



# Spring Newsletter



## *Emmy Winner Joe Pantoliano is Guest Speaker for Spring Luncheon*

The Gathering Place 21st annual Spring Luncheon will be held on April 24, 2008 at the Hyatt Regency Houston. We are very excited to have **Joe Pantoliano** as our guest speaker. One of today's best character actors,

the inexhaustible Joe Pantoliano boasts over 100 film, television and stage credits, including *Risky Business*, *The Goonies*, *Midnight Run*, *The Fugitive*, *The Matrix*, *Memento*, and he won an Emmy Award for his portrayal of Ralphie Cifaretto on the hit HBO series, *The Sopranos*.

Most recently, Pantoliano produced and starred in *Canvas*, a feature film that portrays a family's struggle with mental illness. Pantoliano is a dynamic and powerful speaker who speaks on reducing the stigma associated with mental illness in a professional, sensitive, and humorous way. His foundation, "No Kidding, Me Too!" is a nonprofit organization comprised of entertainment industry members united in an effort to educate Americans about the epidemic related to mental illness in all forms. We are pleased to be honoring at this year's luncheon, Jim and Linda McIngvale and their daughters Laura and Liz, for their passionate support and advocacy for mental illness.

## *Luncheon Details*

"No one can make you have a sense of inferiority without your permission."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

**When**

April 24, 2008

**Luncheon Chairs**

Cabrina & Steve Owsley

**To purchase a table or individual tickets, call Michael Ross at**

**Where**

Hyatt Regency Houston

**Honorees**

The McIngvale Family

## *“Normal” by Kimberly Regner*



Back in 2001 (before 9/11), I was at the lowest point in my life. I was in total denial, not wanting to admit that I was in the grips of major depression. Bearing the stigma of being “weird” or “strange” was not something I wanted. I thought that if I could just “get over it”, I would be all right. I quit my job before getting a new one and was evicted from my apartment. I put everything into storage. I was at death’s doorstep and had different plans for suicide.

Then, thankfully, I called my best friend of over 17 years for help. She took me to the hospital and it was there that I finally saw all of the different faces of mental illness. I realized that I was normal, just as they were. I began to understand that we come from all different walks of life and that mental illness is a medical problem, not imaginary. And, like persons with diabetes or high blood pressure, we need medication.

The first half of 2001 was spent just trying to get a grip on my illness and I left the hospital still feeling suicidal. It took several months, a third stay at the hospital, and a new doctor to finally get me stabilized. From there, I went to go live with my mother and spent (an often rocky) six years until finding my own apartment.

I joined The Gathering Place two years ago. Here, like in the hospital, people are normal. We come from different walks of life. We live in personal care homes, with family, or in our own homes or apartments. Some of us work or look for employment while others are sustained just by the fellowship of our fellow members. We do what we can here. If The Gathering Place did not exist, I would probably be home-bound with nothing to do and nowhere to go. This could be detrimental to someone with depression as severe as mine.

Today, I am not ashamed to admit that I have a mental illness and I refuse to fall victim to the stigma. Mental illness is a real medical disease. I was born this way. It is not my fault or the fault of my family. I come to The Gathering Place, and that’s all I do. While on the surface, it may seem that I’m not engaged in activities as much as others, I’m helped so much just by being here. It keeps me from getting so sick that I have to go back to the hospital. We’re not open on the weekend, so when Sunday night comes around, I’m very much looking forward to the next day because I can come back and be with people again!

### **Dad**

By Felicia K.

I see so many beautiful things  
in your smile,  
thoughts that brightens up  
my day.

I see the horizons fill up  
with happiness  
and sunny days that  
let the light in.

The sun shines every day and I  
see so many things to be  
grateful for ,

like the beautiful flowers,  
birds and the majestic clouds  
in the sky.

And every night as I reflect on  
the best things in life to be  
happy about,  
they all remind me of you.

## *TGP Hosts International Gathering*

On January 30<sup>th</sup>, The Gathering Place was pleased to host the international board of directors of The International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD) for their annual board meeting. Carolyn Hamilton, President of NAMI Metropolitan Houston and long-time supporter of The Gathering Place, serves on the international board of ICCD and was responsible for bringing the group to our campus.

Those in attendance included Finn Mortensen, President, Martin Dives, Anette Hoegh Goelet, Carolyn E. Hamilton, John Ingram, Mark Lanier, William Madaus, Joel Corcoran, Executive Director, Pauline Anderson and Ralph Bilby, staff at ICCD. Hamilton stated that "each one of them was impressed with the beauty of The Gathering Place's facility and the wonderful comradery between the clubhouse members."

That evening, TGP opened its doors to the public for an informal reception that allowed the ICCD board to meet with several leaders of our community and to share a bit about what ICCD is and what it means to be an ICCD clubhouse.

ICCD clubhouses are founded on the realization that recovery from serious mental illness must involve the whole person in a vital and culturally sensitive community. A clubhouse community offers respect, hope, mutuality and unlimited opportunity to access the same worlds of friendship, housing, education and employment as the rest of society.

The Gathering Place received its official certification from ICCD in 2007 and is pleased to be a part of an international movement to promote awareness and activism that will benefit not only those suffering from mental illness, but our entire community, state and nation as well.



Carolyn Hamilton



### *From the Executive Director - Tyeshia Miller*

One of the areas in which TGP is looking to grow this year is transitional employment, which is the stepping off point for many of our members who seek to become fully independent. Transitional jobs are part-time, short-term placements in the community. TGP partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, and corporations allow us to provide on-the-job experience to our members in real-life office environments.

Transitional employment partners set aside entry-level, part-time jobs for TGP members. These placements last from six to nine months and give members real work experience and the opportunity to gain skills and build a résumé, while paying them competitive wages. TGP staff prepare members for jobs, provide on-the-job training and placement, and then support members while they are on the transitional jobs.

After two transitional jobs, members look for permanent positions with the help of a job coach. Members are assisted to write their résumés, search for available jobs, learn interview skills, and secure permanent part-time or full-time jobs. This phase of the employment program is called supported employment, and lasts as long as the member wishes. Members and job coaches keep in touch by site visits, telephone calls, or meetings, as well as at monthly employment dinners where all members in the employment program can meet to socialize and support one another.

In order to increase our success rate with transitional employment placements, we need your help. Is there a position available within your place of business that could be filled by one of our members? Is your church, school or favorite place to shop looking to fill a vacancy? If so, please give me a call directly at 713-729-3499, extension 28 or email me at [TMiller@gplace.org](mailto:TMiller@gplace.org) and let's work together to give one of our members a real chance at independence.

## The Gathering Place

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### MISSION

The Gathering Place provides a supportive environment for adults with severe and persistent mental illness, focusing on strengths rather than limitations, in order to facilitate life choices and more independent living.

### Board of Directors

**President**  
Peter Roth

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“Attitudes are more important than facts. Change your attitude toward the facts and reality will change.”

- Dorothy S.

## Give to TGP Just by Searching the Web!

What if The Gathering Place earned a penny every time you searched the Internet? Or how about if a percentage of every purchase you made online went to support our cause? Well, now it can!

GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Advertisers pay a fee whenever Internet users click on a given link.

Last year search engines generated almost \$6 billion through such searches.

You use GoodSearch.com just as you would any search engine. You'll get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up!

GoodShop.com is a new online shopping mall which donates up to 37 percent of each purchase to your favorite cause! Hundreds of great stores including Target, Gap, Best Buy, EBay, Macy's

and Barnes & Noble have teamed up with GoodShop and every time you place an order, you'll be supporting your favorite cause.

Just go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and be sure to enter **The Gathering Place - HOUSTON** as the charity you want to support. And, be sure to spread the word!