

TOWNE HOUSE CREATIVE LIVING CENTER

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FALL 2005

A Program of Bay Area Community Services

JOURNEY TO EMPLOYMENT

Since 1983, the Mental Health Association of Alameda County has provided Transitional Employment opportunities to Towne House members.



Jaleah Winn (right) with supervisor Debbie Duthie

After working as a teacher and tutor for 5 years, I took a break for 3 years to take care of myself. In September 2005, I returned to work with the Transitional Employment Program at the Mental Health Association of Alameda County. At the office I organize mailings and create photocopies. For at least 3 months I will hold this position. I have two job coaches, Darryl Frison and Araceli Martinez, who train me on the use of office equipment and discuss ways to manage stress.

Towne House has been instrumental in preparing me for a job. The weekly Employment Group facilitated by Edy Nicolini and Lois Silvers is the place I get feedback on concerns about working, and share in the employment successes of Towne House members. Also, participating in the Creative Services unit run by Jenna MacHaffie and Julie Froehlig builds my clerical skills and provides a daily routine for me.

In addition, I brainstorm about my vocational goals with BACS Employment Director Bill Judd. It is now my hope to become a peer counselor so I may help others the way that Towne House has helped me. I can achieve this goal by participating in the BestNOW peer counselor training program. This can be a way for me to get an understanding of consumers helping each other with recovery. Finally, on my journey to employment I am taking the path that will lead to a successful re-entry into the workforce by taking it one step at a time.

Jaleah Winn
Member

FOLLOWING A DREAM

In high school I had a teacher who inspired me to work with people diagnosed with severe and chronic mental illness. At UC Berkeley, I started my journey of following that dream with a major in psychology hoping to become a psychiatrist. There were changes in my life, and I became a teacher instead. I taught school, got married, raised a family, and had a variety of jobs.



Edy Nicolini

Yet, the longing to work with people with mental illness continued. At JFK University, I followed the dream and got an MA in Clinical Psychology. Again, there were changes in my life, and I worked as a counselor in a hospital with people suffering from chemical dependency. The yearning continued, and I entered a PhD program at Rosebridge Graduate School of Integrative Psychology. I needed an internship as part of my studies, and, following the suggestion of Richard York at the Mental Health Association of Alameda County, I applied at Towne House in 1993. My internship

experience was wonderful. I was finally doing what I had wanted to do since I was 17 years old!

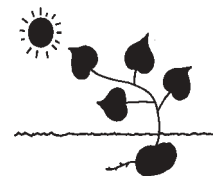
During the last twelve years at Towne House I've been an intern, an Adult Education Teacher, a Team Leader, and the Program Coordinator. My experiences at Towne House have been stimulating, enriching, fulfilling and rewarding. The members have shared their life experiences with me and taught me a great deal about mental illness, courage and recovery. The staff has helped me grow in knowledge and skill. I'm appreciative of BACS for the opportunities they've made available to me to learn and grow professionally.

After 12 years at Towne House, my life is changing again, and it is time for me to move on. I am very grateful to the members and staff for having allowed me to follow and live my dream.

Edy Nicolini
Program Coordinator

SUMMER FUN

Feel the rhythm
The beat of nature calling you, calling me
To be free to enjoy this Retreat
Everyone jumping up and down having fun
In the summertime put your cares on the run
It's time to have big fun playing games in the summer sun
With music, laughter and harmony, all you need is a smile
And a heart full with soul to get on by.



Written for Retreat at Coyote Hills Regional Park

Orvell Wilson
Member

FINDING NEW ROLE



Mitchell Grant

Mitchell Grant, intern at Towne House from March-July, 2005, was part of the BestNOW Program that trains mental health clients to become peer counselors.

Working at Towne House was a great experience. It gave me a chance to learn how my experience as a consumer could benefit me in my new role of becoming a provider. At Towne House I was part of the Food Service group. Part of my job was to participate, as well as to encourage and help members in their work assignments. Working side by side with members building positive relationships became a great part of my development. I also was a group facilitator and led activity groups. One of my favorite groups was WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan). This was a new group, geared at helping members develop their recovery plans.

One thing that impressed me was the positive attitude and cheerful nature of members and staff. The best impression I came away from Towne House with was from the staff. Their acceptance of me, a consumer, as staff, was wonderful. It made me feel proud to be part of the staff and to know that I was part of the team. I truly respected my supervisor, the director and all the staff at Towne House. I am very pleased that I requested Towne House as the place for my internship.

*Mitchell Grant
Intern*

SPECIAL TOUR IN JAPANESE

One of my roles at Towne House is to give visitors a tour of the building, including a brief history and explanation of the three work groups. Last March, a group of eight Japanese social work students and their professor from Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo came to visit. I was asked to give the tour because I lived in Japan for over 23 years and speak Japanese. I was pleased with my translation since I had not used my Japanese in about 10 years. But I did not forget it, and it just rolled off my tongue. I was able to answer their questions about the clubhouse model of rehabilitation.

*Judd Girande
Member*



Japanese Social Work students at Towne House

WELLNESS RECOVERY ACTION PLAN

We introduced the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) at Towne House with a kickoff breakfast on May 5th. Andrea Reyes and Jeffrey Salada from PEERS came to tell us about the process. Next we established four WRAP groups that meet each week. Members and staff have gone to special trainings and now co-facilitate the groups.

WRAP is a written plan focusing on Self-Empowerment and Wellness. We focus on what we are like when we are well, and what things we do when we are well. We learn to recognize our *Triggers* (things outside ourselves that may lead to psychiatric symptoms), our *Warning Signs* (things internally that may be overwhelming and produce symptoms), and our *Action Plan* (what we do to cope with triggers and warning signs, which include taking medication, coming to Towne House, etc.) We do this to prevent having to go to a psychiatric hospital.

However, we also make an information plan while we are well in case we do need to be hospitalized. The plan includes preferences for hospitals, medications, and treatments, as well as a list of the ones we do not want. It can include an Advanced Directive. It also includes a list of supporters and what we want them to do for us while we are well, when we are hospitalized, and after we are discharged from the hospital and are making the transition to being fully well again.

I'm promoting WRAP to help others and myself. It's ours. It's our own individualized Wellness Recovery Action Plan.

*Patrick McCaffrey
Member*

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

In November 2004, California voters passed Proposition 63, which will generate additional funding for mental health services. Towne House members gave feedback on how best to use the money. These ideas were taken to a Consumer Conference and incorporated in the Alameda County planning process. Priorities included:

1. More clubhouse models like Towne House in California.
2. Hospital care, not jail.
3. Increase of SSI benefits with no waiting list for getting on disability and no automatic denials.
4. More housing resources, including more multi-faceted, comprehensive programs that have dual diagnosis, SIL, residential, and Case Management programs that teach a variety of skills.
5. Paid training and work programs, including vocational training.
6. Case managers and support teams for every individual.
7. Drop-in centers run by professionals.
8. Twenty-four hour crisis services, not the police.
9. Multi-discipline one-stop centers in each city district, incorporating mental health, recreational, educational, and medical services.
10. Reduced or no charge for paratransit.

WALKING FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Towne House and other BACS programs were active participants in the first annual San Francisco Bay Area NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Walk in Golden Gate Park on May 21st. A



BACS Team at NAMI Walk

group of members and staff went to the kickoff luncheon on March 29th, where we learned that this was the third year for NAMI Walks throughout the country, and that it had expanded from 12 cities two years ago to 50 cities this year. Proceeds from the walk will help NAMI fulfill their mission to support, educate and advocate for those whose lives are touched by mental illness.

As a Start/Finish Line Sponsor, the BACS team of 30 participants was proud of tee shirts donated by Joe Shimizu. As a team we raised \$1,258, and the grand total for the first Bay Area NAMI Walk was over \$269,000. We are already looking forward to next year's walk on June 3, 2006.

Two members commented on their experiences at the NAMI Walk in Golden Gate Park:

It was a nice day in the park. We walked three miles, and they gave us water and apples. Milly prepared sandwiches for us. That was kind and nice of her. Believe me, if you never experienced something like this, you would have loved to have gone on this trip with us.

I collected four \$5.00 pledges from my family and friends. Our group gathered early at Towne House. BACS walkers had a booth in the park, and began the walk to the sound of bagpipes and cheerleaders. There was a water station along the way. We had lunch together after the walk.

HONORING OUR LOCAL HERO

Joe Shimizu, a long time Towne House supporter, was honored by KQED Public Television as a "Local Hero" for his many contributions to mental health in Alameda County. Awards were presented to Joe and four other community heroes during the Bay Area Asian Pacific American Heritage Month award ceremony at the KQED television station in San Francisco on May 10th.

Part of the recognition included a short television segment about the recipient. It was an honor for all of us when Joe asked if he could have his segment filmed at Towne House. He spent a morning at Towne House with the producer, cameraman, and soundman being interviewed. The film clip showed Joe interacting with members as they went about their daily activities doing clerical, food preparation, and gardening activities. It was shown on public television four times throughout the month, and Towne House received a DVD copy.

A FAMILY ALLIANCE

"He ain't heavy, he's my brother" was a song popular in the 1970's, a theme about being strong enough to help others. The song has meaning for all of us, but I always think of my younger brother, Mark McKinzie, who loved 70's music, and was a member of Towne House from 1993 until his untimely death in September from cancer.

Mark was much loved by his family. He had lots of personality, imagination and humor, and like all of us, needed to be needed. When he was approaching 20, he began to have symptoms of mental illness, and our whole family struggled trying to help, not really understanding mental illness or his behavior.

Everyone who has a family member with a dual diagnosis, as Mark had, knows how hard it can be to keep a loved one close when symptoms are severe, and recovery lapses. We found enormous support in 1993 when Mark became a client of two exceptional agencies, BACS and Bonita House, which provided mental health services and support for him to live independently in his own apartment. At Towne House, where Mark came alive helping with day program activities for 12 years, he found that he was needed, that there was a place for him to stand on his own.

As Mark grew stronger through community support, our family received the joy of his full participation as an adult. He was back with us for birthday celebrations, holidays, fishing trips and weekly phone calls. With the support of many hearts and hands, our family gained added strength to help Mark in his life with mental illness. Best of all, Mark realized the potential of his naturally caring personality, and he was able to give back, offering love and encouragement to family and friends. Steadfast in his sobriety, he spent 7 years working for Reachout, a consumer-run community outreach program that visits people in psychiatric hospitals.

Although our family is saddened by the loss of Mark at age 48, he lived beyond his years in all he experienced, gained and gave back. He needed more than family support to be that man. We are ever grateful that the mental health community, and especially Towne House and Bonita House, shared our view. Mark was a deserving, loving human being, our brother, and a man who made life richer for many who knew him.

*Kay McKinzie
Family Member*

One member said about the experience, *It was interesting working with the cameraman and being filmed in the kitchen. He said to be natural, and he shot more of the food than of us cooking French toast. I was relaxed, and it was fun seeing myself on television.*



Joe and Ruth Shimizu

FRIENDS OF TOWNE HOUSE CLC

Cash donations (except raffle) from November 2004 through October 2005

INDIVIDUALS

Geraldine S. Alvarez
Jean Alvarez
Walter & Milly Alvarez
John Badanes
Rowshan E. Bahman
Myra Barrett
George & Larisa Batchelder
Kathie Ritchie Bateman
Dennis & Pat Bleile
Mary Boyvey
George & Mary Jane Brimhall
John Brooks
Jay & Zela Claiborne
David Clegg
Cindy Cooper
George & Catherine Cowling
Klaus Dehlinger
E. Julie Dobson
Barry S. Dorfman
Hal & Diana Feiger
John & Christine Flaningam
Donald & Katharine Foley
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Ken Bell Gleason
Arthur & Vera Gough
Nathan & Ann Hale
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Ellen March Woods
David & Mary Yamamoto
Phyllis Zagone
Elaine Zelnik

CHURCHES

First Congregational Church of
Berkeley/Ministry of Outreach,
Mission, & Service

ORGANIZATIONS

Piedmont Service League
Department of Social Work
Meiji Gakuin Univeristy
Tokyo, Japan

MEMORIAL GIFTS

IN HONOR OF

Tosh Caulfield
by Ruth A. Johnson

Mark McKinzie
by John & Edy Nicolini
Lonnie Moy Walker

James T. Swim, Jr.
by Jane Swim

Harold Theus
by Walter & Milly Alvarez

TO HONOR

Milly Alvarez
by Dick & Pat Buffer

David Clegg
by Ann C. Tuohy

Craig & Anne Harper
by Elwyn & Pat Williams

Kirsten Towne Smith
by Norman & Janet Pease
Winifred Clegg Smith

Winifred Clegg Smith
by Norman & Janet Pease

Taylor Wong's Birthday
by Lonnie Moy Walker

21ST ANNUAL RAFFLE

Donations \$100 & Over
Jean Alvarez
Stephen J. Bischoff
Lorna Byrne
Jay & Zela Claiborne
Gigi Crowder
Grant & Austra Gauger
Joanne Sultar
Stan & Judy Taubman
Sharon Toth
Ruth Wallace
Piedmont Service League

LOYAL TOWNE HOUSE SUPPORTERS

We are fortunate to have many donors who have supported us for years. We asked several faithful supporters, *Why do you support Towne House year after year?*

Katharine Foley: *I am interested in giving to local organizations that I know are doing a good job, and Towne House provides support for a group of needy people who are neglected in society.*

Anne Harper: *Even after all these years, the spirit of Towne House continues to be an inspiration to me.*

Fran Ohlsson: *From my experience in working with Towne House clients at the Alameda County Mental Health Association, you do excellent work helping clients and their families.*

Patricia Pope: *They do a fine job with their members.*

Catharine Ralph: *I became aware of Towne House through their catering program long ago, and learned of their other programs providing useful services to people with great needs for training and supportive services. I have a brother with a similar affliction and see my brother's story in Towne House.*

Cecile Weaver: *The program is effective, efficient, and so greatly needed. I don't know of a better way to help my community than to support the Towne House program and staff.*



Towne House CLC Review

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