

WE VALUE EXPERTISE

We were pleased to welcome Lee Kellogg, Program Officer from Clubhouse International, who visited with us this week. Lee traveled to Florida for an accreditation visit at Club Fellowship in Miami-Dade County, and stopped by the Academy on his way back to Michigan. Members and staff were excited to share work-ordered day and employment experiences with Lee. The Academy currently holds a 3-year accreditation with Clubhouse International. We are indebted to Clubhouse International for their expertise and guidance, especially during the early stages of our development. It is amazing to be part of a world-wide movement of more than 300 Clubhouse programs worldwide!



(left to right kneeling) Kristen Disler and Idanes Paredes, (left to right back row) Jacob Yohe, Elaina James, Joanne Campbell, Jodi-lee Weiss, Paul Hennekes, William McKeever, Rima Ghalieh, Patty Haltinner and Lee Kellogg.

PEO LUNCH & LEARN

We had the privilege of hosting a Lunch & Learn for PEO, a community-based educational and philanthropic group for women. They read an article about us and were intrigued by our mission. Ten guests toured our facility and were full of questions and insights. It's always a pleasure to see our own Academy through fresh eyes and be called upon to speak about how and why we operate as we do. At the end of their visit, they seemed to really understand our philosophy, and we felt that we had made new friends.



Chantel Gingerich explains our Transitional Employment program to our guests.

AT CENTER STAGE

by Aaron Collmer

Last week, we had our seasonal Ambassador Luncheon. It was a bit challenging for me as I went out of my comfort zone and read a speech about my time at the Academy since I started. I practiced my speech numerous times and by the day of the luncheon I was ready. Speaking about my challenges and fears was very rewarding when I overcame them. I especially want to thank Jodi-lee Weiss for her help in preparation for my speech. The whole Academy did an excellent job and it was one of our best luncheons to date.

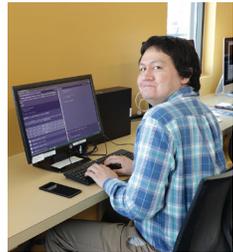


Aaron Collmer shared his journey with a crowd of more than 50 guests.

THE CODE TO SUCCESS

by Eric Flanagan

Computer programming touches all of our lives, whether we know it or not. From aviation to zoology we rely on computers for nearly everything we do.



I focus on “back end” programming. “Front end” refers to what you see and interact with when you go to a website, and it requires a good visual design sense. This is not my strong suit, which is why the less flashy side appeals to me. Back end has to do with accessing, and using the data the website uses and gathers.

I use this to help the Academy collect and use the information on the computers to create reports on various topics that are important for us to know, such as statistics, trends and contacts. These reports will be more accurate and can be created automatically, freeing up time and people to work on other projects. With so much going on at the Academy, that's a very good thing.

HOSTING OUR PARTNERS



This week, several counselors from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) visited us for a tour. One of them, Canada West, has championed us from our beginning and, in fact, she was the first counselor at DVR to send us a referral. The other two counselors, Kathy Gregory and Dawn Davis, had never been here, and they were quite excited to learn about our program. Among the many things that they do, DVR works with agencies that provide job placement to people who have mental health diagnoses. They loved our slow-and-steady approach to recovery and employment success. Canada and Kathy stayed for lunch and got to enjoy the fruits of our collaborative process.



(left to right) Jodi-lee Weiss, Kathy Gregory and Canada West

GETTING MY ART OUT IN THE COMMUNITY

by Chantel Gingerich

While staffing my booth at a recent craft show, I was approached by a woman who was interested in my paintings. We chatted for a while, then she asked if I could custom paint a picture for her. She wanted a painting of a Volkswagen Beetle which happens to be one of my favorite things to paint! She gave me a photo of the car she wanted me to paint on canvas. I had a canvas and all the needed acrylic paints already on hand, so I got right to work. I really love painting and it helps to relieve my stress. This was my first commissioned painting and I hope to sell more in the future.



Original artwork created by Chantel Gingerich



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UPCOMING EVENTS



Monday, March 2

Telephone Training - 8 a.m.

Tuesday, March 3

Tour Guide Training - 8 a.m.

Wednesday, March 4

Menu Planning - 11:45 a.m.

Wellness Wednesday - 3 p.m.

Thursday, March 5

Customer Service Training - 8 a.m.

Employment Workshop - 8:15 a.m.

Newsroom Meeting - 11:30 a.m.

Friday, March 6

Welcome Desk Training - 8 a.m.

ONGOING

Breakfast is served:

Monday-Thursday, from 8:15 - 8:45 a.m.

Friday Buffet, 8:45 a.m.



The Academy values our partnership with the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). NAMI provides support, education, awareness and advocacy to individuals with mental illness and their families. Learn more through their Peer to Peer and Family to Family classes. Visit namisarasotacounty.org for more.

Wellness

February was the month of love and we emphasized the importance of loving thyself and boosting self-esteem. As we align our wellness program with the mental health calendar, we will be exploring healthy food choices for national nutrition month. As you choose healthy foods you are automatically exercising self love. How beautiful is that?

