

Casa Primavera

A unique clubhouse designed for Latino men and women with mental illness

Summary

Casa Primavera is a unique clubhouse specifically designed for Latino men and women living with mental illness. Some members have a dual diagnosis, challenged with a combination of both mental illness and substance abuse. Casa Primavera is the only psychosocial rehabilitation program of its kind in Boston. The clubhouse has bilingual and bicultural staff, activities, and groups that respond to the specific cultural needs of its members. The clubhouse also has an environment that strives to enhance each member's feeling of safety and comfort, a vital need for individuals who are experiencing the confusion and distress caused not only by their mental illness, but also by living in a country where most others speak a different language.

The Program

The program is modeled after Fountain House, the first clubhouse of this kind established in New York City in the early 1970's. Daily activities are based on a clubhouse "work-ordered-day" in which members and staff work together in teams called "work units" to perform



El Kiosko (the snack bar) sells fruit, cookies and coffee to members, staff and visitors.



The Club trophy case displays awards and trophies that have been won in softball and bowling competitions by either a member or the program as a whole.

all the basic functions of the club. The program is organized into four work units:

- 1) *The Kitchen & Maintenance Unit* plans and prepares meals, and performs daily housekeeping and maintenance tasks.
- 2) *The Education Unit* provides ESL, GED and other training.
- 3) *The Employment Resources Unit* helps members enter the job force.
- 4) *The Office Unit* is in charge of the club's day-to-day operations and manages membership services.

Like all Fountain House Model programs, Casa Primavera makes use of a self-help model that encourages members to be actively involved in each other's recovery. All members participate in club management, helping to set policies and to run the day-to-day programming, which enhances the members' sense of ownership in the program.

Clientele

Approximately 80 men and women attend Casa Primavera regularly, about 30 attend per day, 6 days a week. All members speak Spanish as their primary language and are of varying levels of disability due to their mental illness. Some function at a high enough level to be able to live independently and maintain some type of employment. Others are in need of

Casa Primavera

substantial staff support. Most clients live in Roxbury or Dorchester now, but were born in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Cuba or one of several Latin American countries. Many understand and speak little or no English.

Holidays

Casa Primavera is a friendly haven for members, striving to provide the comforts of home and enhance quality of life. They celebrate many holidays commonly observed in the United States and also hold festivals on Latin American holidays. Casa provides extra support around the winter holidays, a time that's known to be hard for many, but especially difficult for those separated from family who still live in their native countries. On December 24th, the traditional day to celebrate Christmas in Latin America, Casa Primavera members come together for a conventional holiday dinner complete with a pig roast. Everyone is involved



Members have the opportunity to learn computer basics at Casa Primavera.

in planning the feast and the club is transformed with bold-colored decorations, dancing, music, talking and laughing.

Referral Information

Any adult who is a client of the Department of Mental Health (DMH), who resides in the Metro



Members gather in the large common room where there are 15-foot ceilings and many large windows that provide an abundance of natural sunlight.

Boston DMH area (includes all of Boston, Brookline, Chelsea, Winthrop and Revere) and whose primary language is Spanish, is eligible for membership. Priority for membership in Casa Primavera is granted to adults who are clients of the Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center. Any other adults living in these areas who have a psychiatric disability are encouraged to apply for membership. They will be referred to the Eligibility Determination Unit for Metro Boston DMH to determine whether they meet eligibility requirements.

The first step in making a referral is to contact Casa Primavera. Visits and tours for those



Doing small art projects using color markers is a good emotional outlet especially during the winter.

interested in membership as well as referring counselors or family members are warmly encouraged. An application form will gladly be sent. This should be filled out and returned to Casa Primavera. A staff member will forward it to the correct person at the Dr. Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center.

Building and Location

Casa Primavera, located in Roxbury, occupies 2,100 square feet of space on the second floor of a masonry building which is accessible by a flight of stairs or by elevator. The space is



In La Cocina (the kitchen), some club members prepare a hot lunch that is served daily.

air-conditioned and has 15-foot ceilings and many large windows that provide an abundance of natural sunlight (extremely important to any Latino living in the northeastern part of the United States). Furniture clusters divide the area naturally into social and work spaces. A large trophy case displays ribbons and trophies that have been won by either a member or the program as a whole in softball and bowling competitions. In addition to the large common room, there is also a kitchen, two bathrooms and a staff office.



Members of La Oficina (the office) answer the telephone, compile member attendance and enter information into the computer, and give tours of the Club to applicants and visitors.

Casa Primavera



A good game of dominoes is one way to spend a few afternoon hours.

Casa Primavera is located in Dudley Square, Roxbury, across the street from the Dudley Station bus terminal. In addition, the Ruggles T stop on the Orange Line is close by. Most members commute by public transportation from Boston neighborhoods easily accessible to the bus or T, using Special Needs passes. Some get transportation service from “The Ride.” Casa Primavera has its own van and provides transportation to those few members who require staff support during their daily commute (such as individuals living in psychiatric inpatient units).



Lunchtime meals are always very well attended.

*For more information about Casa Primavera,
please contact the
Program Director at (617) 445-8017*



Casa Primavera
2326 Washington St.
Roxbury, MA 12119

