



# HOPE *Clubhouse*

Healing • Opportunity • Purpose • Empowerment

*A Publication by Hope Clubhouse of Southwest Florida, Inc.*

Fall 2011 Newsletter

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Debra Webb  
Executive Director

## Wishing You and Yours a Happy & Healthy New Year

Dear Friends of HOPE Clubhouse,

On behalf of the members and Board of Directors of Hope Clubhouse of Southwest Florida Inc., we would like to wish you and yours a happy, healthy holiday season and would like to share a bit of our story.

What began as a small, grassroots effort operating in a tiny 500 square foot space has become a transforming force for Lee County. HOPE Clubhouse is an exceptional place, an exceptionally good place, where people with lives once shrouded in darkness and despair experience hope and opportunity. At HOPE Clubhouse, adults living with a severe and persistent mental illness join a community built on the philosophy that work is the therapy that changes people and lives.

One in four individuals will suffer from a mental disorder in the next year such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or severe depression. Many are either among the homeless or on the fringe of homelessness. Many more remain isolated from society due to stigma, poor social skills, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence. They merely exist.

Jourdan is a 21 year old young woman. She lives with multiple mental illnesses including: bipolar disorder, anxiety, and post traumatic stress disorder. Before HOPE Clubhouse, Jourdan isolated herself in her house and lived in a dark hole of fear and depression. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2010 she tried to take her own life; luckily she was unsuccessful and found hope. In her own words, "HOPE Clubhouse changed my life. I am able to maintain stability and have made plenty of friends and met people that believe in me. I have self-worth and confidence all over again. Most importantly, I am no longer defined by my illness."

We cannot help Jourdan or anyone else without you. We have served 82 people in the last year and a

half and have a waiting list. Our ability to assist, promote, and partner with them in their effort to recover social and vocational skills and become employed is directly dependent on your generosity. Your contributions to HOPE Clubhouse directly support our members in daily rehabilitative service.

Please make HOPE clubhouse part of your new year giving by mailing us a donation today, or you can donate online at [www.hopeclubhouse.org](http://www.hopeclubhouse.org).

When you donate, you too can know the joy of helping someone realize a full life, as Jourdan is doing. It truly is a priceless feeling!

Hope Clubhouse wishes everyone Happy Holidays and a prosperous new year.

Sincerely,

Debra Webb  
Executive Director

### Our Mission Statement

HOPE Clubhouse is a community resource that fills a significant gap in the opportunities available for people living with mental illness in Southwest Florida. Our HOPE Clubhouse offers opportunities for meaningful work, education, friendships, and access to housing in a supportive, caring, dignified, and respectful community setting. Members of HOPE Clubhouse will develop hope for recovery and achievement of their full human potential.

# Pete Earley Speaks about HOPE!

By Jackson Bates

Award winning journalist and nationally known mental health advocate, Peter Earley, was in Ft. Myers at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theater, October 7th. Early spoke to over two hundred people regarding the need for mental health reform, at a luncheon hosted by the HOPE Clubhouse. Earley is best known as the author of "CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness", which was a finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize. In addition to Earley, HOPE Clubhouse member, Jourdan Miller and her mother, Joyce, gave speeches on living with mental illness and how it has affected their lives.

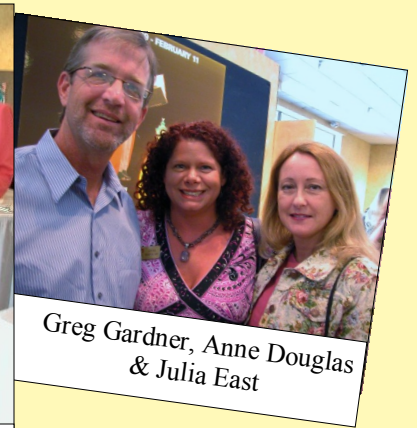
"We are very honored that Pete Earley has agreed to join us for our first annual luncheon in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month," said HOPE clubhouse director Debbie Webb. "HOPE Clubhouse has filled a significant gap in the mental health system of Southwest Florida based on the principle that meaningful work is critical in bringing positive change to the lives of those living with mental illness."



Pat Meyer, Carl Meyer,  
Joyce Miller with Peter Earley



Clubhouse Members & Staff with Pete Earley



Greg Gardner, Anne Douglas  
& Julia East

## A Member's Perspective:

### Escaping from the Depths of Depression

By Jackson Bates

Last March I went to the emergency room because I was having trouble breathing. The next thing I remember is waking up three months later after having open heart surgery. According to doctors, my heart valve had been replaced and I had to be resuscitated four times during the process. I had always had problems with mental illness, but this event seemed to compound the symptoms.

My depression was worse than ever. I was sleeping 12 to 14 hours a day. I had lost interest in anything productive. I quit applying for work, had no confidence in my abilities and wasn't even trying to "get better" anymore.

One day I was watching the news and saw a story about HOPE Clubhouse. The only thing I heard was that they help you find work and it's free. My decision to go there has resulted in so much more.

I now have a place to go where I feel safe and appreciated. I attend daily just like a job and it has made all the difference in my life. I feel like a part of something

bigger than myself. I have responsibilities at the Clubhouse that are crucial to day to day operations. This accountability is one of the things that get me out of bed each morning.

I have discovered that the best way to "get better" is to help others. The members and staff at our Clubhouse are amazing. Giving assistance with things like job applications and computer training has been more rewarding for me than it could ever be for them. At the Clubhouse I have made friends that are healthy for my recovery and theirs.

I have decided to go back to college in January. Before the Clubhouse I had given up on furthering my education because I had no self confidence. I am also in the process of starting a new job before the first of the year. I cannot begin to tell you how excited I am about this opportunity. The HOPE Clubhouse has not only saved my life, it has given me back a life worth living.

# ◆◆◆◆◆ HOPE Clubhouse Celebrates New Home ◆◆◆◆◆

HOPE Clubhouse celebrated the grand opening of its new home on November 8th. Our 2800 square foot facility was purchased by John and Kappy King. "John and Kappy King recognize the valuable service that HOPE Clubhouse is providing in helping to rehabilitate those living with mental illness in our community. We can't thank them enough for their ongoing support and encouragement" said Debra Webb.

According to Kappy King, a board member of HOPE Clubhouse, "This has been a dream of ours to be able to help people in the area living with mental illness. If this clubhouse had been available when our children were in the initial stages of mental illness, it would have been such a blessing. Here are some photos as a memory of the open house."



Kappy King, Debra Webb & Ann Amall



Bill Madaus & Susan Tew



Ken & Joyce Miller  
with Mary Fairweather



David Winters & Anne Douglas



Christa Carlsen, Sheri Iwanow,  
Carolyn Carlsen & Jen Yontz-Orlando



Keith Alexander, Carolyn Johnson,  
Debra Webb & Jourdan Miller

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## What the Clubhouse Has Done for Me

*By Kyle Kontak*

I started going to the HOPE Clubhouse a year and a half ago, where I learned life skills and made new friends. HOPE Clubhouse found me and two other members housing and we have been living there for seven months. Down the road I am planning to move into a house.

I haven't been able to find a job and in the past I have had trouble keeping a job because of my learning disability. I am not as fast as the others and the HOPE Clubhouse has helped me get a job at Old Navy. I have been there for a week and I really like it. HOPE Clubhouse has changed my life for the better.



# HOPE Clubhouse

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**HOPE Clubhouse**  
**3602 Broadway**  
**Fort Myers, FL 33901**

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Anyone wishing to make a donation may do so with a check made out to Hope Clubhouse or with a Visa or Master Card by calling Hope Clubhouse at 239-267-1777. Thanking you in advance for supporting people living with mental illness.

## International Standards for Clubhouse Programs

The International Standards for Clubhouse Programs, consensually agreed upon by the worldwide Clubhouse community, define the Clubhouse Model of rehabilitation. The principles expressed in these Standards are at the heart of the Clubhouse community's success in helping people with mental illness to stay out of hospitals while achieving social, financial, educational and vocational goals. The Standards also serve as a "bill of rights" for members and a code of ethics for staff, board and administrators. The Standards insist that a Clubhouse is a place that offers respect and opportunity to its members.

### **Standard #2**

***The Clubhouse has control over its acceptance of new members. Membership is open to anyone with a history of mental illness, unless that person poses a significant and current threat to the general safety of the Clubhouse community.***

We make our own decisions about the suitability of membership for each person on the basis of our own experience with that person.

During orientation at HOPE Clubhouse, potential members spend their first day learning about HOPE Clubhouse, the Clubhouse movement, and most importantly, the new approach to mental illness for which Clubhouses are responsible. Starting on the second day, potential members work in units of the Clubhouse side-by-side with members and staff. All efforts are made to draw them into the work and relationships of the unit; no distinction is made between potential members and people who are already colleagues in terms of their access to work opportunities. We assume that potential members will get caught up in whatever is going on, and many people do!