



### 1) Summary

*the Well Community* seeks your partnership in providing **transformational**, faith-based mental health services to some of the neediest residents of Dallas. Our programs are **distinctive** – we are the only program in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex employing the clubhouse model, an internationally recognized **best practice** of psychosocial and vocational rehabilitation. In addition, our programs meet the critical need and increasing demand of hurting people in our community:

- **Critical Need** :: Mental illness is a highly prevalent, life-threatening disease that affects millions of people all around the world. Over 44 million people in the U.S. – one in five adults – suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, and over 5 million people are disabled by severe mental illness (National Alliance on Mental Illness – NAMI).
- **Increasing Demand** :: In 2009, the largest provider of public mental health services in Dallas reported a 38% increase in total number served. Over 38,000 individuals were served, reflecting the skyrocketing demand for strong mental health programs in our city. Likewise, *the Well Community* touched more lives last year than ever before. Over 450 individuals, a 63% increase over 2008, received our services.
- **Hurting People** :: Jesus calls us to help the “least of these” – those with profound physical, emotional, and spiritual problems. Therefore, if God’s people do not befriend and serve people with mental health problems, who will? To do so is to remain faithful to the One who touched the lives of so many and to share in His ministry to those in need.

### 2) History and Mission of *the Well Community*

*the Well Community* (“the Well”) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2002. What started as a simple, church outreach to a handful of people has grown into a flourishing, holistic ministry among adults recovering from serious mental illness. *the Well’s* philosophy of care, relational interventions, and holistic rehabilitation combine to make a significant impact upon those we are called to serve.

Joel Pulis, a former associate pastor at Cliff Temple Baptist Church, a historic inner-city congregation, conceived and founded *the Well*. He became aware of a high concentration of unlicensed boarding homes serving adults with severe mental illness. Further research discovered that the needs of this population was largely underserved. Therefore, a vision began to coalesce of a relational program of outreach and support.

Last year, the programs of *the Well* provided assistance to over 450 residents of Dallas (2009). These services are primarily delivered through our weekday, Community Life Center (“CLC”). Open Monday through Thursday (8am-3pm), the CLC offers a restorative environment for people who have had their lives drastically disturbed by mental illness and need the support of others in moving toward health. Our Community

Members (i.e., “clients”) co-administer the program with members and staff working together to provide and/or access psychiatric, employment, housing, substance abuse, entitlement, and advocacy services.

Opened in 2005, our CLC recently received certification by the International Center for Clubhouse Development (ICCD)<sup>1</sup>. The ICCD is a global association of programs following the “clubhouse model of psychosocial rehabilitation”, a mental health best practice. *the Well* is the only organization in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex to receive such a distinction and we consider this recognition to be a demonstration of our unrelenting commitment to excellence in our programs.

*the Well* has an annual operating budget of \$430,000. The organization is staffed by five full-time and two part-time employees and is governed by a 6-member board of directors. Jeff Alsup is the current Executive Director. He joined the organization in 2010, having previously worked as an assistant director of a ministry that serves low-income families and as a CFO/partner of a local advertising agency.

Over the years, *the Well's* excellence has been highlighted by many organizations in the community. Mental Health America of Greater Dallas and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) have honored *the Well's* staff with awards of service to the Dallas community. Other recognitions have come from Baylor University, Texas Baptists, the Dallas Mavericks, and the Texas National Guard.

In 2008, *the Well* was a finalist for the Mission Excellence award of the Center for Nonprofit Management. The programs have been featured in numerous publications and television programs, including *People* magazine, *The Dallas Morning News*, and WFAA Channel 8.

### 3) The Needs Statement: “A Community of Care”

*the Well* is a “community”, as reflected in our name, but more importantly in our philosophy. We are a people committed to bringing love and health to adults recovering from serious mental illness. Without *the Well*, many of our Community Members would have no other place to turn for such assistance.

Texas has long been known as a place of opportunity; however for someone suffering with severe mental illness it can be one of the hardest states in the nation in which to live. Texas is perennially ranked near the bottom in per capita mental health spending (currently 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states) with only 23% of Texans needing mental health treatment able to get it, and most areas having long waiting lists.<sup>2</sup> In a recent national survey conducted by the National Alliance on Mental illness, Texas’ mental health system received a grade of “D” (NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness, *Grading the States 2009*).<sup>3</sup>

In particular, Dallas’ mental health care system is now in serious peril. In 2006, the north Texas region had approximately 762,000 persons with a mental illness, representing a **17.6% increase in the number of persons with a serious mental illness in just four years.**<sup>4</sup> The NorthSTAR program provides the region’s managed mental health care. In the last ten years, the number of clients in the system has skyrocketed by 90%, but funding has risen only 60% during the same timeframe.<sup>5</sup> According to ValueOptions of Texas Inc., a for-profit company that runs the North Texas region’s mental health program, there has been a 30 percent increase in demand for public mental health services since January 2008. Yet, despite the escalation in need, funding for such programs continues to be scaled back.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, with a debilitating brain disorder, those with mental illness are expected to secure adequate housing, maintain relationships with family, balance their finances, navigate the public system for resources, attend to their daily needs, utilize public transportation, remain compliant with their medications, and the list

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<sup>1</sup> International Center for Clubhouse Development – [www.ICCD.org](http://www.ICCD.org)

<sup>2</sup> Simmons, Tim. *Texas’ Mental health system is broken.* [The Dallas Morning News](http://www.dallasnews.com). April 29, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness. *Grading the States 2009*.

<sup>4</sup> United Way of Metropolitan Dallas. *2008 UWMD Community Needs Assessment: Health*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Horner, Kim. *Mental services under huge strain in North Texas.* [The Dallas Morning News](http://www.dallasnews.com). Sept 16, 2009.

could go on. Unfortunately, most are unable to maintain these responsibilities on their own, with seemingly insignificant and trivial circumstances proving disastrous. Thereby, local jails, emergency rooms, and homeless shelters are carrying a burden they were not set up to address.

*the Well* is one of the few organizations in the DFW metroplex placing strong emphasis on holistic recovery and empowering those with severe mental illness. While we offer emergency assistance in the form of food and clothes, our interventions help take our clients beyond base needs to a real place of stability and health. This emphasis helps keep our Community Members out the hospitals and jails and off the streets, thus minimizing the impact upon our city's strained public system. Without our critical care, many of our Community Members would have no place to turn for assistance.



We serve some of the neediest members of our society. Our Community Members have *diagnosable, severe,* and *persistent* mental illnesses including major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or other major mental disorders that require crisis resolution and ongoing intervention. These illnesses affect their physical, psychological, emotional, social, occupational, and spiritual lives.

#### **Our Community Members**

- We serve adults, ages 18 to 80+.
- We are ethnically diverse, generally reflecting the cultural diversity of Dallas.
- Approximately 40% are female and 60% are male.
- More than 90% receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI); approx. \$674/month.
- More than 80% live in the surrounding zip codes (75208/75203).
- *the Well Community* does not deny service to a potential client on the on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, or religion.

#### **4) Program Description: A Welcoming and Empowering Community**

*the Well* is a community of people working to bring love and health to adults recovering from mental illness. Our Community Life Center (CLC) is a place where people with mental illness – who are known as “Community Members” – participate in their own recovery process by working and socializing together in a safe and welcoming environment. The Community Life Center (CLC) is the home of our Clubhouse program. “CLC” is a place; “Clubhouse” is the program model. Therefore, at times, these terms are used interchangeably.

Much more than simply a program or a social service, a Clubhouse is most importantly a community of people who are working together to achieve a common goal - offering people who have mental illness hope and opportunities to achieve their full potential. Clubhouses are a powerful demonstration of the fact that people with mental illness can and do lead normal, productive lives. *the Well's* programs provide our Community Members with opportunities to build long-term relationships that, in turn, support them in obtaining employment, education and housing.

Membership at *the Well* is voluntary, with Community Members choosing the times and way they utilize the Clubhouse, and the staff with whom they work. There are no agreements, contracts, schedules, or rules intended to enforce participation of members.

At *the Well*, our days follow a “work-ordered” schedule, with Community Members and staff engaged together, side-by-side, in the running of the Community Life Center. The focus is on the strengths, talents and abilities of our Community Members, with the responsibility for the Clubhouse’s operation falling upon the Community Members and staff.



The work done in the CLC is exclusively the work generated by the community in the operation and enhancement of our Community Members. All work in the Clubhouse is designed to help members regain self worth, purpose and confidence; it is not intended to be job specific training.

*the Well* does not provide employment to Community Members through in-house businesses, segregated enterprises or sheltered workshops. Instead, *the Well* is working to empower our Community Members to return to paid work through transitional, supported, and independent employment in the community.

Faith is an essential and fundamental aspect of the spirit and character of *the Well*. Therefore, every morning and throughout each day, our community focuses our hearts and minds upon God through prayer, scripture reading, and worship. Although housed in a Baptist church, our programs are intentionally nonsectarian, welcoming all and denying service to none. Participation in Bible studies or worship services are voluntary and are not required.

*the Well's* Community Life Center is located in the facilities of Cliff Temple Baptist Church. Accustomed to living in the shadows of society where they have often been neither noticed nor needed, our Community Members come to *the Well* and are warmly welcomed into our programs. Entrance to the CLC is located on the northwest corner of the Cliff Temple facilities, near the corner of Zang Boulevard and 10<sup>th</sup> Street in north Oak Cliff. Our 4,000ft<sup>2</sup> space houses work units, a café, clothes closet, dining room, administrative offices, and access to a commercial kitchen. By sharing the space with Cliff Temple, we keep costs at a minimum.

Although the majority of our current Community Members come from adjacent zip codes, we have participants that travel from across the city. Our central location, just 5 minutes south of downtown, enables clients throughout Dallas easy access via public transportation.

In addition to the Community Life Center, *the Well* offers the following programs:

- **Saturday Night Life** – Considering the stigma surrounding mental illness in our culture, many of our Community Members have a hard time finding a welcoming place to worship. Therefore, to meet this need, in 2002, we started a weekly nondenominational worship service complete with singing, Bible teaching, sacraments, and a fellowship meal. For many of our Community Members, Saturday Night Life is their primary place of worship.
- **Jacob's House** – Opened in 2006, Jacob's House is a transitional housing program for eight men. The residents come through our CLC programming and formerly lived on the streets and/or in other group homes. Our goal is to prepare the residents for independent living and to assist them in finding safe and secure housing after their stay at Jacob's House.

## 5) Measurable Outcomes: *Well* Members Receive Hope and Health

“At *the Well*, they give you encouragement, a new reason to hope for a normal day,” says Anne, a Community Member currently employed in a Supportive Employment position secured by *the Well*.

*the Well Community* is committed to providing effective mental health treatment to adults suffering from serious mental illness. We strive to give our Community Members the needed resources to live healthy and productive lives. We work with our Community Members to secure and maintain friendships, wellness, housing, and employment. In addition, we are a community-based approach that complements available public psychiatric treatment.

### Specifically, goals for Community Members of *the Well* include:

- Finding hope and learning to develop healthy relationships
- Receiving and maintaining essential psychiatric treatment
- Pursuing employment, educational, and career goals
- Securing safe and decent housing
- Living a healthy and substance-free lifestyle

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The Clubhouse Model originated in 1948 at the Fountain House in New York City and over the last 60 years has spread to over 400 clubs in 27 countries. The effectiveness of the Clubhouse Model has been demonstrated to provide:

- **Improved Well-Being:** Compared with individuals receiving services as usual, Clubhouse members were *significantly more likely* to report that they had close friendships and someone they could rely on when they needed help.<sup>8</sup> Another recent study suggests that service systems should prioritize services that offer ongoing social supports like Clubhouses, as they enhance mental and physical health by reducing disconnectedness.<sup>9</sup>
- **Reduced Hospital Stays:** membership in a certified Clubhouse program resulted in a *significant decrease* in the number of hospitalizations.<sup>10</sup>
- **Reduced Incarcerations:** criminal justice system involvement *substantially diminished* during and after Clubhouse psychosocial program membership.<sup>11</sup>
- **Cost-Effective:** the cost of Clubhouses is estimated to be *one-third* of the cost of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Model of Supported Employment; about *half* the annual costs of Community Mental Health Centers; and *substantially less* than the Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) model.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> International Center for Clubhouse Development – [www.ICCD.org](http://www.ICCD.org)

<sup>8</sup> Warner, Huxley and Berg (1999).

<sup>9</sup> Leff and colleagues (2004).

<sup>10</sup> De Masso, Avi-Itzak and Obler (2001).

<sup>11</sup> Johnson and Hickey (1999).

<sup>12</sup> McKay, Yates, and Johnsen (2005); IPS model reported by Clark et al (1998); ACT model reported by Macias et al (2001).

## 6) How YOU can help!

- **Give Now!** There's no better time to make a gift than right now! Help us enter the summer months in a good place. On our website, [www.WellCommunity.net](http://www.WellCommunity.net), you can immediately make a tax-deductible donation, or mail a check to **125 Sunset Ave, Dallas 75208**.
- **Pray!** We send out a brief prayer list via email every few weeks. If you are willing to pray, please join our Prayer Team by sending an email to [Prayer@WellCommunity.net](mailto:Prayer@WellCommunity.net) with "subscribe" in the subject line.
- **Share with a Friend!** Whom can you introduce to *the Well*? If you are excited about our work, then invite your friends to an **Informational Tour!** Held every 1st & 3rd Wednesdays at noon, the tour includes an overview of our work and a free lunch. RSVP at [Tours@WellCommunity.net](mailto:Tours@WellCommunity.net)
- **Help Us Find Jobs!** We are looking for part-time employment positions for our Community Members. The work needs to be in central Dallas. Types of work would include warehouse, clerical, janitorial, food service, or landscaping. Please send us an email with any leads to [Josh@WellCommunity.net](mailto:Josh@WellCommunity.net).
- **Promote *the Well!*** Help us get out the word by promoting *the Well* at your church, business, or community group. Just send Jeff an email ([Jeff@WellCommunity.net](mailto:Jeff@WellCommunity.net)) and he will send you all the info you need to help!

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