

VENTURE VOICE

SPRING

NEWSLETTER

2025



VENTURE
HOUSE



ALBANY, NY
MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS



Our Mission

Venture House is dedicated to supporting the wellness and recovery of individuals living with mental health challenges. We are a diverse, inclusive community that helps members access employment, education, housing, civic engagement, and the arts. We promote hope, self-determination, fellowship and purpose.

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Venture House Locations

Queens

150-10 Hillside Avenue
Jamaica, NY 11432
718-658-7201

Staten Island

1442 Castleton Avenue
Staten Island, NY 10302
718-658-7821

Bronx

2477 Webster Avenue
Bronx, NY 10458
646-214-8164

Brooklyn

885 Rogers Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11226
929-551-2130

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Unveiling Of Our New Logo



Venture House is proud to introduce our new logo, a symbol of hope, self-determination, fellowship and purpose.

As we continue to evolve and grow, we recognize the need for a logo that accurately reflects our mission.

Inspired by the lotus flower and compass, our new logo symbolizes overcoming challenges and finding direction. The lotus is a flower that emerges from darkness into the light, while the compass embodies guidance, purpose, and a path toward wellness. If you look closely you will see petals in the foreground overlapping points of a compass.

The new logo represents our ongoing commitment to building a strong, inclusive, stigma free community.



Clubhouse Membership

Members use their talents in our work-ordered day, participate in decisions on all matters relating to the operation of the Clubhouse, and have opportunities for paid employment.



Health & Wellness

Venture House has many programs that recognize the mind/body connection and the impact of physical health on overall well-being.



Social Recreation

Members have many monthly activity to create unforgettable memories and reduce feelings of loneliness. We celebrate all major holidays without members.



Employment & Education

We help adults find jobs or continue their education with active support all along the way. You do not need to be a member to access this service.



Housing Assistance

We help adults find affordable, stable housing that meets their needs and preferences. You do not need to be a member to access this service.

New Venture House Clubhouses just added in the Bronx and Brooklyn!

BLACK HISTORY SHOWCASE





Venture House Presents: **Black History Month Showcase**

By Brenda Wilson
(February 27, 2025)

With staff and Members represents significant moments in Black History told from the perspective

- Grandma's Hands - Performed by Rashan B.
- Narration by Toni Coleman, as Grandma
- Montgomery Bus Boycott- shut down Montgomery 1 year didn't ride the bus Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. started the boycott. - with Tara A., Carol W., Natellie P., Tiana C., and David P.

- March on Washington- Power to All the People with: Tara A., Carol W., Natellie P.
- "I Have A Dream" Speech by Martin Luther King - Read by: Bobby K.
- "By Any Means Necessary" Speech by Malcom X. - Read by Matt R.
- Black Fashion By- Tara A, Carol W., Chaunce H., Larry J., Robert L.
- The Temptations played by - Larry J., Jesse G., Chris W., Nijah P., Rashaun B. and Alex H.
- Martha Reeves and the Vandelles - Chaunce, Roe, Beret and, Tiana C
- Shirley Chism Speech - Read by Carol W.

- Muhammed Ali Boxing Demo- Patrick G. and Morillo
- "Rapper Delight" Sugar Hill Gang - David P, Larry J. and Rashaun
- Hip Hop Outfits: Patrick G., Tara A., Tiana C. and David P.

Special thanks to the Culinary Wellness Unit, Tiana Coleman, Toni Colman, David Plotka (Director of Venture House). Another special thanks to the Members and Staff of Venture House for making an amazing showcase which shared the talents that we have no matter what you go through.

The atmosphere was great with
Sound & Music by: Dan V.
Filming & Photography by Matt R.





Annual Board Meeting at Venture House Queens

By Brenda Wilson
(March 18, 2025)

Every year, the Venture House Board of Directors has a public meeting so the community can be aware of how it is conducted and invite them to ask any questions they might have. The meeting started on time promptly at 5:30 pm. In attendance was staff and members from all the

Venture House clubhouses including Bronx, Brooklyn, Staten Island and Queens.

The Board President, Catherine Wigdor, lead the meeting and spoke about the growth of attendance in all the Clubhouses.

The atmosphere was pleasant and, at times, commical as well. There was wonderful food and drink for everyone to enjoy, and informative to the staff and members. ■



Venture House Brooklyn Groundbreaking Ceremony

By Marc Calixte

A sincere thanks to everyone for your incredible support in making yesterday's Venture House Brooklyn's "Groundbreaking Ceremony" a success. The presence and dedication of Venture House staff and members from all our clubhouses helped showcase the strength of our community to elected officials, the press, and our partners.

As noted in the city's press release, this milestone marks a critical step in expanding mental health services, with our new clubhouses among the first funded under NYC's \$30 million investment. Our efforts continue to ensure that VHBK becomes a thriving space where members are empowered to shape their future.

Thank you again for everyone's commitment and hard work. Please thank all our amazing members as well. We are all building something truly special together. I am so proud of all of us. ■





Accreditation Is Over... Finally!

By David Plotka
(February 26 - 28, 2025)

Accreditation is a Quality Assurance process overseen by Clubhouse international. It includes a Self-Study, which is a complete self-reflective report (ours totaled 120 pages!) evaluating our adherence and fidelity to the 37 Standards, a 3-day site visit culminating in a verbal finding report and ultimately ends with a written report from Clubhouse International a few months after the Accreditation visit. Clubhouses are awarded one-year or three-year status.

The process commenced for us way back in June of 2024 when we first began to discuss the Accreditation and our strategy for success. A team of Staff and Members met on a weekly basis from September through early January to write and edit the Report which was ultimately sent in mid-January to the Faculty for review along with a Clubhouse Profile Questionnaire (CPQ) which is compilation of demographic data about our Clubhouse and membership

The Faculty Team (which is always comprised of a member and staff who are

trained to conduct these Accreditation visits) consisted of Aaron, the Program Director of Towne House Clubhouse in Fall River, Massachusetts and Delaine, a Member of the Howard and Sally Levin Clubhouse, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

The visit began on Wednesday 2/26/25 with the Faculty Team receiving a tour of the Clubhouse from Tiana. They then joined us for breakfast and the morning meeting. Throughout their stay Aaron and Delaine visited all 5 of our units, took part in and observed an array of meetings including the morning meeting, unit huddles, then house meeting and different committee meetings (e.g., social planning), visited a TE site (JCAL), visited a VH Apartment, and met with the Board President (Catherine).

Overall, the Faculty was extremely impressed with us (hey how could they not be!), citing our strong community, vibrant work-ordered day, robust employment program, effective housing program and dynamic social programming amongst only some of our strengths. Of course, we are not perfect, and we welcome feedback. Aaron and Delaine had two

recommendations for us concerning:

Standard #6: - Members have a right to immediate re-entry into the Clubhouse community after any length of absence, unless their return poses a threat to the Clubhouse community.

Standard #18: - The Clubhouse is organized into one or more work units, each of which has sufficient staff, members and meaningful work to sustain a full and engaging work-ordered day. Unit meetings are held to foster relationships as well as to organize and plan the work of the day.



For Standard #6 we will be convening as a community to revisit (and potentially revise) our Suspension Committee while the recommendations around Standard #18 are related to bolstering up afternoon huddles and adding some visual structure (i.e., board, screens) to the Media Unit. Easy fixes.

All in all, it was a great visit, and I'd like to thank the entire VH community of Members, Staff and the Board who helped to make it such a success. I look forward to celebrating with y'all at the Accreditation Party (on yeah, it's coming!!!) once we get an official letter from Clubhouse International. ■





Superbowl Extravaganza

By Tara Arnold
(February 9, 2025)

On a cold Sunday evening, the Clubhouse came together at the clubhouse to watch Superbowl 59. Everyone was very excited because we were all waiting to see which team would win, the Philadelphia Eagles or the Kansas City Chiefs. Throughout the season, I was rooting for the New York football teams which were the NY Jets, NY Giants and the Buffalo Bills but unfortunately, all three of them lost. So, I ended up rooting for the Eagles.

Before the game started, we had some food. We had sandwiches, which were made by Maggie and Robert, some mini hotdogs with chips which were made by Dan, and Eddie made boneless BBQ chicken wings. There were also chicken tenders donated from Raising Canes and Patrick's family restaurant, Radigan's, was kind enough to donate chicken wings for the party as well.

After we ate, we were all talking to

each other about who was going to win the Superbowl this year. Most of us picked the Philadelphia Eagles, but Alex and Robert were cheering on the Kansas City Chiefs. Both kept on bragging about how they were the greatest of all time, and they were going become three-time champions, also known as a "three-peat". However, throughout the entire game the Eagles kept on destroying the Chiefs. For most of the game the Chiefs had zero points while the Eagles had 20 points at the end of the first half. We kept trying to tell Alex and Robert that their team wasn't going to win this time, and they should just switch sides, but they would not listen. At the end of the game the Chiefs ended up losing 14 to 45 and the Eagles won their second Superbowl. Everyone was dancing and cheering while both Alex and Robert were pouting in the corner.

The whole event was documented on the Sports Report podcast from the Queens media center. You can relive the excitement the Eagles fans had as they celebrated the win and feel the shame the Chiefs fans endured as we mocked them. You can see this on our YouTube channel @VHYNC. ■

Expression through Music in Media

By Natellie Kay Philip

Every Wednesday afternoon at 4:00 pm, the Media Unit hosts an activity known as "Expressions through Music". Each participant picks a song that means something to them, then we look the song up on YouTube to listen to it and afterwards, we share why we picked the song and what it means.

- Tyreek - "Congratulations" (original music) by Sonny Ryan
- Brenda - "Oh Happy Day" by Edwin Hawkins
- Cindy - "I Apologize" by Anita Baker
- Natellie - "Apologize" by One Republic/Timberland
- Chris- "Roar" by Katty Perry
- Dan - "I'm just a girl" by Gwen Stefani
- Larry - "Gangsta Lean" (This Is For My Homies)

We wanted to keep the theme of "Women's History Month". We as people need to acknowledge our women/men as human beings and respect them as much as possible. As we know that women are very sensitive but are strong in many ways. And we can achieve any goal and dream in life through perseverance, motivation and determination through our hearts. Women's rights are very important and mean a lot to society. In our society we fought for all people's rights. Remember, you can do anything that you put your mind too, with lots of support, guidance, and assistance with success. ■



Venture Nets

By Tara Arnold
(February 2, 2025)

On a frigid February evening, a Venture House group went to Downtown Brooklyn to the Barclays Center to see the Brooklyn Nets vs the Philadelphia 76ers game. We did a table event outside of the sitting area and we handed out flyers and gift bags to people who came by to see us.

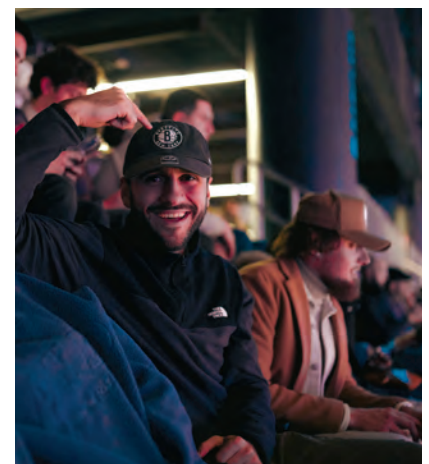
team was trying their best to win, but in the end the winners were the Brooklyn Nets and scored 100 points while the Philadelphia 76ers got 96 points. I had a great time at the Nets game. It was a great experience to be a part of. We got brand new Venture House shirts with our new logo on it and a Brooklyn Nets shirt as well. I am glad everyone enjoyed themselves at the game, and I hope we can do this again soon. Maybe when Larry puts in another 25 years. ■



Honoring Larry Jones for 25 Years of Service

We also honored Larry Jones for being at Venture House for over 25 years. He was so surprised about being honored. We got a chance to be on the same court the Nets play on before the game started.

The game between the Nets and the 76ers was a great experience, it was a very close game between them. Each





Advocating for Supportive Housing Programs

By Natellie Kay Philip
(February 3, 2025)

We had our great and supportive staff including Yogi, Jesus, and Jehon that led us all to victory on Lobby Day to Albany with great team leadership. They were all in full effect and ready to conquer the world. We also had our loyal members attending on the Albany Trip to advocate for our rights, that consisted of Tara, Alex, NIijah, Sal, Antonio, Farrah, Liz, Jarrar, Thomas, Mark, and me Natellie etc.

We were going to Lobby Day to advocate for an increase in Supportive Housing. We need quality, secure, and safe housing that all people can afford. We know that it is not easy in our community. We went all around the building and met with different people in the whole building that were fighting for the same or similar issues or situations. We met with two

Senators : Jamaal Bailey and Simcha Felder.

We also met with Assemblymembers:

- Steven Raga
- Jessica Gonzolez Rogas
- Sam Berger
- Catalina Cruz
- David Weprin

The Supportive Housing Modernization Act would cost a fraction of the multibillion-dollar annual state budget. Getting more “money-per-unit” in supportive housing programs. Another fact is that Social Workers’ low wages and personal issues have made them handle multiple jobs that can be stressful and most of the time demanding. For example, some of our dedicated staff had to leave their jobs to maybe go back to school or find other positions with maybe higher pay; if need be. We are also asking to fund a 7.8% investment in the human services sector using the State cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) statue. We would like our staff at

Venture House Clubhouse and other mental health workers to have an increase in their pay so that there is no turnover in the staff and that we can keep our devoted and determined staff working with us so that we can really focus and concentrate on all of our dreams and goals. We basically wanted to increase pay for nonprofit workers.

The reason why we should increase HHAP is because homelessness increased in NYS by 50% last year. We don’t need anymore homeless people in the streets under the train tracks in the cold weather or on the sidewalk; hungry for food or water. It’s not good to be without housing and living on the streets. We need to come together as one to create jobs that people can keep and enjoy in a positive way. If we love and enjoy our jobs, we would want to come to work everyday and never leave. All and all we (Venture House Staff and Members) went to Albany to talk and advocate for the mental health workers increase in pay and an increase in Supportive Housing units and programs. We all had a wonderful and productive day that brought awareness to end homelessness, make neighborhoods better, save money and people’s lives. That’s one of the positive things that we do at our Venture House Clubhouse. ■



Clubhouse Brings Advocacy to Albany



Mental Health Legislative Day

By Natellie Kay Philip
(March 4th, 2025)

It was another successful day in Albany on March 4th, 2025, with Pat, Kelsey, Sheann, and Lisa leading the group, in a positive exciting way. We also met up with our Staten Island, Brooklyn, and Bronx staff and members like Ms. Carrisa, and Ms. Carol (CEO of Staten Island) Clubhouse. They also took vibrant and happy pictures of us in Albany. Eddie made lobby day T- shirts for all of us to wear and sport. The

shirts were carefully handmade with lots of care and love with the assistance of Tara Arnold and other great members and staff. On Lobby Day, Luke S. one of our previous staff that worked with us in the E&E Unit years ago, became V.P. of Public Policies and made a moving speech. Pat really led the group with his productive leadership skills alongside staff and members, like Mark Knox, Temes, Tara, Eddie, Farrah, Nelson, Alexander, Jennifer, Richard, Tommy etc., Staff and members worked side by side to get the job done. We rallied, paraded, and protested about people's rights. (7.8 we won't wait) ■



Bronx Albany Trip

By Stephanie Vargas
(February 25, 2025)

On Tuesday, February 25, 2025, a group of staff and members of Venture House met with Assemblymember Yudelka Tapia at Albany. It was my first time visiting up there. She called Venture House for a meeting regarding requesting State funding to expand the Clubhouse Model throughout New York State.

The Assemblymember Yudelka was so excited to share her experience with our clubhouse. She saw firsthand the impact of our work and wanted to help our efforts. It was heartwarming to hear members' testimonials on how the Clubhouse has helped improve their lives. It was also a fun and interesting trip with everyone. It was such a blessing to be able to experience this. ■





Movie Trip

By Leslie Langer

(March 11, 2025)

Patrick took members including me, Tara, Salem, Joseu, Trisha, and Kenneth to see Captain America at the AMC theater in Fresh Meadows. We were supposed to see the movie Mickey, but I'm glad we didn't. Captain America was amazing! I had popcorn and a diet coke which was delicious. Steve Rogers gave the Captain America shield to Sam Wilson. There was plenty of action and excitement in this movie. Harrison Ford played President Ross and the Red Hulk. This movie will get a lot of Oscar nominations in 2026 in my opinion. ■



Bowling Lanes

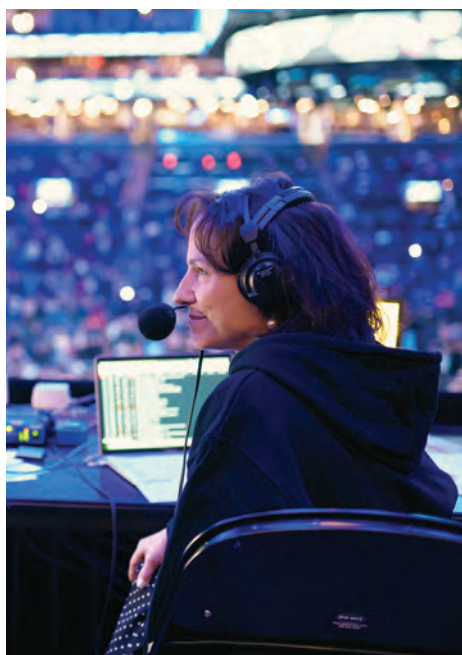
By Leslie Langer

Matt took Eddie, Alex. Tara, Avi, Joanie, George, Melinda, Richard bowling at Jib Lanes. I gave Tara my extra wrist band. I did not bowl because of my hernia.

The best bowlers were Eddie and Richard. Eddie beat Richard 157 to 150 in the first game. In the second game, Richard beat 153 to 150. In the third game Richard beat Eddie to 147.

We all had a great time. Even though I didn't play, I cheered everyone on while they bowled. I did eat a chicken sandwich and drank a Snapple, which was very tasty.

Everyone then drove back to Venture House before we all went home. ■



My Mental Health Journey

By Liz Leal

When I was in high school, I got into a serious altercation. I was a victim of verbal abuse and one day I had reached my breaking point. It had to be God that stopped me that day because I picked up a chair in the classroom ready to do some damage, but before I could I set it down. I'm glad I did because I could have really hurt her. However, I was expelled from that school. Due to the consequences of my actions at 16 years old I was home-schooled; my options were slim because no school would accept me due to my history. Nonetheless, I graduated high school with an advanced regents diploma.

Throughout my home-school career I was a straight A student. It was there that I met my teacher John M. Broughton who introduced me to Columbia University. There I studied computer science and finished with my certificate in computer programming. I subsequently worked as a computer and English teacher on and off for the past 20 years. Despite my academic success, trouble found me again. I ended up in jail on Rikers island for approximately 4 months, between 2011 to 2012. The reason for my incarceration was because of a conflict I had at a clubhouse in New York City, they claimed that I deliberately damaged property. I was a member there for 12 years prior and after that incident I was banned for life.

Later on, I was a member at another clubhouse in Harlem for approximately 13 years. I was housed within a week and resided in their

program for 9 years. Unfortunately, I was assaulted by my roommate that led me to move out of their supportive housing program (Promesa). I then moved in with my father, where I have been staying for 7 years now. I became a member of Venture house and in one year I was able to find employment, continue my education and receive housing assistance. I visited Clubhouse International in St. Louis, Missouri where I represented Venture House alongside Carolyn Chen, and I received my certificate of training completion. I also teach karate to children and volunteer with the Guardian Angels in Washington heights, where I protect my community. Throughout all of this, I haven't been hospitalized in over 12 years.

I am currently volunteering as an EMT with Gotham in Queens Middle Village. I am also a student in Boricua Collage, studying to obtain my Bachelor's in Childhood Education. I would love to become a teacher, supporting and nurturing the youth. Working with children is something I am passionate about because I want to be a role model, especially to my 15-year-old son. My life is testament that you can bounce back from any situation. ■

Making the Most Of Venture House

By Michelle Alam

When I'm at Venture House, I try to make the most out of my day. Coming to Venture House is almost like going to work except I don't get paid, it's like I'm going to work to have fun and learn different things at the same time. I enjoy everything. I

used to attend Citiview Connections at another clubhouse, but after a few years they moved to a different location and the staff that were there left, the clubhouse became unenjoyable and less promising. Plus, I needed to take the train to get there, and I don't particularly like taking the train. Going to Venture House I only have to take the bus, either two buses or one bus. It's the best Clubhouse I've ever been to thus far. I've learned a lot since I've been attending and still learning. The Coco Bean is our snack bar, and it is also where members get their lunch tickets for a dollar. I learned how to operate the register and give the tickets. I learned how to enter the attendance in the CID aka Communication, Data and intake. I don't go on outings much, but I do sometimes stay for house events. Recently I stayed for a talent show that Venture House held and was involved in singing a song. I did go on a day trip to a place called Archimed, which is a global investment firm that focuses on healthcare companies. We went with David and Tiana and a few other members. That was a cool trip because it was part of Carnegie Hall. We got to go inside a bit since we were early and just stepped into the lobby area. Then once we got into the building, we experienced a music duo before going upstairs for our conference. We had an amazing lunch and got a tour of the huge office, met some of the staff that worked there. Coming to Venture House is a complete joy for me. I get the chance to give tours of the clubhouse to potential members and let them know about my experience, I always try to sell Venture House and let them know how great a place it is to attend and how much it has helped me since I've been here. ■

The Answer to Loneliness

By Saul Holcman

We hope everyone can take advantage and actively participate to combat your loneliness together at Our Venture House Clubhouse.

Here are some tips & ideas.

Loneliness isn't just about being alone. It's that hollow ache inside you, the one that doesn't go away even when you're surrounded by people. It's lying in bed at night, staring at the ceiling, and feeling like no one really knows you, like no one would notice if you just disappeared.

In a world where loneliness can often feel overwhelming, mental health clubhouses serve as a powerful testament to the strength of community. They remind us that we are not alone in our struggles, and that together, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone. As we continue to advocate for mental health awareness, the role of clubhouses in fighting loneliness will unquestionably remain significant, paving the way for a healthier, more connected society.

It creeps up on you slowly, until one day you realize you've stopped hoping for someone to ask how you're doing. You've stopped waiting for messages that don't come, stopped explaining the silence you carry. It's scary, isn't it?

How something so quiet can feel so heavy.

The scariest part is how loneliness makes you doubt everything about yourself. It whispers that maybe you're not enough, not worth the time, not someone people want to keep.

And you try to shake it off, but it lingers, like a shadow you can't escape.

Loneliness doesn't shout, it doesn't demand—it just quietly tears you apart. And sometimes, the silence is the loudest thing you'll ever hear.

1. **Self-Discovery and Loneliness** can be a great teacher. It gives you the chance to discover who you are when you're not surrounded by people. Think of it as a personal retreat. You might find that you actually enjoy your own company and that you're more interesting than you thought (hello, hidden talents!).

2. **Creativity Boost:** Ever heard of the phrase "solitude breeds creativity"? It's true! Many artists, writers, and musicians have found their muse in moments of solitude. So, if you're feeling lonely, maybe it's time to pick up that paintbrush or start writing that novel. Who knows? You could be the next Picasso or J.K. Rowling!

3. **Better Relationships:** Sometimes, a little distance can help you appreciate the people in your life more. When you're not constantly surrounded by others, you begin to value your relationships and understand who really deserves a spot on your social calendar.

The Downside of Loneliness

1. **Mental Health Struggle:** On the flip side, loneliness can lead to a slippery slope of sadness, anxiety, and even depression. It's the emotional equivalent of eating a whole cake alone—initially satisfying, but ultimately a recipe for regret.

2. **Social Skills Deterioration:** Like a bicycle left in the garage, social skills can rust away if not used. Prolonged loneliness can make it uncomfortable to interact with others, turning the idea of attending a party into a horror film plot.

3. **Physical Health Risks:** Believe it or not, loneliness can affect your health. Studies have shown that it can lead to various ailments, including heart disease. Who knew that being a hermit could be bad for your heart?

4. **Embrace the "Me" Time:** Instead of wallowing in self-pity, embrace your alone time! Pick up a new hobby, read that book you've been meaning to get to, or try cooking a complicated dish (just be prepared for the smoke alarm).

5. **Reach Out** It's easy to retreat into a shell when you're feeling lonely, but remember that texting a friend or joining a group can work wonders.

6. **Practice Mindfulness:** Meditation and mindfulness exercises can help you sit with your feelings without letting them consume you.

7. **Volunteer:** Helping others can be a fantastic way to combat feelings of loneliness. Plus, it's hard to feel lonely when you're surrounded by people who are just as eager to make a difference!

8. **Seek Professional Help:** If loneliness becomes overwhelming, don't hesitate to reach out to a therapist. Sometimes, a chat with a professional can help you sort through those feelings faster than a Netflix series can distract you.

In conclusion, loneliness is like that unexpected rain shower: a little inconvenient but sometimes refreshing. Embrace the pros, navigate the cons, and remember that you're not alone in feeling lonely. So, grab your favorite blanket, put on those fuzzy socks, and turn this uninvited guest into a productive afternoon.

Cheers to solitude! ■

Nothing Ventured (Nothing Gained) Podcast By Delia Van Praag

Attention! Looking for Members to participate in a new podcast, Nothing Ventured. We are searching for participants who feel comfortable sharing their own story, in their own words. We will discuss a range of questions about mental health with the goal of destigmatizing mental illness and finding comfort in our shared experience.

The ultimate goal of the podcast is to make us all feel a little less alone, by tapping into our shared experiences. Ideally, it should feel like more of a conversation and less like an interview.

So be on the lookout for the first episode sometime soon, or if you are interested in being a guest on the show, please reachout out to the Media Unit. ■



New Member Profile: Jesse Gidwill

• How did you find out about VH and what are your impressions so far?

Jesse: I found out about Venture House while I was at the PHP program at Queens Hospital. Maggie came and explained what the Clubhouse model was. It sounded like a good place to talk and meet people. Little did I know it would have a huge impact on my life and mental well-being.

• Can you share a bit about your cultural and familial background, and do you feel this has influenced your perspective on mental health and seeking support?

Jesse: Born and raised in Whitestone, Queens, NYC and my heritage is German / Irish. My mother and my father are very accepting of me, and they have been extremely supportive of my struggles. Yes, my family has influenced my thought process in my mental health. It puts into perspective how to handle myself in certain situations. I'm not willing to compromise my needs for others anymore.

• Are there any challenges you've faced that have had a significant impact on your well-being?

Jesse: Many. To name a few, My old butcher shop boss, saying that my anxiety is all in my head and not real. Panic attacks were VERY real while working there alone cleaning. While working at Project Renewal, one of my coworkers was making fun of my gender Identity and calling himself "King" as his gender identity. Then



he said I was stalking him. I was doing my work. Everyone believed him. I was the bad guy. It discredited my self-image and invalidated my experience. The bullying made a huge impact on how I felt.

• If you could have a superpower for a day, what would it be and how would you use it?

Jesse: Cure all illnesses such as cancer and dementia. I'd use it to save people from dying young or suffering in their own head.

• If you could have a conversation with your younger self, what advice about mental health would you give? Is there a specific moment or insight that you wish you could share to make your younger self's journey easier?

Jesse: Be strong and not let people get in your head. I wouldn't change a thing though. My issues are what makes me who I am today. ■



“Brent” portrait of member by Robinson L.



“Gigi.” portrait of member by Robinson L.



“John” portrait of member by Robinson L.



“Namish” portrait of member by Robinson L.

Exploring AI in Filmmaking: A New Era of Creativity

By Daniel Chateau

For the past six years, I've had the privilege of working as a filmmaker and content creator, capturing stories, emotions, and moments through the lens of my camera. Over time, my work has evolved, incorporating various creative tools to enhance the storytelling process. In my journey to push the boundaries of visual content, I've recently found a new and exciting way to merge traditional filmmaking with cutting-edge technology - through the use of AI-generated art.

One of the most fascinating aspects of AI is its ability to create visual artwork from real-world references. By providing AI tools with reference images of real people, I've been able to generate incredibly detailed, imaginative pieces of art that help bring my projects to life in ways that were previously unimaginable.

AI tools, particularly in animation, have drastically improved filmmaking efficiency. Gone are

the days of painstakingly creating each frame by hand. Programs like Midjourney, which I've been using, can quickly generate stunning visuals and animations based on prompts and reference material. This not only saves time but also provides an array of stylistic choices to explore, making it easier to create visually complex scenes with a much faster turnaround. With AI, the process of creating high-quality content becomes more streamlined and accessible, allowing filmmakers to focus more on narrative and less on the technical grind.

Despite the growing influence of AI in filmmaking, it's important to remember that AI is a tool, not a replacement for human creativity. The real artistry in filmmaking lies in how a person guides the technology. It's still the filmmaker who drives the process, shapes the narrative, and makes the critical creative decisions. AI enhances our work, but it's the human touch that makes the art truly meaningful. As AI continues to evolve, it serves as a companion to the creative mind, empowering us to explore new realms of possibility without losing the heart and soul of filmmaking. ■



My Dream

By Jennifer Keren

(Inspired by the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Several years ago, individuals with mental health conditions were kept in long-term institutions with poor living conditions and no hope of treatment and integration into the outside world.

The availability of medications, the promise of community resources, and the movement to de-institutionalize individuals with mental health conditions brought a new day of hope.

However, I feel that this hope has largely gone unfulfilled. With the closing of hospitals came a push to "throw the baby out with the bathwater" and people who needed long-term treatment have only received short-term, thus there are high rates of relapse.

Many hospitals that housed these individuals have been replaced by other institutions that do not provide adequate care for the population.

I have dreams that I hope many of you share. I have a dream that mental health conditions will be treated equally to physical health conditions.

I have a dream that the red tape of bureaucracy will be broken and mental health professionals will take insurance coverage just as readily as medical doctors do.

I have a dream that people in unjust and unsafe institutions such as prison will instead receive the care they need in community centers as well as hospitals.

I have a dream that people will be able to step out of the shadow of stigma and be able to take off a mental health day from work without fear that they

may lose their jobs.

I have a dream that mental health conditions will be de-stigmatized and recognized as no different or less than physical health conditions.

I have a dream that mental health conditions will not be seen as character flaws, but as illnesses that are no different from diseases such as diabetes and asthma.

And finally, as someone who has been on the receiving end of discrimination and stigma, I have a dream that I and other very capable individuals will be recognized for their talents and achievements and this will not be overshadowed by the stigmatizing label of "mental illness"

I have a dream! ■

Man Plans and God Laughs

A Poem By Saul Holcman

Life's a jester, oh so sly,
While you're plotting, it zooms by.
With calendars filled and goals in sight.
It tosses surprises-what delight!
You sketch your future,
paint it bright
Yet here comes chaos,
like a thief in the night.
Plans go awry, like socks in the wash,
But laughter's is the cure,
- oh life's such a posh!

So while you're busy
with your grand design,
Embrace the detours;
they're truly divine
For life's little twists,
like a dance in the rain
Are the sweetest of moments
that break every chain. ■



The Artist's Flow

A Poem By Robinson

Hope I have it in numbers
Except when i am under the
influence of a slumber
And under, the surface,
which is joy and gain,
Lies a troubled artist who is
enduring some pain.

When it rains, i gotta find a pillow to
punch,
Because they locked me outside,
when i came home from brunch,
Society's lunch has to be the
goshdarn twisted.
Hatred of the underdogs, and yet i
stay a little gifted.

Im siftin' through the pages of the
holy bible,
In a world where its cool to have
"heathen" as a title
I write though, with monogamous
designs
And i cant break up, with the crime

Artistry is back in the house,
Politicians im comin for you next
No need to be too vexed
I check out when i gotta leave
Peep the artist's flow and breathe. ■

Communication, Intake & Data

New members for February include: Andre C., Daniel F., Haywood W., Josie R., Linton C., Michael L., Paul Y., Stacy Rattray., and Tyrone G.

New members for March include: AJ D., Christopher H., Dong Z., Larry W., Michele C., Shamaria W., Tony U., and Wanda J.

Unit Ambassadors! We are looking for people interested in being a point person for new members during Orientation. Unit leaders are encouraged. Please see CID if you are interested.

Reception desk! If you are interested in answering phones, buzzing people in, or being a greeter, please come to CID to learn how to be a receptionist.

Housing & Maintenance

The HAM unit is working on creating some new signage for the bathrooms. Small indicators/reminders that will remind the community to look after our space, wash your hands, and dispose of items in the appropriate way.

VH Supportive Housing is excited to announce new property management partnerships in the BRONX which means we will potentially have units there.

The HAM unit facilitated a busy, busy 1st quarter of the year with apartment visits. Shoutout to all the staff that put in the work to help us meet the requirement of visiting every tenant in the housing program at least one time this past quarter! Your work is very much appreciated.

- 4/2 (Tues, 4 pm) - Tenant Support Meeting
- 4/7 (Mon, 4 pm) - Quarterly Housing Meeting

Media

Voice Out is back (Thursdays at 4:00 pm)

Damion and Andre are lead a workshop on Thursdays at 4:00pm. We have them for 12 weeks that we are hoping to have a performance to showcase the talented music makers, vocalists and rappers that have contributed to the project. Come one and come all.

Join Media for Friday Fun all month long:

- 1st Week (Fri, 3:45 pm) - First Friday
- 2nd Week (Fri, 3:45 pm) - Film Friday
- 3rd Week (Fri, 3:45 pm) - Funky Friday
- 4th Week (Fri, 3:45 pm) - Photo Friday.

Culinary Wellness

In February, we had the Black History Month showcase on 2/27 and it was a wonderful experience. Members and staff participated in showing the African American experience throughout history displayed by music, clothing etc. For Valentines Day, we organized the creation and distribution of Boo-grams. Members and staff were able to make goodie bags filled with candy to give to loved ones.

In March, we had the St. Patricks Luncheon and served corned beef, cabbage, roasted potatoes as well as a fun key lime pie pudding.

We have rolled out our new lunch options which consisted of having two options. Option 1 is the meal that is made the day of and option 2 is the meal made the day before. This allows for better use of our leftovers as well as more options offered during lunch. This means that Friday no longer consists of leftovers but is a new meal and is now \$1.

Octaviano Medrano, a new staff, joined the Clubhouse on 3/24.

Coming Up, we have some fun stuff planned for Easter in April that is currently in the works. For May, we are also planning to have something for Mental Health Awareness Month.

Employment & Education

Education Opportunities: College tours will start up in April and if you are interested, please see Sheann. If you are graduating and would like to be recognized on the bulletin board for your accomplishments, please come up to the unit to give us your name and the school or program you are graduating from.

Upcoming E&E events:

- 4/11 (Fri, 11 am) - Employment Brunch
- 4/16 (Wed, 5 pm) - Employment Support Dinner
- 4/18 (Fri, 11 am) - Education Brunch

In the past months the E & E unit has been hard at work facilitating successful gatherings in efforts to meet our members at their points of need. Our employment support group and employment and education brunches continue to be a huge hit! The school year is in full swing, and 3 members have started school this semester. ■

APRIL

Upcoming Activities & Events

Holidays

- 4/20 (Sun) - Easter

Events

- 4/1 (Tues) - UBS - Islanders (Neurodiversity Day)

Meetings & Support

- 4/10 & 4/24 (Thur, 10 am) - Menu Planning
- 4/11 (Fri, 11 am) - Education Brunch
- 4/16 (Wed, 5 pm) - Employment Support Dinner
- 4/18 (Fri, 11 am) - Employment Brunch

Activities

- 4/5 (Sat) - Bowling
- 4/8 (Tues) - Movie Night
- 4/19 (Sat) - Cradle of Aviation
- 4/23 (Sun) - Paley Center

Arts Programs

- Expression Through Music (Weds @ 4 pm)
- Voice Out (Thurs @ 4 pm)

MAY: Mental Health Awareness Month

-WELLNESS TOPIC OF THE MONTH : CO-OCCURRING DISORDERS


CLUB ED TOPICS :

- (04/18) MISSION STATEMENT & STANDARDS DISCUSSION - ADMIN
- (04/24) RECEPTION ETIQUETTE - CID

4/12 PASSOVER
4/18 GOOD FRIDAY
4/20 EASTER
4/22 EARTH DAY








Opening:
3/31 - 4/4 CW/MEDIA
4/7 - 4/11 E&E
4/14 - 4/18 HAM
4/21- 4/25 Admin
4/28- 5/2 CID

APRIL



PROGRAM HOURS:

MON & FRI 8:30AM-5:00 PM
TUES-THURS 8:30AM-5:00PM
EVENING HOURS
SAT & SUN 11:00AM-4:00PM

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM ISLANDERS HOCKEY GAME 2:30PM TE PLACEMENT Matt, Pat & David	2 10:30AM COMP. CLASS 2:30PM SOCIAL COMMITTEE 2:45PM COOKING WORKSHOP 4 PM EXPRESSION THROUGH MUSIC 4 PM TENANT SUPPORT GROUP Kelsey & Larry	3 10:30AM RECEPTION MEETING 2:00PM HOUSE MEETING- HAM 2:30PM ADVOCACY 4PM VOICE OUT Chaunce & Roe	4 1PM BAND JAM 3:30PM CHESS CLUB 3:45PM FIRST FRIDAY Octaviano & Larry	
6 IN HOUSE  Dan & Jesus	7 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM DEEP CLEANING WEEK 11:30AM COCOA BEAN PLANNING 1PM BAND JAM 4PM QUARTERLY HOUSING MEET. Roe & Octaviano	8 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM DEEP CLEANING WEEK 2:30PM JOB DEV. 2:30 UNITS MTG 4PM MOVIE NIGHT Roe & Octaviano	9 DEEP CLEANING WEEK 10:30AM COMP. CLASS 2:00PM FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE 2:45PM COOKING WORKSHOP 4 PM EXPRESSION THROUGH MUSIC Jesus & Matt	10 DEEP CLEANING WEEK 10AM MENU PLANNING 10:30 AM RECEPTION MEETING 11AM CLUB ED- ADMIN 2:30PM ADVOCACY 4PM VOICE OUT Chaunce & Matt	11 DEEP CLEANING WEEK 11AM EDUCATION BRUNCH 1PM BAND JAM 3:30PM CHESS CLUB 3:45PM FILM FRIDAY Beret & Chaunce	12 IN HOUSE  Beret & Chaunce
13 IN HOUSE  Jehon & Roe	14 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM 1PM BAND JAM Jehon & Beret	15 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM 2:30PM TE PLACEMENTS 4PM OUTREACH COM. Jehon & Beret	16 10:30AM COMP. CLASS 2:30PM SOCIAL COMMITTEE 2:45PM COOKING WORKSHOP 4 PM EXP. THROUGH MUSIC 5 PM EMP. DINNER Dan & Larry	17 10:30 AM RECEPTION MEETING 2PM HOUSE MEETING -HAM 2:30PM ADVOCACY 4PM VOICE OUT Dan & Fabian	18 11 AM EMPLOYMENT BRUNCH 1PM BAND JAM 3:30PM CHESS CLUB 3:45PM PHOTO FRIDAY Fabian	19 CRADLE OF AVIATION  Fabian
20 IN HOUSE  David & Pat	21 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM 11:30AM COCOA BEAN PLANNING 1PM BAND JAM Sheann & Maggie	22 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM 2:30PM JOB DEV. 2:30 UNITS MTG Sheann & Maggie	23 10:30AM COMP. CLASS 2:00PM FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE 2:45PM COOKING WORKSHOP 4 PM EXPRESSION THROUGH MUSIC Beret & Sheann	24 10AM MENU PLANNING 10:30 AM RECEPTION MEETING 11AM CLUB ED- CID 2PM HOUSE MEETING 2:30PM ADVOCACY 4PM VOICE OUT MINI GOLF TRIP David & Octaviano	25 1PM BAND JAM 3:30PM CHESS CLUB 3:45PM APRIL BIRTHDAY'S FUNKY FRIDAY Matt & Sheann	26 IN HOUSE  Matt & Sheann
27  Kelsey & Maggie	28 ORIENTATION 9AM-1PM 1PM BAND JAM Fabian & Jehon	29 2:30PM TE PLACEMENTS Fabian & Jehon	30 Beret & Sheann 10:30AM COMP. CLASS 2:30PM SOCIAL COMMITTEE 2:45PM COOKING WORKSHOP 4 PM EXPRESSION THROUGH MUSIC Kelsey & Jesus			