

Spotlight on the KNZ Gym

Written by Tom W.

We at the Clubhouse now have a gym on the premise and it opened in January 2023. We can work out in group settings or have a personal trainer with us while we exercise. There are several different machines available for us to use (see photos below). There are two bikes and an exercise machine that can be set up to work every part of your body. The gym is set up so you can work on many different ways to exercise, build up a sweat and improve your endurance so you can be fit.



There is plenty of room, so there can be small classes, where we work out as a group. We can also have individual sessions, where we work out individual clients; this way we can help each person individually and get the most use of the facility.

As for me, the best way for me to get a work out is with a personal trainer. I feel that working with a personal trainer is the best way for me to stay in physical shape. It will definitely let me live longer and enjoy life.

Featured equipment pictured below from Left to Right: NuStep, Universal Gym, Schwinn recumbent bike, Mat table, Ballet/balance bar



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Join our Board of Directors or a volunteer committee.

Governance Committee · Gala Committee · Golf Committee

Synapse House continues to grow. Expanded program and service offerings are now available to members.

Interested? Please contact Janet Yardley at janet@synapsehouse.org

CLUBHOUSE UPDATE

By Megan McClain & Erika Panatera
Work Unit Coordinators

While we anxiously await the build out of our new Culinary unit, the Clubhouse members have been extremely busy in the Business unit preparing for the Golf outing in June and the Gala in September.

Already in 2023 we have hosted 1 Occupational Therapy (OT) capstone student, 1 OT level II student, 1 occupational therapy assistant (COTA) level II student, and 3 OT level I students. Additionally, we have welcomed many volunteers to our setting introducing them to what the Clubhouse setting means and how it operates. Marvyn's Occupational Therapy Capstone Project is a Virtual Reality simulation of meal preparation as well as real, cold meal preparation. He is comparing the results of the simulation and real-time meal prep by taking baseline and post-trial measures of the Box and Blocks test to determine if dexterity has improved with an increase in transfer of blocks with testing.

We continue to increase our community of members in the Clubhouse as well as in our Work Readiness group. Our mornings are packed with organizational work tasks in the Business unit from typing documents to addressing and stamping envelopes. Having two separate business offices is beneficial to getting work completed in a quiet, focused area with direct supervision provided to ensure jobs are completed accurately. Additionally, in the morning members who are not busy with Business unit tasks assist with keeping the Clubhouse organized, clean, and in working order. Without the physical and cognitive skills each member contributes to the daily operations, our Clubhouse would not be successful in its mission.

Our afternoon programming continues to be a welcome break from the hard work of the morning while focusing on health and wellness, making the Clubhouse day a holistic approach to our members continued rehabilitation. Every afternoon exercise programming is offered in our KNZ gym while simultaneously group activities are occurring that focus on physical and cognitive skill enhancement with standing, fine and gross motor skills, social engagement, and visual-perceptual skills. Twice a week we also offer a meditation group that is prepared and hosted by one of our members. This offering has been a welcome opportunity for members to relax and decompress after several hours filled with focused work, physical tasks, and overstimulation for some. Thank you to our member, Daniel, who initiated offering this group and follows through weekly with planning.

As the weather improves, we are excited for our upcoming fundraising events. Our 9th annual Golf Outing held at Glen Oaks Country Club, and our 10th annual Gala held at Cantigny Park. Through funds raised at these events and throughout the year, we will be able to accommodate our growing program and offer enhanced programming and more comfortable participation in daily operations.

The Cranium Chronicles is published by Synapse House

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www.synapsehouse.org

Our Support Team

Deborah Giesler, Executive Director, MS, CCC/SLP
Pattie Zinski, Development Director
Vera Kramer, Business Development Manager

Clubhouse Work Unit Coordinators

Megan McClain MS, OTR/L
Erika Panatera MS, OTR/L
Wendy Vandehei COTA

Employment Services

Patrick Dwyer COTA/L
Jill Mueller MS

Exercise Physiologist

Kristina Chapman-Rapp M.S.Ed, CPT, GEI

Community Support Specialists

Kristina Chapman-Rapp M.S.Ed, CPT, GEI
Patrick Dwyer COTA/L
Wendy Vandehei COTA

Transportation

LaShelle Morrow

Board of Directors

Janet Yardley, Board Chair
Basia Rudy, Secretary
Jim Meier, Treasurer
Bryan Bacon
Joe Bretz
Mort Hart
Kayla Hicks
Melissa Johnson
Jerick Lacson
Laura Ludwig
Kelly Snow



Synapse House offers fitness services specifically for those with neurological impairments.

Services include:

- Personal Training
- Circuit Training
- Advanced Exercise Group (45 minutes)
- Seated Exercise Group (45 minutes)

Exercise groups are offered in person and virtually.

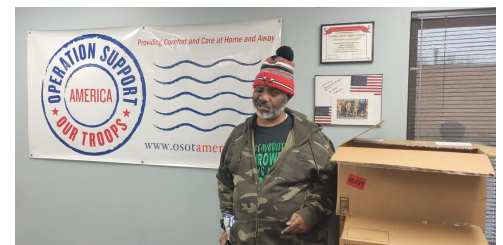
For more information, go to our website at www.synapsehouse.org OR call 877-932-1120

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to a group outing, individually the veterans have been busy focusing on their personal goals through community involvement.

Community Support Services serves veterans with brain injury in their home and community. This program's goal is independence with a focus on building social capital and enhancing quality of life. Funding is available for veterans who served post September 11th.

Pictured right, veteran KB Volunteering at Operation Support our Troops in February



IN MEMORIAM

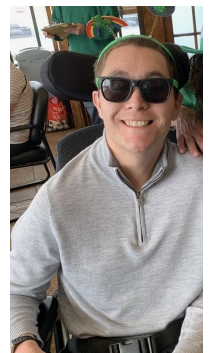
Remembering Rashad, Kevin, Ranger Jim, Dan C. & Luke

The fall and winter of 2022 and early 2023 presented our Clubhouse with a lot of changes, but not all were in a positive light. Sadly, our community experienced the passing of five of our devoted Clubhouse members: Rashad O., Kevin B., "Ranger" Jim B., Dan C., and Luke A. (pictured right from left to right).

While our Clubhouse was consumed with relocating, we made time to stop and remember our friends and the impact they each left on our community and individual lives. We remember Rashad as a social butterfly, engaging everyone in conversations, always asking how people were doing and having a laugh with others. Kevin is remembered by his bright blue eyes and spirit for competition. We also remember his love of music as it shone through during exercise when he'd find the beat. Ranger Jim is fondly remembered for his great musical talents, both singing and performing. Ranger Jim would volunteer his time to our Clubhouse at holiday parties and throughout the year playing his guitar and having us all sing along with him. Next, we recall Dan and his positive attitude and willingness to help. Dan was always eager to lend a hand with physical tasks as well as computer driven tasks with the goal to return to work. Finally, we remember Luke, another lover of music and our house DJ. In addition to his love of music, Luke was a proud, devoted father to his daughter, Rosie. He would regularly report to us on how he spent his time with her and what he loved most about her.

While we are sad to no longer have these members present in our Clubhouse, we are thankful for the time we had together and the impact they had on our community and each individual. We also would like to thank their families and friends who have kindly donated items, equipment, funds, and kind words to our Clubhouse. Specifically, Rashad's family donated cleaning supplies and paper products in addition to coffee pods, which was a request Rashad had specifically discussed with his mother prior to leaving us as he was an avid coffee drinker. Kevin's family kindly donated a Total Gym for use in our KNZ gym to help in physical recovery and work-hardening training. Ranger Jim's daughter, Kris, spotlighted Synapse House and our impact on her dad's recovery in a Facebook post, and asked friends to consider donations to us for further support to continue our programming. Additionally, Dan C's partner, Nancy, and Luke's parents, Laurel and Mitch, kindly asked for donations to be made to Synapse House in Dan and Luke's names. Through these donations we were touched by the kindness of their friends and family and learned more about them both and the impact Synapse House was having on their recovery.

Despite having to navigate the loss of so many friends, we are reminded of the work we do here at Synapse House and the positive effect we have on our brain injury survivors and their personal communities. It is with great hope we continue to grow our community and continue to pursue our mission of engaging our members in meaningful work and activities that provide everyone with a sense of purpose and contribution to a community.



In memory of Rashad, Kevin, Ranger Jim, Dan and Luke

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

By Jill Mueller

The new year has gotten off to a great start. Three of our members have become employed, while others are completing applications to businesses of interest. The Work Readiness members are working to match job descriptions to their own skills and interests, while everyone has been practicing their interview skills. This group is engaged and motivated!

Synapse House is looking for businesses to partner with who may be interested in allowing our members to complete job trials, shadow a position or fill an open position. If you know of any job openings that may be a good fit and would like to partner with us, please email Jill Mueller at jill@synapsehouse.org.

Synapse House would like to thank the following businesses for providing amazing work opportunities to our members; Nordstroms, Whole Foods, First Student, Cielo Concessions, Hertz Rental Car, Intuit, Aurora Public Library, Wheels, Inc. and Birches Assisted Living & Memory Care.

If you or someone you know is interested in returning to work or exploring our Clubhouse Day Program or KNZ Gym, please contact us for further information by calling 877-932-1120 or contact our Director, Deborah Giesler, deborah@synapsehouse.org for a tour.

Special Thanks

Donations we've received in honor of previous employees, current and past members

"In loving memory of Helen Woods. We love you Aunt Holly"

"My contribution was in honor of my brother-in-law, Michael K, and also to thank you for being there for him in his recovery. Thank you for all you do at Synapse House."

Please consider joining us for one of our annual fundraisers to support programming and operation costs at our Clubhouse. All proceeds benefit the members who are all survivors of brain injury.

SYNAPSE HOUSE
PRESENTS:

2023 GOLF OUTING

MONDAY, JUNE 5TH

At Glen Oaks
Country Club
21W451 Hill Ave, GlenEllyn60137

WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE
FOLLOWING

- HOLE SPONSORSHIP \$250
- RAFFLE DONATIONS
- CORPORATE SPONSORS
- GENERAL SPONSORS

Synapsehouse.org
877-932-1120



SYNAPSE HOUSE
Presents

ROARING TWENTIES

GALA

FUNDRAISING EVENT

- Auction Items
- Wine Bottles
- Restaurant Gift Cards
- Sponsorship Opportunities

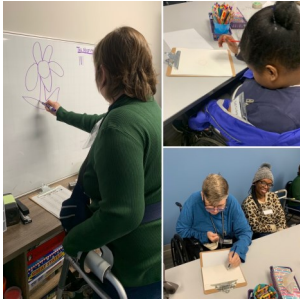
Friday, Sept. 29 2023



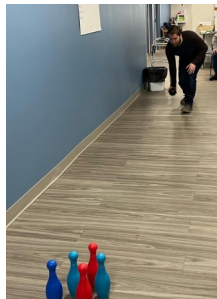
Member Accomplishments

- Since the beginning of 2023, three of our members have obtained employment. Congratulations to Joe L, Brian D, and Janine K.
- We received a grant from Whole Foods for use in our Culinary unit.
- Daniel K. has initiated running meditation groups twice a week for members (artwork pictured left created by Daniel K. and on display in our Serenity Room)
- Thank you to Jerick for creating fliers for our 2023 Golf and Gala fundraising events as well as the logo and flier for the KNZ gym

2023 JANUARY, FEBRUARY & MARCH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CLUBHOUSE EVENTS



In the Clubhouse, members participate in daily afternoon groups designed to target standing tolerance and balance, following directions, fine and gross motor coordination, appropriate social engagement, and visual-perceptual skills all while having some fun together.



We enjoy opportunities to volunteer in the community, specifically at Operation Support our Troops in Lisle, IL to offer assistance where other businesses may need a hand.



Community outings are important for our Clubhouse members to engage in activities in unfamiliar and unpredictable environments, while enjoying what the neighborhood has to offer and exploring leisure interests.



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 www.synapsehouse.org

PLACE
 STAMP
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SYNAPSE HOUSE WISH LIST & EVENTS

Set-up a donation drive or schedule a supply drop-off.

Email vera@synapsehouse.org for more information.

Copy Paper
 Post-It Notes
 Cleaning Wipes
 Paper Towels
 Latex Gloves
 White Cardstock

Toilet Paper
 Hand Weights
 Letter size Envelopes
 Postage Stamps
 File Folders (letter size)
 Large Bulletin Board

Gas Gift Cards
 Uber or Lyft Gift Cards
 Cases of drinking water
 Gift cards to Jewel, Office Depot,
 Mariano's, & Michael's

*9th Annual Golf Outing
 Glen Oak Country Club
 Monday, June 5th, 2023*



*10th Annual Gala
 Cantigny Park: Red Oak Room
 Friday, September 29th, 2023*



Follow us on Facebook, Instagram & Twitter to see our Clubhouse programming, Culinary Unit meals, Employment training and members in the spotlight!

"Like" or "Follow" us at: Synapse House, @synapsehouseclubhouse, @synapsehouseculinary & @SynapseHouse



For more information or to register for an event go to Synapsehouse.org/events