



Gift Cards to Jumpstart a Healthier Lifestyle

As part of a large Cinco de Mayo celebration with the Hispanic Clinic at CMHC, Madeline Diaz wanted to offer clients a special gift for attending that aligned with the goals of behavioral health homes. She requested five gift cards to be raffled at the event, to be used for healthy groceries or put towards the purchase of basic fitness gear such as pedometers and hand weights. This was a unique way to empower clients in her prevention and health promotion groups and helped clients apply what they learn in health groups, transforming information into positive lifestyle changes.



For more information on this project, contact Madeline Diaz, Clinical Nurse Coordinator, Behavioral Health Homes, madeline.diaz@ct.gov



Coloring Supplies for BHH Hispanic Clinic Clients

As Behavioral Health Homes became a part of the CMHC community, staff worked together to provide educational, recreational, and spiritual activities for clients in the Hispanic Clinic. 50 Under 50 gave them the support they needed to acquire supplies for new groups. Eva Falk requested crayons, colored pencils and sophisticated coloring books to be used in a coloring group with Hispanic Clinic clients.

With these supplies, the group started and was able to provide a calming environment for clients to be present and connect with others. Clinicians are able to access the coloring books to make copies of the images and use them as a therapeutic intervention with their clients individually.

For more information about this project, contact: Eva Falk, Nurse Clinician,

eva.falk@ct.gov



Pill Boxes for Increased Medication Adherence

Adhering to prescriptions can be challenging for some clients, and pill boxes serve as an effective reminder and method of organization for multiple medications. Robert Harrison submitted a request for funds to purchase Reizen pill boxes. A previous donation of these boxes allowed the pharmacy to gift boxes to clients at the CMHC Health Fair. The boxes were received with positive feedback, particularly because they allow users to keep a day's worth of medication with them rather than carrying a large box. The boxes regularly provided by the Department of Pharmacy are bulkier and less portable.

For more information about this project, contact: Robert Harrison, Clinical Pharmacist, robert.j.harrison@ct.gov



Journals for WRAP Group

Deborah Jackson and Nancy Kuzia teamed up for their 50 Under 50 proposal. The two facilitate a Wellness Recovery Action Plan group at the CMHC. Through their work they educate and empower clients to take charge of their recovery.

In these workshops, Deborah and Nancy have spoken with clients about their daily activities. They submitted a request for funds to purchase journals. These journals have helped clients track activities and identify triggers which could hinder their recovery.

For more information about this project, contact Deborah Jackson, Assistant Team Leader of Peer Support, deborah.d.jackson@ct.gov



Inspirational Pens

Leigh Nathan noticed that clients had a need for planners to keep track of appointments, bills, and other responsibilities. She decided to create large custom planners. But clients had another barrier to managing their time- pens. Leigh submitted a request for pens, and chose the inspirational quote “Never Give Up” to serve as an uplifting reminder.

This project had an unexpected result: the pens became a source of connection for clients and staff alike. “I always hand out three pens at a time- one they can keep for themselves and two to give away if they see someone who looks like they need the positive message.”



For more information about this project, contact Leigh Nathan, Public Psychiatry Fellow, leigh.nathan@yale.edu



Connecting CMHC through Spider Plants

Jessica Trzaska worked with clients on the fourth floor who had cared for spider plants in a group which formed to give clients a sense of connection to the larger CMHC community.

Clients in the group were tasked with writing a wish or affirmation for the person receiving the plant, re-potting the spider plant, and caring for it until it became securely rooted. With over 100 plants ready for new homes, the group gifted them to people in the CMHC community. Jessica requested the funds for potting soil and pots for the growing plants. The project culminated in an open giveaway on the first floor, where anyone could take home a plant. The response was enormous- every plant was gifted to brighten up offices and homes.



For more information about this project, contact: Jessica Trzaska, Rehabilitation Therapist, jessica.trzaska@ct.gov



Improving Office Lighting

While working with clients Faith Steffen-Allen, Psychology Practicum Student learned that the overhead lighting in her office disturbed clients. Individuals with psychosis often experience sensitivity to light, and her clients would complain of headaches during their time together.

The 50 Under 50 grant helped her strengthen her rapport with clients by showing that their feedback was valued. The new lighting created a more comfortable office environment for clients to visit. The project was also proposed with sustainability in mind- as a student, Faith will leave the floor and desk lamps for future students to use in their offices.

For more information about this project, contact: Faith Steffen- Allen,
Graduate Psychology Practicum student, STEP Clinic, faith.steffen-allen@ct.gov



Therapeutic Sand Trays

Julie Price used her 50 Under 50 grant for these innovative therapeutic sand trays. She had been using sand trays with clients who found discussing certain topics triggering. The trays are an evidence-based approach that allows clients to share information in a non-verbal and stimulating way through the use of sand and miniature figures which clients used to tell stories. Together, Julie and her clients were able to process the stories created with the sand trays to address grief, stress, and trauma. Julie used funds to cover a portion of the cost of a container, silica sand and miniature figures in order to expand the options clients had to use.



For more information about this project, contact: Elaine Henley, Community Clinician,
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