



Synapse House has expanded programming and services to meet the needs of our members both in-person and virtually.



How Virtual Programming Has Affected Me

Written by Tom W, Clubhouse Member

When I was at the clubhouse, I did many different things, such as typing articles for the newsletter, helping in the kitchen and exercising. However, with the pandemic, I am stuck at home for the foreseeable future. With that in mind, we enter



virtual programming. Using that lets me remain at home and still be interacting with the clubhouse and its members. We work as a group, doing exercise and playing word games with each other. It may not be in close contact, but it is interacting with each other.

With virtual programming I can talk with the various members, which lets me practice my speech when I talk to each one individually. Doing that makes me think harder to everything that I say.

As time goes on it should become easier to converse out in the general public.

I feel that the Clubhouse is important to many people. Right now, because of the pandemic I cannot go to the Clubhouse. Having virtual programming lets many people such as me attend the clubhouse on a computer and get help on their road to recovery.



Heartfelt “thanks” to our 2020 Strokes for Stroke Golf Outing & Veranda Dinner Sponsors.

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You are the of our  organization

Thank you for your kind donations for Giving Tuesday Now! We surpassed our fundraising goal allowing us to expand virtual programming!

Please visit: <https://synapsehouse.org/our-wish-list> for our donation list

A message from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

2020 has been a year of many challenges to all of us. Despite many of our new staff having only been with us less than a month when the order came to shelter in place, they mobilized to provide amazing therapeutic programming to our members and families in just two weeks. Our donors mobilized to give generously to keep our organization funded as our doors were temporarily closed and we cannot thank you enough!

We are so proud of our members, our volunteers and our staff for making the very best of this hard situation. We are blessed and grateful to all those who continued to give, sponsor and those who came out to golf. We are happy to see some of our members now in person and others virtually. We have missed them!

Truly, we could not have asked for any better during this time. We thank you. Please stay safe and healthy. We cannot wait to “see” you at our Virtual Gala on October 3rd!

Deborah Giesler

Deborah Giesler, Executive Director

Employment Services News and Accomplishments

Despite the pandemic, we have been very happy in our Employment Services Program at Synapse House. We have a new Work Readiness Training program that is comprehensive and meaningful for all members. It will focus on cognitive and social training, task completion, habits and attitudes to adopt for work and the development of coping techniques and strategies. We will also help members explore careers, learn how to interview effectively, create resumes and cover letters and improve focus and attention. In the coming year, we hope to expand our network of employers and to create more opportunities for volunteering and job evaluation.

As our Employment Services Program has evolved, we realize that ours is a unique group of people who have some challenging obstacles to employment and that we need to address those obstacles from the earliest possible point in the recovery process. We are hopeful that this aspect of programming will assist in returning individuals to work.

Accomplishments We Have Made Since Virtual Services Began, by Basia R.

- ◆ Basia has been able to tandem stand without holding on for 30 seconds
- ◆ Basia works out 5 days a week now and her ataxia when spinning has greatly improved
- ◆ Joe made it back into Synapse House
- ◆ Dan meditates and found media devices others can use
- ◆ Dan has been working on walking without his brace
- ◆ Jerick has been riding his bicycle
- ◆ Jackie has HUGELY improved on typing
- ◆ Prior to the pandemic, Jan and Joe led a Microsoft Office skills workshop for fellow members and staff

Board of Directors Update

Hi friends and donors,

First off thank you for your continued support of Synapse House members and staff, especially in 2020 with the pandemic. As a member I just want all of you to know how hard the staff has been working. The board is still looking to expansion and we hope to keep moving forward as the need is getting bigger with more young stroke survivors such as myself. We are looking for Board members that can help keep us moving forward, let us know if you or someone you know is interested. Once again THANK YOU. We would not be here without you. I hope to see you all on our virtual Gala in October, a great way to connect and help support us.

Basia R., Clubhouse Member Board Representative

Synapse House Family Support Group is Back!!!!

On the second Saturday of every month, Synapse House welcomes spouses, significant others, siblings, children and parents of our members, to gather together to discuss issues that affect their lives as family of stroke and TBI survivors. To date we have met in June, July and August and have had great conversations and shared with each other on topics including benefits, relationships and adjusting to a new reality. In the upcoming months we will feature community resources and where to find them, caregiver burnout, going back to work and what is new in the brain injury world. The group works because we have people who are new to this, experienced in dealing with it and everywhere in between. The exchange of ideas and support is inspiring. We hope to feature some guest speakers in the months to come and offer current rehabilitative and health information. We welcome all to join us and bring your questions, frustrations, triumphs and tribulations. —Mary Drabik, Employment Coordinator

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Our Mission is to **ENGAGE**,
EMPOWER and **EMPLOY** individuals
affected by brain injury and stroke.



**At Synapse House we are resilient and strong. We have adapted
to this evolving pandemic to meet the needs of our community!**

Synapse House Has Made Changes *Written by Dan K.*

Due to what's going on with COVID it is a safe place to be. People all wear their masks, and staying socially distant. They put on a workout program daily, it is available online too. They keep everything clean. It is wonderful to have social interaction. It's done carefully.

It is totally safe. We used to have long tables where we got to do work and hang out. I'm not complaining about not doing that, we are staying socially distant staying safe.

I had a brain injury due to a truck accident, and it's so important that I can continue to go. I received my brain injury December 11, 2016. And I'm doing all that I can to live life correctly. I have come so far in my recovery. Thank you for the donations for this place, I really appreciate you're helping of the cause.

What I Miss About Being In-Person in the Clubhouse *Written by Tom W.*

When I was at the Clubhouse I used to type interviews, type recipes, played word games and interviewed individuals for our paper. I also did the group exercises and helped in the kitchen. I enjoyed all of that and miss being there to converse with the members. When I was doing that, I had a chance to practice my speech. I had the chance to interact with the members. While I was there the members interacted with me, and I really miss playing the card and board games with the members. Unfortunately, right now I can not come to the Clubhouse because of the COVID-19.

When I can come back and join you, I look forward to working on many things for the Clubhouse. I can work on any mailings that we generate. I can do labeling, collating, typing and write articles and stories for our newsletter. There are many things that I can do around the Clubhouse that come up during the day and I am more than willing to take on any job that presents itself. I enjoy the togetherness that obviously exists between the staff and members that makes me feel at home when I am there. I miss that.



**New Clubhouse
Open Space**



**New Clubhouse
Activities Center**



**New Clubhouse
Socially Distanced Desks**

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2020 Golf Outing



Thank you to our sponsors and everyone who joined us at our Synapse House Strokes for Stroke Golf Outing & Veranda Dinner on August 24th



Join us for our 7th Annual

Synapse House Gala


A Virtual event including auction, music, Fund the Need & optional Livia catered "to-go" dinner

October 3, 2020
Free Virtual Live Stream: 7:00pm - 8:00pm
Livia "to-go" dinner - \$75 per person (Elmhurst or Geneva)

Help support our rehabilitation services, including our **new** online program, for survivors of brain injuries and strokes.

<https://synapsehouse.salsalabs.org/7thannualharvestmoongala>

Artwork by Synapse House Member Scott B.



Join us on October 3, 2020 for our 7th Annual Synapse House Gala

This year's event will be a virtual live stream party from 7-8pm CST. We are offering an optional to-dinner from Livia (Elmhurst or Geneva, IL). Visit **www.synapsehouse.org** to register for this wonderful event and help us raise funds to support our cause.



"Like" Synapse House on Facebook for the latest news and information on upcoming events!

Register for our events online: www.synapsehouse.org/events