



LAUGHTER MEETS PURPOSE

by David Meyersburg

I first heard the “siren’s call of the stage” at the ripe old age of 16 but was far too self-conscious to heed the call. I eventually made my way in front of the footlights on my 50th birthday as a supporting actor in Neil Simon’s “Fools.” Acting became my avocation, and the draw of the



(L to R) David Meyersburg and Ian Churchill emceeding our “Field of Dreams” fundraiser

stage never left me. An inveterate punster, getting a groan in response to my attempts at humor has always been as rewarding as a laugh. I’m just as happy when the person I’m tormenting comes up with the answer to one of my silly word puzzles as not. In the last few years, I have come to realize that it is important for me

not only to bring humor to others, but to be helping them as well. I have an inventory of skills and abilities beyond imparting laughter, and I’m open to new ways to share and learn. Perhaps that was evident to our program coordinator Billy Elkins when he approached me about sharing the Master of Ceremonies honors for our fundraising efforts in March.

I have long since put aside any problems with facing an audience, so the opportunity appealed to me. The search for a co-host took some doing but I was eventually paired with fellow member Ian Churchill. We were already friendly, and “worked together” at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. And so the emcees were established... Meyersburg and Churchill... or Churchill and Meyersburg as Ian persists in saying! Both of us contribute to the graphic design & multimedia team, and we have quite literally worked elbow to elbow for some time, swapping stories, sharpening our technical abilities and helping out where we could—but this was special.

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WARM WELCOME TO DEBRA ODOM

by Debra Odom

I moved to Manatee County 51 years ago from New Jersey. I was a housewife for 23 years until my husband Mason passed away in 2017 from metastatic cancer.



Cesar Rodriguez from Centerstone helped get me into the Academy. My living situation isn’t ideal, and I wanted somewhere to go during the day to be around people and feel productive. I use the Academy’s transportation program to get to the Academy, which means that I’m here for five hours a day, which is a lot, but I’m building stamina.

When I’m here, I usually work in the culinary team, setting tables, making floral arrangements, hanging chef coats after they’ve been laundered, and helping to make lunch. I’ve helped make lemon pepper chicken and steak fajitas, and they both turned out well.

My goals moving forward are to get better at following through on tasks and branching out into the multimedia team. Today I made a birthday card for a fellow member for the first time and I liked the way it turned out. Since I finished making the card and I also finished writing this article, I guess I’m getting better at my first goal of following through! The Academy is improving my life!

We even went out with the video crew to Ed Smith Stadium and participated in shooting footage for the baseball-themed event.

With our creative director Jodi-lee Weiss taking notes, Ian and I provided brief life histories for her use in writing our scripts. After some practice, and some editing, we mounted the stage on the evening of March 12, 2026 scripts in hand, to kick off the Academy’s spring fundraiser, “Field of Dreams.”

TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE

by Kylee Silverman and Kerry Morrison



(L to R) Member Yvonne Miller with Kylee Silverman and Kerry Morrison in culinary

We'd like to thank everyone at the Academy at Glengary for welcoming us and creating a wonderful environment where we were able to learn so much. We appreciated the ability to get to know the members and their unique and inspiring stories. Prior to our experience at the Academy, we learned the basic framework of the Clubhouse model, but nothing

compares to the five weeks when we were fully engaged with the members. Thanks to the members and staff, we are leaving with an abundance of knowledge about how important and meaningful clubhouses can be for members of the community.

Throughout our time at the Academy, we immersed ourselves in the three teams: culinary, business & technology, and graphic design & multimedia. Within our first week of working alongside members, we saw how much autonomy is given to them to use their interests and skills to help the Academy run successfully. Not only do the members play a crucial role in running the Academy, but they're highly supported by staff if they have an interest in transitioning into employment or continuing education.

We were given the opportunity to share our knowledge on various topics such as wellness, creativity, and body mechanics. One workshop we did with members was a passion project, in which members reflected on their hobbies and skills and developed a business model or logo that represented their interests. Not only did this spark creativity, but it also opened a space where we were

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able to get to know the members on a deeper level, learning what truly matters to them. We appreciate that the members participated in our workshops, as well as give insight on our topics. Although our time together came to an end quickly, we are eager to share what we've learned about the Academy with our community. The relationships we built here are something we will always cherish, and they will continue to inspire us as we use what we've learned to become successful occupational therapists.



ACTS Clubhouse member Frederick "JR" Richardson filming in multimedia

ALL COME TO SHINE

by Ray Reilly

Yesterday we had guests from ACTS ("All Come To Shine") Clubhouse in Tampa. Staff Jasmine Trezza and Daniel Mercedes were joined by member Frederick "JR" Richardson. I provided a tour before they joined the teams.

Jasmine and Daniel joined our culinary team and JR headed for graphic design & multimedia where he helped create a video. We were

excited to learn that JR hosts a podcast for ACTS and were very interested in learning from him.

Later, Daniel visited our Transitional Employment at the Public Defender's office where he saw member Gerry Zago in action. Jasmine spent time in business & technology and also met with our enrollment coordinator to see how we do intakes and enrollment. It was great meeting them and learning about their program while sharing what we do. I hope I get to visit ACTS in the near future.



(L to R) Daniel Mercedes & Jasmine Trezza in culinary

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