

Greater Heights Clubhouse

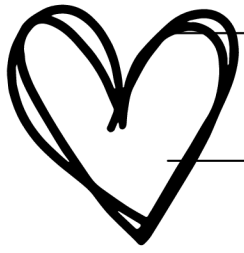
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| | Issue No.14 February 2025 | |
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Mission Statement:

The BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse is a community-based rehab program for Brooklynites living with mental illness. While all members in the program have a history of mental illness, many of our members also face barriers like chemical dependency, illiteracy, housing and job insecurity. Members work through these challenges in our program, gaining greater self-esteem and fighting the stigma and social isolation associated with psychiatric illness.

Our unique, collaborative model allows members and staff to work side by side to run the daily operations of the Clubhouse, gaining essential life-skills that help participants in all areas of life. This clubhouse is accredited by Clubhouse International, which works to help people with mental illness achieve their social, financial, educational, and vocational goals.



Featured articles

Love Heals

The way we feel about each other is something rare,
Especially the way we show that we care.
My life has changed since you came back to me,
And I promise, soon my wife you'll be.

Words can't explain the way that I feel,
Two lost souls, finally healed.
I promise forever, I'll stand by your side,
Always honest, with love as my guide.

When it comes to you, no one compares,
Our love is full, a bond we share.
So happy Valentine's Day to my only soulmate,
I'll love you forever, not just on this date.

Each day, I fall deeper in love,
Blessed by the heavens above.
At first, you had your doubts, it's true,
So I showed you what real love can do.

Now we both see that our love is real,
So, believe you are the only one I feel.



DTR (Double Trouble Recovery) Group

Our DTR has been up and running. DTR stands for Double Trouble Recovery.

It helps members with dual diagnosis. Dual diagnosis is people have mental health issues and substance abuse. We learn coping skills and realize the journey to recovery doesn't happen overnight and takes patience. Members come and attend as we share personal stories about addiction. There are more types of addiction besides drugs.

Our group is member lead, and I am the one who orchestrates it. Although I lead the group, I don't say it as my group. This group is for the members including me.

I suffered from substance abuse in that and this group keeps me motivated to continue practicing sobriety. Our group is also confidential. This enables members to feel safe and not judged. We all have things in common and people talk about secrets of addictions and how substances impact our lives in a negative way.

I really enjoy our group and members do also. I'm looking forward to continuing to lead the group.

Articles By Leon Sims

Introducing
the OMNY card.



The newest way
to tap and go.

Featured articles



The OMNY Card: A Game Changer

When I first got my very own OMNY card, I was so happy—it was a big moment for me! The OMNY card is incredibly easy to use. When I get on the bus, all I have to do is tap my card on the machine at the front, and I'm good to go. That's exactly what I did the first time, and it felt great.

I use my OMNY card Monday through Friday, and when it expires on October 28, my provider will get me a new one. I love this card because it's much faster and more convenient than my old reduced-fare MetroCard. Before switching to OMNY, I was using my reduced-fare MetroCard up until its expiration date on February 28, 2025. Now, with OMNY, I feel fantastic! It has truly been the best idea ever.

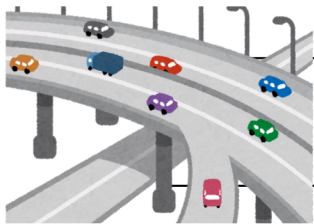
Even when I'm waiting for the bus, I know I'll get to my destination faster and safer. OMNY is a hit for me, and I'll keep using it. Some people still use regular MetroCards, but at least they're getting where they need to go. I've had my OMNY card since last year, and I just have to say—thank you, OMNY, for making my life so much easier!

I always keep my OMNY card in a MetroCard holder inside my pocketbook so I won't lose it. I only take it out when the bus comes. If anything ever happens to my card, I let my provider know right away. Having an OMNY card means I have to take care of it—it's my responsibility. It's simple: tap and go, and that's it!

If you're interested in getting an OMNY card, you can find them at locations like CVS, 7-Eleven, Walgreens, and some subway stations. It's worth checking out! OMNY cards are so easy to use, and I plan to keep mine for as long as I live. As long as I have my OMNY card, I know I'm doing better than expected. This card has completely changed my life, and I absolutely love it!



*An Article By:
Cassandra Stukes*



Featured articles

NYC's Congestion Pricing: What It Means for You

What is Congestion Pricing?

Congestion pricing involves charging a toll to vehicles entering Manhattan below 61st Street during peak traffic hours. The goal is to reduce gridlock, lower air pollution, and encourage the use of public transportation. Similar programs in cities like London and Singapore have successfully reduced traffic, improved air quality, and funded transit upgrades. NYC's program would be the first in the U.S. to implement congestion pricing on such a large scale.

How Much Does It Cost?

The MTA has released a proposed toll structure, though final details may still be adjusted as the program nears launch:

- Passenger vehicles: Up to \$15 per trip during peak hours.
- Motorcycles: Charged at 50% of the passenger vehicle rate.
- Trucks and commercial vehicles: Higher tolls based on size and weight.

Positive Effects of Congestion Pricing

1. **Less Traffic & Safer Streets:** A decrease in cars on the road means smoother traffic flow and safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.
2. **Better Public Transportation:** The program is expected to generate approximately \$1 billion annually for the MTA, which will go toward upgrades to subway and bus services. These funds may also help improve accessibility across the system and reduce delays, making transit more reliable for everyone.
3. **More Space for Pedestrians & Cyclists:** The program will free up space for expanding bike lanes, pedestrian zones, and other public spaces, encouraging walking and cycling as alternatives to driving.

Negative Effects of Congestion Pricing

1. **Increased Costs for Drivers:** For commuters who rely on driving due to lack of public transportation options, congestion pricing will increase costs, especially during peak travel hours. This may be a burden for those who have no viable alternative.
2. **Impact on Businesses:** Small businesses that rely on deliveries or in-person customers could face higher transportation costs. The program may also deter some customers from driving into Manhattan, especially if parking is limited or expensive.
3. **Higher Rideshare & Taxi Fares:** Uber, Lyft, and taxi fares could rise as companies may pass on congestion tolls to riders, making trips into Manhattan more expensive for everyone.

Community Reactions

There is a clear divide in how New Yorkers are reacting to congestion pricing. Many residents and environmental advocates argue that it's a necessary step for reducing pollution, improving transit, and making the city more livable. However, others feel the tolls will place an unfair financial burden on low-income drivers, small businesses, and those who depend on cars for work. Community leaders and local businesses have voiced concerns about how the program will affect their daily operations and the economy.

What's Next?

In February 2025, the Trump administration revoked federal approval for New York City's congestion pricing program, citing concerns over its financial impact on working-class Americans and small businesses. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy criticized the \$9 toll for burdening these groups. In response, the MTA filed a federal lawsuit to keep the toll in effect, arguing that the program had already reduced traffic in Manhattan by 9%. Governor Kathy Hochul and MTA CEO Janno Lieber have vowed to fight the federal suspension and keep the toll active. The timeline for the legal proceedings is uncertain, potentially keeping the toll in place for an extended period.

An Article By
Jenny Flor



Featured articles

Super Bowl 59 Clubhouse Party

On Sunday February 9th the Clubhouse held a wonderful Super Bowl Party. We had well over thirty people in attendance and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. We had great food for the party and served Meatballs, Pigs in a blanket, Vegetable Orzo, Sausage and Pineapple, Guacamole with Salsa and Chips, Pretzels, Cookies, Celery and Carrots with Hummus dip, Stuffed Grape Leaves, Pizzas, Buffalo Chicken Wings with Blue Cheese Dressing, Super Bowl Cake and Iced Tea.

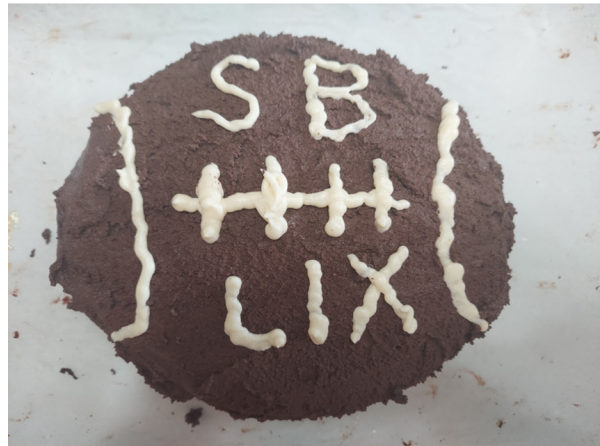
A bunch of people helped out. A special thanks to our Advisory Board Member Advaita Anne and her friend Joe Dougherty who volunteered and came to do prep work, set up and provided food service. Bill Lampert's wife Naomi Lehr was incredibly helpful throughout the event and did the baking of the cake and the cookies that were used for prizes. Francis Moore did a ton of great cleaning and Timothy Dabriel did quite a bit of work too.

As for the game, it was pretty one-sided. The Philadelphia Eagles dominated the two time defending champion Kansas City Chiefs racing out to a 24 to 0 halftime lead. By the fourth quarter, the lead ballooned to 40 to 6. The Chiefs added two very late TDS and two point conversions to make the game's final score 40 to 22 and give the misperception that it was less of a blowout than it actually was. Eagles Quarterback Jalen Hurts had a great game and was named the Super Bowl MVP.

Despite the fact that the game wasn't very close, all the people in attendance seemed to really have a great time.



*An Article By:
Bill Lampert*



NAMI-NYC Advocacy Day

GHCH Takes Action at Advocacy Day in Albany!

On Tuesday, February 12th, GHCH Staff Generalist and *NAMI-NYC Advocacy Ambassador Sabrina Garcia* and member *Joy Daniel* traveled to Albany as part of NAMI Advocacy Day—and what an incredible experience it was!

"Words can't explain how great the experience was," said Joy. "I went along so we could express to Congress how mentally ill people get the short end of the stick. We are not properly taken care of when it comes to healthcare."

Joy and Sabrina joined advocates from across the state to meet with local Assembly members and Senators, pushing for critical funding and policy changes that support mental health services. They were split into groups based on their zip codes, ensuring they met with their communities' representatives. Together, they shared their personal stories to highlight key issues, including:

- ✓ The Social Work Workforce Act – Eliminate the LMSW exam which has shown to be bias.
- ✓ Daniel's Law – Calling for crisis response teams led by mental health experts instead of police.
- ✓ Peers Not Police – Advocating for trained peer support in crises.
- ✓ Treatment NOT Jail – Ensuring individuals receive treatment instead of incarceration.
- ✓ Suicide Prevention Education – Bringing mental health education to 7th-12th graders.

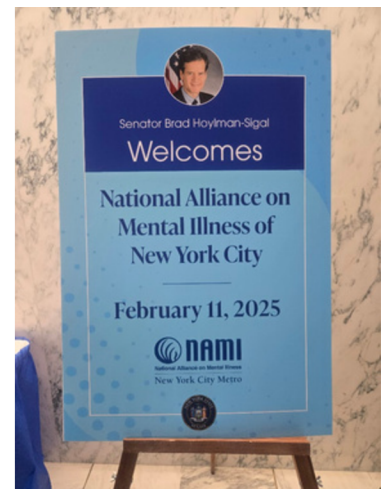
As they rallied on the steps of the Capitol, they made their voices heard—loud and clear! A major victory? Their advocacy helped secure a commitment from mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani to support Daniel's Law! This was a powerful reminder that when we speak up, we can make a difference.

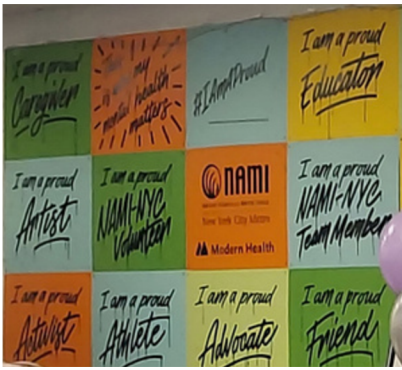
Representing GHCH at Advocacy Day was an unforgettable experience, and we are proud to be part of this movement. Let's continue to fight for better mental health care and services for all!

#OurVoicesMatter #MentalHealthForAll #GHCHAdvocates



*An Article By:
Sabrina Garcia*





Featured articles

Greater Heights Clubhouse Attends NAMI-NYC Winter Social

On Saturday, February 22, 2025, staff and members of Greater Heights Clubhouse (GHCH) had the wonderful opportunity to attend the NAMI-NYC Winter Social. The event, held at NAMI's West 38th Street office, was a fantastic way to connect with the greater mental health community while enjoying food, fun, and creative expression.

The afternoon kicked off with delicious pizza and salad, offering everyone a chance to sit, eat, and mingle with members of the NAMI community. The welcoming atmosphere made it easy to forge new friendships and strengthen existing connections.

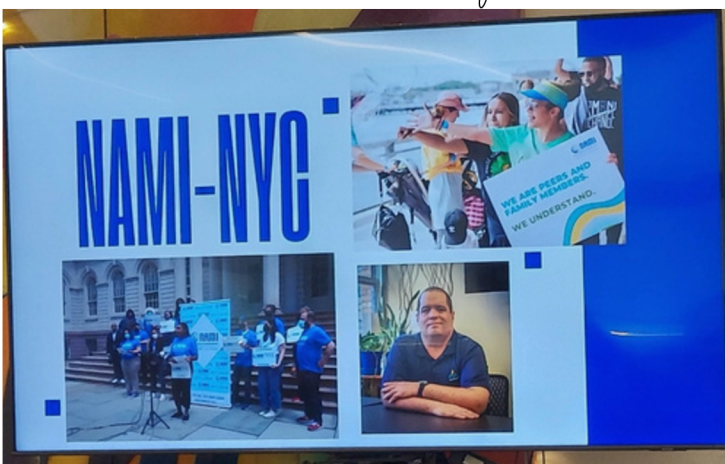
One of the highlights of the day was the interactive tattoo station, where members had fun expressing themselves with temporary tattoos. The photo booth also added to the excitement, allowing attendees to capture memories with creative props and big smiles.

The event also featured a showcase hour, where members of the NAMI community shared original creative pieces, including music, spoken word, and heartfelt writings. One particularly moving moment came from GHCH staff member Sabrina Garcia, who is also a NAMI Advocacy Ambassador. She gave an impromptu reading of her piece, *Because of You...*, written in honor of her son, Mosai, who passed by suicide in March 2024. Her powerful words resonated deeply with the audience, reminding everyone of the importance of advocacy, support, and mental health awareness.

Attending this event was an incredible opportunity for GHCH to continue building its collaborative relationship with NAMI-NYC. The clubhouse has participated in the NAMI Walk annually, and members and staff are already looking forward to this year's walk, scheduled for Sunday, May 19, 2025.

The Winter Social was a meaningful reminder of the strength found in community, the healing power of self-expression, and the importance of standing together in support of mental health. GHCH is grateful for the experience and looks forward to more opportunities to engage, connect, and advocate alongside NAMI-NYC.

An Article By: Sabrina Garcia



Featured articles

Understanding Literature Can Be Challenging: English 102

When reading literature, I didn't know how to use critical thinking. I thought reading the text with analysis was all it took. English 102 has introduced me to new methods on how to view and summarize literature. Using strategies when reading material is very useful and effective. There are many questions to ask when analyzing text. Different text has different approaches like poems for instance might take a more attentive path. Using literary devices and lenses help give a better understanding making the text clearer and more interesting. Understanding text and literature transparently is a step closer to critical thinking and writing. As a writer communication is a major role in order to help the audience understand the point of view and perspectives. Getting to know the author better is a reliable way to start the thinking process. Then understanding the topic or issue the author is writing about should also help in the beginning process of critical thinking. In class and through discussions there were many ways to analyze and evaluate literature. In class and group discussions I learnt that when it comes to literature and critical thinking there is no exact way to understand the material. There are always many different point of views and different levels of depth in discussing topics.

Literature in my opinion have great value in our communities and society. Literature is very educational and inspirational. Some literature may increase our imagination and help us see life in different wonderful ways. Sometimes an argument may be needed in order to come to a better solution. There are all types of various literature that are very useful, constructive and fun to read. Historical literature helps us keep aware of what our past was like as well as the struggles that we faced as people of this world. It helps us shape our characters and who we were in a world that's constantly evolving. Literature lets us know where we came from, our culture, other cultures and keeps us understanding how to make appropriate distinct decisions. Poems are a good way that authors use giving us an outlook of their images. Poems help us express ourselves in many ways that not only it is interesting but can also be inspirational. Poetry can help people make connections with the world as well as themselves. Music on the other hand not only help us express ourselves but it shows a way of lifestyle and how we may choose to live. Our lives revolve around literature and the information we consume. A few authors stood out for me this semester, like Langston Hughes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Ken Liu. Some were memorable, or quite interesting with a lot of imagery, while others may have been resourceful on how challenging life may be. Nevertheless, literature brings great enthusiasm.

This semester not only have I become a bit greater in the critical thinking process, but I also became more interested. Paying attention in class and staying focused helped me grow confident in the learning process. English 102 this semester was favored by me rather than English 101 and this is because in English 102 not only did we have lecture but we were also shown how to break down and analyze step by step. There were different discussions, and assignments that were very helpful. I learnt strategies and formatting that I know I will benefit from and will carry on till the future. Learning skills in English 102 helped me improve my critical thinking skills and became simple to remember because of the actual breakdown on how to develop and use our thinking to generate better essays.

An Essay By: Thomas Russo

Happy Birthday!!

February Birthdays

2/01 Jarvis
2/01 Helen
2/09 Althea
2/09 Osama
2/09 Earl
2/12 Francisco
2/14 Ronald
2/17 Jonathan
2/19 Antonio
2/19 Donisha
2/23 Christopher
2/26 Justin
2/28 Aisha



Upcoming March Birthdays

3/01 Chloe
3/01 William
3/01 Mark
3/03 Vernessa
3/05 Della
3/07 Geraldine
3/10 Bill
3/12 Keema
3/14 Paula
3/15 Jerome
3/17 Sarah
3/18 Gary
3/19 Karen
3/19 Sarah
3/20 Monica
3/20 Olga
3/27 Mitchell
3/28 Tomilio
3/30 Gregory

Featured articles

The Chainsaw Man

The chainsaw man comes in the dreams,
One too many times I have seen
He prepares for his attack and raid,
He intimidates and revs up, the blades

Ranting and the raves
Have nothing compared to the sting of death
The fear, the running away
The catching of the breath

The chainsaw man does not give a darn
He is here just to bring harm

The chainsaw man, does he love destruction?
Or is he just following his natural way
Either way, i am very afraid
Makes me wanna close the book
Not even turn the page
I cant even tell if the chainsaw man is full of rage

One day this should all be over
I may be with my Lord
And the congregation
Where the chainsaw man will no longer in
dreams attack
Helpless, i lacked
Hope, something of a shake up
From those dreams I am glad that I wake up

An Poem By:
Rob Lortie

I Love The Clubhouse

I love the Clubhouse because everyone cares for each other. There's only love and warm energy here. I like expressing myself through cleaning—I enjoy sweeping, mopping, wiping down tables, and tidying up things that need to be done. I work on all tasks. I'm not a bad person, I'm a hard worker, energetic, and wise. When I come here, I'm not sad, and there's no one bothering me.

I appreciate the many personalities of the staff. Mr. Kristian is always there when I need help, he's like Superman, and he's going to help me get a paying job. I like Sabrina because she is a vocal woman, loving, clean, and an awesome mom. She gives me great advice and always listens. Chibozo has a warm heart and truly cares about my growth and development, plus, he's a sharp dresser! Bianca is always smiling, but she's also a powerhouse. Ms. Octavia is easy to be around, caring, and has a rich heart. Mr. Derek is a hardworking and diligent man, wise and honorable. And lastly, Bill, he and I go way back. He was born for this job. He is always advocating for everyone in the Clubhouse. He's humble, loving, smart, and carefree.

I love all the members, too. Juanita is my good friend. I also like Delisa, Paul, and Timothy, he's really sweet. Leon is friendly. Even the staff from other programs are fun to be around.

I love the people in this Clubhouse because I've learned to be free and be myself. I can be a Christian and still feel at peace within. I'm not bad or tormented. I'm not ill inside. I'm not sad, I'm living life with purpose, and I'm happy. I'm not lost, I'm listening to my inner peace.

I love my money, I budget and save it. Now I'm done expressing who I am and how I got to be me. I'm in love with myself and the Clubhouse.

An Article By:
Isabella Taylor

Featured articles

Interview of Lara Athoe with Isabella Taylor

On February 5th Lara Athoe of Fountain House came to the Greater Heights Clubhouse as an aspiring Clubhouse Faculty Trainer through Clubhouse International. Our amazing Member Isabella Taylor interviewed Lara for the GHCH Newsletter.

I.T.: What made you interested in becoming a C.I. faculty?

L.A.: I am passionate about the clubhouse model

I.T.: What has been your Clubhouse Experience so far?

L.A.: I love to work on projects with Members.

I have, and excitement helping members to develop projects and explore educational opportunities, and clear up confusion.

I.T.: What kind of challenges do you see ahead in doing this work?

L.A.: I find it challenging to deal with people with strong opinions. I have to Find the balance between participating while still observing and learning.

I.T.: Can you share some of what you hope to accomplish by doing this?

L.A.: I really want to Help clubhouses become Stronger clubhouses.

I.T.: What have been some of your impressions of the Greater Heights Clubhouse?

L.A.: Here I have experienced overwhelming kindness and hospitality. Everyone was willing to help me gain a better understanding of the Greater Heights clubhouse

I.T.: Would you like to share some things about yourself to leave with us here at Greater Heights?

L.A.: I will share a few things. I started at a small startup clubhouse. I did Clubhouse training in Canada. I have worked in over five units within the Fountain House clubhouse. Currently I work in the Fountain House Welcome Center.

*An Interview By:
Isabella Taylor*



Self-Care Corner



Wellness Tips for Mind & Body

Mind & Emotion:

- ✓ Try deep breathing or grounding techniques to ease anxiety.
- ✓ Write down 3 things you're grateful for each day.
- ✓ Stay connected—talk to a friend or join a clubhouse activity.

Body & Wellness:

- ✓ Move in ways that feel good—stretching, chair yoga, or a short walk.
- ✓ Drink plenty of water and eat foods that nourish your body.
- ✓ Get enough rest—set a bedtime routine to improve sleep.

Routine & Balance:

- ✓ Start your day with a small goal—it builds confidence!
- ✓ Take breaks when you need them, and practice self-kindness.
- ✓ Ask for help when needed—support is always available.

do it for you

Embracing Mindfulness and Meditation

Incorporating mindfulness and meditation into your daily routine can significantly enhance mental well-being, especially for individuals with disabilities and mental health challenges. These practices involve focusing your attention on the present moment, acknowledging your thoughts and feelings without judgment, and fostering a sense of calm and clarity.

Benefits:

- Stress Reduction: Regular mindfulness can lower stress levels and promote relaxation.
- Enhanced Emotional Health: Meditation can improve self-awareness and emotional regulation.
- Improved Focus: Practicing mindfulness can increase attention and concentration.

Getting Started:

1. Find a Quiet Space: Choose a comfortable, quiet spot free from distractions.
2. Set Aside Time: Dedicate a few minutes each day to practice; consistency is key.
3. Focus on Breathing: Concentrate on your breath, observing each inhale and exhale.
4. Acknowledge Thoughts: Notice your thoughts without judgment, then gently return focus to your breathing.

Remember, mindfulness and meditation are skills developed over time. Be patient with yourself and embrace each session as a step toward greater mental clarity and emotional well-being.

start somewhere

Upcoming March Events

March 4(Tuesday): Mardi Gras Game Night

- Time: 4:00 PM
- Come celebrate Mardi Gras with an exciting game night. get ready for an evening full of fun, laughter, and festive spirit!



March 17(Monday): St. Patrick's Day Party

- Join us for a festive St. Patrick's Day Party filled with good vibes, great company, and plenty of fun! Wear your best green outfit and enjoy games and delicious treats as we celebrate the luck of the Irish together!

March 27(Thursday): Monthly Employment Dinner – "Spring Into Action"

- Time: 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- Activity: Mock interview demonstration and interactive tips.
- Dinner: Fresh garden salad bar and roasted chicken with spring vegetables.



Information Page

BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse (FKA East NY Clubhouse)

The primary goal of BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse is to assist our members in their process of recovery from the effects of persistent mental illness and social barriers. We strive to help people to integrate more fully into their communities and to live more independent lives. Our ability to succeed depends on the generosity of the wider community.

If you would like to support our cause, please contact us by email: greaterheightsclubhouse2697@gmail.com

Donations can be sent to:

BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse at 980 Halsey Street Brooklyn, NY 11207.

FYI: Checks must be made payable to **Brooklyn Community Services**. PLEASE identify that funds are dedicated to the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse. Thank you!

BCS Greater Heights is dedicated to the principles of self-help, peer support, employment training and placement, by focusing on our Members individual strengths and talents.

Important Note: Currently our hours of operation are Monday thru Friday 9AM to 8 PM and every Saturday from 9AM to 5PM. Additionally, we will continue to operate a virtual platform for remote participation at specific prescheduled times.

For more info, Visit us on the web:

<https://wearebcs.org/what-we-do/services-for-people-living-with-disabilities/greater-heights-clubhouse/>



BCS, Greater Heights Clubhouse

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