

WilPower News

WilPower partners with people with mental illness to recover and pursue lives of meaning and purpose.

Page 2
Everyone
counts

Page 3
Founders and
Friends Society

Page 4
Walgreens
supports EBP

Page 5
Who needs
supportive housing?

Spring/Summer
2007
Vol. XXI
No. 1

The drafting table

WilPower joins Asian Human Services (AHS), Housing Opportunity Development Corporation (HODC), and Chicago Graystone, Inc. as partners with Trilogy, Inc. to develop single-site permanent affordable supportive housing in the near north or northwest suburbs. This unique partnership expands the service options available to people using any of our programs.

AHS provides primary-care medical services, soon to be available on-site at Trilogy. Its expertise in service to immigrants, refugees, and asylees includes translation in over 14 languages. Long a critical presence in the Chinatown and Uptown communities, AHS recently opened an office in Palatine and added housing to its multi-service provision mission.

HODC is a familiar name in these pages and again serves as the developer. It will obtain the real estate financing and manage acquisition and rehabilitation, depending on the structure.

As the sole for-profit partner, Chicago Graystone will serve as property manager. It provides for sale and rental housing for an economically diverse clientele, including affordable housing within and outside the city limits.

Thanks to Trilogy's invitation to join it as partners in the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Housing Development Institute, each of us has completed 81 hours of excellent instruction in all aspects of housing development delivered by funding agents, developers, architects, and other housing and service experts. And thanks to CSH and institute co-host, the Illinois Housing Development Authority, over 300 new supportive housing units will result from the ten teams who participated, from as far south as Marion, Illinois, to everywhere in between!



Project team seeks apartments like these owned by HODC

Everyone counts!

WilPower staff and members spent a cold and snowy night on January 25th visiting north suburban “hot spots” in order to count unsheltered homeless people.

Why?

We did this to collect information for Congress, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and, locally, for the Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County (on whose board WilPower sits) to better know the size and characteristics of the unsheltered homeless population.

The data are used to make resource allocation decisions. For instance, where in suburban Cook County should we develop more permanent housing? Where should shelter services be expanded? How do we distribute services that will prevent housing loss?

The north suburban teams counted 32 unsheltered homeless individuals that night using volunteers who included agency staff, college students, and people who were formerly homeless themselves. The west suburban teams counted 52 people and the south suburban teams counted 79 people. Overall, 72% of the individuals were male, 28% female, and 33% met the definition of chronic homelessness (i.e., an unaccompanied adult with a disabling condition who has been homeless for a year, or has experienced four episodes of homelessness in three years.)

A report detailing these count results will be issued later this spring.

Recovery quote

“Recovery is a right, not a privilege.”

- Linda Logan, NAMI CCNS Person of the Year in her acceptance speech.

Thank you and well wishes

We bid farewell to long-time board member Lydia Lilienheim at a springtime luncheon in her honor. For 17 years Lydia served with a fervor, never ceasing her advocacy for permanent supportive housing. We credit Lydia for influencing her filmmaking daughter and son-in-law to risk filming *Unbreakable Minds*, a documentary about three men and the role that housing and other services play in their recovery.



Lydia Lilienheim and family

Shown in television markets throughout Canada and the United States, the film has given hope to consumers and families throughout the continent. Thank you Lydia. We wish you the best, and good rest!

Many thanks to E. Martin Heldring for his leadership on the board’s executive committee. Among his many contributions are his help to improve our financial policies and procedures, and his work to review and revise the WilPower by-laws. He leaves WilPower and Illinois for a new position in Philadelphia. We wish him continued success.

Each semester WilPower plays host and mentor to bachelors and masters level students from local universities. We are dedicated to teaching about psychiatric rehabilitation, recovery and peer services, and individual job placement and support so that future workers are exposed to alternative models of treatment. A big thanks to the students who leave us this spring to further their studies at Loyola University, University of Illinois’ Jane Addams School of Social Work and the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Identity examination

We are examining the WilPower identity and its consistency with our mission to partner with people with mental illness to recover and pursue lives of meaning and purpose. Over the last months we have asked ourselves, "Does the 'who' match the 'what'? Does our name convey our mission? What does the word willpower mean in relation to recovery?"

We have received thoughtful and creative comments and suggestions. If you want to add your input to that of members, staff, and other stakeholders, kindly send a note to sshimon@wilpower.org, or leave a message at (847) 501-2878 x3. Thank you!

For crying artloud



Randy and Patrick

Artists from WilPower exhibited their work in a gallery show at Open Studio in Evanston in January. Friends, family, and folks from WilPower enjoyed drumming and accordion music, refreshments, and conversation with the painters, photographers,

sculptors, and crafters whose work was displayed from floor to ceiling all week. The musicians gave guests a chance to play their drums and there was a little dancing too.

The Open Studio Project teaches and facilitates the use of art-making for personal transformation. The project collaborates with community mental health centers, schools, shelters, hospitals, and other social services.



Our accordionist Marc

Staff and member news

Gregg Fields, M.S., C.A.D.C, told his inspiring story at the NAMI CCNS-hosted "Success Stories: Succeeding in Life Despite Mental Illness" forum in March. He talked about the onset and course of his serious mental illnesses, including drug addiction, and the treatments and supports he uses in his recovery. Gregg is a WilPower assertive outreach worker and one of our specialists available for members with co-occurring mental illness and substance abuse problems.

Congratulations, Vlad, on becoming a U.S. citizen!

Founders and Friends Society

WilPower is fortunate to have many individuals, families, and organizations who generously support the work we do. To recognize this support, we have developed the "**WILPOWER FOUNDERS AND FRIENDS SOCIETY**" as a way to show our appreciation to those we depend on most. Every level of giving comes with rewards and recognitions that are designed to express the gratitude of WilPower members, staff, and board to our "**Founders and Friends**". *

Founders - \$25,000 +

Engraved plaque on exterior of Northfield Clubhouse

Champions - \$10,000 - \$24,999

Name on exterior of one home, name on outside of Clubhouse group room

Advocates - \$5,000 - \$9,999

Dinner with Board President and Executive Director

Benefactors - \$2,500 - \$4,999

Two complimentary tickets to Annual Benefit

Partners - \$1,000 - \$2,499

Invitation to Donor Recognition Event

Sponsors - \$500 - \$999

Artwork created by WilPower artist

Mentors - \$250 - \$499

Member-created greeting cards

Friends - \$100 - \$249

Listing in Newsletter, Annual Report, and Website

* Each level benefit includes all preceding benefits.

Beat the winter blues

Nearly 80 people came out on a bitter cold night and made our dance party at the Morton Grove American Legion a terrific success as members and staff came out to mingle, groove, and feast with friends. The room was dimly lit and festively decorated, making a beautiful backdrop for the evening. Guests enjoyed meeting people from other agencies, including Trilogy, Lutheran Social Services, and Turning Point. As the DJs spun their tunes, members, staff, family, and friends were indistinguishable on the dance floor.



Guests dancing away the chill

- Erin Bender

The “two left feet” folks took pictures, sipped punch, chatted with friends, and ate plenty of pizza and snacks. Everyone is looking forward to next year’s winter dance!

Walgreens supports EBP

This spring WilPower implements Illness Management and Recovery (IMR), one of the six evidence-based practices (EBP) for people with serious mental illness that have demonstrated positive outcomes in multiple research studies. Thanks to a gift from Walgreens, we will contract with Mary Rychener to provide instruction and supervision to staff. Rychener is the Wellness Management and Recovery Coordinator at Thresholds, and trained with Susan Gingerich, co-author of the model.

The IMR program is a series of weekly sessions designed to help people develop personal strategies for coping with mental illness and its symptoms and move forward in their recovery. This service focuses on the following goals: 1) learning about mental illness and strategies for treatment, 2) decreasing symptoms, 3) reducing relapses and rehospitalizations, and 4) making progress toward goals and toward recovery. We are grateful to Walgreens for this opportunity and look forward to implementation of other evidence-based practices in the near future.

Now he’s cookin’!

Endearing, hard-working, and kind; these words describe Mike, who began using our supported employment services in January, 2006. At the time, he was looking for mailroom work as his time in the naval armed forces gave him experience and skills for general clerk positions. After years out of the work force, Mike’s motivation to pursue a job was ignited while volunteering on the WilPower kitchen crew. There he sharpened his skills, built his work stamina, and discovered his interest in working in foodservice.

The search was on. Mike pursued his own leads, and those supplied by the employment team. He used each interview and new job experience to build his skills and confidence. He tried a mailroom position for a short time, and tried other positions too.

In September of 2006 Mike found a great job match and has worked since then for Aramark at Niles North High School in their food service department. His first position was dishwasher, where his supervisor and the director of the foodservice gave him a ringing endorsement. However, he had an allergic reaction to the soap, and was forced to give up the position. He was discouraged, but didn’t give up. Mike, the employment team, and the high school worked together to find a comparable position.

Now Mike is the fry man. His job tasks include pulling the fries each morning, frying them and packaging them for the cafeteria line. His supervisor is very satisfied with Mike’s work and his demeanor is a bonus for the whole team. Mike says he enjoys his work and works hard every day. He likes his team and they like him. Congratulations, Mike, for persevering and finding a great job match.

Housing Survey Results

We received 130 responses—from members, staff, families, and others—to our new permanent supportive housing survey. We will use your input to plan future housing. The results are posted on our website www.wilpower.org under news and events.

Who needs supportive housing?

Our deepest thanks go to members of the WilPower board and staff, NAMI CCNS, and others from the community who attended a Wilmette Board of Trustees meeting in September to act as witnesses to the value of permanent, affordable, and supportive housing. Following is an excerpt of the testimony Executive Director Sue Shimon gave:

WilPower operates permanent, affordable, supportive housing in Evanston, Glencoe, Morton Grove, Northbrook, Northfield, Skokie, and Wilmette. There are 44 adults and seven children living in five group homes, a single family house, town house, and eight apartments that we manage. Unfortunately, despite the number of people I hear from on a regular basis who need supportive housing, there are no openings at WilPower.

A 2005 report by the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities sheds light on the housing affordability problems experienced by some of our most vulnerable neighbors—those with significant and long-term disabilities. It is virtually impossible for people with disabilities receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to obtain decent, safe, affordable, and accessible housing in their families' communities unless they receive housing assistance.

Among the key findings of the report:

- With incomes equal to only 18.4% of the median one person household income, people with disabilities receiving SSI are among the lowest income citizens of our country.
- In 2004, as a national average, a person receiving SSI needed to pay 109.6% of their entire monthly income in order to rent a modest one bedroom unit. In our area that percentage rises to 142.4%.
- Since 1998, the national average rent for a one bedroom unit has increased 59%—pricing millions of people with disabilities completely out of today's housing market.
- In 2004, a north suburban resident must have earned \$15.44 per hour at a full-time job in order to rent an affordable one bedroom unit.

There are approximately 4,500 adults with mental illness residing in nursing homes at a cost of \$30,000 per year, per person, financed 100% by the state of Illinois. Studies estimate that half of these men and women can live viable lives in the community with the right supports at a fraction of the cost. In Illinois today there are 5,466 units of supportive housing. It is estimated that nearly double this amount is needed. The supply falls dismally short of the need.

When WilPower opened its first residence for people who were homeless in 2003, the beds were filled by local citizens immediately. These residents graduated from local grade schools and high schools. Depending on your age, they were your classmates if you grew up here and they likely bag or scan your groceries today.

They are your neighbors today; their illnesses are stable, they are working and participating in the community, because supportive housing works. It ends the expensive cycle of people with special needs shuffling in and out of institutions and emergency care. It enables people to:

- Remain permanently in their homes
- Regain and maintain stable health
- Have freedom and necessary supports
- Get consistent and proper medical care
- Regain employment and stable social and family networks

Permanent supportive housing combines affordable housing linked with services tailored to the individual needs of the residents, allowing them to live independently while receiving support they need to remain housed, participate in family life, pursue college, maintain employment, and be near friends.

It is a proper response to the compelling housing affordability and community support services crisis experienced by people we know to ensure that a "fair share" of resources are provided to people with disabilities.



Board of Directors

*Jim Hunt, President
Irvina Warren, Vice President
Donald Hanigan, Treasurer
Mary Walther, Recording Secretary
Sylvia Adams
Bette Budnik
Jerry Carynski
George Harmon
Nancy Hug
Carrie Katz
Jim Morrow
Charles Morton
Minnie Morton
Judith Perlman
Barbara Peterson
Thomas Peterson
Betsy Rosenzweig*

Executive Director

Susan M. Shimon

Advisory Board

*Neil H. Adelman
Charles Connors
Elizabeth Coulson, State Rep.
Dorothea DeGutis, M.D.
Jay Forman
Cass Friedman
Louis I. Lang, State Rep.
Norm Lee
Robert Lundin
Erma Medgyesy
Sheila O'Neill
Jeffrey Schoenberg, State Sen.
Clarice Stetter*

Dated Material — Please Deliver Promptly

Printed on recycled paper.

Mark your calendars

Evening to Remember—"South of the Border"
August 26

Springfield Mental Health Rally May 9

WilPower Independence Day Celebration July 2

Before Hours Networking Event
May 8, 7:30 - 9:00 AM

Expressive Arts Festival July 27

Wish list

The WilPower drumming group needs more drums for our weekly sessions. Do you have a Remo or Djembe type drum that you can donate? Please contact Wendy Trafny at www.wtrafny@wilpower.org or (847) 386-3082. Thank you!

Immediate tax deductions for future charitable donations

Several major financial intuitions including Fidelity Investments and Charles Schwab offer Donor-Advised Charitable Gift Investment Funds which provide immediate income tax deductions with the client retaining control over future charitable giving choices. The most tax effective approach would be to donate non-cash assets (investment securities, etc.) which have appreciated in value. The IRS allows an income tax deduction for the full market value of the donation up to 30% of total adjusted gross income.

Cash gifts can also be donated to the Charitable Gift Fund and are eligible for an income tax deduction of up to 50% of adjusted gross income. Once the investments or cash are donated to the Charitable Gift Fund, the donor chooses where the funds are invested (money market or equity investment funds). The client chooses which qualified charity will ultimately receive the donated funds.