



Friends of Friendship Place

SPRING 2014

Friendship Place Goes to Hawaii



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Hawaii	1
Grand Avenue Club	2
FP Oshkosh	2
Art Therapy	3
Mental Health Awareness	3
Thank You's	3
Donation/Information	4

This winter will be remembered as one of the coldest, snowiest and longest, but definitely not as anyone's favorite! We have been kept indoors for far too long and it has been taxing on everyone's mental health! So, for one afternoon at Friendship Place in February, we turned up the heat, threw on some grass skirts and "hula-ed" the winter blues away!

We played pass the pineapple, under the sea ring toss, pin the coconut to the palm tree and had crazy tourist relay races. We feasted on all things Hawaiian-pulled pork sandwiches, fruit kebabs, tropical punch and coconut cake. The day was complete with beach balls and Polynesian music while we spent some time under the big umbrella and imagined we were on a tropical island. It might not have brought the warm weather, but it definitely lifted our spirits!



The Grand Avenue Club

Not every clubhouse is all about fun and games! Much the contrary, the Grand Avenue Club (GAC) in Milwaukee, WI is all about hard work, team work, and a strong work-ordered day. The Grand Avenue club is an independent non-profit organization that was founded in 1991 and is based on the International Clubhouse Model of Psychiatric Rehabilitation which focuses on staff and members working side by side to provide paid employment opportunities, access to education, and community resources. The mission of the club is “to provide Milwaukee County adults who have experienced mental illness with an array of opportunities that will assist them to experience recovery, to integrate into society via work and education, and to live lives that are vocationally productive and socially satisfying.”

In November, Friendship Place staff along with representatives from United Way, NAMI, Winnebago County Clinical Services, and the FP Board of Directors had the opportunity to experience an entire day at the Grand Avenue Club. Upon arriving, we were asked if we wanted to check our coats and if we'd be purchasing a lunch pass. We were then given the “grand” tour of the 4-story stately building which is located right in the heart of the city. Access to resources and transportation were especially important when choosing their location. Each floor at the GAC

houses one of their 3 work units, the 4th floor being designated to their art gallery, and the basement containing a members-only retail shop. During the “work week hours” (Mon-Fri, 8:30am-4:30pm), work to maintain the GAC community is the primary focus. Participation in this work is completely voluntary and members set their own goals; however, it is strongly encouraged and all members



realize that without everyone's help and participation, the GAC wouldn't be what it is today. The club is also open on Wednesday evenings and on Saturday and Sunday afternoons for recreational and cultural activities. At the conclusion of our tour we were informed that we were being put to work, each of us spending the remainder of the morning working on a different task within a work unit. Three of us were sent to Member Services which includes the employment and education programs as well as an expansive lending library. This work unit composes a daily and monthly newsletter, maintains employment data, runs 3 different

support groups and assists members with scholarships, financial aid and tutoring/mentoring. Two of us were sent to Culinary Arts and helped to prepare the day's lunch. That work unit takes care of all daily prep and serving of breakfast and lunch, as well as dinner several times a week and catering of all clubhouse events. They are responsible for researching recipes, shopping for supplies, sanitary storage and clean-up. The remaining two of us were sent to Administration which oversees fund development, budgeting, record keeping, reception/coat check, cashiering/members' bank, assisting with public relations, research and writing reports to funders.

After we were finished with our work, we enjoyed a great lunch that was prepared by the GAC culinary team. We were able to share our experiences on each of the different units as well as chat with additional GAC members about what the clubhouse means to them and how it has impacted their lives. It was truly an eye-opening experience to see how another mental health facility with similar goals as Friendship Place operates so differently. We hope to implement some of the structure and techniques of the Grand Avenue Club back at Friendship Place to get our members even further involved in their community.

Friendship Place is looking to expand in order to serve those individuals in Winnebago County. Watch for details about Friendship Place Oshkosh!!

Art Therapy

Friendship Place is very excited to announce the return of Art Therapy sessions since February of this year! We are very excited to be working with Jean Meissner MSE, NCC, LCP-IT to offer this opportunity to our members. Jean's academic career started with a Bachelor's Degree in studio arts from UWGB and then combined with her love for working with different groups of people (older adults, developmentally/physically disabled, juvenile delinquent teenage boys) to lead her to the Masters of Counseling program at UW-Oshkosh. She has also completed a certificate in AODA counseling at FVTC. Jean brings to Friendship Place a great energy, new ideas and a passion for the therapeutic experience that comes through creating art.

Mental Health Awareness Month

This year marks the 65th anniversary of May being proclaimed "Mental Health Awareness Month" by Mental Health America. This month is dedicated to raising general awareness about mental health and getting people to have more conversations about this important topic. "Mind Your Health" is 2014's theme and was set to remind us that being "healthy" not only includes physical health, nutrition and activity, but mental well-being too! The mind and body work hand in hand and each directly influences the other. I think we all know that the last thing on our minds when we're in a slump or upset about something is to make sure we're getting 6 servings of vegetables a day and getting our 10,000 steps in! With 1 in 5 individuals experiencing a diagnosable mental illness in any given year, mental health is an issue that has the potential to directly impact every individual on this planet! Knowledge is definitely power and the more that people know about mental illness and the steps they can take to increase mental wellness, the better.



At Friendship Place, the May calendar was created around the concept of wellness and the idea that all aspects of wellness are inextricably linked. The activities will touch on physical, mental and social health and include: art therapy, music therapy, a session with the therapy dog, visits to the YMCA and an open discussion with Katie Schalk (Neenah YMCA health & fitness coordinator), mental health jeopardy, a depression survival kit, an educational open forum with UW-Extensions about healthy meal planning, a Wall of Resistance activity and many volunteer opportunities! In support of Mental Health Awareness month, we're asking everyone to dig deep into their closets and sport extra green attire, the chosen color of mental health. But it doesn't end there - have a conversation with your neighbor, coworker, or friend about mental health and what you're doing to ensure your mental wellness!

Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

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Time & Talent: FP Board of Directors, Jeff Zdrale, FP staff members, Leah Schwartz, FVTC OTA students, Kris Soper & Evan Groth with UW-Extensions, Molly Johnson with Compassionate Canines, and Neenah High School Strive Students.

We would like to publically thank the following for their time, talents, and donations for the first quarter of 2014. Without all of you, FP wouldn't be the place it is!

YES! I want to help Friendship Place with a financial donation.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____

Enclosed is my **tax-deductible** contribution of:

\$5.00 \$10.00 \$25.00 \$50.00 \$100.00 Other

We appreciate your helping others gain their independence.

Please make your tax-deductible checks payable to Friendship Place.



Mission Statement:

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

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