

Union Station Weekly

YEAR-IN-REVIEW EDITION FOREWARD

2020 is a year that will be written about in the history books. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be an event that we have not encountered in modern times. It has provided challenges to every human being on the face of the planet. But, as with every challenge, the human qualities of strength and resilience have been on display in a variety of ways.

In our “little corner of the world”, Union Station Clubhouse, we have endured, learned, grown, and thrived in ways that we could not have fathomed a year prior. From the advent of virtual services and the evolution into hybrid services, our Clubhouse has stayed true to its mission.

Over the span of this year, our members and staff worked tirelessly to put out a weekly newsletter to keep each other connected, informed, and involved during the pandemic. The following “Year-In-Review” publication is a collection of all the articles and provides a unique perspective into living through the challenges of not only mental health issues, but a world wide pandemic. I think it truly speaks to the strength, resiliency, and commitment of the members and staff of the Union Station Clubhouse. ~Scott B.

AN APPRECIATIVE MEMBER

The pandemic has been rough to say the least. As I was to returning to work three weeks ago when this began, I was put on hold until just this week where my work hours were cut in half. I am grateful for this because I am the one of the few members still working due to this outbreak. Furthermore, I have been using my spare time to assist in the operation of the virtual Clubhouse and the Coronavirus Subdomain (www.coronavirus.unionstationclubhouse.com). I also maintain our private Facebook Group and other related duties. I am so thankful for all my knowledge I have learned over the years in this area. I am appreciative for my Clubhouse friends and family in these trying times that I can be of assistance to them. ~Dustin M

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EASTER: THE FIRST HOLIDAY

Easter Day: Nice Weather.

Good Food It was really nice out on Easter Sunday, so I got to ride the four wheeler. For Dinner, I spent Easter with my dad. We had ham, mashed potatoes, dinner rolls, and butter noodles. It was really nice. We still kept our distance by not having family over. It was only two of us. Although we are in lock down, we still had a nice Easter just spending time together.

~Toni F.

Yvonne's Easter

I woke early but got up late. I took my medicines & had breakfast. I made a package of mac and cheese and had some for my lunch & supper. I watched the History Channel from 2PM until midnight. It told about the bible and showed the major stories, including Jesus' Life on Earth, Death and Resurrection. Also the major events following including in Revelation. Then I showered and went to Bed

~Yvonne S.

“The members and staff of Union Station are very resilient and steadfast, and our Clubhouse is TRULY a family.” ~Scott B., Program Director

CLUBHOUSE CLOSURES FOR WEEKS, MONTHS PHYSICALLY

On the evening of Monday, March 16, 2020 Union Station Clubhouse would receive orders from its sponsoring agency, Goodwill of Southwestern Pennsylvania that our Clubhouse would be closed for two weeks due to the new and developing novel Coronavirus, or COVID-19. For two weeks we as members and staff would sit in our homes without the supports of the Clubhouse until March 31, 2020 when we would begin services on a Telehealth Format. This would continue with our Program Director, Scott leading us daily (with the help of Goodwill) for two months until two staff would be called back from furlough. Shortly after the Clubhouse re-opened on June 3, 2020 for in person services and eventually all staff were called back off from their furlough that March 17th Day they were last at Union Station.

HOW DOES CLUBHOUSE HELP YOU DURING THE PANDEMIC?

I am staying strong and wearing my mask everyday and making sure I am doing what I need for myself to not get sick.

~Krysta C.

The Clubhouse helped me during the pandemic by getting me out of my house and around people.

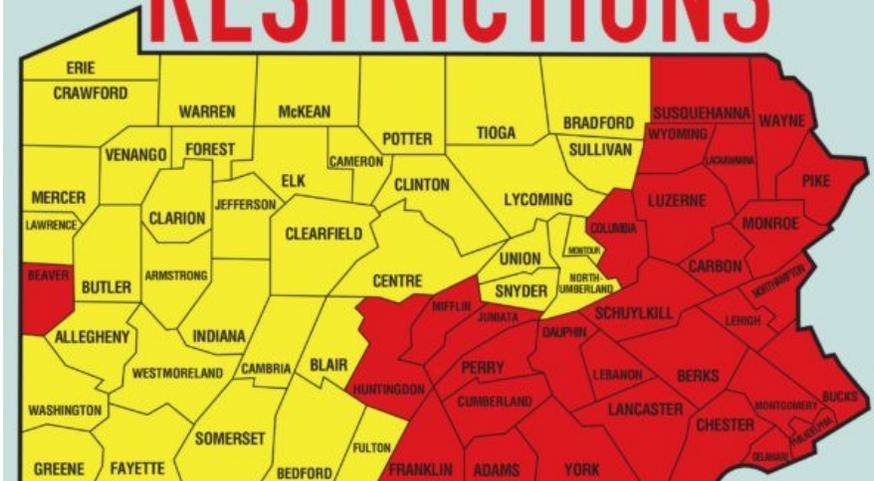
~Toni F.

The continuation of Clubhouse Services during the Pandemic has been paramount to my recovery. Especially during the periods I have been working remotely and the Clubhouse physical facility was closed.

Routine virtual contact has been essential to making sure that I am well and following my recovery regimens. I remember the two weeks we were without services when the pandemic began, and they were really tough for me. One of the good things that helps me in my Clubhouse work is the weekly newsletter that I help put together each week. It doesn't seem like much, but it helps me a lot.

~Dustin M.

GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS



In the spring this year, Pennsylvania's Counties had a Colored-Schema Phased Reopening Plan. Fayette County went to RED April 6th, YELLOW May 15th, and finally GREEN, June 6th

GETTING BACK TO THE NEW NORMAL

When the time comes that the stay-at-home order is lifted, I believe that things will be very different from what our lives were before the pandemic. I still believe that things like social distancing and use of PPEs (i.e. masks) will still be in effect. I also think that large gatherings like sporting events, concerts, etc. will not be the same either. I would not be surprised if teams played to empty stadiums. As far as our Clubhouse goes, I predict it will be a gradual opening with a limit on the amount of people in the building at a time with the use of social distancing and PPEs. I also think that some of the "virtual Clubhouse" activities we have been doing will also remain in place to some extent. Regardless of how things end up, I hope that this whole affair will make everyone appreciate the freedoms and relationships they had before all of this happened. ~Scott Bombach. B.S. CPRP Program Director

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TELEHEALTH

The current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has provided difficult challenges for the Clubhouse community. However, like with many other examples in our lives, difficult situations tend to lead to significant and often necessary changes. I think the use of telehealth services in the Clubhouse community is no different. Since Union Station Clubhouse began utilizing our "virtual Clubhouse" environment, I have noticed how our members have adapted and embraced the entire concept. Our members have taken over a true sense of responsibility and ownership, especially since I rely heavily on them to provide content and substance to everything that we are doing. I truly believe that we are on the forefront of an exciting transformation in the delivery of services. I hope that the telehealth options can continue along with site based services so that our members can have expanded opportunities to be engaged in their Clubhouse. ~Scott Bombach B.S. CPRP Program Director

Data gathered from a survey for members who are currently involved in virtual services. What the data showed is that members who are actively participating in "virtual Clubhouse" are having NO increased instances of mental health related hospitalizations or use of crisis services. Additionally, a high percentage of members surveyed have reported that their overall wellness (both mental and physical) has remained stable. Additionally, every Friday I attend a teleconference with our Medicaid provider agency, Beacon Health Options, and the overlying theme throughout that meeting is that virtual services for all types of mental health services is proving to be widely effective. So much, in fact, that the state department of human services is being approached by these providers to request the continuance of telehealth services, even after the pandemic is over. What does all of this mean for Union Station Clubhouse? It means that there is data and reports from mental health service providers all over the world that supports the continued use of virtual services in both the near and distant future. Therefore, I foresee our Clubhouse having opportunities for BOTH a virtual and onsite experiences, which is very exciting indeed!

CORONAVIRUS

Coronavirus
A bad thing, a dreaded thing,
A thing to be over.
The World
will be glad
when it ENDS!

~By Yvonne S.

ATTENDING VIA TELEHEALTH

While technology has been present for some time now, we have not been as inventive with it as we have been until we were presented with a national emergency like the COVID19 pandemic. As far as the telehealth movement, I am hoping that it is a continuance in our healthcare system on all formats as it can reach a broader community. Yes, I am sure there are quite a bit of kinks in the system that need to be worked out before it is finalized, but I have hope that this can be a building block in that process. As for the mental health community, I would wish ALL these elements would incorporate telehealth. Things like support groups and public meetings could be continued as a way to gather more input. I have spent my time taking an online course about local government through the Penn State Extension. I could see this as a lesson learned and I plan to use the opportunity to take a role in city and state government by watching these meetings virtually. I would simply hope that others would follow suit and broaden the availabilities to others like me. ~Dustin M.

I think telehealth will continue strongly for a while and then down use. Hopefully, we'll continue in some fashion ongoing. ~Yvonne S.

Memorial Day, A Year Later

As the Memorial Day holiday approaches, we typically think of flags, parades, picnics, and various ceremonies. This year, however, our thoughts will be on physical distancing, PPE use, and good personal hygiene. During one of our virtual unit meetings, the members, staff, and I discussed how the events around the COVID-19 pandemic and how it has impacted our lives. More specifically, how it has made us realize how much we took for granted such as holidays with family and friends. I hope that everyone gains a newfound appreciation for what we have as well as the people in our lives. I also hope that it makes us all aware of maintaining our health, wellness, and safety practices. I truly believe this is a “learning moment” for the world, and I think we will be better at the end of it. ~Scott B.

MEMBERS CELEBRATE MEMORIAL DAY

My Memorial Day holiday will be like last year. I hope I will get to see my family and spend time with them. I love being around my family.
~Krysta C.

If anyone has ever heard about one of my favorite remembrance holidays, you will know for sure that it is Memorial Day and that I usually have only come to the Clubhouse Memorial Day Picnic if it was raining. Last year was my first year living independently, and I had the pleasure to walk a half block to the main street from my new home where the parade route has been since 1956 (the same place where the Veterans Memorial has been). For the first time in my then-33 years in Connellsville, I would have the pleasure of attending the annual remembrance service for my community—as a member of my community. The High School band and local band would play, a list of veterans who were no longer with us at that point would be read, and other remarks would be given at the event. It was something I will never forget. Fast forward to a year later, I have learned that the Citizens of Connellsville will not be lining the boulevards, nor will there be a service at that very monument. School has been closed for several weeks, thus not having a band or JROTC for the festivities. In our local newspaper recently, one of the area's oldest dignified veterans stated that it would be the first parade he would march in over 60 years and has not been cancelled in all of his memory. Nor will veterans be gathering at the local American Legion or VFW for meals after. It is definitely a change for the communities in the United States as hopefully we will find an alternative method of honoring

~Dustin M.

UPGRADING TO YELLOW—MAY 15, 2020

Fayette, other counties enter YELLOW Phase Today!

At 12:01 this morning, Fayette County along with 12 other counties in Southwestern Pennsylvania “graduated” to the next phase in Pennsylvania’s Reopening plan. The YELLOW phase, eases the stay at home order, allows gatherings of less of 25, allows some businesses to resume operation, while some others like gyms and barbershops to remain close. Other businesses like restaurants will remain continue to not serve dine in customers at this point. While this is not a graduation of sorts, we must still remember that the Coronavirus is still abound and other precautions will be taken such as the masking and social distancing processes. Members decided to take a page out of this week’s newsletter and share what it means to them

For the yellow phase, I see much of a continuation of what is presently occurring other than the necessitation of remaining at home. While some businesses are permitted to reopen, it will indeed be very different to what we are accustomed to, including our Clubhouse. Change is difficult for me and I feel it is best to keep doing what I am doing in the way that I am doing it. Many things will not be the same for some time and I understand that. I have personally adapted to some changes such as socially distancing and masking well, but when other patrons of a business do not comply, I get frustrated and fear for my own safety. Therefore, to protect myself from relapsing, I am coming to terms of this is the way it is going to be for some time and honestly I do struggle with it and sometimes feel like it is a setback. But I do have to look at the positives as I still can be employed and can manage with what I have. I do enjoy more things being available online as a result as this occupies my free time since I do remain at home. Finally, I want to thank our managed care and government authorities for allowing telehealth to occur as it is a great benefit for me and with it being allowed to be continued, which will make my life be somewhat stable in a ever unpredictable future that helps individuals on the Autism spectrum such as myself .
~Dustin M.

After stay at home order ends, I plan to start going out to absolutely necessary things. Things like; my chiropractor (cause of my carpal tunnel), visit my Mom and Sister again, also see my mobile psych face to face, eventually go and get my own groceries and things again, as well as maybe go out to vote and work the polls June 2nd. I will also still do Tele calls and appointments for a while to come, longer if allowed. I have found this a very convenient way to get some of these things done.

~Yvonne S.

CLUBHOUSES GRADUALLY RE -OPEN AROUND THE WORLD (MAY 2020)

As our international Clubhouse community responds to the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Clubhouses are now adjusting to the reality of having to operate as ‘virtual’ Clubhouse communities. Clubhouse International has been in communication with our International Training Bases and with many Clubhouses around the world. We have been learning about how they are creating systems to ensure that their members still have the critical supports of belonging to a Clubhouse, even as they are not able to gather together in their Clubhouse buildings. We have always said that Clubhouses are communities, rather than simply being mental health ‘programs.’ Now we are learning just how true this is. Clubhouse resiliency, innovation, passion and dedication have quickly led to an inspiring array of strategies and solutions to address the new reality. Members and staff may no longer being able to gather together inside their Clubhouse buildings, but they have shown that they will continue to support each other through this crisis. We are deeply moved and awed by the extraordinary level of care and connection that continues to hold Clubhouse communities together, despite the severe restrictions regarding physical togetherness. ~Clubhouse International Press Release

ADJUSTING TO THE CORONAVIRUS AND THE YELLOW PHASE (MAY 15, 2020)

There was also some uncertainty with the Clubhouse being closed for 9 days in March that put a wrench in my routine. Nonetheless, my prior events along with the stay-at-home order have provided me an opportunity to address the issues that I need in my recovery. As we are in the first full week of the “Yellow Phase”, I am making plans to accept and plan for the routine at hand and learn that things change and that I need to be able to accept those changes gracefully and manage my feelings better. Many norms that occurred prior to the order, such as being able to dine in a food establishment, are not permitted currently. Now, social distancing and being more cognizant of one’s surroundings as well as a better understanding of needs to be done within my home is required. Therefore, I am in preparation of balancing the routine with the “new normal.” I am getting accustomed to wearing a mask in public and managing my emotions better when someone goes the incorrect direction in a grocery store aisle or is not exactly practicing the suggested length of social distancing, or wearing a mask in public. I must first and foremost pay regard to my own safety and grow and adapt ~Dustin M.

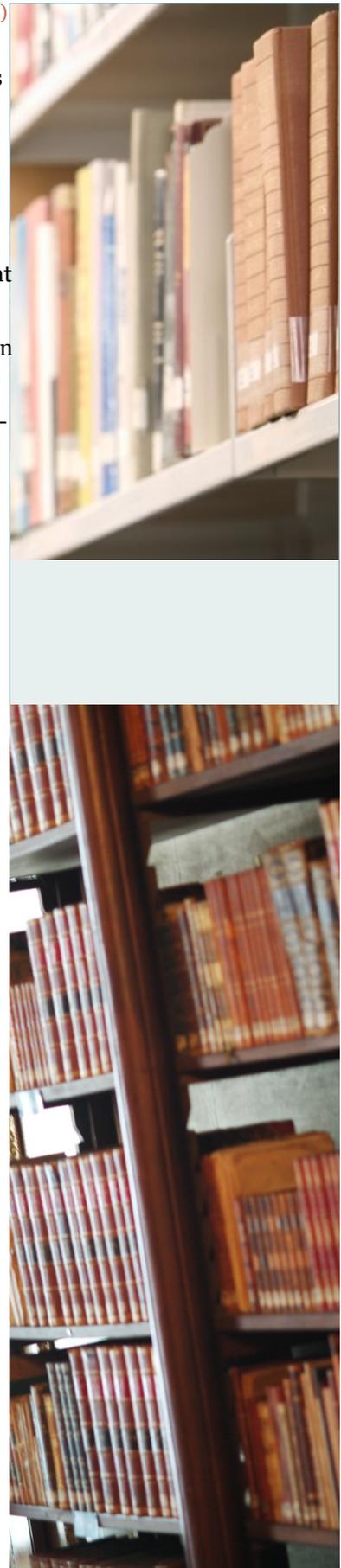
STAFF RETURNS (MAY 29, 2020)

Recently, we have welcomed two staff back from their furloughs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Caprese and Amanda. They share their stories on returning back to the Clubhouse, although it is virtual for now: “After a lengthy absence due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, I was able to return back to work the week of May 18th. With so much uncertainty occurring in the world around me I am very appreciative to have made my return back to the Clubhouse. I do realize that things may look a little different for some time, but I am looking forward to the challenge.” ~Caprese J.

“The last two months away from work has been a very unfamiliar change of pace to my life, as I know is a similar feeling with many others in one way or another. I am very grateful for the time I got to spend safe at home to do my part in slowing the spread, while also being appreciative of the many others who had to continue working in very public and stressful situations. Now I’m ready to be back and do my part, and I’m looking forward to finding new ways to implement the necessary changes needed to get Clubhouse back to its full operating potential and safely do what this is all about – being there for each other.” ~Amanda W.

MEMBERS SHARE HOW TO “BEGIN AGAIN” (JUNE 5, 2020)

I have to admit that beginning again is going to be extremely difficult for me. One, I am going to be in a new environment which is difficult. Then with all the social distancing regulations it will be an adjustment for me to adhere in a location where we were like family when we left such as Clubhouse and work. It is definitely the “new normal” and it will take some time to get used to all these new rules and changes in an ever-changing environment. But in the end, I realize that all these changes are necessary to protect us from falling ill. ~Dustin M



FAYETTE COUNTY MOVES TO THE GREEN PHASE TODAY! - JUNE 5, 2020

The green phase is the least restrictive phase of Wolf's three-color reopening plan. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf announced Friday afternoon that 16 more counties will move to the green phase at 12:01 a.m. June 5. Those counties are: Allegheny, Armstrong, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Clinton, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, Indiana, Lycoming, Mercer, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland. There are several counties that moved to the green phase of reopening on May 29. Those counties are: Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Montour, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga, Venango and Warren

VIRTUAL CLUBHOUSE NAVIGATES INTO HYBRID FORMAT THIS WEEK

June 8, 2020—The Clubhouse Building opened up to members on June 3rd and began in a hybrid meeting format including members in the facility along with members still not able to attend via ZOOM due to capacity limits because of COVID-19. Last Friday, it was decided to dedicate each day of the week to a specific domain of the Goal Plan with the Information Station at 11:00 focusing on that and the afternoon (2:30) activity focusing to a degree on that as well. With this brings a few additional changes other than was listed with the time changes listed last week and this week. The Monday 2:30 Group effective next week will now be the House Meeting

The Domain Days are as follows:

- Monday - Living
- Tuesday - Learning
- Wednesday - Wellness
- Thursday - Working
- Friday - Social

OPENING DOORS AND WELCOMING ARMS (JUNE 5, 2020)

This Wednesday, after nearly three and a half months, Union Station Clubhouse finally reopened its doors to welcome members back to their "old Clubhouse under a new normal." Our onsite members were pleased to have the opportunity to interact with their online peers through video conferencing utilizing our kiosk computer in the dining area. Friends who haven't had the opportunity to interact since the building closure on March 17th were able to say "hello" and share much needed smiles. I can also say that I am very pleased with how well our members have accepted and adhered to all the requirements for physical distancing and helping to ensure proper hygiene and

cleaning practices. At this point, I believe our members are just happy to be back in their Clubhouse and amongst friends. This time also launched us into utilizing a "hybrid Clubhouse", with interactions with both site based and online services. Our real challenge is integrating the two to create new and exciting ways for members' involvement and growth. I personally look forward to the changes and new opportunities that will help the over 60 year-old Clubhouse model evolve into the modern era.

~Scott B.
June 5,
2020



MEMBERS SHARE THOUGHTS ON THEIR RETURN TO THE CLUBHOUSE FACILITY (JUNE 12, 2020)

When it was announced that the Clubhouse would open, at first I was apprehensive about my safety upon returning. However, I visited last week and was pleased by the poise and dedication of both our members and staff in their dedication to keep our Clubhouse facility and other devices safe and sanitary. While I did get to go back to work this week, and as such I had scheduled to attend the Clubhouse those days. Upon exiting the van for the evening the first night, I felt extremely comfortable adding an additional day to my schedule and am thankful for the ability of having the opportunity available to be able to have the flexibility of attending Clubhouse from my personal home or our Clubhouse home.

~Dustin M.

It's hard to get back to work when trying to find work and there isn't any resources and there is still chaos. Coming back to the Clubhouse is hard because we have to wear masks, which are both good and bad. Good because we won't get sick and bad because it's difficult to breathe. No matter what, I am glad to see all my friends and the staff. ~Ra-Mel H

UNION STATION CLUBHOUSE IS OPEN! - JUNE 3 2020

The Union Station Clubhouse facility reopened to members and staff on June 3, 2020. To ensure safety and compliance with state and CDC guidelines, the following policies have been put into place:

- Personal protective devices (PPEs) such as masks and/or face shields must be worn at all times.
- All members and staff must submit to a prescreening which includes temperature checks.
- Social distancing within the building is assured by limiting the number of members permitted within the building (currently 15), limiting seating in the dining area and computer lab, and limiting the number of people within certain areas of the Clubhouse (restrooms, offices, etc.)
- Protective physical measures have been added to the facility such as sneeze guards in common areas as well as protective dividers in the computer lab.
- Regular sanitization and disinfecting is done in all areas of the facility

The Clubhouse vans are also up and running, but with limited capacity and assigned seating to maintain social distancing. Prescreening is done before anyone boards the vans. Union Station Clubhouse will also continue to offer virtual services via Zoom, with regular meetings at 8:30AM and 12:30PM, informative group sessions (i.e. Information Station) at noon, and various group activities at 2:30PM. We encourage our members to participate in either or both onsite and virtual services!

WHAT WAS OLD IS NEW AGAIN (JUNE 12, 2020)

Earlier this week, I was assisting one of our members with sanitizing our vans and he said to me : “this is just like Clubhouse was before, except we have to wear masks.” I found that statement to be very telling as to the resilience of our members who I feel have done an excellent job of adapting to the current societal changes. Through all the requirements of physical distancing, PPE use, etc., our members seem to be happy just to be back at a place that offers them safety and support as well as provide them with the opportunity to physically interact with their peers. I think the virtual aspect of our Clubhouse has brought some exciting opportunities as well. It’s nice during our unit meetings to have the direct interaction between virtual and onsite members. Our members really enjoy the “Cooking With” and “Friday Night Live!” sessions where members in both environments get to interact in an imaginative and fun manner. Through the entire pandemic and our temporary building closure, our members have shown a true commitment and dedication to their Clubhouse and each other. During our virtual only period, the “Union Station Nation” really took an active role in keeping us going. Now with a “hybrid Clubhouse model”, our members continue to be committed to staying true to the underlying Clubhouse philosophies and standards. So, even though we might have a current “new normal”, our members still have and “old school” approach to their involvement in their Clubhouse.

~Scott B.

MAIN STREET WAS TWO WAYS FOR MOST OF THE YEAR

Since we have been inundated with the Coronavirus and members for the most part have been no where near the Clubhouse facility for sometime. While COMING to the Clubhouse Facility remains the same way, however when you leave, getting to where you will need to go may seem a little different, That would be because the West Main Street Bridge over Coal Lick Run before the traffic light at Mount Vernon Avenue is being rebuilt this summer as part of a PennDOT bridge improvement program. With that being done, access to the bridge is forbidden and traffic exiting the Clubhouse Facility and Corporate Crossing Road will be required to continue west on Main Street to the Senior Life Overflow (Old VFW Overflow) lot and follow the directional signs traveling BACK on West Main Street, as from Mill Street to our neighbors at Fay-Penn (Old VFW) has been converted to two-way traffic to accommodate access to our facility and other properties in our neighborhood. Pedestrian access along with vehicular access on the Western edge of White Swan Apartments has been barricaded off. Those wishing to walk to other businesses, such as Sweet Peas or others in that direction should walk up to Mill Street to access South Street and all areas in that direction. As such we have learned that the City of Uniontown has terminated ownership of that alley and is now private property of the White Swan Apartments. Let’s hope for good weather (which it mostly has been) for our construction workers so they can get the bridge work completed so we can resume a little bit of normality. The Bridge opened on the day of our Thanksgiving Luncheon, November 24, 2020.



ANOTHER HOLIDAY: INDEPENDENCE DAY

Well, yet another holiday has come and gone under unprecedented times. Independence Day is a holiday that is known for its fireworks, food gathering and good times outdoors. However, this year in addition to the current pandemic, we were met with extreme heat and other guidelines that limited congregating in groups to watch fireworks displays with some communities cancelling holiday displays and remembrances all together. Some go to the amusement parks, but, they were closed because of the pandemic. Many signs and symbols were out in the community we live in, but persons were not congregating in large numbers compared to years past. I miss being able to get close to the fireworks to see them be set, although my neighbors did a splendid display that met about as equal. ~ Dustin M.

For the holiday, I attended the social here at Clubhouse which seemed different because of the smaller numbers in attendance as well as it being held outside in order to ensure social distancing. Also that weekend while it didn't seem any different other than wearing masks and practicing social distancing I spent time with mine and my girlfriend's families enjoying the usual picnic fare. All in all it was a good holiday. ~Ra-Mel H.

The fourth of July picnic was nice because we all got a chance to get together with some friends. But the only thing about it was with this virus going, we spent most of the time wearing our masks. Hopefully, next year things will be better ~Rose S.

FACING OUR CHALLENGES - JULY 3, 2020

At the time of the printing of this newsletter, our state along with several others are seeing an uptick of positive COVID-19 cases. The reasons for this are varied and not completely clear, but the result is that some restrictions (such as mandatory mask wearing in public) will be implemented. So, as a Clubhouse community, what can we do? Very simply, what we have been doing since our facility reopened: wearing masks, keeping proper social distancing, regular disinfecting/cleaning, and prescreening prac-

tices. But, more importantly, we, as a community, must make sure that we are diligent in these practices. As a matter of fact, I would say that we should even be objectively honest in what we can do to improve our preventative practices for COVID-19. Lastly, and most importantly, I think one of the best things we can do individually is to remain positive and hopeful. Like most hardships, this is only a moment in time. We must maintain the right mindset to be able to move forward from this pandemic. Scott B. July 2, 2020

MAINTAINING OUR VIRTUAL PRESENCE (JULY 2020)

Just recently, I was charged with the responsibility of completing documentation for Beacon Health Options to continue our ability to provide telehealth services. Additionally, the Union Station Clubhouse staff and I completed a survey from the Pennsylvania Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS) with the intent of determining the effectiveness of utilizing telehealth services. What does that mean? It means that the continued use of telehealth services through virtual platforms is very much in consideration for long-term use by our program and many other mental health service providers. How does that affect us? Quite simply, we can continue to use platforms like Zoom to connect and engage our members when they don't have the opportunity to be onsite. So, if a member has a medical issue and can't come to the facility, they can still be involved in their Clubhouse through virtual means. Maybe there is a geographical or transportation barrier that keeps a member from accessing our facility. Not a problem, they can be involved in our virtual platform. As I have stated since we first began telehealth services in March, I think these services are a great way to continue to serve our members as it removes a lot of barriers that formerly would have kept them away from their Clubhouse family. ~

~Scott B.

HOW THE CLUBHOUSE HAS BEEN SINCE THEY HAVE RETURNED—JULY 17, 2020

The Clubhouse Environment is certainly different since we left the facility on March 16th. We can't do many things that we used to do such as practicing physical distancing, masking, and staying six feet apart from each other. Also all the modifications to the Clubhouse facility itself like the shields and being screened daily for COVID-19 are some of the biggest challenges that everyone is facing everywhere, not just at Clubhouse. ~Dustin M.

Since coming back to the Clubhouse, it is different. The hardest part is having to wear a mask all day. However I know I need to in order to protect myself and others. I am waiting to go back to work on my TE at Eat N' Park as I am unsure of when there will be a soup & salad bar again. Other than that it can be normal, but boring to physically distance from the other members and staff. ~Ra-Mel H.

I'm Glad I'm coming back to the Clubhouse everyday, but its very hard to remember to always to wear your mask and I can't wait until the virus is over with so we can go back to the regular things we used to do. ~Rose S.

Its all right, but everything about it is crazy. Everyday, we must stay 6 feet apart from people so you can't touch hug anyone or anything like that ~Krysta C.



Dustin Wearing a Homemade Mask on his way to his SE in the Clubhouse Van

YARD SALE RESCHEDULED FOR SATURDAY, AUGUST 22ND

Due to COVID-19, Our annual Yard Sale will tentatively be Saturday, August 22, 2020 dependent on regulations set forth at that time by the CDC and the Local and PA Department of health. The Yard Sale will also coincide with the 17th Annual Historic National Road Yard Sale. The yard sale extends for 824 miles from St. Louis to Baltimore along the National Road, known locally as Route 40

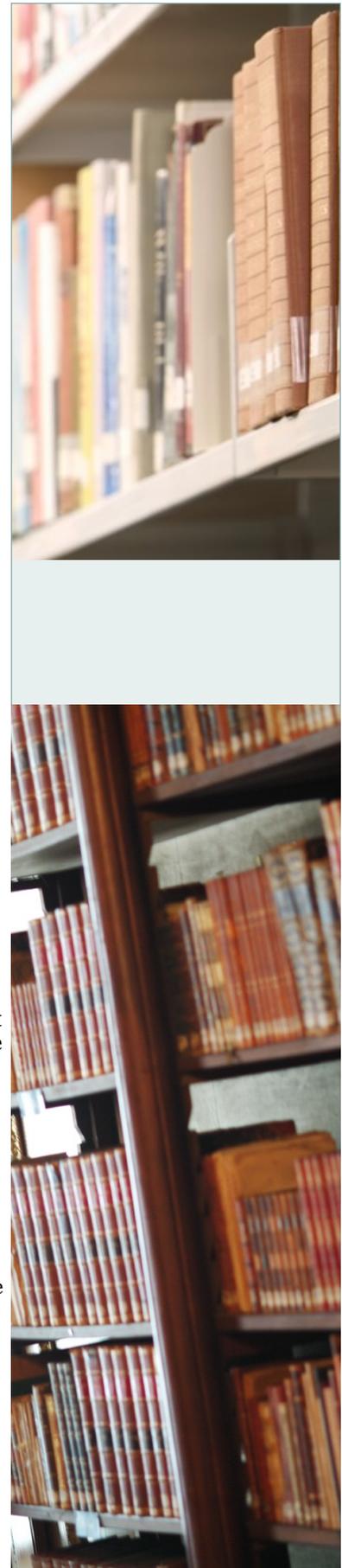
KEEP ON MOVIN'!

Shortly before our facility closure on March 17th, we received our report from our most recent accreditation from Clubhouse International. Although it was mostly positive, it identified that Union Station Clubhouse needed to focus on increasing interest and opportunities in community based employment. To that end, we started moving things around in the Operations Unit to accommodate an employment area with display boards and monitors, and desks with employment related resources. We had also just procured a new TEP at Eat N' Park in the kitchen doing prep work for the soup and

salad bar. Then, the COVID19 lockdown happened and all of that got derailed. But, since the lockdown restrictions were lifted and our reopening in June, we have slowly but surely worked our way back to a full work ordered day. With that being said, beginning in August, I intend on having us refocus our efforts into addressing the employment needs mentioned in the accreditation report. The pandemic might have slowed us down, but it certainly hasn't stopped us!

~Scott B.

July 17, 2020



MEMBERS SHARE WHAT THEY PLAN TO DO FOR THIS SUMMER.

My plans for the summer are to spend time with those close to me such as my family and girlfriend and staying in the community I live in. I also want to enjoy all the nice weather we have been having so far this summer. I don't like the fact of social distancing and masking and that some popular gatherings in our community, like the Fayette County Fair has been cancelled due to COVID-19. ~Ra-Mel H.

What am I going to do this summer I have been working a lot but I do get days off from work on my days off I sleep or walk around and go fishing, but mostly I am at work. I love my job and my coworkers. It's amazing that I have been working a month now I think this job is the one for me so far for now. ~Krysta C.

Fayette County Offices Closed Temporarily Due to Outbreak

In light of positive COVID-19 test results of various County employees, the government offices of Fayette County began to operate with the restrictions on Wednesday, July 29, 2020. These restrictions will remain in place until August 13, 2020. Until further notice, the Fayette County Courthouse will be closed to the general public, with the exception of the courts, which will be open for emergency matters and certain previously scheduled events. Criminal Court week for August has been cancelled and jury summons for August should be disregarded. A mask is still required for entry to the Courthouse and will be strictly enforced. Should any business need to be conducted, the board of Commissioners asks that it be conducted via Phone, Email or on the county's website. All county facilities will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized during the closure.

LOCAL BUSINESSES, BANKS CONFRONT NATIONAL COIN SHORTAGE (AUGUST 2020)

Amid the ongoing crisis sparked by the coronavirus, the United States is experiencing a coin shortage. While it may not be as worrying as running out of toilet paper, there are fewer coins to be had across the country today than there were in March. There are a couple of different reasons for this: First, the volume of cash transactions has plummeted as many Americans have been shopping online and keeping their distance from brick-and-mortar retailers during the pandemic; and the manufacture of coins has slowed as mints have placed social distancing and other measures in place to slow the spread of COVID-19. In April, coin production fell by 10%, and tumbled by 20% in May.

Jerome Powell, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, told the House Financial Services Committee last month that "the flow of coins, it's kind of stopped."

Powell added, "The places where you go to give your coins and get credit, cash – these have not been working. Stores have been closed, so the whole system of flow has kind of come to a stop."

As a result, many retailers, both large and small, have been pinching pennies and telling customers they have to use exact change if they are paying in cash.

"It's been trying," said Andrew Corfont, the marketing director for Community Bank, which has area locations in Fayette, Westmoreland and Washington counties.

"There are some merchants that use a lot of coins." For example, banks like Community Bank have only been allowed to order \$1,000 in quarters per week, when they would typically use three to four times that amount on any given day, according to Jennifer George, Community Bank's chief operations officer. They have been spreading coins around to branches that have the greatest need.

"It's been a headache for (businesses) and for us," George said.

The businesses that have been most affected by the shortage are large retailers like grocers and those that rely heavily on coins, such as laundromats and car washes. Dick Roberts, a spokesman for Giant Eagle, said in an email message that the region's largest grocer, "has been impact-

ed by the temporary shortage of coins." He continued, "While we are hopeful that this national coin shortage issue will be short-lived, we are nevertheless actively working to make as much change as possible available to our guests." Retailers such as Sheetz, which has over 600 stores across six states and headquartered in Pennsylvania, have been particularly impacted by the coin shortage.

"We are experiencing the coin shortage first-hand at almost all of our locations," said Nick Ruffner, the public relations manager with Sheetz. "We are alerting our customers before they purchase items with cash that they must have exact change ready."

Ruffner added, to help overcome the coin shortage, Sheetz is also encouraging customers to order and purchase items through their "SHcan & Go" app or through debit and credit card transactions.

"Additionally, when checking out, customers can donate their extra change to Sheetz For the Kidz, an employee-driven charity supporting underprivileged children," Ruffner said. "Stores can ring these donations through the register for the charity so the funds go to an important cause and then use the coins as change for customers."

Some observers have suggested that the widespread use of credit and debit cards during the coronavirus pandemic is pulling us more quickly toward the long-predicted cashless society, where the coins and paper bills in our wallets and purses will become a thing of the past and be replaced entirely by credit or debit cards. But cash is still used in about 30% of all transactions, and is particularly popular for transactions under \$10, according to a 2018 report by the Diary of Consumer Choice.

The problems caused by the coin shortage demonstrate that we're not prepared to leap into a cashless world anytime in the near-term, according to George.

"I don't think everybody's ready for it yet," she said.

This article was blended from the Federal Reserve, Community Bank's and Sheetz's Websites.

UNION STATION CLUBHOUSE CONTINUES TO ROLL ON THE TRACKS! - AUGUST 7, 2020

Even with the forced closing of our Clubhouse facility on March 17th, 2020 due to the COVID19 pandemic, the members and staff of the program worked tirelessly to get us to the point to where we could reopen our facility on June 3rd, 2020. We successfully faced the challenges of integrating virtual and site-based services along with the restrictions from state and federal agencies to keep our Clubhouse running.

I am happy to report that as a result of the continued efforts of the members and staff on the Union Station Clubhouse, we are going to begin planning restarting our outings and evening social events. In addition, we are going to “green light” our annual yard sale fundraiser on Saturday, Au-

DIRECTOR’S REPORT— AUGUST 14, 2020

At the time of the writing of this article, we are going to be a little over a week away from our rescheduled annual yard sale fundraiser. The members and staff of Union Station Clubhouse have worked tirelessly to get donations and set up the merchandise. We were very fortunate to have one particular generous donator who brought us a house full of furniture! I have to say (in my own humble opinion) that we have some top-quality items this year.

I am also happy to report that we are finally back at full staffing! So, with that being said, I am looking to restart social events and outings in September. Although I know it will be somewhat challenging given the COVID-19 restrictions, I think that doing activities again will really help

boost everyone’s spirits. Another key component to us moving forward following our facility closing and reopening is picking up where we left off with our last accreditation recommendations. This includes making continued physical improvements to the building, building an employment area, and establishing more transitional employment sites.

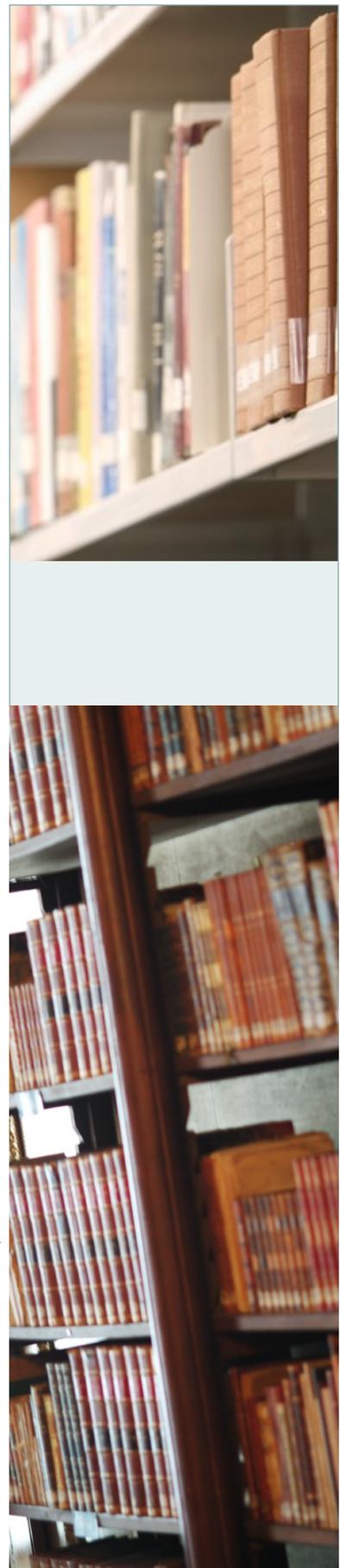
Finally, keeping in line with the overlying theme for this week’s newsletter which is summer activities during the pandemic, I just want to tell everyone to get outside as much as you can. Go for a walk, go to a community park, plant flowers, whatever you have to do to be outside and active...DO IT! ~Scott B.

- Scott B.

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WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO BE HEALTHY IN THESE TRYING TIMES? - AUGUST 21, 2020

For me, It has taken me a while through these trying times to know that I need to stay healthy. In order to protect my health and safety, I have not dined in at a restaurant since the pandemic, and have limited my footprint to where I go. As for physical health I try to move at every opportunity and as the weather is fit to do so. For mental health, I continually keep in contact with Clubhouse members and my Facebook community, and work on my hobbies and blogs. I am also in constant contact with my therapist and MPR worker to make sure everything is in check. ~Dustin M.

What am I doing to be healthy includes eating salads and healthier food rather than sweet and sugary foods that are bad for you. I make sure I am staying away from bad food that I use to eat before and I am starting to eat healthier. Also, I am drinking water more than anything else and I am watching how much pop I drink now as well. ~Krysta C.

For mental health, I continually keep in contact with Clubhouse members and my Facebook community, and work on my hobbies and blogs. ~Dustin M.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO COMBAT FATIGUE? - AUGUST 28, 2020

I do a lot of reading and puzzle books. I also watch my DVD's on my portable DVD player. I come to Clubhouse 5 days a week, on Saturdays I go to Archives Drop-In Center in Brownsville, and I go to church on Sundays. ~Rose S.

I tackle not sleeping by going for a walk, listening to music, and going to the park. I also stay active by exercising and hanging out with friends ~Ra-Mel H.

I do not let people walk all over me anymore. I used to let them walk all over me and let them tell me what to do, but I don't anymore. I started to "put my foot down" and tell them how I feel about it. I feel so much better because I am not stressed out anymore. ~Krysta C

YARD SALE ANOTHER GREAT SUCCESS (AUGUST 29, 2020)

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit our little corner of the world, we were faced with all sort of uncertainties. We had to close our doors temporarily from March 17th to June 3rd, which meant we had to cancel our annual yard sale fundraiser that is typically held in May. Once we reopened, we were resolute in that one way or another, this fundraiser was going to happen. When we learned about the National Pike event occurring on August 22nd, we knew that was our opportunity! With some great social media push by members and staff, our yard sale was well attended. We also had some wonderful donated items this year. With the combination of social media and attractive sale items, we successfully raised more funds than we did last year!

~Scott

B.





Spending time in nature is a way of self-care for many of our members and its healthy. Dustin M. took this photo of the Youghiogheny River as a way of self-care by being out and taking in the sights and sounds of nature.

WHAT DO YOU DO FOR SELF-CARE?

- When I think of self-care, I think of having good hygiene (shower, clean clothes, etc.). I feel that when I shower, typically in the morning, it helps to get my day started. It gives me motivation to carry on with the day. I also enjoy watching the Pittsburgh Pirates. It helps to relax my mind and if it's an evening game, helps prepare me for a good night's rest. ~T.J. B
- For me, I listen to music, hangout with friends, exercise, stay moving, eat healthy, and stay positive ~Ra-Mel H.
- I take care of myself by getting enough sleep, eating regularly, and budgeting my time (not always well, but I try). Mostly though, I talk to Jesus and he talks back. Let me explain, it's not an audible voice, but in thoughts that don't come from me. Also, he talks with me with just peace in my spirit when I hit on an idea that coincides with the Bible and his will. During the times in my life when I didn't speak to Jesus, my life would go all haywire. So now that Jesus comes first and center in my life, I know that it works out fine in the end, not so in the beginning or the middle, but all works out in the end. ~Yvonne S.
- I take a shower everyday and I make sure I am clean and wearing clothes that smell good. I make sure my hair is clean everyday. ~Krysta C.
- Self Care for me is knowing that I have to keep busy, but not too busy that I am overwhelmed. This is done by making time to do interests that I enjoy and not by doing things like excessive work that irritates me excessively. I also know that by focusing on my interests, keeping in touch with family, friends and supports on a regular basis, as well as using tools in my recovery toolbox (such as maintaining my WRAP- Wellness Recovery Action Plan I would also include taking care of my body, blogging, sleeping and medicating regularly, reading the Bible, and watching things that humor me are a part of what I need to practice healthy self-care for my mental health . ~Dustin M.

GETTING OUR CLUBHOUSE BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY—SEPTEMBER 11, 2020

Since our facility reopening on June 3rd, the members and staff of the Union Station Club-house have continued to work on rebuilding our connections to the community of Fayette County.

The first step in this effort was committing to our annual yard sale fundraiser. Due to COVID-19 related cancellations of public events, we rescheduled it from May to August. The event was heavily pushed on our social media pages and was well attended. I am happy to report that the amount raised exceeded any of our previous events to date!

Our next planned community based event will be our participation in the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours Event at Storey Square in Uniontown next week. This is an outdoor event, so social distancing restrictions will not be quite so heavy. This will give us a great opportunity to connect with chamber members and the community at large.

Yet another component (and probably the most important) is getting our members back to work! All of our supported employment placements are back to work and our transitional employment placement with Eat N' Park started back two weeks ago. We are currently in development with 2 employers for TE placements. Let's keep our fingers crossed!

Lastly, the members and staff of our Club-house have started discussing social events and outings. We will hold in-house socials for the month of September, but hope to do some community based outings in the near future.

-Scott B.

FAYETTE COUNTY COURTHOUSE CLOCK GOES PURPLE FOR RECOVERY MONTH

UNIONTOWN, PA - Fayette County citizens might notice a colorful change to downtown Union-town's skyline this month. As part of a joint initiative between the Fayette County Commissioners and Axiom Family Counseling Services Inc. of Uniontown, the Fayette County Courthouse's historic clock tower on East Main Street in Union-town has turned purple in honor of National Recovery Month. Sponsored by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), National Recovery Month is an annual observance held every September, aimed at educating Americans that support and treatment can enable those with mental and substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives.

In addition to turning the faces of the tower's four clocks purple, Axiom officials will visit the courthouse at 10 a.m. Sept. 14, to place purple banners and ribbons on its grounds. At that time, Fayette County Commissioners Dave Lohr, Chair-man; Vince Vicites and Scott Dunn will present the visitors with a National Recovery Month proclamation on the courthouse steps, doubling down on their commitment to helping citizens recover from addiction and other health issues.



SEPTEMBER—IT'S RECOVERY MONTH, WHAT DO YOU DO TO MAINTAIN RECOVERY?

- I recovered from my family deaths over the years. I have been suffering from health issues all my life. I continue to recover from all my family's death and my health issues just taking it day by day and doing what I need to do to get better.

~Krysta C.

- Recovery has been a long but good journey for me the past few decades. It is an essential piece of my lifestyle and is something that I take very seriously. I am active in my goals here at the Clubhouse and exemplify what I learned throughout my journey. I apply it in my life as well as in my career by showing others that no matter how much you need to progress in your journey, recovery is possible, probable, and likely in each and every individual. You just have to put forth the effort and work on the skills that are modeled little by little. I didn't get to the point I am now overnight as it took two decades to get this far and we are still growing as I am still discovering myself as time goes on.

~Dustin M.

- Keeping on track for my recovery is a never ending job. For just when I think I have it right another different and usually harder situation pops up in my life. Certainly a never ending battle. That said, I try to stay on track by not missing my meds too often. But sometimes things pop up (like being sick, or the sickness of someone close to me) or even a death. Then sometimes I miss doses, which is not good to do, because nothing gets back the lost good days that I miss out on. That said I also need to take care of my spiritual life too. Because taking my meds right and not missing doses does me little good, if I take my eyes off my (our) Savior, Jesus. Keeping my eyes on Jesus looks like studying God's Word (the Bible), Praying (talking to God aloud or silently). And then relating it to my everyday life. A tall order when your (my) world gets all turned upside down. So in closing Recovery is the goal even if not always reached completely.

~Yvonne S.

KEEPING OUR TRAIN ON TRACK—SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

It has been roughly 3 months since the Union Station Clubhouse re-opened its doors following the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, and since that time, the members and staff have been working diligently to keep our train rolling.

Both of our work units (Food Service and Operations) have been patching and painting walls, assembling new furniture, and doing a great deal of cleaning and organization. We will soon have a dedicated employment area in the Operations Unit that will give our members the opportunity to apply for jobs, work on resumes, and prepare for job interviews. This area will also maintain and display the pertinent information on all of our employment programs for everyone to see. Pictures will be coming soon!

I am also happy to report that a vast majority of our members in both supported and transitional employment have returned to work. Our SE folks are working hard at places like T.J. Maxx, Goodwill, and the Mental Health Association. Our current TE with Eat N' Park continues to do well, and we are hopeful to place more of our members there in the very near future. We have also met with two other businesses and hope to develop placements there soon.

Union Station Clubhouse recently participated in the first community based event since the pandemic, the Business After Hours hosted by the Fayette County Chamber of Commerce. It was an outdoor event with business representatives from the local area. We had a table at the event, and it gave us a great opportunity to make our presence known with the surrounding business community.

After a great deal of planning, our Clubhouse will finally be holding its first evening social event this month with our Employment Dinner on September 30th. We feel that holding these events is very important to our working members as it gives them a place to be recognized for their efforts as well as share common experiences within the community.

Lastly, with September being recovery month, I wanted to share what I feel are two huge elements in recovery: work and fellowship. Through work we gain confidence, value and self-worth. It teaches us valuable life skills such as discipline and perseverance. Fellowship makes us think and live beyond ourselves by creating bonds with others. We learn how to foster relationships with others by being a better person. Both of these elements are key components of the Clubhouse model, and that is why it is so powerful for individuals working through their recovery.

- Scott B.

HOW DOES ONE IMPLEMENT THEIR RECOVERY INTO THEIR LIFE? - SEPT. 18, 2020

I maintain my recovery by being around my family and the Clubhouse. It helps me in my recovery. A key point for me is to stay busy by watching TV, especially sports. ~TJ B.

I wake up every morning thinking about my family and how good they are in my life. I take my meds everyday and take showers everyday also. I make sure I eat everyday along with talking to my doctors about my meds to make sure the meds are ok with me. I talk to my family and friends everyday when I can. I go out for walks and listen to music and play games on my phone. ~Krysta C

To Stay well, I go for walks, talk to my parents, enjoy the weather with nature, and spend time with family and friends

~Ra-Mel H..

For me, one part of implementation for me is self-care. While this has taken me years to establish what it is and that I need it. In essence, it has helped my recovery to a degree. Part of that is the simple fact that I do not need to micromanage every concept of work or Clubhouse tasks. This was a big realization of me. Another part of implementation is the need of having a WRAP, or Wellness Recovery Action Plan, along with my blog, Dustin's Dynasty, that helps me express my story in a public format and not using any names or personal references. This way other people with my diagnosis validates that I am not the only one feeling the way I am feeling. Furthermore, some-times I realize the need to have music into my life by maxing up the headphones and kicking out the jams when necessary to self-stimulate when things get rough. ~Dustin M.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE CHANGE OF FALL—SEPT. 25, 2020

I enjoy the fall because it's not too hot and it's not too cold. I also enjoy the change of the color of the leaves on the trees and when my kids were little they used to like to pile up the leaves and jump in them.

~Rose S.

My favorite things about fall is the colors of the leaves changing and falling on the ground along with the cooler weather, It's also my birthday as well!

~Krysta C.

What I like about Fall is the cooler weather and the changing of the leaves. When the leaves turn, my family and I go onto the State Game lands outside of South Connellsville and go to a overlook called Look Out Point near the Casparis

Caves. Its about 3/4 miles from the parking lot but the view of the S-Bend of the Youghioghny River Gorge is fantastic. If COVID-19 wasn't occurring we would go to some fall festivals such as Pumpkinfest in Confluence in Somerset County along with Hallowboo at Idlewild, however that will have to wait until next year when the state of the country's health improves.

~Dustin M.

There are many things I love about fall. Some of them include: different colors on the leaves, the smell of fall when you wake up in the morning the joy gathering up leaves jumping in to them. I enjoy the smell of pumpkin pie. I also like to help my grandma passing out candy To the trick or treaters.

~Ra-Mel H.



A FRESH LOOK FOR UNION STATION - OCTOBER 2, 2020

Over the last month or so, the members and staff of the Union Station Clubhouse have worked diligently to improve and “freshen up” our space.

In the Operations Unit, we have purchased new furniture, done some rearranging, and freshly painted the walls. We have also added an employment area to the unit for members to actively prepare and search for competitive community based employment.

In the Food Service Unit, we also purchased new dining room furniture, rearranged the kitchen, and repainted the walls in the dining and snack bar areas. It should be noted as part of our initiative to promote wellness and proper nutrition, we removed our deep fryer and will be replacing it with another work station table.

We also did some outdoor improvements as well. We pressure washed and refinished our back deck/stairs as well as added non-slip strips on the stairs to assure safety for our members.

We have been in our current space for 6 years now, and it has been long overdue for a new look. I think it also signifies our move toward a more professional looking environment that will promote a sense of pride in our members.

~Scott B.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME IS APPROACHING, HOW ARE YOU GOING TO ADJUST TO IT? (OCTOBER 30, 2020)

I adjust to daylight savings time by occupying my time watching television. I like to watch Teen Mom 2, Catfish, Lifetime movies, and so on. I also try to eat dinner when the sun is still up, so I can enjoy the rest of my night in my room catching up on newest episodes of my favorite shows.

~Erica P.

I wake up in the morning and get ready for my day and eat something in the morning and afternoon and dinner everyday and take a shower everyday as well and I do go places everyday to and I go see my family and friends everyday to.

~Krysta C.

For Daylight Savings Time at first it is a struggle to get used to but I remember the need to take my medicine on a consistent schedule along with getting to bed a decent hour and waking up near the time the alarm goes off. Many of the clocks in the house change themselves, however many do still need changing. One thing I will miss as we “fall back” this year is the Book Sale by the friends of the Carnegie Library in Connellsville as when the clocks usually change twice a year they have a fall a bag sale that is well attended. It was one of the last things that we did pre-COVID

~Dustin M.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO CONTROL YOUR ANGER? - NOVEMBER 6, 2020

I control my anger by walking away so I don't say something I will regret. I say things before thinking first and I'm always afraid to hurt somebody's feelings because I did it in the past and in the long run I felt bad.

~Rose S.

Staff at Clubhouse calms me down. I also listen to music which helps me more. I also talk to people about what is going on with me and they help me get through what I need to.

~Krysta C.

Anger is a very difficult emotion for me to control, especially around those that are close to me. I have come leaps and bounds in this regard over the years as not being physically aggressive, but more of emotionally and verbally aggressive. It brings out a side of me that many don't think that I have. However, I know I need to work on this and continue to do so frequently. I practice grounding techniques, listen to music, go for a walk, and many other relaxing tools in my recovery tool belt. As part of my mental health diagnosis, I have a reaction stage after I get aggressive and I become very apologetic. Sometimes I wish I thought things out better before saying things that are either none of my business or hurt others feelings. However, I am continually working on that to better this so that I progress better in this regard.

~Dustin M

WHAT WE ARE THANKFUL FOR—NOVEMBER 13, 2020

I'm thankful God is with me daily and he is watching over our country, our president and his family, all of the congressmen and senators along with their families, the CIA, and FBI and their families, and our military along with their families. I'm thankful for my family and all of their families, all of the American people and their families, and those without families. I'm thankful God watches over all of his children all over the world and that everyone who needs shelter and food gets what they need. I'm so thankful for all living and growing things, all the plants and animals, and everything else in this world.

~Jackie C.

I'm thankful for my family because they brought me on this earth and continue to show me unconditional love. I'm thankful for the staff and members at the Clubhouse because they are like

a second family to me, always being there when I need them. Both my family and staff help me stay on the right path and want nothing but the best for me.

~Ra-Mel H.

I'm thankful for my family and friends and my dog buddy. I am also thankful for the love and support for what everyone has done for me every day and the love of God that lifts up my spirits and joy in the world. ~Amanda C.

What I am thankful for is my family and friends including my nieces and nephews and great nieces and great nephews I love them a lot and I love being an aunt and a great aunt. It's the best thing ever and they are every-thing to me. I am very blessed to be living a good life in this world! I hope I will have many more.

~Krysta C.

HOW HAVE YOU ADJUSTED DURING THE PANDEMIC- NOVEMBER 20, 2020

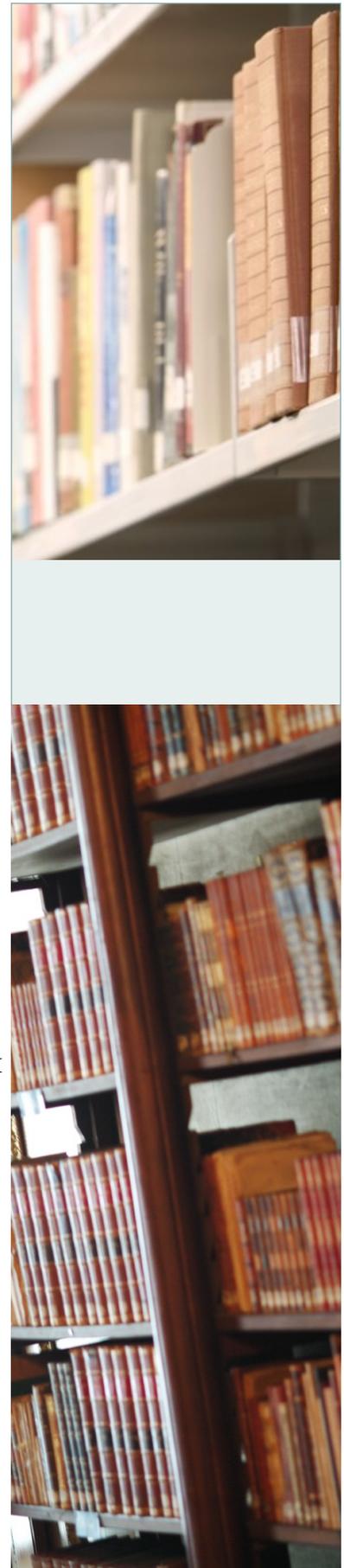
Being in a new living arrangement for the second time has been a big change for me, but it is for the better. I have come to the realization that I need to keep a busy schedule and need to reach out to my supports and create new ones such as virtual support groups offered by NAMI affiliates across the commonwealth and through Mental Health America. I also need to offer input to other listening entities such as the local Community Support Programs during the pandemic and learn how others are coping too. I have made the decision at my new home to forgo cable as to not have the opportunity to absorb myself in the outpouring of media gravitated towards the pandemic. I am cautious of where I go and who and what I come in contact with and follow the guidelines set forth by our government leaders. I have realized that while we may not be able to do many things that we did this time last year, we have the availability more than ever with tech-

nology to reach out for support when we need it. I have come to a realization that I should take advantage of what is offered so I can take care of myself and be well.

~Dustin M.

I keep myself away from people and stay well.

~Krysta C.



GOV. WOLF, SEC. OF HEALTH ANNOUNCE NEW PROTECTIVE MITIGATION EFFORTS TO PUT PENNSYLVANIA ON PAUSE THROUGH EARLY JANUARY (DECEMBER 10, 2020)

As COVID-19 cases continue to rise, Governor Tom Wolf and Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine today implored Pennsylvanians to take the next three weeks and stand united against the virus by adhering to existing mitigation orders and stricter efforts announced today.

“Today I am announcing additional, temporary COVID-19 protective mitigation measures in the commonwealth,” said Gov. Wolf. “With these measures in place, we hope to accomplish three goals: First, stop the devastating spread of COVID-19 in the commonwealth. Second, keep our hospitals and health care workers from becoming overwhelmed. And third, help Pennsylvanians get through the holiday season – and closer to a widely available vaccine – as safely as possible. This is a bridge to a better future in Pennsylvania.”

The new, limited-time mitigation orders take effect at 12:01 a.m. on December 12, and remain in effect until 8 a.m. on January 4, 2021.

These measures presently as of this writing include the halting of In-person dining and Alcohol Sales; strict limits on Gatherings and Events; Capacity Limits for Businesses; the closure of Gym/Fitness, entertainment, extra-curricular activities and youth sports at the schools; and prohibits spectators at Professional and College Sports.

BEING THANKFUL DURING 2020—NOVEMBER 25, 2020

Yesterday was our annual Thanksgiving luncheon at Union Station Clubhouse. And, might I say, it was quite an unusual event that is very telling in regard to our lives during the pandemic.

Usually our dining room is lined with long tables filled with chairs and with staff and members sitting closely together. This year, we had to create additional tables and seating for single occupancy to assure social distancing. As we normally have 30 or more people, we had to limit our occupancy to 20 to meet safety protocols.

Even with all of the changes to meet the challenges of the current pandemic, I am thankful that our Clubhouse family still had an opportunity to be together in our facility. I am also glad that (thankfully) to date, we have had no issues with positive COVID cases and that we have been able to continue to operate within some capacity.

I am also thankful for the opportunity we have had to build a virtual environment to keep our members that are unable to attend or who chose to remain at home to still be active and involved with their Clubhouse.

Yet another thing I am thankful for is that the employers for our transitional employment and supported employment programs has recalled our members back to work. So, our members are out there working!

Lastly, I am most thankful for our members and staff that have displayed commitment, dedication, and passion for their Clubhouse so that it can continue to operate and thrive, even during the most difficult of times.

~Scott B.



WHAT DID YOU DO THIS THANKSGIVING?

Although I did not get to spend Thanksgiving with some family who I would have liked to, all of us at Clubhouse had Thanksgiving dinner together and enjoyed some good food which I really liked. My favorite was the ham and pumpkin pie. It was very nice that everyone was in a good mood and everyone got along. I also had fun working with another member to decorate a door for the holidays. I'm thankful for my family, home, job, and the people at Clubhouse. I'm looking forward to spending Christmas with everyone. –Tammy G.

My Thanksgiving was great! I spent time with family and friends. I also spent time with my girl-friend and her family. I love gathering around the table and saying what I'm thankful about.

~Ra-Mel H.

I want to thank my sister-in-law for Thanksgiving and spend time with my family and I get to see my family.

~Krysta C.

This Thanksgiving was different in some ways than any other Thanksgiving in my 35 years of living. In years past when I was living independently and I would go to the local senior center for lunch. Because of COVID, that got cancelled. As a result the place where I go for food pantry did-to-go dinners that was delivered to my house early in the morning. I would heat those up after our two virtual Clubhouse check-ins. Later in the afternoon, my MPR worker would bring me a humongous meal that he and his family made for various people in the community. I felt truly blessed this Thanksgiving because most of this year has been trying and I wouldn't have dreamed of being in a new, comfortable, and safe home for the holidays. This is a true Thanksgiving blessing.

~Dustin M.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN THE WINTER

When I was younger, making snow forts with the neighborhood kids and sledding was fun to do. Now as an adult, my outdoor activities in the winter mostly consist of shoveling snow, which is not very fun. I do enjoy some indoor winter pastimes though, such as watching football and college basketball, and picking brackets. I also like to stay warm inside, decorate, and watch A Christmas Story.

-TJ

A winter activity I used to enjoy doing was horseback riding on trails. I haven't done it in years, but I would love to do again one day. I also enjoy decorating for Christmas and watching the ice capades on TV when I am home. Sledding and snow ball fights are also fun (when I'm feeling up to it!) An activity I would like to try one day is skiing. -Tammy G.

My favorite winter activities is going outside play in the snow and playing with my family in the snow as well
~Krysta C.

For many winters I lived with my parents on their farm and we would go outside and do things. But, since I moved on my own I like to continue that tradition in some form. Thankfully, in the years I have been independent, we haven't had any real bad winters. So, I like to go to the River Park and pray and take pictures and video of the river and the geese there. I would usually follow that up by going to Sheetz and having a drink in the dining room. Unfortunately, that will have to be on hold this winter as the dining room is closed during COVID. It also a good way for me to be active since I am a little fearful of going to the gym with all this going on right now. I am hoping for a nice winter where the weather is at least conducive for me to get out and stretch my legs.

~Dustin M.

CELEBRATING THE SEASONS FOR MORE REASONS (DECEMBER 18, 2020)

At the writing of this article, we are holding our annual Christmas luncheon and party. As usual, our Clubhouse has all the decorations and feel of the season. But, as it is true with many this year, our celebration is noticeably different.

Where our Clubhouse packed with members, due to COVID-19, we have to limit it to 15. For those who can't be with us, we are going to take meals and gifts to them. So, ironically, we are bringing gifts and cheer just like Santa! Also, I look out at our members and staff with Santa hats, ugly sweaters, and other festive garments. But, along with the festive wear, you can see protective face masks and folks distanced apart.

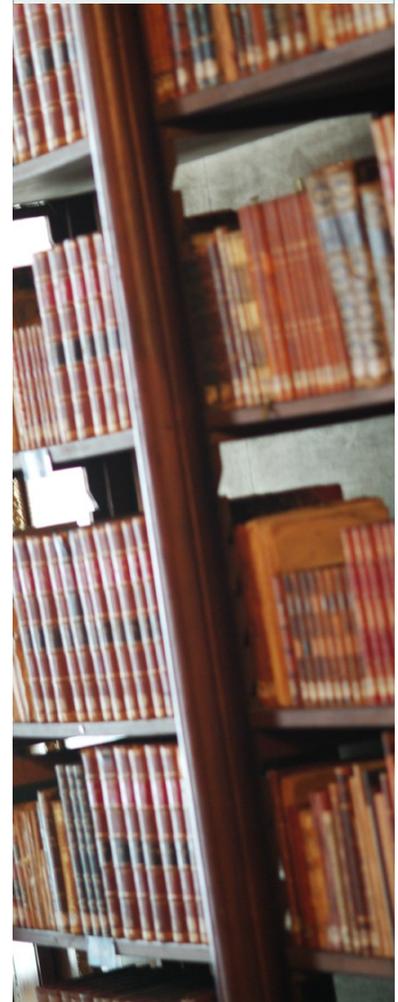
Surprisingly, even with all the protective measures and constant news reports of a rise in cases and hospitalization, there is a true feeling of comfort and joy in our

Clubhouse. Members are laughing and singing Christmas songs.

This is a clear example of two things: the members and staff of Union Station are very resilient and steadfast, and our Clubhouse is TRULY a family.

As the director of this Clubhouse, I consider the greatest gift of all is that our members and staff are able to celebrate this day together in a joyous fashion regardless of the troubling times around us.

~ Scott B.



UNION STATION CLUBHOUSE

Union Station Clubhouse offers people living with mental illness the opportunity to recover and fully participate as respected and valued members of society. We are a proud member of Clubhouse International, a network of more than 300 Clubhouses in over 30 countries around the world dedicated to ending social and economic isolation for people living with mental illness.

KEEPING THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT ALIVE (DECEMBER 11, 2020)

To say that 2020 was a difficult year would be a gross understatement. What we have all experienced to this point is unprecedented. Even with all of the uncertainty, the spirit of the holiday season is something that we can all rely on.

With that being said, Union Station Club-house is doing every-thing it can to assure the spirit of the holidays is alive and well.

First, we have already decorated our space with the usual holiday décor. Lights, trees, wreaths, and garland is abundant.

Second, the members and staff of our Club-house are holding a door decorating con-test that will be judged by the public via our Facebook page.

Third, Since Goodwill of Southwestern PA is not having it's usual "Week of Cheer" before the holidays, we will be conducting our own. Some of the days during that week we will be having is "Flannel Day", "Hot Cocoa Day", and "Cheesy Cheer." The week will be capped off by with our annual Christmas luncheon and party.

Finally, I should mention that true to Clubhouse form, we will be open in observance of the holidays. During those days, we will be offering virtual services along with site-based.

With the challenging year we have all faced, the Clubhouse staff and I wanted to make an extra effort to spread holiday cheer to our members.

~Scott B.

PHOTOS FROM THE CHRISTMAS WEEK OF CHEER (DECEMBER 18, 2020)



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