



the CRANIUM CHRONICLES

Summer 2023



2023 Golf Outing Breaks Record!

Heartfelt thanks pouring out to our 90 Golfers, 60 Diners, 18 Sponsors, 6 Raffle Donors, 3 Beverage Donors, and countless Clubhouse Members, Staff and Volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this our most successful golf outing yet. Together we raised over \$24,000 to fund recovery programs for persons affected by brain injury and stroke.

Shout out to all our Members and the staff who guided them as they solicited for donations of beverages and raffle items, prepared swag bags, invited friends and family to attend the Golf Outing, and worked the event. Special thanks to Glen Oak Country Club for their warm hospitality in welcoming all of us and providing an exceptional golf and dining experience at their majestic clubhouse and golf course.

When the final score cards were tallied, we had our first ever tie! Congratulations to Tim Kluckman's and Ron McClain's foursomes (pictured right) for shooting an eye-popping 21 under par. Best of all, our Members and staff felt loved and supported by all who showed up for us. Thank you!



Thank you to all of our 2023 Golf Sponsors

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!
YOU ARE THE HEART OF OUR CLUBHOUSE!



THANK YOU TO OUR RAFFLE AND BEVERAGE DONORS!



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

We Engage, Empower and Employ individuals affected by brain injury and stroke.

CLUBHOUSE UPDATE

By Megan McClain & Erika Panatera

Work Unit Coordinators, Occupational Therapists



After months of anticipation and planning, we re-opened our Culinary unit in July 2023. Due to budget and construction delays, we developed a working plan to open the kitchen with limited means. We have gotten creative with our menu planning as we do not have a stove or oven to cook on or in. Instead, we have learned how to cook noodles in a crock pot, brown meat in an electric skillet, and use an air fryer (donated by member JoAnne) for vegetables. While we await the eventual build out of our new Culinary unit, we will take advantage of what we do have and reap the therapeutic benefits that cooking can have for our members both physically and cognitively.

We hosted our Golf Outing at Glen Oak Country Club on June 5th and it turned out to be our most well attended outing yet! With the contributions of everyone who participated and donated this event was a great success. Thank you to Glen Oak Country Club for sharing their beautiful course with us (again) and we look forward to what 2024 will bring!

From May through August, Clubhouse members have been contributing to the community by volunteering to help make care packages at Operation Support Our Troops (OSOT) in Lisle, IL and Phil's Friends in Addison, IL. OSOT is an organization that makes care packages to send to active military personnel and Phil's Friends is an organization that makes care packages, greeting cards, and fleece blankets to send to people battling cancer. Both organizations are operated by kind and accommodating individuals and we enjoy having the opportunities every month to assist in helping others with their missions.

Additionally, Clubhouse members have been busy within the community eating at restaurants and exploring indoor and outdoor activities such as parks, miniature golf, the zoo, and outdoor art exhibits. It is important for us to engage in community activities to practice navigating unfamiliar environments, speak to unfamiliar people, read signs and menus, follow directions and maps, and overall have some fun! Our members recall their experiences at our outings in monthly newsletter articles to recap the highlights of the activities.

In May, the Clubhouse members, families and staff came together on a Sunday at Ty Warner Park in Westmont, IL to enjoy sunshine, company and a great potluck meal (pictured below). The event was well attended with everyone contributing a dish to share. Mario's empanadas are always a crowd favorite, but the chicken, sandwiches, salads, and desserts were enjoyed as well. After our events and fundraisers, we reflect on what an amazing community of members, families and donors we have and we thank you for all of your support as we live out our mission.



Visit our website to learn more about our programs, volunteering and donating.
www.synapsehouse.org

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

Clubhouse Work Unit Coordinators

Megan McClain MS, OTR/L
Erika Panatera MS, OTR/L

Employment Services

Jill Mueller MS

Exercise Physiologist

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

Community Support Specialists

Kristina Chapman-Rapp M.S.Ed, CPT, GEI
Wendy Vandehei COTA

Transportation

LaShelle Morrow

Board of Directors

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



Please consider joining us for our 10th Annual Gala fundraiser at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, IL to help support programming and operation costs at our Clubhouse.

All proceeds benefit the members who are all survivors of brain injury.



By Kristina



Members are participating in a mileage competition in the SUMMER ROAD TRIP CHALLENGE. Teams of four work together to virtually travel to Kansas City, Missouri. One minute of exercise equals one mile for the team. The members can use the recumbent bike, Nu-step, or use the arm cycle to participate, and the first three teams to complete 504 minutes (miles) will win a prize. Challenge dates are July 5 - August 29th. August 30th the clubhouse will celebrate with a Mission BBQ catered lunch! This challenge not only engages the members in more exercise which increases blood flow, neuro-transmitters (the good feeling chemicals in the brain), reduces anxiety and/or depression, increases memory recall, cognition, lung capacity, attention to detail and task, and concentration, but they also benefit from, tracking their progress, socializing with other members, bi-manual coordination, increased endurance, increased range of motion. We are five weeks in and have a team with a solid lead at 409 miles. KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!

Upcoming KNZ Neurofitness gym programs include:

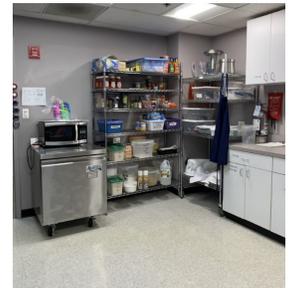
1. Fall Into Football (September) - focusing on increasing class participation combined with positive mental attitude activities
2. Ride for Your Lives (October) - Zombies (staff) versus Humans (members),
3. Maintain Don't Gain (November and December) - Holiday mental and physical health program



CULINARY UNIT

After months of anticipation, we would like to announce the grand re-opening of our Culinary unit! We are working with our limited kitchen so each month we develop a menu to accommodate this, making minimally complex dishes such as sandwiches and skillet meals. During June, we reorganized the current kitchen and trained members how to appropriately don kitchen apparel and perform handwashing before starting any meal preparations. Additionally, we provided training in kitchen clean up such as serving meals, busing tables, discarding leftover food and washing, rinsing, sanitizing and drying dishes.

We are working hard on the steps to finish the remodel. We are making approximately 15-20 meals daily. Our members and families have been very patient as we developed this plan. We are excited to announce that we received funds to purchase a baking oven once renovations are complete in memory of Kevin Bretz. Thank you!



Announcing our 20/20 Vision Campaign

Join us in our 20/20 Vision Campaign to raise \$40,000 to perfect our vision of a multipurpose day center where persons affected by brain injury and stroke can engage in meaningful work, regain life skills, and achieve their personal fitness goals. Donations totaling up to \$20,000 will be matched by a \$20,000 donation pledged by a generous anonymous donor to help us achieve our \$40,000 goal. The funds will be used to complete the final buildout of our new kitchen, as well as support the maintenance and operation of our programs, including our vans, and provide scholarships for Veterans and Clubhouse Members to make our programs more accessible to those with financial need. Please join the 20/20 Vision Campaign by donating at www.synapsehouse.org.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

By Beth, Colin & Jerick

Greetings readers, we will be your tour guides for the goings-on in the Employment Program and would like to mention what we've been working on. First, Janine is doing well at her new job! She previously worked at a nursing home and now is employed at All Creatures Great and Small. She identified her interest in animals and turned that into an employment opportunity. Next, we highlight Bijon who began his job at Burlington and recently transitioned to a cashier position at Village Market Place where he obtained more hours that he desired. Next up, we say hello to Zenas who is employed at an Amazon Distribution Center where he's doing well with his duties. We have Jerick who began working part-time at Kohl's as a Sales Associate primarily in the shoe department and as a cashier. And lastly, we have Jackson who is employed at AutonomyWorks. Congratulations to all who are now employed! We are very proud of them.

Meanwhile, back at Synapse House our other members of employment have been busy with virtual webinars as well as an outing to the Downers Grove Public Library. We are using these resources to update our resumes and seek additional career resources.

If you know of any businesses who would like to partner with us, please email Jill Mueller at jill@synapsehouse.org.

Member & Organization Accomplishments

- We had four members become employed since May 2023 at the following companies: Amazon, Village Market Place, Kohls, All Creatures Great and Small, and AutonomyWorks. Congratulations to our employment team and our members for this achievement!!!
- Member, Scott B. and his niece Kayla won silver medals in the Special Olympics for Bocce. Congrats to you both!!! (Pictured right)
- We raised \$24,000 at our Golf Outing in June 2023
- After one month of being re-opened, we have cooked 200+ meals
- Since January 2023 we have:
 - ◊ Gone on 12 community outings
 - ◊ Volunteered 9 times at Operation Support our Troops and Phil's Friends
 - ◊ 40 active Clubhouse members, 5 active CSS contracts, and 9 members who have obtained jobs with supported employment
 - ◊ Hosted 1 OT Capstone student, 5 OT students, 1 COTA student and 2 groups of SLP students from Rush University, Lewis University, Fox College, Governor's State University, North Central College, and Elmhurst University.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (CSS)

Our Veteran, Jeremy, had a very busy few months volunteering and exploring leisure interests with our CSS staff. Jeremy regularly volunteers at Operation Support our Troops giving back to his fellow service men and women. Jeremy's service dog, Boone, accompanies him on his adventures to offer support and comfort. Jeremy is an avid outdoorsman who has been revisiting his outdoor interests, specifically, fishing. Thank you, Jeremy, for your service and your commitment to yourself and recovery.



Special Thanks to our:

- **Families and Members**—for your dedication to our program and to continued rehabilitation
- **Donors**—for your continued support to help fund our programming to benefit our members and their recoveries
- **Board of Directors**—for your time and effort in planning events, overseeing decisions, and supporting our mission
- **Staff**—for your ongoing dedication to our members and enhancing our program design to maximize everyone's recovery potential

2023 MAY, JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CLUBHOUSE EVENTS



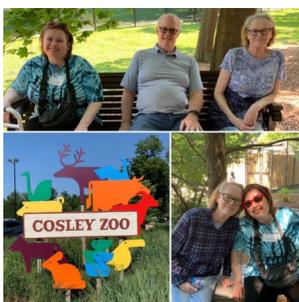
Exploration in **LEISURE INTERESTS** and activities is vital to occupying one's time post-brain injury. In the Clubhouse we try new workouts (*top left Taekwondo hosted by Kevin B's son*), make art projects (*top middle*), play yard games and board games, and participate in new adventures (*top right sports theme day, bottom right letters to Veterans*) to learn new skills and find out what we like to engage in during our free time.



We have sustained our **VOLUNTEERISM** with Operation Support our Troops helping with making care packages for the active military members. We have also added a new opportunity to our monthly list at Phil's Friends (Pictured bottom far left) making cards for community members fighting cancer.



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. Pictured are Cosley Zoo in Wheaton, mini-golfing at the Hub in Elmhurst, a group outing to Ty Warner Park in Westmont, and the Umbrella Sky outdoor art exhibit in Elmhurst.





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SYNAPSE HOUSE WISH LIST & EVENTS

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

Email megan@synapsehouse.org for more information. Bold items we have a greater need for.

Copy Paper
 Post-It Notes
Cleaning Wipes
C-Fold 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 Wal-Mart, Jewel,
 Office Depot, & Mariano's**

*Thank you to Ozinga for
 sponsoring our Gala again
 this year!*



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



For a snapshot of our Clubhouse programming, Culinary unit meals, Employment training and members in the spotlight, please follow us on Social Media:

Facebook: Synapse House
Instagram: @synapsehouseclubhouse and @synapsehouseculinary
Twitter: @SynapseHouse



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