

Clubhouse International Download and Discuss

Clubhouse Coalitions

As members and staff join together to build and nurture a Clubhouse community, so Clubhouses around the world have joined together in Clubhouse coalitions to support and strengthen each other. Through Clubhouse coalitions, Clubhouses can assist each other through the various struggles and challenges they face. Established Clubhouses can assist the newly developing ones. Vital resources from the larger community can be tapped and multiplied.

As individuals have experienced in coming together in Clubhouses, so Clubhouses also experience: “We Are Not Alone.”

The primary work of Clubhouse coalitions includes:

- **Exchange of information and collegial consultation**

Coalitions utilize regular meetings, E-mail, newsletters, and phone calls among coalition Clubhouses for information exchange and advice on best practices for the work-ordered day, the evening and weekend program, wellness functions, services for members with substance abuse problems, and any other Clubhouse concerns.

- **Bolstering TE, Supported, and Independent Employment opportunities**

Coalitions organize to effectively share job leads and job development strategies.

- **Monitoring the progress and effectiveness of coalition Clubhouses**

Coalitions utilize surveys of employment, housing, attendance, and other indicators of the effectiveness of Clubhouse services and opportunities.

- **Advocacy for Clubhouse funding**

Coalitions work cooperatively to sponsor advocacy for Clubhouse funding from government and private funding sources.

- **Public awareness of Clubhouses and mental illness**

Coalitions sponsor events to raise funds and generate awareness of Clubhouse services and mental health issues among the general public.

- **Promote and assist new Clubhouses and Clubhouse working groups**

Coalitions organize and promote initiatives to support developing Clubhouses.

- **Assist coalition Clubhouses to prepare for ICCD certification**

Coalitions offer collegial consultation, workshops, and sharing of information and resources to coalition Clubhouses preparing for certification.

We asked three established, recognized ICCD Clubhouse coalitions to share with us a few of their recent accomplishments. Our hope is that other coalitions will use these ideas to further their thinking about what coalitions can achieve!

- **The Swedish Coalition of Clubhouses** has worked together over the last several years to advocate for a significant change in the benefits structure in Sweden, which had seriously impacted on members' ability to work on TE jobs without losing their benefits. This past year, the Coalition was successful, and as of January 2009 many more members can access TE opportunities without facing dramatic cuts to their benefits.

The Swedish Coalition has taken a lead role in creating a unified communication linkage between the Swedish Clubhouses and the ICCD.

The Swedish Coalition has prioritized the development of strong working relationships with government representatives, to assist in advocating for Clubhouses.

- **The Hawaii Clubhouse Coalition (HCC)** successfully advocated for better access to affordable dental services for people with mental illness.

The HCC successfully hosted the 10th Western Regional Clubhouse Conference in October 2008.

The HCC has launched wellness teams. Members and staff are losing weight, walking more, eating better, changing their menu choices.

The HCC has partnered together on NAMI walks, voter registration drives, public awareness campaigns, specifically educating state legislators about Clubhouse.

- **The Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition** developed an employment expansion model and gained grant funding for it enabling the MCC to play a national role in helping US Clubhouses expand employment opportunities for members.

The model includes:

- Massachusetts Clubhouses meet monthly to share job leads and help each other improve their job development strategies.
- The MCC conducts a statewide employment survey with the assistance of UMASS Medical School and releases the results at a press and public awareness event at the Massachusetts Statehouse each year. Funders of Clubhouses are invited to the event to see the outcomes that state tax dollars have supported.
- The MCC assists member Clubhouses in generating positive, employment focused publicity in relation to the event, getting articles in local newspapers and company newsletters about Clubhouse employment and members employment success.
- The MCC utilizes a list of employers the survey helps to generate to share job leads at the monthly employment committee meetings.
- The grant funded project helped the MCC hire staff and generate employer reference letters for US ICCD Certified Clubhouses to use as a tool to support job development and expansion efforts
- The MCC utilized the grant fund to develop a Project Employer Advisory Board of employers who are helping coalition Clubhouses understand their companies better and to reach out to them more effectively for additional jobs.
- The MCC Employment Committee has worked with select employers to remove hiring barriers within those companies making it easier for ICCD certified Clubhouses to develop TE and SE positions with them.

- The Massachusetts Clubhouse Coalition developed a Supported Housing model and helped six of its member Clubhouses gain funding for a Clubhouses Housing Support Project.
- The MCC worked with the mental health advocacy community, including NAMI and other organizations to project mental health funding in the state. In some years the MCC was instrumental in getting \$24 million dollars restored to MA DMH community services.
- With MCC support, coalition Clubhouse members and staff have formed 28 Dual Recovery Anonymous meetings in the community or in Clubhouses during lunch time or after the work ordered day.
- The MCC (32 member Clubhouses including all of their members and staff plus MCC staff) have played such a successful role in educating DMH and legislators in MA that this past fall when all community mental health programs except housing were eliminated, Clubhouses were not.

If your coalition has had any notable successes in the recent past, please let us know. We can continue to pass along exciting coalition projects and initiatives, so that other coalitions can have the benefit of your many and varied accomplishments.