

Brooklyn  
Community  
Services

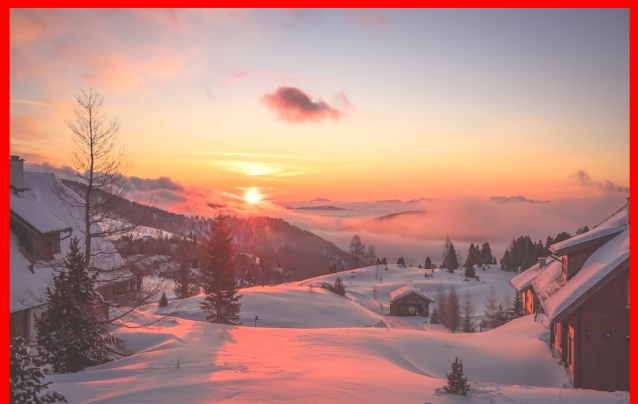
# Newsletter Edition #12 of 2023

# December 31, 2023



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# Month of December

**December 4th:** Sarai Sue Perez, daughter of Clubhouse Member Vernessa George Perez and her husband Kishan Perez, turned five years old. Happy Birthday Sarai Sue and Many More Happy and Healthy Ones!!!!

**December 7th:** Was the first night of the eight nights of Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of lights. The holiday is celebrated by the lighting of the Menorah and eating fried foods such as Potato Pancakes (latkes).

**December 20th:** We held our annual Clubhouse holiday party. Many attended the event and the Holiday Spirit was very present for all of us.

**December 21st:** Was our Winter Solstice, the first day of winter and the shortest day of sunlight of the year. Typically the winter season brings cold weather and some snow.

**December 24th:** Christmas Eve. The day before Christmas is typified by holiday parties, gatherings with loved ones, festive meals, gift wrapping, tree decorating and singing Christmas Carols.

**December 25th:** Christmas Day is the commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is traditionally a day to embrace the spirit of the life of Jesus, give and receive presents with significant ones, gather with family and or friends, eating of a festive meal and being charitable to others.

**December 26th:** Is the first of the seven days of Kwanzaa an annual holiday that celebrates African American culture and embraces its 7 core principles.

**December 31st:** Is New Year's Eve the last day of the year. People might celebrate the end of the year by going to a party or gathering, toasting the end of the current year and ringing in the New Year, making resolutions for the upcoming year or just taking a personal inventory of their life.

# Please Keep Our Clubhouse Open

By Calvin Franklin



*Editor's Note: There will be a rally at City Hall Park on Wednesday January 3rd, to prevent the closure of any of the existing NYC Clubhouses.*

I have been a Member of the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse for almost two years now. My experience here has been really great. I like coming here because I have made a lot of friends with both the Staff and the Members. It is a very fun place to be, but also a place that has helped me to focus on work.

Through the Clubhouse, I was able to take on and complete a TE at the Turn the Page Again Bookstore in Bayside Queens. While I am at the Clubhouse I like to help out with doing the dishes, restocking the bathrooms, general cleaning and participating in meetings.

As I said before I have a lot of friends here and I really look forward to spending time with the people at the Clubhouse. It is very important to me that this Clubhouse stays open. I am not very interested in changing to a different Clubhouse, because I am happy and comfortable here. I hope the city understands how important it is to keep the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse open because this is a good place and most importantly, to me, it is my place!!

# About the Clubhouse by Geraldine Ray



I go to the Clubhouse to be sociable and to do something that day. I need this place badly. I get tired of just staying home all the time, it gives me heartache. People, don't get me wrong; I love my apartment, it's a blessing from god. I just need the Clubhouse. It's good for my psyche to be there. I learn skills and I love to do the snack bar as often as possible. It is my favorite activity to do there.

Imagine if this small clubhouse was closed due to budget cuts or something else. Me and the other Members would not have a place to go to keep themselves busy. I like being busy. I like being productive. Please, don't close us down!!

This clubhouse is so comfy. I walk with a walker, and it's difficult for me to maneuver a walker on the train because the train could be crowded. Carrying the walker up the Subway steps is also a problem. To get here, I just ride the M.T.A. bus and that is a little bit better for me.

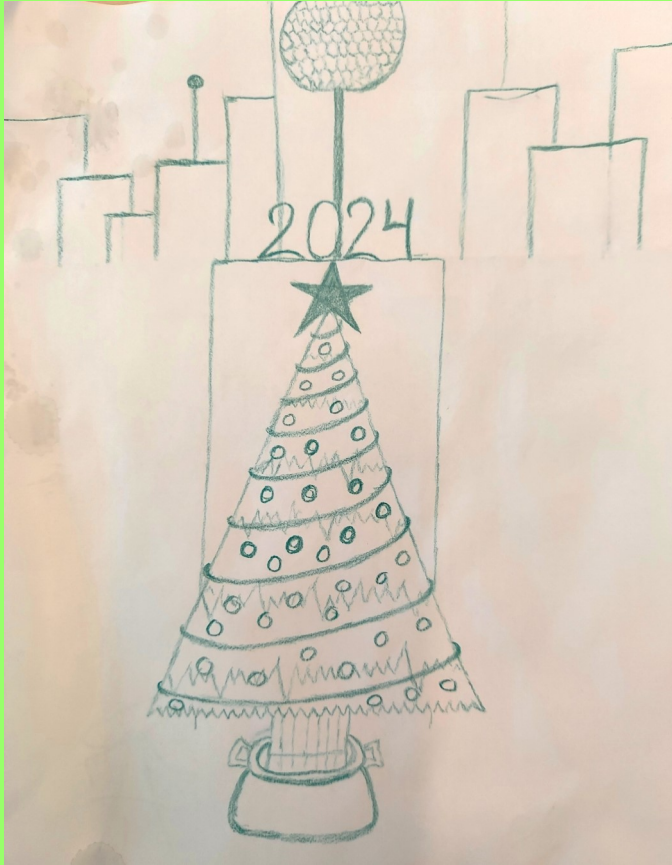
# My New Job by James Duverglas



Hi, my name is James Duverglas. I recently started a new job at a bookstore called Turn the Page Again. I started there on 12/15/23. So far I love it there and I am eager to learn more duties at the job like using the computers. In my position I will be doing work on the computer, organizing books alphabetically, cleaning books, selling books and being a receptionist.

Bill Lampert from my Clubhouse helped me through the process of obtaining the job. Turn The Page Again is located in Bayside, Queens. I take two buses to get there and one bus and one train to come home. My supervisors are good people. I hope to keep this job as long as possible. It is a temporary position (TE) and I did not get paid as of yet, but I am looking forward to getting my first paycheck.

# Member Drawings



Francisco Fontanez Drawing



Lux Edwards Drawing



Tanya McLaurin Drawing



# The Importance of Advocating by Leon Sims



Sometimes in life you have to choose between being passive and being assertive. Being assertive is far from being aggressive. It is a key to advocating. It is basically standing up to situations in a respectful manner. Without advocating people will never know if you are bothered by something or put in awkward situations. It is basically standing up for what you believe in.

There are many forms of advocating. Some methods consist of rallies, boycotts, peaceful protest, petitions, and even verbal communication via radio, television or even conversations. Anyone can advocate for themselves no matter what age, gender, occupation or disability.

Many may feel like some are incapable of advocating, but I disagree. Especially people with mental illness. If we don't stand up for what we believe in, then people will dictate our lives. Just take a look at the past, boycotts helped end segregation and other forms of racism, sexism, and inequality. Just because we are mentally ill doesn't mean we should let outside influences dictate our choices and lives. Remember.... "Closed mouths don't get fed".

# **Member of the Month**

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## **Ross Wade**

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**Two years ago, right about Christmas, Ross Wade and his amazing service dog Ripley walked into the Clubhouse for the first time to see what we were all about. That was a fortunate day for the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse and both Ross and Ripley have been a very positive presence here ever since. It is fair to say that Ross has many admirable qualities and he brings those positives with him whenever he is here. Ross has an unusually high level of empathy and kindness and is often found supporting his fellow Members in whatever way he can. Whether he is helping people navigate struggles, assisting someone in need in an emergency, or just lending a kind and caring ear, Ross makes a big difference here. In addition to that, Ross is our resident Dungeons and Dragons Master and has brought his skills and talents to run highly inclusive and accessible D & D games here on a regular basis. Over the last number of months Ross has been an Active Member of our Advisory Board. He is a great advocate, a very talented writer and his ability to articulate and reason have enhanced our efforts for Clubhouse viability as we navigate the future uncertain political climate. Beyond that, Ross is simply a great person and we are happy to declare him the Member of the Month for December.**



# Happy Holiday's from the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse!

## *Holiday Party* - Bianca J. Simmons

The Greater Heights Clubhouse Holiday Party took place on December 20, 2023. This party was planned by our Fundraising and Recreation Committee, so that we as a Community could celebrate all of the upcoming Holidays as a WHOLE and as a FAMILY. The hope of the party was to have festive foods, as well as desserts and to just be able to enjoy each other. We served a wide array of foods. We had Collard Greens, Baked BBQ'd Chicken, Baked Ziti, Mac and Cheese. Ham with pineapples, Mixed vegetables, Mixed Green Salad and Holiday Punch. For desserts we had home baked Cupcakes and a delicious Ferrero Rocher Cake. Members and Staff alike dressed up in festive Holiday colors and even wonderful Christmas Sweaters. Some events at the party were a Secret Santa Gift exchange, Christmas Carol Singing, a Christmas time in Hollis Queens rap, and we topped it off with a gift from the Clubhouse! Also, holiday music was played and ornaments were painted by each member to be hung up on the Clubhouse Christmas tree. We all celebrated together and everyone enjoyed a sweet note ending by eating that amazing Ferrero Rocher inspired cake.

**In addition, Delisa Bynum Wrote:** On December 20, 2023 we had our Clubhouse Holiday Party celebration and we had a gathering with all our friends. We shared and gave gifts, plus we also sang Christmas carols. We wanted to have a jolly Christmas because it is a special holiday for everyone in the world. I just want to wish you all a Happy Merry Christmas. **(See Holiday Party Photos on Page 10)**



# Hanukkah



Hanukkah is the Jewish Festival of Lights and it remembers the rededication of the second Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, in Israel. This happened in the 160s BCE/BC (before Jesus was born). (Hanukkah is the Hebrew and Aramaic word for 'dedication'.) Hanukkah lasts for eight days and starts on the eve of the Kislev 25, the month in the Jewish calendar that occurs at about the same time as December. Because the Jewish calendar is lunar (it uses the moon for its dates), Kislev can happen from late November to late December. In 2023, Hanukkah will be from the evening of Thursday, 7th of December until the evening of Friday, 15th of December.

During Hanukkah, on each of the eight nights, a candle is lit in a special menorah (candelabra) called a 'hanukkiyah'. There is a special ninth candle called the 'shammash' or servant candle which is used to light the other candles. The shammash is often in the center of the other candles and has a higher position. On the first night one candle is lit, on the second night, two are lit until all are lit on the eighth and final night of the festival. Traditionally they are lit from left to right. A special blessing, thanking God, is said before or after lighting the candles and a special Jewish hymn is often sung. The menorah is put in the front window of houses so people passing can see the lights and remember the story of Hanukkah. Most Jewish families and households have a special menorah and celebrate Hanukkah. Hanukkah is also a time for giving and receiving presents and gifts are often given on each night. Lots of games are played during the time of Hanukkah. The most popular is 'dreidel' (Yiddish) or 'sivivon' (Hebrew). It's a four sided top with a Hebrew letter on each side.

## **Kwanzaa**

**by Miguel Cordero**

These are my thoughts about this wonderful event. First I didn't know it was created in mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It's not that old. It happens once a year around other festivities, like Christmas and Hanukah. This makes it convenient if you want to add to your festivities. Of course I forgot to mention it's from African Culture. It expresses deep meanings and has certain principles, but I'll pass the torch to my co-writer, Katrina.

***Yes, Miguel, I find Kwanzaa to be a time of learning, family and Celebration!***

During the week of Kwanzaa (December 21- January 1), families and communities come together to share a feast, to honor the ancestors, affirm the bonds between them, and to celebrate African and African American culture. Each day a light is lit to the candle of the Kinara (Candle holder) to highlight the principle of the day and breathe meaning into the principles with various activities. The seven principles of Kwanzaa that are acknowledged during this week include: Umoja (unity), Kujichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity) and Imani (faith). Activities include a Karamu (feast), dance, poetry, music and other activities to be educational and promote African heritage.

The candles include one black, three red and three green. The colors red, black and green are important to Pan-Africanists. Black represents "the people," while red is for the blood spilled in the struggle for liberation and green for the future of black liberation. On the seventh night of Kwanzaa, gifts are exchanged. Handmade gifts are preferred and they should relate to the holiday's principles. Typically, children are the primary recipients. The gift exchange must always include a book and a "heritage symbol," or item that represents African history and traditions. Kwanzaa concludes with a feast called the karamu. Hosts are encouraged to display their most beautiful art and African cloths along with fresh fruit and vegetables.

In my family, we recognize the seven principles all year around and celebrate Kwanzaa to reinstall the importance of unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith. As Miguel highlighted, if you want to celebrate you can add Kwanzaa to your festivities, a great way to strengthen yourself and the community at large!

**By Katrina Grant-Rodriguez**

## Getting to know Our New Member Estelle Kennedy by Doris Thomas



**Doris:** How did you first find out about the Clubhouse?

**Estelle:** Theresa a person I live with told me about the Clubhouse. I want to stay here, I think it's nice.

**Doris:** How long have you been coming here?

**Estelle:** I have been coming here for about six weeks now.

**Doris:** How has your experience here been so far?

**Estelle:** My experience has been good. I like it! I like the people here.

**Doris:** What are some of your interests or hobbies?

**Estelle:** I like to sit down and talk to people and work with Arts and Crafts. I also go on trips to the park.

**Doris:** Do you have any hopes and dreams for the future?

**Estelle:** My birthday is August 15<sup>th</sup> and I'll be 63 then. I would like to move some place in Brooklyn and get a house.

**Doris:** Is there anything else you would like to share about yourself?

**Estelle:** I like to go to barbecues in the park. I was born in Brooklyn and have lived there my whole life.

# Clubhouse Birthdays



## December Birthdays

Demetrius 12/3

Olive 12/4

Phillip 12/5

Carline 12/7

Jaclyn 12/8

Millicent 12/9

Anthony 12/12

Rodolfo 12/13

Edward 12/13

Susan 12/18

Henry 12/19

Stephanie 12/19

Calvin 12/19

Bernice 12/19

Ronnell 12/19

Jamal 12/27

Tineka 12/27

Rodney 12/27

## January Birthdays

Akter 1/1

John O. 1/1

Kevin 1/2

Oscar 1/8

Elvin 1/15

Steven W. 1/15

John S. 1/29

Joy 1/30



# State Senator Julia Salazar Visits the Clubhouse

On Friday December 1st our local NY State Senator Julia Salazar came to visit us at the Clubhouse. While there, she met with BCS CEO Janelle Farris, BCS Chief External Relations & Advancement Officer Raine Martin, BCS Chief of Staff Monae Priolenau-Jones and a wide variety of Members and Staff from the Clubhouse.

Senator Salazar is a Member of the NY State Standing Committee on Mental Health. That committee is the legislative advocate for individuals and families facing mental illness, disabilities, or substance abuse and helps those most in need of compassionate, efficient, and effective government.

While at the Clubhouse, the Senator was able to have productive discussions with many of our Members and was very engaged in listening to their concerns and points of view. She also was able to understand the current complex landscape of Government contracts and BCS's need to continue to do the great work that it does for the Clubhouse community. We would like to give a special shout out to our amazing Member Juanita Mills who gave the Senator a great orientation tour of the Clubhouse.



# More on the Investigation of Donald Trump by Robbie Heier



You know who is continuing to be investigated. Of course we are talking about Mr. Trump

Investigators accessed Mr. Trump's White House cellphone records and plan to use them at trial, so says the Special counsel. This is bad news for Mr. Trump but great news for democracy!

These Federal Investigators have gained access to the White House cellphone records used by the former President, 4 times criminally indicted, Mr. Trump. They could (and likely will) use that information as evidence in the special counsel's 2020 election-related trial.

This person, who Special Counsel Jack Smith refers to as "Expert 3" in a court filing, "extracted and processed data from the White House cell phones used by the defendant and one other individual (Individual 1)". Expert 3 also "specifically identified the periods of time during which the defendant's phone was unlocked and the Twitter application was open on January 6." The filing went on to say the witness "reviewed and analyzed data on the defendant's phone and on the Individual's phone, including analyzing images that were found on the phones and websites visited."

Prosecutors charged Mr. Trump with four criminal counts to which he pleaded not guilty, including conspiracy to defraud the U.S. for his alleged efforts to resist the peaceful transfer of power, Individual 1 in the indictment is no other than Mr. Rudy Giuliani.

Note: Mr. Trump has denied wrongdoing in the case and has slammed Smith's prosecution as politically motivated. He should talk, the filing was in response to a court order asking for information related to any expert witnesses the parties plan to call as part of the upcoming federal trial, which is currently slated to begin on March 4, 2024. The filings use digital data to explain the crowd's movement on Jan 6, 2021.

If elected, Mr. Trump would fire all in the DOJ and put in unqualified yes men and put those who want to hold him accountable in prison. Also he would pardon himself as well as the Proud Boys serving prison time for trying to overtake the Capitol and attacking the Capitol Police. However, if and hopefully when he is convicted in Georgia, that is a state where he can receive no pardons.

This is serious, our basic freedom is at risk.

**BE INFORMED AND VOTE**



# Peer Staff Generalist Sandra Jacobs with Leon Sims



**Leon:** What is your name?

**Sandra:** Sandra Jacobs

**Leon:** What is your occupation at our Clubhouse?

**Sandra:** I was hired as a Peer Staff Generalist and a Teacher.

**Leon:** What do you love about your job?

**Sandra:** I love helping people.

**Leon:** How many years have you been working here?

**Sandra:** I have been working here since the year 2020.

**Leon:** How has your experience been since you started working here?

**Sandra:** It has been challenging and rewarding. The rewards are seeing Members, grow, improve and learn. When I see Members getting better and challenging themselves it makes me happy.

**Leon:** Is there anything else that you would like to share about yourself that we don't know?

**Sandra:** I love what I do as challenging as it is. I'm from Trinidad, I love the sea, and swimming. I also love music

# Wellness at the Clubhouse

## by Doris J. Thomas



The time is absolutely now, for everyone older than 21 to think about their health outside of their mental health alone. If we can all sit and lay down when we're at home, then we can certainly exercise while we're out and about. BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse should be a center where all members are physically active and not give in to being idle.

We know that this is a place we chose and allows us to go from one area of peacefulness to another. We know that this is a place where we can ask questions or inquire about anything we want. We also know that this a place that helps with the maintenance of our overall wellness. If we want to get the best out of the Greater Heights Clubhouse why don't we work at maintaining our wellness in the best way possible.

# **IMPORTANT AND SURPRISING RESULT** **IN RECENT DUTCH ELECTION**

**By Maurice Tyler**



In late November of 2023, veteran anti-Islam populist leader Geert Wilders won an unexpected victory in the Dutch general election. Dutch politics are known for tolerance. Mr. Wilder, not known for tolerance, led the Freedom Party (PPV), which won 37 seats. The target is for PPV to win a majority of 76 seats in the 150-seat parliament. Not only was his win a surprise in Dutch politics, it will also send shock waves across Europe. While positive about his prospects for leading a government formed by him, Mr. Wilder acknowledged that it would be an uphill task.

Mr. Wilder won after gaining support about frustration about migration, promising “closed borders” and putting on hold his controversial promise to ban the Koran. For example, last year net migration into the Netherlands more than doubled beyond 220,000, partly because of refugees fleeing Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. However, the issue has been aggravated by a shortage of some 390,000 homes. Wilder said, “The Dutch will be No.1 again.” “The people must get their nation back.” In addition, Wilder is skeptical of European Union influence over national decision-making. He has also argued that the Netherlands should revoke the permits of Syrians. Indeed, he has called Islam a “backward religion”, he’s named the prophet Mohammad a “pedophile.” Although condemning the Russian invasion, he has criticized the military support provided by the Netherlands to Ukraine.

Indeed, while he has been compared to Donald Trump, Wilder must form a coalition government before he can even take over the government. Specifically, with 24% of the vote, PPV needs support from at least two more moderate parties to create a government with the required majority of 76 seats in the 150-seat parliament.

Given his stances, not surprisingly, some partners have expressed a lack of desire to work with Wilder while others have indicated that they will work with him. For example, opposition will likely come from Frans Timmermans, who said that Wilder should not count on his support because “We will never form a coalition with parties that pretend that asylum seekers are the source of all misery.” Nevertheless, if Wilder is able to form the required coalition and if he could win a vote of confidence, he would be Europe’s first far-right leader to lead a government since Italy’s Georgia Meloni was in power. He could also become the first far-right prime minister of the Netherlands.

# The Hidden Struggle Within

## by Tineka Johnson



When people look at me they do not see that I am struggling inside from negative self-talk and anxiety. At the end of my Peer Training Program at Howie the Harp, I was plagued with thoughts like, “I will never be able to help those in need,” “I’m not smart enough to convince anyone to seek help,” “I always say the wrong things and will get hurt by my peers,” and “I just cannot support my peers as well as someone else.” All of these thoughts ruminate in my head daily.

Then anxiety started to show its ugly face making me feel worry, fear, concern, and discomfort and I was unable to relax. I was finding it hard to focus on other things because I was worrying about whether I was good enough. Now I find myself avoiding anything overwhelming that triggers my anxiety and causes me to be scared about the future; even if there is no real threat. My mind races and I dwell on all the negative things leading to a sense of dread or fear. Then I find myself being on high alert expecting something bad to occur.

These days, to manage my anxiety I am taking time out to focus on my well-being and making my mental health a top priority. I am doing this, even if it means that I must take a step back and focus on re-integrating back into the community and putting my training program on hold until I can better manage the stress. For the past two years, I dedicated my life to becoming a Peer Support Specialist and to helping others in need. However now I am asking myself how can I help someone, when the person needing help is me?

# If Trump is President for the 2nd time by Robbie Heier



When asked to clarify about his potential second term, Mr. Trump said he would use the Presidency to close the border and increase oil drilling in the U.S. “That is not retribution” When asked “you’re not going to be a dictator, are you?” His reply was he’d be a dictator only on “Day One” if he were to win a second term.

In a taped interview with Fox news anchor Sean Hannity, the former, twice impeached, 4 time Grand jury indicted president was asked if he would “abuse power, to break the law or to use the government to go after people” and he indicated that he would use the government to go after certain people.

Mr. Trump has been very candid about what he would do if he were to return to office, things like if you come after me, i will come after you. He said he would use the military to break up any protests and weaponize the justice department to go after anyone who he doesn’t like. It seems like from his point of view that evidence would be a non-issue.

It appears from what he says that Mr. Trump would act like Russia’s leader, an authoritarian, a dictator. He would take us out of NATO, and more. He would let Ukraine fall to Russia, he’d make nice to our enemies and our allies would no longer be allies!

Note: If you think we don’t have freedom in this country now, then just wait and see what it will be like if he gets back in. He said he would round up all aliens, even the ones born in this country, and put them in “detention” camps like Hitler did with the Jews. Would he gas them to death? With this man, I wouldn’t put it past him.

Under Joe Biden the economy is very good and prices are starting to fall (if not for corporate greed prices would really drop). Inflation has gone from approximately 8.5 %, down to 3.2% and the job market is good. Increases to salary has outpaced inflation.

It is my sincere hope that you read this, and do your own research.

Remember, KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!

**Save the New Date...**

***28th Anniversary Party***

**Join us as we celebrate an Anniversary Celebration**

**At BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse**

**FKA East New York Clubhouse**

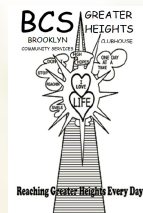
**When: Tuesday January 9th, 2024**

**11:00 AM—4:00 PM**

**@**

**980 Halsey Street**

**Brooklyn, NY 11207**



## Interview with Evans The Rapper (AKA Evans Symeus) by: Leon Sims



**Leon:** What inspired you to be a rapper?

**Evans:** I have a passion for writing.

**Leon:** Is there any message you want to create?

**Evans:** Positivity and consciousness to educate people on the power of the Black man.

**Leon:** When did you make your first rap?

**Evans:** Around 1971 or 1972.

**Leon:** What did you want to accomplish by rapping?

**Evans:** Touching the genders of everybody and to educate on life.

**Leon:** What is your alias as a rapper?

**Evans:** ESG160

**Leon:** What is the name of your favorite rap song you made?

**Evans:** All of my love songs mixed with hardcore rap.

**Leon:** Is there something about you that we don't know?

**Evans:** Yes, I can rap in four different languages.

# Double Trouble Recovery (D.T.R.)

By: Leon Sims



For those of you who don't know, I lead the DTR group here at the Greater Heights Clubhouse. It is a group that is run in many of the Clubhouses. There are quite a number of people out there who suffer from a dual diagnosis. This means struggling with addiction, while also having a mental illness. My goal is to give affective coping skills when faced with triggers or stressors that may lead to abusing drugs or alcohol.

I have had my battles in the past with having a dual diagnosis, but I haven't used any drugs in almost ten years. There are many ways to cope with the stress and triggers without using street drugs. Taking anti-psychotic medication, as prescribed, is one of those coping skills for me. Although we may feel stable while taking meds, that feeling of stability does not mean that we should stop. The reason why we stay stable is because we are on our meds.

Street drugs will only exacerbate our symptoms. Some methods to cope are: meditation, journaling, listening to music, exercising/ playing sports, talking to therapists and much more.

Our group impacts us in a positive way and helps us to realize we are not alone when it comes to temptation. I feel honored to lead the group and for me leading the group is one of my coping skills. I want our Members to stay healthy and learn from the mistakes I made when I used drugs.



# Gingerbread Cookie Recipe

## Ingredients

- ¾ cup unsalted butter softened
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 large egg
- ¼ cup molasses unsulphured
- 2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon if you like a strong cinnamon flavor, increase to 2 tsp total
- ½ tsp dried ground ginger if you like a strong ginger flavor, increase to 1-2 tsp total
- Optional: granulated sugar to roll cookie dough balls in



## Directions

- 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.
- 2) First, mix together butter and sugar until light and fluffy, approximately 2-3 minutes with an electric mixer.
- 3) Next, add egg and molasses and mix well.
- 4) In a separate bowl combine flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and ginger, stirring to combine.
- 5) Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and mix until well combined.
- 6) Form or scoop balls of dough that are slightly smaller than a golf ball. If desired, roll dough balls in granulated sugar after forming. Place them on a baking sheet approximately 2" to 3" apart to allow room for cookies to spread.
- 7) Finally, bake for 10-12 minutes, remove from oven and allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for approximately ten minutes, then transfer to a wire rack to finish cooling.

## Greater Heights Sports Column

### NFL

The NFL has just started week seventeen of its eighteen week regular season and the picture for the Playoff tournament to raise the trophy for Super Bowl 58 on February 11th continues to come into focus. The team with the top record in the NFL is the Baltimore Ravens at 12 and 3. This Sunday the Ravens will be meeting the 11 and 4 Miami Dolphins and with a win the Ravens will nail down the number one seed and home field advantage throughout the AFC playoffs. If the Dolphins win, they will probably still need to beat the Buffalo Bills in the final week of the season to clinch the AFC's number one seed. In the NFC the San Francisco 49ers and the Philadelphia Eagles are tied with conference best records of 11 and 4. However, the 49ers hold the edge on the Eagles in the tiebreaker categories and if they win out, they will clinch the NFC's number one seed and home field advantage. The Jets and the Giants have been eliminated from postseason play and are just playing out the string now.

### MLB

The New York Yankees pulled off a blockbuster seven player trade with the San Diego Padres on December 6, 2023.

The principle piece acquired by the Yankees is superstar outfielder Juan Soto. The Yankees also received outfielder Trent Grisham from the Padres as part of the seven-player deal. In exchange, San Diego received right-handers Michael King, Jhony Brito and Randy Vasquez, starting pitching prospect Drew Thorpe and catcher Kyle Higashioka. While the Yankees trade was big news, the Los Angeles Dodgers easily grabbed the biggest headlines with two gigantic free agent signings. First and foremost the Dodgers blew the lid off any previous sports contract ever by signing the reigning AL MVP Shohei Otani for ten years at a previously unheard of salary of 700 million dollars. Otani's abilities to star as both a Pitcher and an Outfielder have not been seen in MLB since Babe Ruth, but it remains to be seen if he can actually measure up his performance level to this unprecedented contract size. If signing Otani were not enough, the Dodgers went out and signed the number one free agent pitcher on the market. On December 27, 2023 they officially signed Japan's 25 year old pitcher Yoshinobu Yamamoto to a twelve year 325 million dollar contract. Yamamoto has clearly been the best pitcher in all of Japanese baseball and the Dodgers fully expect him to bring that same level of performance to their team. Both of the local teams (the Mets and the Yankees) pursued Yamamoto aggressively but at the end of the day neither could top the Dodgers offer.

### NBA

The NBA has played just about 40% of its regular season games thus far. The Boston Celtics have the best record in the league currently at 25-6 and sit on top of the Eastern Conference standings. The Milwaukee Bucks are second in the East with a record of 24-8 and are followed by the Philadelphia 76ers at 22-10. In the Western Conference, the Minnesota Timberwolves have the best record at 24-7, followed by the 21-9 Oklahoma City Thunder and the defending Champion Denver Nuggets with a record of 23 and 11. The local Knicks are in 8th place in the East and have a record of 17-15. On 12/30 the Knicks traded R.J. Barrett, Immanuel Quickley & a 2nd round draft pick for Toronto Raptors Forward OG Anunoby & 2 other players. The local Brooklyn Nets are in 9th place, in the East, with a record of 15-17.

### NHL

The New York Rangers continue to have a good season and have the best record in the Metropolitan division at 25-9-1. They currently have the most points accumulated at 51. The Islanders have been playing better as of late and sit behind the Rangers tied for third place in the Metropolitan Division with a record of 17-9-9. The third local team, the New Jersey Devils, has a record of 19-14-2 and are tied for fifth place in the Metropolitan Division.

### College Football Playoffs

The final four teams that will battle for this season's national Championship has just been set. Number one undefeated Michigan will meet number four once beaten Alabama in the Rose Bowl, on New Year's Day. Number two undefeated Washington will meet number three once beaten Texas in the Sugar Bowl, also on New Year's Day. The winners of those two games will meet on January 8th in Houston, Texas to play for the national Championship.

# Advisory Board Column

## December 2023



**The Greater Heights Clubhouse Advisory Board wants to express its gratitude during this Holiday Season to all of the great Members and Staff that make up the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse Community. The wonderful energy of our Clubhouse Members drives hope and inspires belief that all things are possible. The Advisory Board is here to help find ways to sustain the mission of the Clubhouse and to ensure that our Members have a program that is committed to fulfilling their needs in the best possible ways. We are very much looking forward to partnering with all of you and to watching and celebrating our Community's successes in 2024 and beyond. A Happy and a Healthy Holiday season to all!**

# The Year 2023 in Review - By Bill Lampert

The year 2023 has been a busy and impactful year at the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse. It was our second full year at our 980 Halsey Street location and we continue to look for ways to make our Clubhouse the best that it can be. We have had many wonderful new Members join our community this past year and they have brought a combination of passion, talent and humanity that have emboldened us all. We now look back at some of the year's events, as we also look forward to finding ways for us to continue to thrive in 2024 and beyond.

**January:** Members returned to the Clubhouse on January 3<sup>rd</sup> after a long Holiday weekend. On January 5<sup>th</sup> there was a funeral held in St. Paul's Square in Vatican City for Pope Benedict XVI. On January 10<sup>th</sup> the Georgia Bulldogs routed the TCU Horned Frogs 65 to 7 to win the NCAA college football championship for the second year in a row. Singer David Crosby passed away on January 18<sup>th</sup> at the age of 81. Hockey legend Bobby Hull passed away on January 30<sup>th</sup> at the age of 84. Our Member Miguel Cordero received unescorted furlough privileges from KPC on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Tineka Johnson was named our Member of the month for January.

**February:** This month LIU OT Interns Allison Pennie and Sam Laster finished their Clubhouse internship. On February 6<sup>th</sup> there was an earthquake in parts of Turkey and Syria that led to approximately 59,000 fatalities. Legendary Composer Burt Bacharach passed away on February 8<sup>th</sup> at the age of 94. Actress and well known Icon Raquel Welch passed away on February 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 82. On Sunday February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Clubhouse hosted a festive Super Bowl Party. In Super Bowl 57 itself, the Kansas City Chiefs, led by Super Bowl MVP QB Patrick Mahomes, won a thrilling contest over the Philadelphia Eagles 38 to 35. On Tuesday February 14<sup>th</sup> the Clubhouse held a wonderful Valentine's Day Party. Sadly, our amazing Clubhouse Member Rahmir Williams passed away on February 25<sup>th</sup> at the age of just 43. To add to our sadness, the very next day, February 26<sup>th</sup>, our relatively new Member Claudy Virgile passed away at the age of just 39. RIP Rahmir and Claudy you will be greatly missed but not forgotten. Anika Sylvester was named our Member of the month for February.

**March:** Community Tax Aide representative Emil Gomez worked with a large group of our Members this month and last month to get their tax returns prepared and filed. At the 95<sup>th</sup> Academy Awards, on March 12<sup>th</sup>, The surreal multiverse adventure Everything Everywhere All at Once won the Oscar for best picture of the year. Our beloved Member Josanna McKenzie tragically passed away on March 12<sup>th</sup> at the Bronx Calvary Hospice Center. Josanna was a wonderful human being, valued Clubhouse Member and will truly be missed. On March 13<sup>th</sup> Robbie Heier and Aubrey Burke travelled to Albany to represent our Community at NYAPRS Legislative Day. Legendary New York Knick MVP Willis Reed (AKA The Captain) passed away on March 21<sup>st</sup> at the age of 80. Japan won the World Baseball Classic on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Isabella Taylor was named our Member of the month for March.

**April:** The Clubhouse had a wonderful Spring Social Dance on April 18<sup>th</sup>. On April 19<sup>th</sup> Chelton Loft Clubhouse Member Patricia Bostick and Staff Devi Singh visited our Clubhouse. On April 3<sup>rd</sup> the UConn Huskies, led by tournament MVP Adama Sanogo, handily defeated San Diego State 76-59 to win the 2023 NCAA Men's basketball tournament championship. This month LIU OT Intern Sara Cohen and CUNY School of Professional Studies RN Intern Sheldon Orgill both completed their Clubhouse Internships. Singer and Civil Rights Activist Harry Belafonte passed away on April 25<sup>th</sup> at the age of 96. Doris Thomas was named our Member of the month for April.

**May:** On May 6<sup>th</sup> the Coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla took place at Westminster Abbey. Also on May 6<sup>th</sup> the 15 to 1 longshot Mage won the 149<sup>th</sup> running of the Kentucky Derby. The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic Expo Empowerment Day took place at the Clubhouse on May 24<sup>th</sup>. The event had a wide array of Vendors participating and was a huge success. All-time football great, the legendary, Jim Brown passed away on May 19<sup>th</sup> at the age of 87. Singing Superstar Tina Turner passed away on May 24<sup>th</sup> at the age of 83. Hunter undergraduate Interns Jia Xin Huang and Fatima Akter finished their Clubhouse internships this month. On May 25<sup>th</sup> a group from the Clubhouse went down to City Hall to join many others from BCS and organizations from all over NYC to demonstrate in the Just Pay rally for Human Service Workers. K-Boogie (AKA Kushima Warner) was named our Member of the month for May.

**June:** The Clubhouse said farewell this month to Hunter MSW Intern Nora Logan who finished her Internship here. Due to the Canadian Wildfires the Clubhouse was forced to close on Friday June 9<sup>th</sup> over concerns about an unhealthy Air Quality Index (AQI). On Monday June 19<sup>th</sup> the Clubhouse closed again in honor of Juneteenth. On June 12<sup>th</sup> the Denver Nuggets, led by series MVP Nikola Jokic, won their first ever NBA title by defeating the Miami Heat 4 games to 1 in the championship final. On June 13<sup>th</sup> the Las Vegas Golden Knights defeated the upstart Florida Panthers 4 games to 1 to capture the 2023 Stanley Cup. Academy Award winning actor Alan Arkin passed away on June 29<sup>th</sup> at the age of 89. On June 30<sup>th</sup> The Clubhouse held its annual Employment Dinner Fashion Show. Larry Booker was named our Member of the month for June.

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## The Year 2023 in Review Continued from Page 28

**July:** Congratulations to our Members Tineka Johnson and Erica Davis on getting accepted and starting the Howie T. Harp Peer Advocacy Training Program this month. On Saturday July 8th we held the rescheduled Deloitte Job Readiness Employment Event at the Clubhouse. Eleven Clubhouse Members participated and benefitted from the experience. This month we say goodbye to Hunter MSW Intern Diana Stern-Lee and LIU OT Intern Michelle Passik. Congratulations to both of you on completing your internship here. On July 21<sup>st</sup> legendary crooner Tony Bennett passed away at the age of 96. On July 26<sup>th</sup> Irish singer, songwriter and activist Sinead O'Connor passed away at the age of 56. Leon Sims was named our Member of the month for July.

**August:** On August 8th the Hawaiian wildfires in Maui spread and caused extensive damage and killed at least 100 people. We had three summer youth Interns Joaquin Hernandez, Amoireiah Cunningham and Zoe Harper successfully finish up their six-week Clubhouse internships this month. On August 11th Tanya Diego led a Member Beach Trip to Coney Island. It was a great experience for all who attended. On Saturday August 12<sup>th</sup> the Clubhouse hosted a gaming tournament. A number of Members participated. Our Member Lavelle Lockett conceived, coordinated and ran the gaming Tournament. He participated in the tournament as well, and won the tournament championship. Tanya Diego was named our Member of the month for August.

**September:** On September 1<sup>st</sup> the Clubhouse had a festive all-day Barbecue celebration in Herbert Von King Park. The event was well attended, the food was fabulous and everybody pitched in to make the day a huge success. From September 11<sup>th</sup> through September 13<sup>th</sup> the Clubhouse went through their Accreditation site visit. The Clubhouse International Accreditation team of Kari Ragnars of Iceland and Anita Brix-Lambæk of Denmark worked very closely with the Greater Heights Clubhouse Community to do a comprehensive evaluation of our strengths and weaknesses. This month CUNY School of Professional Studies RN Intern Amy Dreffler completed her Clubhouse Internship. On Thursday September 7<sup>th</sup> the NFL regular season kicked off with a matchup between the Defending Super Bowl Champion Kansas City Chiefs and the Detroit Lions. Miguel Cordero was named our Member of the month for September.

**October:** We were deeply saddened that our new Member Sergio Colon unexpectedly passed away, this month, at the age of just 45. From October 26<sup>th</sup> through October 28<sup>th</sup> our great Member Helen De Los Santos, Program Director Katrina Grant and BCS Mental Health Division Director Rose Sauls represented us at the USA Clubhouse Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. This month Mayor Adams and Health Commissioner Ashwin Vasana revealed a plan to increase funding for NYC Clubhouses. The new Adult Clubhouse RFP, that is tied to the plan, has concerning metrics attached to it that could seriously impact the future landscape of Clubhouses in NYC. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> Congress Person Kevin McCarthy, of California, was removed from his position as Speaker of the House. On October 25<sup>th</sup> Congress Person Mike Johnson, of Louisiana, was elected as the House Speaker to replace McCarthy. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, on the Jewish Holiday of Simchat Torah, Hamas orchestrated a series of brutal attacks in southern Israel. The violence and the brutality of the attacks triggered immediate responses from the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and has led to war in Gaza between Israel and Hamas. NFL hall of Fame Chicago Bears linebacker Dick Butkus passed away on October 5<sup>th</sup> at the age of 80. Actress Suzanne Somers, of "Three's Company" fame, passed away on October 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 77. On October 28<sup>th</sup> actor Mathew Perry, of "Friends" fame, passed away at the age of 54. Helen De Los Santos was named our Member of the month for October.

**November:** On Wednesday November 22<sup>nd</sup> the Clubhouse held a pre-Thanksgiving festive meal. The food was outstanding, and our Community had a great experience. Grab and go containers were filled up and provided to the Community for consumption on Thanksgiving Day. On Thursday November 30<sup>th</sup> five of our Clubhouse Members (Leon Sims, Helen De Los Santos, Ross Wade, Omar James and Robbie Heier) joined BCS CEO Janelle Farris in a discussion, via Zoom, with Council Person Linda Lee (Chair of the Mental Health, Disabilities and Addiction Committee). In that discussion, all five of our Members eloquently discussed their concerns about the dynamics of the pending Adult Clubhouse RFP. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, the Texas Rangers won the 2023 World Series defeating the Arizona Diamondbacks 4 games to 1. It was the first World Series Championship ever for the Rangers franchise. Rangers Shortstop Corey Seager was named the World Series MVP. Legendary and often polarizing College Basketball Coach Bob Knight passed away on November 1<sup>st</sup> at the age 83. Former First Lady and longtime Mental Health Activist Rosalynn Carter passed away on November 19<sup>th</sup> at the age of 96. Former Secretary of State and Controversial Statesman Henry Kissinger died on November 28<sup>th</sup> at the age of 100. Juanita Mills was named our Member of the month for November.

**December:** On Friday December 1<sup>st</sup> State Senator Julia Salazar visited the Greater Heights Clubhouse to have a discussion, with BCS senior management and our Clubhouse Members and Staff, about the Clubhouse. On December 15<sup>th</sup> James Duverglas started his TE position at the Turn the Page Again Bookstore in Bayside Queens. On Wednesday December 20<sup>th</sup> the Clubhouse held a wonderful Holiday Party. Sandra Day O'Connor the first female Justice of the Supreme Court passed away on December 1<sup>st</sup> at the age of 93. Iconic and groundbreaking Television Producer Norman Lear passed away on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the age of 100. On December 1<sup>st</sup> disgraced Congress Person George Santos, of New York, was expelled from Congress for numerous ethics violations. On December 22<sup>nd</sup> the death total in the Israel-Hamas war exceeded 20,000. Ross Wade was named our Member of the month for December.

The calendar year of 2023 is coming to a close and the BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse is looking forward to 2024 with great hope for a bright and vibrant future. That hope is rooted in our amazing group of Members, whose courage and resolve to achieve great things are an inspiration to all of us each and every day.



### **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: [kgrant@wearebcs.org](mailto:kgrant@wearebcs.org)  
Donations can be sent to:

**BCS Greater Heights Clubhouse C/O Katrina Grant 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 Tuesdays, and Fridays from 9 AM to 8 PM, as well as Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 AM to 5 PM. We also will be open on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month and possibly on some Holidays from 1 PM to 5 PM. Additionally, we will continue to operate a virtual platform for remote participation at specific prescheduled times.*

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