

Charter House Journal

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Advocacy—Dual Eligibility
- Mindfulness—Coping Skills
- New Peer Support Specialist TE's
- Brand New Unit

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COORDINATOR'S CORNER

2012 is here bringing with it possibilities and potential. What do you want to call into your life this year? Some of the things I would like to see include the creation of our Advisory Board. We already have one member, Nena Bondarenko. She is a realtor in Lansing and is also with NAMI Lansing. We are still looking for other community members to help us. Our goal is to have the committee fully operational by March 2012.

This year, lets double the number of members who attend Charter House!! Recently we had 40 persons here on one day. It was wonderful to see our Clubhouse so active and busy!! More members means more friends and more fun and allows us to get a lot more done. Another goal this year is to

raise the money for training with the International Center for Clubhouse Development. This is part of our work towards becoming an Accredited Clubhouse. Gary L went to this training and thought it was great. The training is 3 weeks long so it will be a real adventure!

I want to welcome Lucia Vellenga, our new full time Peer Support Specialist. She spent 9 months with us doing an internship and we are happy to have her back with us on a full time basis. Lucia is replacing Mark Phillips. Mark has worked at Charter House for several years but has taken a new position as Recovery Specialist. This is a fantastic opportunity for him to work with all Peer Support Specialists in AMHS. We wish Mark well in his new position (and in his

new marriage!)

Many thanks to Jessica, Erika and Rachel our social work interns who are with us this year. They have been invaluable this semester, helping us out in so many ways. Our Halloween party was sooo amazing because of them. It was maybe the most fun party we have ever had!

Jeramie and Dave also started with us this fall. They both completed the Peer Support Specialist Training that we offer and are in their "internship" at Charter House. It has been great working with both of them and watching them develop as Peers. Having them here shows all of our members that they too can change their lives.

FIRST OF THE YEAR

This issue of the Charter House Journal may be a bit lengthy, this is due to wrapping up many of the events and activities that took place in the latter part of 2011. We have had some computer hardware failures that have unfortunately postponed much of what

has now found its way into this First Of The Year Newsletter Extravaganza! We have had to get creative with the technology we have, be it swapping out hard drives, ordering new power supplies, loading software with external DVD-Rom players because our

machines only have CD-Rom drives. At any rate, through it all, we have a more stable computer base and now we are implementing Microsoft Office 2010, which is being used in the creation of this newsletter.

ADVOCACY UNIT

What's Up with Advocacy? Since the last Newsletter Advocacy Unit has been busy. Most recently we attended Power Day at the Capitol. Nicole, an Advocacy Unit member made a speech as part of the program. It was very inspiring. She was asked to speak by the Michigan Chapter of the United States Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, who sponsored the event.

Representative Joan Bauer received the Phyllis Levine Award for service to Mental Health Programs. Representative Bauer is a special friend of Charter House and even mentioned Charter House and Advocacy Unit Members Ruth, Steve B and Nicole in her speech.

Advocacy also made the signs we held up on the steps of the Capitol to let the politicians know how we feel and to remind them that we vote.

There was a craft show at Jolly Rd. and we sold cards to make money for the member account. We also sold some cookies we had left from our Open House.

On August 18th we held an Open House. The purpose

of the Open House was to let the community know who we are and so we could get to know our neighbors. Senator Levin sent a representative. Melissa Horse; Daryl Green a Lt. in the LPD came; Joan Jackson came from the City Council. She brought a plaque from the Mayors Office proclaiming August 18th Charter House Day in Lansing. We also had visitors from the MSU School of Social Work.

Goals that the Advocacy Unit are working on include: Creating an Advisory Board by May 2012; filing an application for an Accreditation visit by October 30th, 2011; redoing the Charter House video; and start having "guest luncheons" in January 2012.

ADVOCACY UNIT-DUAL ELIGIBILITY

On Tuesday, December 6th, 2011, members of the Advocacy Unit, Clark, Steve B., Serralee, and Certified Peer Support Specialist, Melinda, attended a public testimony on integrated care planning for dual eligible. People who are dual eligible qualify for both Medicaid and Medicare. At Charter House there are at least 9 members who are dual eligible.

They talked about how they are satisfied with Community Mental Health and how they want them to continue to

be in charge of their care. They also talked about how important Charter House is to them and how they wanted clubhouses to be involved in the integrated care planning for dual eligible.

They made their voices heard.

POWER DAY 2011 BY NICOLE WRIGHT

Charter House, a few other clubhouses, and other supporters gathered on the lawn at the state capitol to celebrate Power Day. We were small in number but mighty in spirit. I was one of the many speakers and I shared my recovery story, hoping it would help at least one person. We had a great day of encouragement!

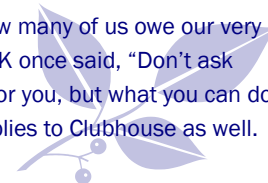
State representative Joan Bauer was given an award for all

of her work on behalf of Community Mental Health consumers. Joan Bauer also mentioned Steve B., Ruth P., and me by name when she gave her acceptance speech. She also said that the three of us have given her a face for the mentally ill consumer.

AN OPEN LETTER BY CLARK W.

An open letter to all members of all clubhouses in Michigan. We all owe a great deal of debt to our clubhouses. A debt that can never really be paid off. Where would we be without our Clubhouse? Where would we be if our Clubhouse suffered a large cut? That's why we need to oppose something like the dual eligible changes. We need to express our opinion at every opportunity.

In conclusion, how many of us owe our very lives to the Clubhouse? JFK once said, "Don't ask what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country". That applies to Clubhouse as well.



THE BIG SUMMER TRIP BY LYNN L.

Friday, September 30, 2011 was our Big Summer Trip at Charter House. It was on the boat, The Michigan Princess. We had an all you can eat luncheon buffet from 11-1 p.m. I really liked the Sweet Potato casserole. We all boarded the boat early at 10:30 so we got back at 12:30. It seemed like it was over very fast, bummer! I had never been on a boat before and sitting on the boat made me dizzy, especially when I looked out the windows. My friend and I took a walk around the boat and that helped me feel better. There was

a really good band that was playing 80's music. People were enjoying the music and some were dancing. The group got to meet the Captain and walk on the open deck on the second floor. I took some pictures which came out really good and showed them around.

Overall, we had a great trip with good food and music and members and staff had a really good time.

MY WEEKEND WITH RYAN BY JULIE T.

Recently Ryan and I spent a whole weekend together. We went to my brother, Brian's house one day to play with the kids. On Sunday we went to church and to the race. Ryan and I had lots of fun at the race. The race we went to was Brian's race. He has a race car; it is a little four cylinder, number 81. He races on a dirt track in a little town. During the race Brian went over the side of the track, hit the wall and also hit a water barrel. After the race was over we got

to go to the pit to see and meet the drivers. Currently Brian is ahead in points for racing and he will get a trophy at the Corn Harvest. Brain is good at racing. Ryan and I enjoyed watching him.

FUNDRAISING

We had exciting Fall and Winter fundraising events! We had a Movie Day at NCG Theatre on Saturday, November 26, screening Twilight Breaking Dawn Part 1. Family, friends and the community were, able to for a low cost, have the proceeds from the purchase of their ticket/snacks go to Charter House.

We are also planning a big, Spaghetti Dinner! What can be better than that? Eating hot yummy noodles with deli-

cious, spaghetti, topped with parmesan cheese; all while supporting your favorite Clubhouse! This will be held on January 12, 2012 from 4pm – 6pm. Cost for adults will be \$10 and children under 13 will be \$5.

Also ahead is our continual bake sales. We will be selling delectable gourmet goodies at Jolly Rd. Thank you, Thank you! We so appreciate you!

NEW CHARTER HOUSE FACES

Dave — Peer “TE”

1. Where do you live and where did you grow up?

In Lansing, born in Lansing and spent 20 years in Arizona.

2. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I have 2 daughters, 3 grandsons and I am a widower. I enjoy my dog.

3. Could you explain what a peer “TE” is?

Someone who advocates for the members of Charter House.

4. Why did you consider working at Charter House?

I was referred by CMH by my caseworker.

5. What do you like about working at Charter House?

It gives me an opportunity to help the members.

6. Could you tell us about your previous work experience?

I was a car mechanic all of my life.

7. What are your hobbies and what do you like to do in your spare time?

Scuba dive, play with my dog, backpacking, and swimming.

Jeramie — Peer “TE”

1. Where do you live and where did you grow up?

I live on the south end of Lansing; have lived in various places when I was growing up.

2. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I am an artist, martial arts, was in Army for several years.

3. Could you explain what a Peer “TE” is?

I am able to help others as an advocate.

4. Why did you consider working at Charter House?

I like the organization here.

5. What do you like about working at Charter House?

The members are the best part, feels like family.

6. Could you tell us about your previous work experience?

Design T-shirts, factory work, then I joined the Army

7. What are your hobbies and what do you like to do in your spare time?

I love to draw and paint, interested in ancient cultures, and understanding the bible.

SKILLS GROUP CORNER

MARK PHILLIPS-PEER SUPPORT SPECIALIST

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a key concept taught in Skills Group. Mindfulness is practiced throughout the world and is a part of all major religions. Author Jon Kabat-Zinn, who wrote the popular book; "Wherever you go, there you are," defines mindfulness as, "paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally."

In other words, mindfulness is about being present in the here and now, doing one thing at a time focusing on the task at hand, blocking out all distractions. If we are able to block out all distractions, we can give ourselves a break from our worries and anxiety.

There are many different techniques that can be used to practice mindfulness. One technique that is often used is visualization or imagery. The following is a mindfulness exercise which uses the imagery of a stream and a pebble. When practicing mindfulness it is important to be relaxed, sit comfortably in a chair or lie down, focus your eyes on one object close to you and be fully present and aware of the activity. If your mind wanders, just notice it and bring your attention back to the activity. You could have someone read the passage to you or read it yourself and then reflect for a few minutes on what you have read. The following is the stream and pebble mindfulness.

"Imagine yourself as a pebble which has been thrown into the river. The pebble sinks through the water effortlessly. Detached from everything, it falls by the shortest distance possible, finally reaching the bottom, the point of perfect rest. You are like a pebble which has let itself fall into the river letting go of everything. At the center of your being is your breath. You don't need to know the length of time it takes before reaching the point of complete rest on the bed of fine sand beneath the water. When you feel yourself resting like a pebble which has reached the riverbed, that is the point when you begin to find your own rest. You are no longer pushed or pulled by anything."



Reflect on this passage for as long as you can, trying not to let distractions or thoughts enter your mind. A beginner to mindfulness may only be able to practice the reflection for a minute or seconds. Like many things, mindfulness takes practice and as you practice you will be able to concentrate your mind on the activity longer, giving yourself a break from worries and anxiety.

Skills group meets Monday's 1 p.m. until 2 p.m. in the conference room.

VOCATIONAL ARTICLE

LAURA SANDBERG

At Charter House, we have recently been working on trying to change our TEP's (transitional employment positions) to more closely match what is required in other clubhouses. The best possible positions are between 15 - 20 hours and last for duration of 6-9 months. Therefore, we are in the process of combining some of our positions and adding more hours to get closer to that goal. Transitional employment is something that can help our members "try" a job when they have not worked for months or years. It can also allow a member to train and gain skills for a position that they have never worked in. TEP's have the benefit of get-

ting a lot of support from Charter House staff, so if someone is having trouble on the job, the staff is there to assist, problem solve, and train the member. We also provide a Worker's Seminar every month to the TEP's to help them learn about other skills that would be necessary for them to have if they eventually want to work at a job out in the community. We continue to find that work is a very important part of our member's lives and that it can help someone to achieve recovery in many areas of their lives as a result of having a job.

**COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AFFILIATION
OF MID-MICHIGAN CONSUMER AND
STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COUNCIL
BY NICOLE WRIGHT**

The Affiliation and Consumer Advisory Council is made up with consumers or family members of someone with a developmental disability or mental illness or both. We are connected or affiliated with eight counties here in Mid-Michigan.

I became a part of the council about a year ago. I saw a posting about the council at Community Mental Health and I applied. I was interviewed and I was accepted. Currently I am the chairperson of the council.

Charter House members should care about the council because multi-counties help keep CMH strong in these days of state budget cuts. Club-house members should also care about the council because the council helps shape policy for CMH programs – that might be Charter House.

CLERICAL UNIT UPDATE

There have been many changes on the Clerical Unit as of late. Beginning on September 28, Charter House is now using a new VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) phone system, which has been installed throughout all of CEI-Community Mental Health. This new phone system completely replaces our old phones. Members of the Clerical Unit have had to be completely retrained on this new system. We have several Clerical Unit members who can operate the phones independently and we will continue to train members who want to learn the new system and be part of the switchboard team. Thank you to all, for your patience and work on the Clerical Unit during this difficult transition.

Also new to the Clerical Unit is an updated Morning Meeting Minutes format. Each day, a member of the Clerical Unit will be responsible for taking the meeting minutes and then typing them on the Morning Meeting Bulletin. The minutes have been changed to reflect

what is currently happening at Charter House and what activities are occurring daily. Hopefully this will give new members better information as they become familiar with the goings on at Charter House. New sections that have been added to the bulletin include: ICCD news, *Advocacy Unit*, *Fundraising*, *Snack Shop Hours*, and *New Faces at Charter House*. The minutes also include the monthly activities and monthly birthdays. We hope this new format is helpful and useful to all of those who attend or visit Charter House.

We continue to work on teamwork on the Clerical Unit. We could not have been successful introducing these new changes without the help of our membership and staff. The members on the Clerical Unit have been patient and have done a lot of training to update themselves on the changes to the Morning Meeting Minutes and the changes to the Phone System. Again, thank you to all.

M E E T M I N D Y
B Y J O H N S . O F T H E M - T E A M

Mindy is an intern from Michigan State University. She visited Charter House on November 7, 2011. One of the M-Team members sat down with her in between tasks and conducted the following interview.

1. What are you studying in school?
I am studying Social Work.

2. What kind of experience do you have with teaching?
I am a Boy Scout coordinator. I teach the programming for the Cub Scouts. Working with them is very interesting. I can truly say, 'Boys will be boys'.

3. Describe a time when you taught a total beginner a relatively complex task. What happened?
I used to teach swimming to children between the ages of 2 years to 6 years. I taught them how to float and how to be comfortable in the water. Helping them to feel comfortable in cold water when they were frightened or crying could be a challenge, but I really enjoyed it.

4. Why do you want to intern with Community Mental Health?
I am very interested in working with the aging population.

5. How does an internship at Transitions fit into your career goals?
I am doing a lot of goal planning with others and this will help me be a better social worker.

6. Do you work best by yourself or with other people around?
I work best when I am working with other people.

7. Do you have any pets?
Yes. I have a pet python snake. I have had him for over a year now. I have always liked snakes. I was never afraid of them. My snake has a lot of different names but the one that I call him the most is Kitty. His particular kind doesn't get very big. He is really shy and sweet.

8. Where have you traveled?
I traveled to Saskatchewan, Canada. I was a youth counselor / life guard. It just so happened that it was black fly season, so I was very busy swatting flies.

9. What is your favorite food to eat?
I love mushrooms, but they must be cooked.



We would like to thank Mindy for visiting us and hope to see her again.

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

OUR CLUBHOUSE

By Steven B.

If you're looking for a place,
Where we are always glad to see your face.

Where we are each lookin' to find,
Help with our troubled mind

We are here to give you hope,
To help you learn the skills to cope.

It's always good for you to be around,
To hang out in a place where friendship
can be found.

So as you travel on life's journey,
And you find a clubhouse near,

Stop in and make some friends and find,
The beauty in life we hold so dear.

WHO WE ARE

Submitted By
Steven B.

Different structure,
Different skin
All alike, deep within

We come from different places,
Exploring the world.

Seeing and accepting
The changes we may hold.

We meet new faces,
Seeing life through each others' eyes
Not knowing what we may really find

But to our surprise
We are all alike deep inside.
Knowing that, we can all easily bind.

Separated we are many,
But together we are one.

Accepting the challenges,
That can be done.

By Kevin Sabay

GRANDMA

By Nicole W.

I remember your love that you had for
me, Grandma. I remember how you
would call my name. The memories I
have of you, Grandma, are very pre-
cious to me.

We had special times together; just
you and I.

I would come over to your house and I
would take care of your hair. I would
part your hair and scratch your scalp,
and then I would oil it. I would try to
make you look dignified by braiding
your hair.

Then when we were all done, you
would make some Lipton black tea
and we would have some Ritz crackers
with peanut butter.

The memories of you, Grandma, have
strengthened me through the years.

Oh how precious are my memories of
you, Grandma...

THE SATURDAY CHRISTMAS PARTY 2011 BY NICOLE WRIGHT

There were a lot of members, some family, and friends who attended the Saturday Christmas Party. We had music, conversations, light moments, and fellowship. Then there was the delicious food and snacks; some of the things, members brought in. We enjoyed fried chicken and shrimp with cocktail sauce. Andrea and Jodi were our hostesses and they did a great job.

We played Christmas BINGO for prizes as we laughed and joked around. We

also played the "Left-Right" game and that was a blast.

We celebrated Carrie M.'s 40th birthday. Carrie brought a chocolate cake for us to enjoy. Carrie's family and members sang "Happy Birthday" to her.

Sean brought his two little kids to the party and that was a nice treat. We took pictures of the kids with members. It was great to see them.

Some of the members helped with

clean up. All in all, we had a great time.



ZOO DAYS BY JOHN O.

A group of us went to the Potter Park Zoo for CMH's Annual Zoo Day Trip. When we arrived, there were a lot of people there. Food was given to us who were standing in line with the rest of the people. We had hot soup with oyster crackers, cookies, candy, juice boxes, and water. We walked around the entire zoo and saw lions, penguins, amphibians, camels, buffalo, etc. I had a pretty good time. I would go again if they had it next year.

FIRE MOUNTAIN GRILL HOLIDAY EXPERIENCE BY STEVE B.

On December 15th, we got together to share our Holiday Meal. This year we chose to go to Fire Mountain Grill. We met there at 11 am to 1 pm. Almost all the members were there. We all enjoyed having someone else cook. Each of us had our favorite part of the meal. Most people liked the food and here are what some folks liked in addition:

- * Malcolm: Being around friends
- * Julia: BINGO
- * Jeramie: Singing
- * Janice: Transportation

went smoothly.

- * John O: Banana Pudding
- * Randy: Big Cuts of Chicken
- * Jake: Dessert
- * Larry: Veal Cutlet
- * Clark: Apple Pie / Ice Cream

After our meal we played Christmas BINGO. We all won by being a part of the many BINGO games played. By being very creative, Stephanie Tighe made the games we played more interesting and fun.

There was much laughter and many smiles. Some of us won a dollar or two, with John O. winning the big prize. Next time it might be your chance to win. Every Friday the game goes on. Make sure and join us.



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NEW UNIT CREATION

Charter House will be creating a new unit in January to complement the current work ordered day. The *ITCH* Unit will begin the first week of January 2012. *ITCH* being an acronym for **I**nformation **T**echnologies of **C**harter **H**ouse.

The *ITCH* Unit will be responsible for all technological aspects within Charter House. Some items they will be responsible for are:

1. Routine Defragging and Disk Cleanup of HDD
2. Learning All Charter House Software
3. Maintaining Charter House Web Site
4. Helping members fill out online forms / apps
5. Backing up all Charter House HDDs
6. Helping members create email accounts

ITCH Unit
Information **T**echnologies of **C**harter **H**ouse

Looking forward to expanding our clubhouse.