

THRIVING WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

New Mental Health Program provides an environment where people “Celebrate Greatness in Self and Others, Gourmet Coffee and Awesome Food.”

On leap day, February 29th, Café the Lodge opened its doors to the public. The café is part of the Mental Health Recovery Lodge of Northampton County, located on 427 East Fourth Street, on the Southside of Bethlehem. The Lodge provides supported housing, educational and recreational programs, and vocational opportunities for adults with mental illness. According to individual preferences, some of the members live at the Lodge, while others live in surrounding rental properties. The Lodge affirms self-determination and supports its residential members to establish independent and long-term living arrangements, a productive and meaningful existence, and a wholesome lifestyle.

Why a Café? Well, most people would consider themselves doing “pretty good” when they (1) live as independently as possible in a safe and comfortable home, (2) belong to a circle of supportive friends and/or family members, and (3) hold an exciting and rewarding job. This “secret” formula applies to virtually everyone, whether we have a mental illness or not. With this in mind, the Lodge opted to start a café and, consequently, is able to provide interesting career opportunities for people living with mental illness in Northampton County. The Lodge hired and trained 16 paid employees and several volunteers who hold positions as baristas, cooks, and café hosts.

Café the Lodge is determined to exceed the industrial standards in quality and service. The café is open to the public from 7:30am to 2:30pm and serves gourmet coffee, including espresso based coffee drinks, and a variety of breakfast and lunch options, such as oatmeal, quiche, panini, salad, soup, and a range of desserts and snacks.

While many of the café staff consists of individuals with mental illness, they will be preparing delicious lattes or delightful Cuban sandwiches alongside colleagues (staff and volunteers) who are not diagnosed with a mental illness. This creates an environment where stigma loses its power. Whether diagnosed or not, staff will be approached and appreciated for who they are: complete human beings.

Café the Lodge has a capacity of about twenty-two seats and has a small conference room available for meetings and classes. During warm weather, customers may enjoy the courtyard in the back of the property, the Mindfulness Garden with its beautiful pond, and the Greenway Terrace. The Lodge is nestled in the bustling Southside, on the edge of “Four Blocks International,” just a short walk from Lehigh University and the Steel Stacks complex.

The café caters breakfast and lunches, and runs a small gift shop with items that resonate with the philosophy of the Lodge, Mental Health Recovery and Mindfulness. Additionally, customers, as well as the general public, are invited to attend a myriad of classes, workshops, and events throughout the day, such as live music events,

drumming circles, horticulture and garden club, karaoke, mindfulness meditation, dual recovery anonymous meetings, chef's series, film club, and much more.

Currently, the Lodge serves 8 residential members, a number that will increase to 12 when the renovations are completed. Non-residential consumers, as well as people without mental illness, are welcome to become Lodge members, take advantage of employment and volunteer opportunities, and participate in recreational and educational activities.

At the Lodge, the line of separation between those with and without mental illness ceases to exist. The Lodge celebrates greatness in one another; it is an environment that encourages everyone to embrace their aspirations ... and thrive!

For more information, go to: www.TheLodge-rhd.org or call the office at 610-419-3318, or the café at 610-849-2100.

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