

Penguin Pages



2026

INDEPENDENT LIVING
HOUSTON TEXANS
MLK PARADE

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

This month we bring you the latest updates and exciting news from our community. Stay informed about our ongoing projects, upcoming events, and success stories.



Independent Living

Breaking Stigma and Embracing Self-Reliance

By Veronica Y

An independent person is someone who is self-reliant and able to think and act for themselves without excessive control or influence from others. Independence means making your own decisions and often supporting yourself financially and emotionally.

I've noticed that many members, including myself, who live on our own are fully capable of managing daily responsibilities, even while navigating mental health challenges. There is a misconception that people with mental health conditions cannot be independent, but in reality, many individuals are able to pay bills, take care of themselves, and live responsibly.

Many of us also show others that independence is possible. Several members have shared that living independently is empowering and fulfilling, as it allows them to exist and function on their own without constant outside assistance.

“Independence is not about doing everything alone, but about believing you can”

Personally, I have always valued independence. I am comfortable doing things on my own, while still being willing to help or teach others when needed. This is a value I also pass on to my children—encouraging self-confidence, responsibility, and independence.

Mental health does not define a person's ability to be independent. With support and understanding, many individuals successfully manage their lives and deserve to have their independence respected.



How a clubhouse supports Mental Health

By Nicey C

A psychosocial clubhouse is more than just a place to spend time—it is a supportive community where individuals can build confidence, develop skills, and feel a sense of belonging. For people living with mental health challenges, isolation can make symptoms feel heavier. A clubhouse creates a safe, welcoming environment where members are encouraged to connect with others who understand their experiences, helping reduce loneliness and increase emotional support.

One of the biggest benefits of a clubhouse is structure and purpose. Through daily activities such as work-ordered units, classes, groups, and social events, members are given opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways. This sense of responsibility helps build self-esteem, routine, and motivation—important factors in maintaining mental wellness.

Rather than focusing on limitations, the clubhouse emphasizes strengths and abilities.

Clubhouses also support independence and life skills. Members can learn practical skills like communication, teamwork, budgeting, cooking, and job readiness in a real-life setting. These experiences help individuals feel more capable and confident in managing everyday responsibilities, which can reduce stress and anxiety over time.

Most importantly, a clubhouse promotes hope. Recovery is not rushed or forced; instead, members move at their own pace while being supported by peers and staff. The clubhouse model reminds individuals that they are not defined by their diagnosis and that meaningful, fulfilling lives are possible. By offering connection, purpose, and empowerment, a clubhouse plays a powerful role in supporting mental health and overall well-being.

THE HOUSTON Museum of *fine arts*

By Sana P

A Journey Through Time

Our recent trip to the Houston Art Musuem was a deeply refreashing escape into the archives of human history. Stepping through the galleries felt less like walking through a building and more like stepping back in time. Being surrounded by historical pieces from every corner of the globe provided a vivid reminder of how vast and colorful our world truly is. It wasn't just a visual concept; it was an emotional experience that made the normal lives of people from thousands of years ago feel tangible and real.





This parade was so awesome. It was my first one. I liked the marching bands and the cars they displayed. So many people came out to celebrate. I also met Super Man.

Juan Z

MLK PARADE



The weather was good, we had a great spot to view the parade and we also had a porter potty close to us. We sat curve side and had the best view.

My first MLK parade was pretty much what I expected from watching movies. It wasn't a quiet walk at all—it was fun, colorful, and full of energy. Between the loud music, honking cars, and cheering crowds, the atmosphere was exciting. My favorite part was definitely the marching bands; I loved the music they played. I also thought it was cool that people were handing out things like candy, stress balls, and beaded necklaces. I will say, I was a little confused at times. I expected the parade to focus only on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., but there were also a lot of people running for office and promoting political causes. That mix caught me off guard, but overall, it was a really cool experience for my first MLK parade.



*“the
atmosphere
was exciting”*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was a courageous leader who dedicated his life to the fight for equality, justice, and peace. Through nonviolent protest and powerful words, he challenged racism and injustice while inspiring millions to believe in the possibility of change. Dr. King's leadership during the Civil Rights Movement helped bring about major progress, including the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. His legacy continues to remind us that standing up for what is right, loving others, and working together can create a more just and united society

TGP member and ABC 13 Pooja Lodhia





HOUSTON TEXANS



POST SEASON

By Louis P



The Houston Texans finished the regular season with an impressive 12-5 record, marking one of the best campaigns in franchise history. After a rough 0-3 start, Houston turned things around with a remarkable nine-game winning streak that propelled them up the AFC standings. The turnaround was a big story — it made the Texans the first NFL team ever to start 0-3 and make the playoffs multiple times.

Quarterback C.J. Stroud threw for over 3,000 yards and connected well with playmakers like Nico Collins, who led the team with over 1,100 receiving yards, and rookie contributors who added key plays throughout the year.

Defensively, Houston was one of the better units in the league, keeping opponents to just 17.4 points per game — among the best marks across the NFL. Despite finishing second in the AFC South, the Texans clinched a playoff berth for the third straight season for the first time in franchise history.

In the AFC Wild Card Round, the Texans delivered one of their most dominant postseason performances in years, defeating the Pittsburgh Steelers 30-6. Houston's defense was outstanding, forcing multiple turnovers and limiting Pittsburgh's offense while Christian Kirk posted a career-high receiving yardage.

However, their 2025 playoff run ended in the AFC Divisional Round with a 28-16 loss to the New England Patriots. In that game, Stroud struggled with turnovers, throwing several interceptions, and the Texans' offense was unable to find sustained rhythm against a tough Patriots defense.

While the Texans didn't reach the AFC Championship Game, the 2025 season was still a milestone in Houston — turning around an early losing start, setting a franchise best in wins since 2012, and earning a hard-fought playoff victory. The challenge now is building on this foundation and finding ways to take the next step in future postseason runs.



January 2026

KyAnndria

Dietitian



About me

My name is Ky-Ky and I go to UT Health Houston. I enjoy this field because I have a passion for wellness and nutrition. I want to educate the

community and others as well. With my time here I hope to identify gaps in a community setting. I also hope to leave here with a nutritional wall where

people can walk & learn. Some of my hobbies are to be in nature. I like to watch movies and to cook. My favorite color is pink.

January 2026

Lori

Dietitian



About me

Hello my name is Lori and I attend Texas Woman's University. I chose this field because I want to make sure people eat healthy. While my time

here, I want to learn all members styles. Meaning how I can help with their everyday living, and day by day nutrition. I hope that I leave everyone with

a healthier mindset. Some of my hobbies are arts and crafts. My favorite color is pink & gray. I have a dog named CJ who has a Snachuzer.

Thank you to The Gathering Place for the love, support, and strength you continually show within the community. My time here has been truly eye-opening and has even inspired me to consider a future in community dietetics. I hope I was able to share meaningful information that others can carry into their everyday lives and help reinforce the importance of nutrition and overall health. Thank you for all the laughter, conversations, and stories along the way. Being here felt like being part of a big family—one that experiences ups and downs but always comes together. A special thanks to Shalla, Mariah, Dajae, Rob, and all of the members for welcoming me into your home away from home. The Gathering Place is truly something special, and it's each and every one of you who makes it that way. This experience is one I will always carry with me. Thank you <3

MEMBER OF THE MONTH

JAN 2026

ABOUT ME

My name is Sana, and I'm 21 years old. I have a passion for creativity, finding ways to incorporate art into everyday tasks. Helping people is something I truly enjoy. I adore dark colors, with maroon being my favorite. I share my life with two black and white cats, and I'm also a certified makeup artist.

CLUBHOUSE

Sana supports the Clubhouse in several key areas, including the Country Store, Front Desk, and the Communications Team, where she serves as our Graphic Designer. She plays a major role in creating artwork throughout the Clubhouse. Sana's dedication, versatility, and positive presence make her a valuable asset to our team.

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.



SANA PATEL

NEXT MONTH

FEBRUARY

FRIENDSHIP

LOVE

ADMIRATION

HUGS

UPCOMING EVENTS:

2/6 - ALOHA RANEE

2/13 - WORKSHOP

2/20 - FUN FRIDAY

CLOSED 27

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