

Get Involved. Become a Member Today.

The Gathering Place has thrived for more than 30 years through the active participation of our members and donors. We hope you will join in our community of hope and caring, and support a welcoming place for those with mental illness.

To become a member of The Gathering Place, an individual must:

- Have a psychiatric diagnosis from a mental health professional,
- Be at least 18-years-old and
- Not be a danger to herself/himself or others.

Supporters are invited to make a charitable donation for enhancing our programs and services for the members.

- Give by credit card at menningerclinic.com/donate.
- Or mail your check made payable to The Menninger Clinic Foundation, with The Gathering Place written on the memo line, to:
The Menninger Clinic
Office of Philanthropy
12301 Main Street
Houston, Texas 77035

Hours of Operation

7:30 am to 4 pm Monday through Friday

Contact Us

Main number: 713-275-5724

Member services: 713-275-5731

To leave a voice message after hours: 713-275-5338

Fax: 713-275-5783

Location

Our members gather at this spacious facility on approximately four acres at 5310 S. Willow Drive in south-central Houston. The Gathering Place is less than a 10-minute drive from Menninger.



The Gathering Place

Offering hope & dignity
for recovering adults



Get to Know The Gathering Place

The Gathering Place offers a welcoming community to adults who are recovering from serious and persistent mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depressive disorder. By focusing on strengths—not limitations—The Gathering Place assists members in pursuing healthy life choices and more independent living.

Through our psychosocial programs and services, members are empowered to integrate back into the community. Members cultivate teamwork abilities, relearn life skills and build self-esteem while experiencing acceptance and belonging. Membership is free of charge.



“It’s important for us to have a spot like The Gathering Place.”

Willie B., pictured at left, enjoys being part of a community that values him and his unique abilities. He has been a devoted member for 20 years.

Pictured at right, are inaugural members of The Gathering Place Louis P. and Margaret A.



Our History

In 1984, three mothers—Mrs. Lynne Paine, Mrs. Nancy Runnells and Mrs. Beverly Wuntch—were united by their shared experience of having adult children with serious mental illness. At the time, few programs existed to help men and women with severe and persistent psychiatric diseases achieve independent and successful community living.

The mothers envisioned a place where their children and others like them could find acceptance, friendship and opportunities to learn and grow. To fulfill their dream, the women founded The Gathering Place, officially opening its doors in 1986. In the years since, The Gathering Place has served as a safe haven for thousands of Houstonians in need of its unique services. In 2010, it became a community benefit program of The Menninger Clinic.

From humble beginnings of six volunteers and eight members, today The Gathering Place is a bustling and vibrant psychosocial clubhouse with a full-time staff of six helping facilitate and provide free rehabilitative programs and services to approximately 70 members each day.



Founders, from left, Beverly Wuntch, Nancy Runnells & Lynne Paine

Our Programs and Services

At The Gathering Place, every person is seen as a valued participant who has something to contribute to others. Based on a clubhouse model, members participate in a work-structured day helping manage the day-to-day operations of the organization. In addition, free programs are provided for wellness, employment, education and social support.

Wellness

Exercise is known to offer mental health benefits, such as reducing stress and anxiety, improving sleep and boosting self-esteem. In collaboration with our recreational therapist, members establish fitness goals and track their progress to stay motivated. An on-site gym with weight training and cardiovascular equipment, as well as a covered basketball court and walking trail, provide convenient access to exercise opportunities. In addition, meditation, yoga and tai chi classes are offered.

Employment

Through our vocational training program, members’ career interests and aptitudes are assessed, along with potential challenges, to help match members with opportunities for successful employment. Assistance with résumé preparation and job interviewing also are provided. Through participation in clubhouse operations, members develop useful career skills. They can be found running the Urban Market (our retail food store), answering phones, designing monthly newsletters, greeting visitors, staffing the library or teaching classes to other members.



Staff member and interns, from left, Carey R., Donna T., Employment Specialist Glennis Johnson, Corey B. and Khiry K.

Education

Education accelerates recovery from mental illness by broadening intellectual, social and emotional horizons. Self-esteem also is supported by the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes with learning. At The Gathering Place, classes are offered in art, communication, foreign languages and more, while our computer lab enables hands-on technology training. In addition, members who wish to complete their GED are guided through the process by our employment specialist.

Social Support

The Gathering Place promotes a positive environment where people with persistent mental illness feel safe, secure and integrated into a community. Socialization is encouraged through group volunteer activities, peer-to-peer training, and fitness and educational classes. Members eat together, discuss recent life events over coffee and play cards, billiards or foosball. Assistance is provided to secure housing, if needed, and the clubhouse regularly hosts support groups, including Re:MIND (formerly The Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance), Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.



Pictured on cover from left: (top) Peggy W. and Rebecca D.; (bottom) Adele W. and Vincent J.