

Friends of Friendship Place

Issue 11

Fall & Winter 2008-09

EGGROLL FUNDRAISER IS BACK!

With much anticipation, FP will host another eggroll fundraiser. All proceeds from the eggroll sale will go toward our programming at FP. See attached order form for details.

JUNE 3-5, 2009 (you choose pick up date/time)
12-3PM
\$10/dozen (sold by dozens only)

MISSION STATEMENT UPDATED

The FP Board of Directors met in February 2009 and approved the following new mission statement for FP:

Friendship Place encourages adults with mental illness to live well by fostering an environment that provides members with peer support, advocacy, and education.

FP has a long history in the community that began as a location in Neenah, WI and has grown into a program throughout the Fox Cities. It's more than a location. We believe our new mission statement better defines why we exist and our importance to the community.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
1	Eggroll Fundraiser—back by popular demand!
1	We're Off to the Races...The Human Race
2	Survey Says...2008 FP Survey results
2	NAMI New Hope Group
2	Moving From A to B
3	What Does it Mean to be Mentally Healthy?
4	Calendar of Events & Board Members Needed
4	Music and Watercolor Classes
5	Grants Received & Our Favorite Pictures
6	Thank You!



Children and dogs are welcome!

*Human Race is May 2, 2009.
 Help us raise \$1000!*

We are collecting pledges and recruiting team members on behalf of the FP for the Human Race event scheduled on May 2, 2009 at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

What is the Human Race? It is a community fundraiser that provides an opportunity for all non-profit organizations to raise money for their programs. Members collect pledges toward a 5k walk, 5k non-competitive run, or a one-mile walk. Participating agencies receive 75% of the money collected. The Volunteer Center receives the remaining percentage for coordinating the event.

Why Be a Team Member? It feels great to be a part of a good cause. The post-race party that the Volunteer Center & Thrivent Financial for Lutherans hosts is awesome too! Please consider becoming a team member (not required to walk in the race). Contact **Julie or Candy at 729-9975** Monday-Friday from 10am-4pm.

Why sponsor us? With your much appreciated financial support, FP can continue to reach out and make a difference to people with mental illness and encourage them to be more active, contributing members of our community. It is a good feeling to be a part of an event that benefits the whole community. It's a fun and positive way to help, and it is guaranteed to succeed. *All donations are tax deductible!*

We sincerely thank you in advance for your donation. We will provide you with a receipt of your donation. Pledges and money are due April 29th. You may send your donation now until April 29th to: 220 N. Commercial St., Neenah, WI 54956. Please make checks payable to: *Human Race*.

SURVEY SAYS...

Each year our members are asked to complete an anonymous, confidential, self-administered paper and pencil survey about our services and programs at Friendship Place. These surveys are used in a variety of ways. Some of the results are used to secure funding from grants, foundations, and organizations. Other times the results are used to evaluate our program and services effectiveness.

So, what were the 2008 survey results? 51 members completed a survey in 2008.

Outcome #1: 43 of 51 surveyed members reported an increase in their perception of self-esteem as contributed by their participation in activities provided by or through Friendship Place (FP). An influencing factor that contributed to the effectiveness of our 2008 programming pertained to the increase in selection of programs/activities available to members in 2008. Members were asked to take a more directive and decisive role in program/activity planning for all activities at FP, from planning to implementation. Not only were programs more member-focused and driven, but also the programs were more diverse (including type of activity, cost of activity, time of day/night, and day of the week).

Outcome #2: 78% (40 of 51) of surveyed members reported a decrease in number/frequency of psychiatric hospitalizations since participation in FP activities/programs in 2008, which is 12% higher than in 2007. FP has seen an increase in members that have more acute and serious mental illnesses and have a dual diagnosis of drug and alcohol dependence or a developmental disability. Acute members also require more direction in order to follow FP guidelines regarding general housekeeping and hygiene.

Many of our members in 2007 and 2008 were in the first stages of their mental health recovery and are not considered stabilized (still in a state of mental crisis, exhibiting psychotic symptoms). New members were referred directly from the psychiatric units at area hospitals and doctors' offices, as a result of FP's attempts to expand awareness of our programs/services in the community. Members reported significant symptoms of anxiety as a result of media influence (economic uncertainty, elections, natural disasters), with a focus on the stability of their social security benefits and other benefits provided through the state and federal governments. Members also reported significant medication changes in 2008, and thus requiring a higher frequency of psychiatric hospitalization for medication stabilization.

NAMI NEW HOPE GROUP by Patrick H.

Every Thursday at 2:30pm at Friendship Place a NAMI New Hope Group is held. The group is for adults with a mental illness. In a confidential atmosphere, we discuss the problems and issues (and sometimes good things!) in dealing with our illnesses. It is a consumer run group by a trained facilitator. Many have gained a better level of knowledge of themselves through the wisdom of the group of peers. Also, group can be a good source for keeping updated on NAMI events. If you are interested in joining this group, you are invited to come to Friendship Place on Thursdays at 2:30pm. For more information about NAMI Fox Valley and their programming, please call (920) 954-1550 or go to www.namifoxvalley.org.

MOVING FROM A TO B by Leah S.

Per discussion at a recent Board Retreat with Alan Blake, facilitator, the following topic came to me. Moving from A to B is basically moving from a passive/negative/entitlement attitude to an active/positive/self-responsibility attitude. Often society fosters an image of the mentally ill as incompetent, child-like beings that lack control over themselves and their lives. Many of those who first come to FP come with this attitude and stigma. So, how do we get from point A to point B?

Providing incentives to go from A to B includes using those who have attained some self-responsibility to help nurture those at point A. We nurture their life skills and coping skills towards becoming more independent. We help them see the importance of giving and not just receiving, and that they can contribute. By emphasizing their talents and strengths, we try to present opportunities for growth.

It is a labor of love and patience, often beset by setbacks. But seeing the member's movement from A towards B gives us the incentive to forge ahead. It is always a work in progress. The opportunities are there for growth and the incentives include stronger feelings of self worth and more control over their life. If they choose to move toward B, we are always there to assist.

FRIENDSHIP PLACE WISH LIST

- Toilet paper and paper towels
- Small paper plates & paper cups
- Rolls of postage stamps
- Multi-fold towels for bathroom towel dispensers
- Cleaning supplies (bleach, dish soap, disinfectant sprays, etc.)
- Ground Coffee, coffee filters, creamer and sugar
- Ketchup, mustard, relish, and hotdog buns

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MENTALLY HEALTHY?

It has always been easier to define mental illnesses than to define mental health. Even though many of us don't suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder, it is clear that some of us are mentally healthier than others. Instead of looking at how society's negative aspects affect us, let's focus on the positive qualities that help people flourish: courage, optimism, hope, honesty, interpersonal skills, work ethic and perseverance.

Here are some of the ideas that have been put forward as characteristics of mental health:

Ability to enjoy life – Can you live in the moment and appreciate the “now”? Are you able to learn from the past and plan for the future without dwelling on things you can't change or predict?

Resilience – Are you able to bounce back from hard times? Can you manage the stress of a serious life event without losing your optimism and a sense of perspective?

Balance – Are you able to juggle the many aspects of your life? Can you recognize when you might be devoting too much time to one aspect, at the expense of others? Are you able to make changes to restore balance when necessary?

Self-actualization – Do you recognize and develop your strengths so that you can reach your full potential?

Flexibility – Do you feel, and express, a range of emotions? When problems arise, can you change your expectations of life, others, and yourself – to solve the problem and feel better?

Here are some simple ways to practice **mental fitness**:

Daydream – Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a dream location. Breathe slowly and deeply. Whether it's a beach, a mountaintop, a hushed forest or a favorite room from your past, let the comforting environment wrap you in a sensation of peace and tranquility.

“Collect” positive emotional moments – Make it a point to recall times when you have experienced pleasure, comfort, tenderness, confidence, or other positive emotions.

Learn ways to cope with negative thoughts – Negative thoughts can be insistent and loud. Learn to interrupt them. Don't try to block them (that never works), but don't let them take over. Try distracting yourself or comforting yourself, if you can't solve the problem right away.

Do one thing at a time – For example, when you are out for a walk or spending time with friends, turn off your cell phone and stop making that mental “to do” list. Take in all the sights, sounds and smells you encounter.

Exercise – Regular physical activity improves psychological well-being and can reduce depression and anxiety. Joining an exercise group or a gym can also reduce loneliness, since it connects you with a new set of people sharing a common goal.

Enjoy hobbies – Taking up a hobby brings balance to your life by allowing you to do something you enjoy because you want to do it, free of the pressure of everyday tasks. It also keeps your brain active.

Set personal goals – Goals don't have to be ambitious. You might decide to finish that book you started three years ago; to take a walk around the block every day; to learn to knit or play bridge; to call your friends instead of waiting for the phone to ring. Whatever goal you set, reaching it will build confidence and a sense of satisfaction.

Keep a journal (or even talk to the wall!) – Expressing yourself after a stressful day can help you gain perspective, release tension and even boost your body's resistance to illness.

Share humor – Life often gets too serious, so when you hear or see something that makes you smile or laugh, share it with someone you know. A little humor can go a long way to keeping us mentally fit!

Volunteer – Volunteering is called the “win-win” activity because helping others makes us feel good about ourselves. At the same time, it widens our social network, provides us with new learning experiences and can bring balance to our lives.

Treat yourself well – Cook yourself a good meal. Have a bubble bath. See a movie. Call a friend or relative you haven't talked to in ages. Sit on a park bench and breathe in the fragrance of flowers and grass. Whatever it is, do it just for you.

BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED By Jim Travis

The Friendship Place Board of Directors is actively seeking to fill 3 vacancies. Current Board members represent a cross-section of professions and demonstrate an interest or passion for mental health services and are from the community at large. Responsibilities include attendance at bi-monthly hour long meetings (7:30 a.m. 2nd Wednesday every other month) to review and support the overall mission of FP and possible participation on one of the current committees. They will discuss necessary topics and vote on matters needing approval.

Board members are persons who have knowledge and experience of mental disorders or work with persons with mental or emotional disabilities. They accept the responsibility of board membership to work toward enhancing effective operation of Friendship Place. Interested persons should contact Lori at 729-9975 to learn about the upcoming Board meeting.

MUSIC, MUSIC, MUSIC by Julie Grondahl

Like to sing? Come join us for a fun filled time of "singing our hearts" out. Our choir director, Jeff Zdrale, volunteers his time to teach us many styles of music from classical to music of the past. We are currently working on rounds. After much practice, we share our talents by performing for many of our special activities, such as the Let's Be Thankful Meal in November and at the NAMI Holiday Party in December.

One of the most touching times for all of us was to entertain our friends at Vallhaven Care Center at Christmas. We strolled through the halls and into dining rooms sharing the joy of Christmas with song. So many people joined in singing with us. We must have brought back many memories and emotions as we saw people wipe a tear from their eyes.

FP choir practices once per month, sometimes more if we have a special performance to prepare for. Check out our monthly calendar of activities for dates and times. Our calendar can be found at www.friendshipplaceinc.com.

CELL PHONE FUNDRAISER

Bring in your old cell phones and help FP raise \$. See Lori or Melissa W. for details. Whoever brings in the most cell phones wins a free lunch with Rachel Kelbert!

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WATERCOLOR By Candy Luedtke

The wonderful world of watercolor is something special and exciting you can experience at FP. Jeff Zdrale, a retired Neenah School District Administrator, is our volunteer art instructor and has been with us two years. He keeps the attention of his students and instructs as we produce colorful works of art. The class has been featured in *The Post-Crescent* with happy faces displaying their art projects—a friend of mine, who paints with watercolor, saw the article and immediately called with great excitement. She thought we had such a great opportunity. She also looked at our website and thought we had a fabulous plan to get our members involved in painting.

We would like to invite anyone to try art class. The times are on our monthly calendar or you can call FP for information. The class is FREE to members.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL 6-24
PENNY WAR
Staff vs. Members (pennies= +, silver= -)

APRIL 24
CHILI DOG SALE
11:30AM-2:30PM
\$1 per plate for chili dog, chips and pickle

APRIL 29
STAFF BAKE SALE
11AM-2PM
Help support your staff in the Human Race!

MAY 2
HUMAN RACE
8am-1pm at Thrivent Financial for Lutherans
*See Julie or Candy for details.

MAY 4
GETTING IN TOUCH MEETING
12:30PM
Monthly all agency meeting to discuss current month's calendar, next month's proposed activities, issues discussion, staff concerns, etc.

MAY 22
DISPLAY YOUR TALENT SHOWCASE
12:30PM
Show off the many talents you have— dancing, singing, spoken word, collections, hula hoop, etc.

JUNE 3-5
EGGROLL SALE
12-3PM
\$10/dozen (pork or veggie)

JUNE 12
HIGH CLIFF CLEAN UP & PICNIC
\$2 for bag lunch, entrance fee, and transportation (as needed).

JULY 27
NAMI/ORC/FP PIERCE PARK PICNIC
5pm
Free picnic for members and family/friends of members at Appleton's Pierce Park.

FRIENDSHIP PLACE THRIVES WITH GRANTS AWARDED

Thanks to the generous grants received from Winnebago County (\$10,000), St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation (\$3,000), and Kimberly-Clark Foundation (\$5,000) thus far in 2009, FP can continue to grow our mental health outreach programs. For our members, FP may be one of the only places they feel safe and understood. Our programs allow members to practice and maintain an increase in their perception of self-worth, self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility. It is so important for us to receive funding from grant sources such as the above named foundations and organizations. What a great community! We appreciate all of you.

SOME OF OUR FAVORITE PHOTOS



Jeff Berton and Max Jones share some tunes with FP



Let's Be Thankful Meal November 2008



Lori, Candy, and Julie at Homestead Meadows Oct. 08.



Our group enjoying a Halloween meal at Homestead Meadows.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

We would like to publicly thank the following for their time, talents, and donations. Without all of you, FP couldn't be the place it is!

Financial Support: United Way of the Fox Cities, Kimberly-Clark Foundation, Robert Swayne Family, Robert and Sharon Kime, Terry Tessier, JP Morgan Chase, Winnebago County, Marie Stanke, Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Bachman, Carol and Bob Paynter, St. Elizabeth Hospital Community Foundation, Malcolm Hjerstedt, Doug Dieterich, and Shelter Alliance Cell Phone Fundraiser.

In-Kind Donations: Chad and Leslie Grondahl, Community First Credit Union, Ada Hall, Michael Barnes, St. Paul Lutheran Church, Galloway Foods,

Time & Talent: Jeanne Seager, Jeff Luedtke, Ada Hall, Michael Barnes, Melissa Weiland, FP Board of Directors, Jeff Zdrade, Kris Soper, FP staff members, Kara Patterson, FVTC Nursing Program students, Patrick Haskett, John Phillips and Judi Robson, Rachel Kelbert,

Our sincere apologies if we inadvertently left your name out.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jim Travis, President
Terry Tessier, Treasurer
Rachel Kelbert, Secretary
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STAFF MEMBERS

Executive Director: Lori L. Hill
Outreach Specialists: Julie Grondahl & Candy Luedtke
Outreach Assistants: Dan Carroll, Dan Paynter, & Leah Schwartz

A special thank you to Melissa Weiland for being such a great Editor!

