



the CRANIUM CHRONICLES

WINTER/SPRING 2025

**A huge thank you to
Northwestern Medicine!**



Valued Transportation: By Will B.

The vans that Synapse House has in its possession are highly important for transporting our members to and from the Clubhouse program, to our monthly outings and to attend job interviews or job fairs. These outings are important for members getting together for activities like shopping, going out for lunch, or volunteering at a nearby organization that assists military veterans. All of us are fortunate enough to have received a very generous grant funded by **Northwestern Medicine**, to purchase a much-needed new van. Due to this amazing grant, we were able to purchase a 2024 Honda Odyssey Touring van. We are also lucky enough to employ two van drivers that are both responsible and respectful when transporting all of their assigned passengers to that day's destination. So, what would we do without these vehicles? Well, I guess everyone without ready access to daily transportation would unfortunately be forced to stay home! This would impact our attendance, participation in the local community, and our overall program. We take pride in being able to provide rides to and from our local gatherings every month and bringing our valued members to and from our Synapse House Clubhouse every day. So, again, thank you to **Northwestern Medicine** for funding the grant for us to purchase one of our vans! Without all our transportation vans and team of drivers, our community outreach and involvement would be very limited.



PLEASE CONSIDER SERVING ON OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Impact our future & be a part of our
growth

We Engage, Empower and Employ
individuals affected by brain injury

INTERESTED?

Visit: www.synapsehouse.org
Events & Volunteers



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 Deborah@synapsehouse.org



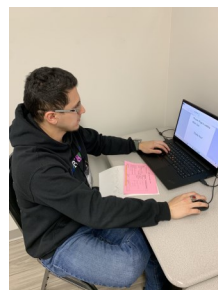
COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (CSS)

Hi, my name is Justin and I joined Synapse House in December 2024. My story begins with my "accident" which happened because I was driving and crashed the car with no seatbelt on. Before my accident, I was enlisted in the U.S. Army which served as a blessing in disguise. The U.S. Army helped cover all the hospital expenses from my accident. Unfortunately, I became stagnant and instead of working towards a goal, I was spending my time reading and playing video games. Synapse

House helps me because they can provide me with better objectives to spend my time. I am learning how to articulate exponentially better, because they have speech pathology interns who can converse/teach me how to stay on topic with memory and attention skills.

When present at the Clubhouse, I like to socialize with peers during the morning, at lunch and during group activities. I also like attending speech therapy sessions with the speech students. I learn new things at the Clubhouse from the guest speakers that come to talk, for example learning about money and the bank. I also enjoy helping with cooking and maintenance tasks as well as going on outings. Next month I plan to go on the ceramics outing.

When I am doing Community Support Services (CSS), I really like the activities we do like going to museums and to the escape room. I also enjoy learning to cook with my CSS staff. One other thing that I really like about CSS is that they help me with tasks that I want to accomplish at that point in time.



Member artwork

Clubhouse member, Chuck, creates drawings each week using his **non-dominant left hand**, as his stroke left his dominant right hand impaired.



Taking dedicated time each week to focus on leisure interests and hobbies is an important part of recovery. Leisure exploration allows members to share their talents, find hobbies and express themselves.

If you know someone in need of services or would like to share information about Synapse House with your healthcare provider, please contact

admissions@synapsehouse.org



In 2025 we have welcomed Gina to our staff. Gina is a Physical Therapist who comes to us with energy and ideas to make our KNZ programming better than ever! She runs our Wednesday afternoon group exercise program (offered both in-person and virtually), focusing on strength, balance, endurance and overall conditioning. Additionally, she will be preparing circuit training to members on Wednesday mornings to provide individualized attention and focus on need-based areas for each participant.

Our hemiplegic group continues to meet at 10AM on Wednesday mornings for members to focus on motor recovery of affected limbs. We perform stretching and warm-ups at the ballet bar in preparation for therapeutic exercises. Then we transition to the floor, mat table or universal gym to complete strength training, stability and mobility. The goal of our group is to upgrade functional use of affected extremities when performing daily living tasks such as dressing, cooking, cleaning, typing, writing, and carrying items, for example. Thank you to our dedicated participants for consistency with participation and dedication to your recovery.



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, Ex. Director, MS, CCC/SLP

Pattie Zinski, Development Director
James Farrell, Business Office

Clubhouse Work Unit Coordinators

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

Employment Services

Ashley Gieschen
Achkei "HK" Wilson

KNZ Neurofitness Gym

Gina Pizzoferrato

Community Support Specialists

Dustin Bellair
Tony Chairez
Darla Kucera
William Selk
Hannah Tegtmeyer
Austin Vongphasouk

Transportation

LaShelle Morrow
LaTonya Davis

2025 Board of Directors

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Matt Dingens
Giovanna Imbriani
Melissa Johnson
John Leone
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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND SPONSORS FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT

A donation was made in honor of
Kinneth Little

A donation was made in honor of
Chris Zinski



Brain Injury Awareness Month Celebration



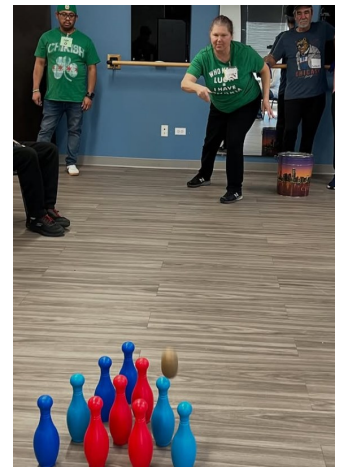
CLUBHOUSE PROGRAM HAPPENINGS

In February we hosted guest speaker John Wascow to share a motivational presentation on his experience with TBI and his recovery...which included becoming a doctor! **See Page 5** of this donor newsletter for a full recap of his time with us, written by member Kasia.

In 2025 we have resumed our volunteering at Operation Support our Troops, putting together care packages for military personnel (**see below**). And as always, we remain busy in the kitchen, preparing lunch daily. The monthly menu is selected by the members and meal prep (from taking lunch orders, making lunch, and cleaning up afterwards) is completed daily by the members with varying levels of assistance.



OUTINGS, VOLUNTEERING & PARTIES



If you know someone in need of services or would like to share information about Synapse House with your healthcare provider, please contact

admissions@synapsehouse.org

**In February we welcomed guest speaker,
John Wascow, to the Clubhouse**

JOHN WASCOW'S PRESENTATION
BY KASIA C.

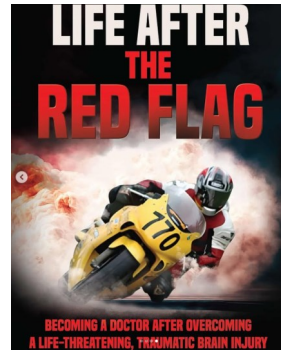
"YES I CAN!" was shouted by the members of Synapse House during Dr. John Wascow's presentation. In mid-February, the members enjoyed a fascinating presentation regarding brain injuries. Through perseverance and a strong support system, Dr. John Wascow managed to defy all odds and made an almost full recovery after suffering a traumatic brain injury (TBI).

He was racing a motorcycle when his life changed forever. Little did he know that during one of his turns, he would wind up in an accident and would suffer a TBI. He was forced to relearn old skills as well as learn some new ones. Despite being injured, he went on to get a chiropractic degree. He can now proudly display the suffix *DC* and call himself a doctor.

He penned the book *"Life After The Red Flag: Becoming a Doctor After Overcoming a Life Threatening, Traumatic Brain Injury"* which, to me, sounds like it can be a very helpful read for those who are currently in the process of dealing with their TBIs. In his novel, he touches on a variety of topics. Some of these topics include how a strong support system and a positive attitude are integral parts of making a full recovery. Having a strong support system at home is something that is very important to the recovery process as it has a positive impact on one's mental health.

Overall, having a positive attitude is an integral part of the healing process as well as keeping a positive mindset are both needed in order to overcome any physical challenges. It takes a lot more than just rehabilitation therapy. You can do anything once you put your mind to something. You just have to believe that you can. All it takes is a positive mindset and a lot of hard work. And anyone can do it. You just have to believe.

YES! I CAN!



**Registration is live for our
annual Golf outing**

**Check your email and our
website for the registration link**

**Register EARLY as space is
limited for golf and dinner**



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



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PLACE
STAMP
HERE



SYNAPSE HOUSE WISH LIST & FUNDRAISING

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
White Cardstock

Hand Weights
Letter size Envelopes
File Folders (letter size)

Postage Stamps
Toilet Paper
Cleaning Wipes
C-Fold Paper Towels
Latex Gloves

Gas Gift Cards
Uber or Lyft Gift Cards

Gift cards to Wal-Mart, Jewel, Office Depot, & Mariano's

SAVE THE DATE:

MONDAY, JUNE 2, 2025
GOLF OUTING AT GLEN
OAK COUNTRY CLUB



As we settle into 2025, we have already begun planning our annual Gala.

If you have any raffle items to donate we will happily accept your generosity. Please reach out **Deborah@synapsehouse.org** to coordinate item drop off or delivery.

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

YouTube: Synapse House



YouTube

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