



**Volume 7, Issue 5**

An intentional work community for adults with a history of mental illness

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**Tours open to all!**

### Goodbye Halle!

In November Halle Steingass left to go to Denver, Colorado. This is an final interview with her.

**What has been your favorite part of working at the Clubhouse?**

Trying to get Jennifer to eat my tofu. For years, I've tried! I love having (and working in) a community of support. I've enjoyed working with people who are so fun and entertaining, and a delight to be around!

**What are your future plans?**

After I leave Clubhouse, I'll be starting graduate school at the University of Denver, pursuing my masters in social work.

**How long have you worked here?**

Including my time as an intern, a little over 3 years.

**What are some of your favorite Clubhouse memories?**

I loved our quote wall (which has since been removed), helping out in the garden, doing yoga in the mornings, and cooking alongside colleagues.

Michael doing random things was always funny! I had a blast driving to Maryland with David George, Holly and Brian Martin, and Myron Yoder to a Clubhouse conference. I have great memories of Trevor Tate ("Tater Tot") and him constantly asking if he could go to Ignition Garage or the "coffee parlor" (The Electric Brew).

My least favorite memory was when Emmanuel threw away my beautiful dried flowers! He was like, "They're dead! Why would we keep them?"

**What will you miss most about Clubhouse?**

The constant entertainment, and each day being different from the last. I'll miss being able to be my complete self, and being accepted.

I'll miss the friendships that I've formed, and the lives I've gotten to know. I love the fact that I know the sounds of people's footsteps, can identify a laugh from a different room, and usually know what colleagues are going to order for lunch. Just the little things that you develop over time.

**Continued on Page 2**



Don't leave us Halle.....!!!

Goodbye Halle!	1
Halle/October-November Recs	2
Clubhouse International Norway	3
Member Spotlight: Jessica Foster	4



Annie & Will at our Thanksgiving feast.



Mike & Lynn on the porch in the snow



Greg really getting into Halloween

Continued from Page 1

### Do you ever see yourself working at a clubhouse in the future?

Potentially. It would be hard, because I don't think I'd want to work at a Clubhouse that isn't Elkhart County Clubhouse.

### What lessons will you take with you?

Family isn't necessarily biological. It's the people who are supportive of you and care for you. It's okay to laugh at yourself. Mental illness doesn't have to be a scary thing.

A deepest thank you to the place I've come to know as home. Thank you for my years spent in this community, learning and walking alongside each one of you. You've shared in life with me, which has been the greatest joy. To my colleagues, including Rich, Erich, and Cris, I am grateful to have been loved by and to have loved the people in this quirky, yellow house in northern Indiana. May we all live well and continue to support one another as we walk our different paths. I will hold you close to my heart as I continue my journey in Colorado. And just a reminder, there will ALWAYS be a small, sassy Halle sending you the biggest, bestest hug wherever you are.

## October-November Recs & Holidays

### The Bonfire Was A Hit!

We had a great time roasting brats and s'mores on the open fire, being with friends and having great conversations. Some jokes were told and personal stories and we had an all-around great time. Erich, thanks for inviting us and opening up your home (even though it was in the woods) because it was great together time.

Carla Wirth

### TRICK OR TREAT

Can you say Wahaahaahaha Madness!!?? Yes we can, our Halloween party was a BOO-LAST! We not only had our traditional treats with our snacks and cider we also had a spooky dungeon in our basement. Greg was the Grim Reaper, Sherry was the mad scientist and Jessica brewed witches' brews and secret potions in a cauldron. We had alot of people that I could not identify because their costumes were so good! Such as Bat Man, Joker, and the Red Devil! Sooo much fun! I'm looking forward to it again next year!

Shy Irizarry

### The Light Parade

On November 9th we went to the light parade and lighting of the Christmas Tree in Shipshewana. The horses were beautiful and the lights were amazing. The wagons were being pulled by Clydesdales and were all decked out. Mike's nephew had some horses in the parade lit up by lights. Some of the floats were pulled by semis that were all decked out. Santa came in on the Shipshewana fire truck. Sherry and Mike got lost from the rest of the group, but eventually found their way back. Ereny thought it was very beautiful and different. Everyone said it was very cold out however the lights and the creativity kept you warm inside.

Mike D, Sherry H & Shy I

# Clubhouse International World Seminar in Norway

From September 27 to October 5, Rich Meyer and I (Andrew Borntrager) went to Oslo, Norway for the 2019 Clubhouse International World Seminar and the Faculty meeting that followed. The seminar was a fantastic experience, and Rich and I came back with many valuable ideas and connections.

The Seminar's opening ceremony included an incredible performance by a man named Mikkel Gaup. Gaup sang in a traditional Scandinavian folk style called Joik. He is also an actor, and has been in the Oscar-nominated *Pathfinders* as well as the critically-acclaimed *Breaking the Waves*. I was able to snap a photo with him after the opening ceremony. I'm fairly sure I was the only one at the conference who was more excited to talk with him about his film career than his performance.

The overall theme for this year's conference was "Work, Wellness, and Community: A Whole-Person Approach to Recovery," but the variety of topics covered at the various workshops and plenaries was very diverse. I attended a workshop on Media in the Clubhouse, lead in part by our colleagues at Magnolia House in Cleveland, OH. I was immensely impressed by how streamlined their daily news program was, and the level of house participation. It was an informative workshop.

I was part of a workshop on Staff Roles in the Clubhouse, and my portion of that went very well. I made out a detailed diagram providing a comprehensive example of ideal staff performance when engaging members in the Work-Ordered Day. It was remarkably well-attended. Rich went to a workshop on The Role of a Clubhouse Director. We'll see if anything he learned sticks.

My roommate for both the seminar and faculty meeting was Michael Hamlin from Fountain House in New York. Michael recently conducted our accreditation visit, and was a wonderful roommate. We both had a bit of a snoring problem, which was amplified by the fact that our room was very acoustically live, but we worked it out.

On the third day of the conference, we were invited to tour Oslo's town hall, where the Nobel Peace Prize is handed out. The building was gorgeous, and we had a reception there with hors d'oeuvres and wine. The mayor of Oslo, Marianne Borgen, gave a speech about Clubhouse and the importance of mental health care in our world. The most striking aspect of this was that she spoke from a Clubhouse perspective, using phrases like "The Work-Ordered Day" and "Colleagues." It was incredible hearing a politician speak specifically about the importance of Clubhouse in our own terms rather than generalities.

During some of my time there, I was able to explore both Oslo and Lillestrøm. I toured Oslo's cathedral, walked around the city visiting different shops, went to a large multi-cultural food vendor, played the world's largest sequencer, walked through the famous Vigeland Sculpture Park, ate at a number of intriguing restaurants, and spent entirely too much money on everything (Norway is expensive!)

The faculty meeting was held after the Seminar. Robby Vorspan from Clubhouse International was unable to attend, so we Skype'd her in. She appeared

**Continued on Page 4**



Serge Blasberg at the faculty meeting, with Robby Vorspan looming overhead.



Crystal proud of her pumpkin

## Member Spotlight: Jessica Foster

**Shy:** Hey Jessica! How are you?

**Jessica:** I could be better, but really I am ok. I am doing good. (she laughs out loud)

**Shy:** How long have you been a member?

**Jessica:** It will be three years at the end of January.

**Shy:** So how or why did you become a member?

**Jessica:** Well I needed help when I got out of jail with things like housing.

**Shy:** How did you hear about Elkhart County Clubhouse?

**Jessica:** I heard about ECC at Oaklawn, at the group home. Plus, I was invited by Greg and Cathy Ann.

**Shy:** Tell me a few of your fondest memories please!

**Jessica:** Well I can tell you one that I really enjoyed and that was Halloween this year! We made a haunted dungeon in the basement and I participated in it. I was a witch and I brewed potions in a cauldron as I spooked the guests that came through! I had a fun time scaring people and joking around with Brian Sherry and Greg!

**Shy:** Heck yeah! Sweet! I too really enjoyed the work and many different talents of the dungeon and all the cool costumes!

**Shy:** What kind of work have you done for the clubhouse?

**Jessica:** I volunteer here whenever I can now it is primarily clerical. I am still very productive in the workday. I am a member of the admin unit.

**Shy:** Would you like to add any final thoughts?

**Jessica:** I recommend the Elkhart County Clubhouse to anyone who has a mental illness. It is a great supportive community and it has really helped me with my introvertness.



## Continued from Page 3

As a giant floating head on the huge projector screen that loomed over the group. We spent several days sitting in a large room full of hardcore Clubhouse people arguing over revisions to the Standards, best practices for accreditation visits, and many other subjects. It was simultaneously exhausting and intellectually stimulating.

By far the worst part of the trip was going home, and not simply because this was a particularly enjoyable experience. My journey home began with the horrible realization that I had a fever and was really, really ill. This isn't the first time a colleague has infected me at the faculty meeting and this year I sat next to "Patient Zero". Rich did his best to make the trip as easy as possible for me as I went through a mountain of tissues on a 9-hour flight from to Chicago. It was trying, but absolutely worth it. Thanks to the Community Foundation of Elkhart County for helping fund the trip.

- Andrew Borntreger



Scott & Erich making lunch