

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

# Penguin *pages*



HOLIDAY  
PARTY

HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR

26



Menninger®  
Where healing comes to mind

## HEALTHY TIPS ON DEALING WITH IT

### ➔ Self Care



Allow Yourself to Feel:  
Don't judge or pressure  
yourself to "get over it."  
Give yourself permission  
to experience the  
sadness.

Eat nutritious foods, stay hydrated, get  
regular exercise (even a brisk walk), and  
prioritize sleep. Get Outside:  
Sunlight and fresh air can change your  
perspective and boost mood

### ➔ Emotional Strategy



Talk About It: Share your  
feelings with trusted  
friends, family, or a  
support group. Even if  
you don't feel like it,  
engaging in hobbies can  
provide breaks and  
moments of joy

Help Others: Assisting someone else or  
volunteering can lift your spirits. Challenge  
Negative Thoughts: Try gratitude journaling  
or focus on things you're thankful for to  
shift perspective

### ➔ Symptoms



Persistent sadness, low  
energy, oversleeping,  
carbohydrate cravings,  
weight gain, social  
withdrawal, and loss of  
interest in activities.

often starting in fall/winter and lifting in  
spring/summer, with symptoms like fatigue,  
irritability, difficulty concentrating, and  
feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness



## ACKNOWLEDGING S.A.D

December is recognized as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) Awareness Month. Seasonal Affective Disorder is a type of recurring depression that follows a seasonal pattern. Symptoms typically appear during specific times of the year—most commonly in the winter months when there is less daylight, though some people experience it during the summer—and tend to improve as the season changes.

If you're feeling sad or low during this time, it's important to acknowledge and validate those feelings rather than pushing them away or judging yourself for having them. Practicing consistent self-care can make a meaningful difference—this includes getting adequate sleep, eating nourishing foods, staying physically active, and spending time outdoors when possible. Connecting with supportive people, engaging in activities you enjoy, and expressing your emotions through journaling, art, music, or other creative outlets can also help process what you're feeling.

If sadness feels overwhelming, lasts a long time, or begins to interfere with daily life, seeking professional support is a healthy and important step. Remember, it's okay to not be okay—sadness doesn't always need fixing, but it does need understanding and space to be processed.



# Our last 2025 Interns: Karen & Valeria



These two visitors from Texas A&M were absolutely awesome and brought great energy to our space. They were highly engaged with our members at every point, taking the time to interact, answer questions,

and make learning feel comfortable and inclusive for everyone involved. They educated our members on the importance of eating a balanced meal, explaining how proper nutrition supports over all health.

During my time at TGP, I learned a lot just by being around the members and joining them during activities, which made everything more enjoyable and helped me connect with everyone. I also gave a presentation on healthy eating during the holidays and really loved how engaged and open the members were. It was great interacting with everyone every day. To the members, I hope y'all had happy holidays, keep taking care of yourselves, and keep being you. You all made this experience really special!



*Thank  
you!*

*Karen*





# Pajamas Party

Our PJ Party was a wonderful and memorable evening filled with laughter, connection, and holiday cheer. Members enjoyed playing bingo, singing karaoke, and simply spending time together in a relaxed and festive atmosphere. The day also included a variety of fun and challenging games that kept everyone engaged and energized. We were especially grateful for the many talented performers who shared their voices by singing Christmas songs, which truly added to the joyful spirit of the event. Overall, it was a great opportunity to build community, celebrate the season, and enjoy one another's company.









# Holiday Party



*Our Holiday Party was a huge success—full of energy, excitement, and festive spirit. The event was packed with members enjoying every moment, and the Winter Wonderland room was an absolute hit, creating a magical and inviting atmosphere for everyone. The food was amazing and truly one of the highlights of the evening, bringing people together to enjoy great conversation. To top it all off, the DJ kept the vibe going by playing all our favorite jams, keeping the dance floor lively and the celebration going all night. Overall, it was a joyful and memorable night that truly captured the spirit of the holidays.*









# MEMBER OF THE MONTH

## PRISCILLA LOPEZ

Priscilla is someone who has stepped up and is making a difference at the clubhouse. She's sweet and is always encouraging to others. She loves the Dallas Cowboys and enjoys drawing.



**Requirements**  
Members are chosen by peers and staff, based on their consistent performance, positive attitude, reliability, teamwork and overall contribution to the Clubhouse and self help.





# 2026

## Happy New Year!

Dear Members and Staff of The Gathering Place,

As you are aware, our program is built on the shared responsibility between members and staff. I am totally honored to be a part of your team! I would like to thank all of you for an incredible year.

As we reflect on the closing of 2025, I want to sincerely thank each of you for your dedication, perseverance, and heart. The work we accomplished together was meaningful, impactful, and rooted in our shared commitment to growth, dignity and purpose.

Last year came with its share of challenges and opportunities, and you met both with resilience, creativity, and teamwork. Because of our efforts, we strengthened our programs, deepened our relationships, and continued to create a space where people feel supported, empowered and valued. Thank you for your willingness to show up each day with compassion and professionalism. Your contributions, big and small, made a difference and they did not go unnoticed.

As we move forward, we do so with gratitude for what we've built with optimism for what lies ahead. I am truly thankful to work alongside such a dedicated and amazing team.

I am grateful and appreciate each one of you! Happy New Year!!!

*Shalla*





# HAPPY 2026

## Next Month

# January

★ JAN **2** FUN  
FRIDAY

JAN **29** ART  
MUSEUM

JAN **19** MLK  
DAY

JAN **23** WORK  
SHOP

JAN **30**

