

Member Newsletter

Working together for a healthier you

Preserving clubhouse services

Community 43 is a clubhouse recovery center in central Phoenix, off 16th Street and Indian School Road. Their goal is for members to focus on growth through employment, education, wellness, social connection and leadership. To them, members are not clients—they’re a valued part of the community.

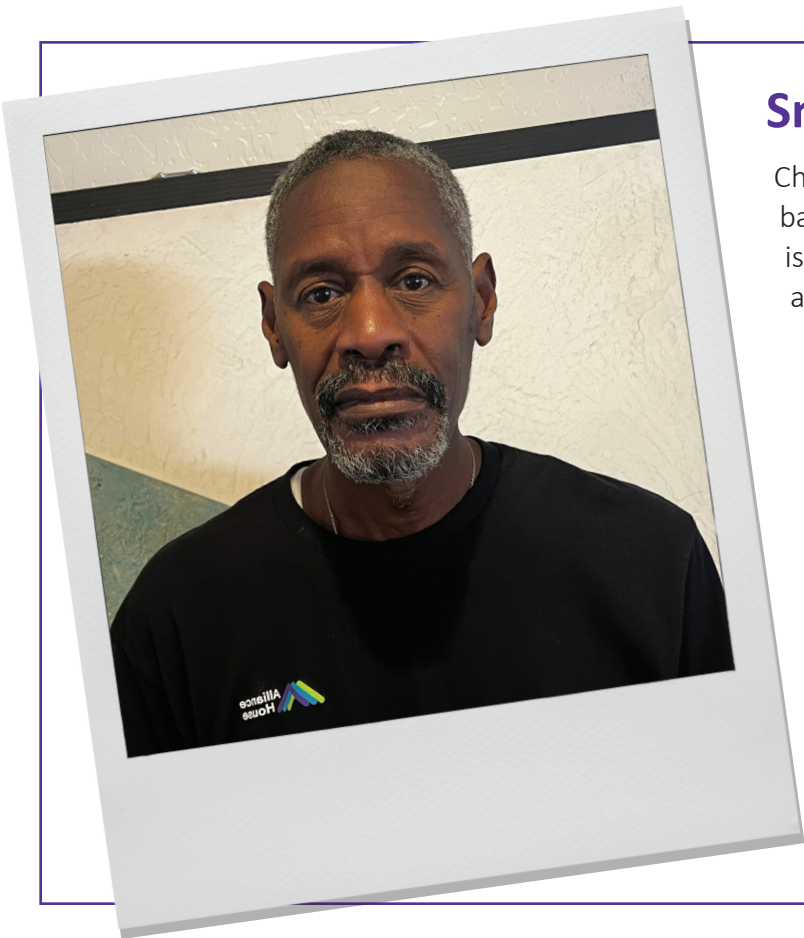
“What sets us apart is our belief that every person has strengths, talents and the ability to lead a meaningful life,” says director, Jonathan Harrison.

Community 43 offers daily practices that strengthen members’ recovery. These can be creating art, growing plants in the on-site garden, preparing healthy meals for staff and other members, hosting clubhouse events and more. Members can also learn practical skills. Some are using the computer lab to make resumes and apply for jobs, learn budgeting, join in meetings and fundraising.

“Many members report that Community 43 has helped reduce feelings of isolation while increasing their sense of connection, self-worth and optimism. The relationships they build with staff and fellow members, provides a foundation of support,” says Jonathan.

This is why Community 43 leaders want to preserve and expand the clubhouse recovery model. They are planning to open a center Prescott, Arizona. It will increase recovery services for people living with serious mental illness. They are also building stronger partnerships with employers, healthcare providers, schools and community organizations. They want more opportunities for members outside of Community 43.

They welcome tours to anyone who wants to learn about Community 43. Find out more at community43.org.



Snapshots of success – Christopher F.

Christopher F. has a lot to look forward to these days—five kids, 14 grandkids and a trip back home to Virginia to visit family and friends. Battling alcoholism for nearly 50 years is behind him. “I’ve been sober for four years and haven’t thought about having a drink all year,” he says.

Christopher received in-patient psychiatric care and went through rehab to treat alcoholism and suicidal thoughts. He said after rehab, he was done with drinking and never wanted to relapse again. The Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps program, prayers and family help him stay on his recovery path. He takes things one step at a time. Christopher likes spending time with his grandkids and is very proud of his oldest grandson who attends Arizona State University.

Christopher attends church regularly again and enjoys daily volunteer work at Community 43. “I love them all here. It gives me a reason to get out of bed,” he says. Christopher also likes listening to jazz and watching TV in his spare time.

Snapshots of success: Aretha Frison – Writing a new verse

When Aretha Frison isn’t producing the latest music and poetry showcase at Community 43, a nonprofit mental health facility in central Phoenix, she’s leading her church’s LGBTQIA+ community group, volunteering at Feed My Starving Children or showing off the latest video of Al Pacino, her adopted cat who earned his name because of his cat-titude.

Life looks much different than it did 10 years ago.

In 2016, Aretha knew something wasn’t right. She had struggled with depression for years, and it became harder to manage as she got older. At the time, she hadn’t been diagnosed with a mental health condition. Her friends told her to “shake it off,” but Aretha knew she needed help.

She enrolled in an intensive outpatient program in New Orleans, where she learned she was living with clinical depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and severe anxiety. For the first time, she received therapy and medication.

“It gave me a foundation for my mental health,” says Aretha.

After moving to Arizona later that year, she continued searching for the support she needed. Along the way, she learned how important self-care, therapy, medication management, and healthy routines were to her recovery.

Then life took another turn.

A diagnosis of fibromyalgia forced Aretha to leave her job. Without a steady income, she lost her housing. After spending one frightening night without a place to stay, she reached out for help.

That decision changed her life.

She connected with people who helped her find treatment, apply for services and begin rebuilding her future. She joined support groups, worked with case managers and found programs that focused on whole-person treatment. She even tried equine therapy – an activity that Aretha, originally from Detroit, never expected would become part of her healing journey.

Eventually, she was offered permanent housing. She’s lived in the same apartment since 2018.

Recovery also helped Aretha reconnect with one of the things she’s always loved most: storytelling. Through writing and poetry, she can express herself, process her experiences and inspire others.

Looking back, Aretha knows recovery takes patience.

“I had a lot of roadblocks on the road to recovery, and I got really discouraged,” she says. “Don’t give up trying to improve your mental health. Take advantage of the groups, therapies and your medication management. Be in charge of your life. If you do the work, you become a better person.”

You can read Aretha’s poetry below or listen in person at Community 43’s upcoming music and spoken word showcase from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Saturday, November 21.



Ego Trippin

*In tribute to my favorite poet,
the late Nikki Giovanni
By Aretha Frison*

*I was born in Uganda,
I devised the direction of the Nile River there,
To flow upwards,
Historians have been in awe of my creation,
Since the beginning of time,
I am bad!*

*I sat on the throne,
While my servants fed me pomegranates,
And honey,
Later, I debated philosophy with Socrates,
Discussed religion with the Christ,
And morality with Buddha,
I am an honorable woman.*

*I climbed the Rocky Mountains,
And unwound in the valley with wild Mustangs,
Then, I curled up for a nap with a grizzly bear,
I am fearless.*

*For a birthday present, my daughter,
The Queen of Sheba gave me diamonds and pearls,
From her personal collection,
For my artistic pleasure, like Lauryn Hill,
I bombed graffiti on the tomb of Nefertiti,
I am powerful.*

*I sowed rubies and precious jewels in my garden,
I rode the waves of water from hurricanes,
My bowels deliver rich oil to the Middle East,
On a trip north,*

*I built an ice castle out of a mighty glacier,
The down south,
I flew a rocket to explore Neptune and the Milky Way,
I am invincible.*

*When I shed tears, it brings rain to sub-Saharan Africa,
I speak in tongues along with six other languages,
My hair is black as the midnight sky,
Embellished with the stars to bring darkness to light.*

*I am the end and the beginning,
I anointed ancient kings and taught them how to rule,
Divine, I am,
Loving, I am,
Victorious, I am.*

How do I talk to someone about suicide?

Sometimes when a loved one is struggling in their life, they may be considering suicide. It’s important to know the warning signs and to seek help.

They may say they want to die, talk about feeling hopeless, having no purpose or being a burden to others. Listen to them carefully. Let them know you are there for them. Get them connected to resources.

Other times a loved one is thinking about suicide but doesn’t tell anyone. Look for warning signs such as them being withdrawn, sleeping too much or not enough, increasing drug or alcohol use, or being anxious, agitated or reckless. Ask them if they are considering suicide. Let them know that suicide is a serious matter. Connect to helping resources.

The Suicide & Crisis Lifeline is a no cost, national service. Trained counselors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They offer support in English and Spanish. Call or text the lifeline at **988** or visit **988lifeline.org** to chat.

More Resources:
www.save.org
https://988lifeline.org/help-someone-else/
https://www.bethe1to.com/bethe1to-steps-evidence/
https://www.mercycareaz.org/crisis-services.html



Understanding at-risk drinking

A person may have an issue with misusing alcohol if they drink daily or have several drinks per week (Heavy Drinking). Or if they have many drinks in a short time frame (Binge Drinking). Drinking in either way as a lifestyle can be harmful. It can lead to **addiction and serious, long-term health problems**.

Talking about alcohol misuse with a loved one is the first step, but it can be hard to bring up. Help is available though. Check out this quick guide from the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: **mercycar.es/alcoholhelp**.

Support for Veterans

Be Connected helps service members, veterans and their families through recovery. They help link them to the right support at the right time. Get no-cost support, care navigation and community resources. Call **866-4AZ-VETS (866-429-8387)**. Or visit **connectveterans.org**.

Improving your health

Mercy Care Health Assistant offers helpful tools for managing your health in your daily life. You can use these resources through your computer, tablet or phone. Get personalized health plans to meet your needs and track your progress. Earn rewards for completing healthy activities. Browse the library of articles, videos and decision tools. Learn more at **mercycar.es/healthasst**.

Snapshots of success – Alexis D.

Following surgery and a period of bed rest, I remained committed to my recovery and personal growth. Rather than allowing my circumstances to hold me back, I used that time to focus on improving myself and preparing for future opportunities.

While on bed rest, I began Peer Support Training, which gave me the tools and confidence to help others through shared experiences. After completing that training, I continued my development by completing Group Facilitator Training, Management Training, and CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention) Training. Each step helped me build leadership, communication, crisis intervention and professional skills.

As a result of my dedication and hard work, I received an offer to work with Stand Together and Recover Centers (STAR), an accomplishment that reflects my commitment to growth, recovery and service to others.

One of my greatest passions is helping people who come from backgrounds similar to mine. I have experienced incarceration and have worked hard to change my life for the better. My past does not define me; instead, it motivates me to help others see that change is possible. Through my own journey, I have learned the importance of accountability, perseverance and making positive choices.

Throughout this journey, I have maintained employment, attended meetings consistently, stayed focused on my goals and continued working on myself. I have remained committed to personal growth and to becoming a positive role model for others who may be facing challenges similar to those I once faced.

I am proud of the progress I have made and the accomplishments I have achieved. My journey has shown me that with dedication, resilience, and a willingness to grow, it is possible to overcome obstacles and build a better future.

Today, I strive to use my experiences to inspire hope, encourage change and support others on their path to recovery and success. Helping people realize their potential and showing them that transformation is possible is one of the most rewarding parts of my journey.

These achievements represent not only the goals I have reached but also my ongoing commitment to recovery, leadership, personal development and helping others succeed.

For a behavioral health crisis

Mercy Care members can call the **Arizona Behavioral Health Crisis Line** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **1-844-534-4673** or **1-844-534-HOPE** Or **Text HOPE** to **4HOPE (44673)** Chat support is available at **crisis.solari-inc.org/start-a-chat**.

- Crisis Line staff can help:
- Provide crisis support over the phone
 - Dispatch a crisis mobile team to support you in the community
 - Arrange for transportation to take you somewhere safe
 - Help you arrange counseling or connection to your outpatient provider
 - Provide options for dealing with other urgent situations
 - If you feel unsafe at home

Tribal crisis lines

San Carlos Apache Reservation: **1-866-495-6735**
Gila River and Ak-Chin Indian Communities: **1-800-259-3449**
Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community: **480-850-9230**
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation: **480-461-8888**
San Lucy District of the Tohono O’odham Nation: **480-461-8888**
Tohono O’odham Nation: **1-844-423-8759**
Pascua Yaqui Tribe: Tucson **520-591-7206**; Guadalupe **480-736-4943**
White Mountain Apache Tribe: **928-338-4811**
Navajo Nation: **928-551-0508**

Veterans Crisis Line: **988**, press 1

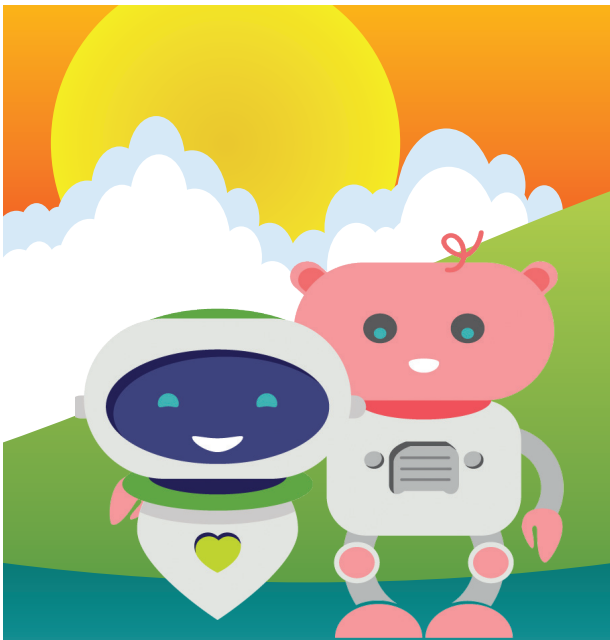
988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: **988**

National crisis text line: **Text HOME to 741741**, about any type of crisis.
Chat support is available at **memcrisistextline.org/text-us/**

Teen Lifeline phone or text: **602-248-TEEN (8336)**

If you need someone to talk to
Call the Warm Line, **602-347-1100**. Get 24/7 support from trained Peer Support Specialists.

Always call 911 in life-threatening situations.



Everyone can use a little extra support...

- Sign up for the Pyx Health app to:
- Find resources to support your physical and mental health.
 - Connect with compassionate humans for a friendly chat or help with resources.
 - Feel better each day with companionship and humor.



Simply search ‘Pyx Health’ in the Apple or Google Play stores or use your smartphone and go to **www.HiPyx.com** to get the app.

Mercy Care

4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Contract services are funded under contract with AHCCCS. This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

Mercy Care is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

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Call Mercy Care RBHA Member Services at **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465** (TTY/TDD **711**). We’re available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 24-hour nurse line: **602-586-1841** or **1-800-564-5465**.

mercycareaz.org

Help getting personal IDs

Mercy Care members can get help to order their birth certificates and other identification. The Homeless ID Project is a no-cost service for all members with an SMI designation. Just make an appointment with a provider below.

When	Where
First Monday of the month: 8am-11am	Terros Mitchell 40 E. Mitchell Dr. Phoenix, AZ 85012. For scheduling contact Karen DiFrancesco: Karen.DiFrancesco@terroshealth.org or call 602-389-3721.
Second Monday of the month: 9am-12pm	La Frontera-EMPACT Comunidad 1035 E. Jefferson, Phoenix, AZ 85034. For scheduling contact Latanya Brooks: Latanya.Brooks@lafrontera-empact.org or call 602-251-0650 ext. 1907.
Third Monday of the month: 8am-11am	COPA Metro 10217 N Metro Parkway West Phoenix, AZ 85051. For scheduling contact Irene Torres: irene.torres@copahealth.org or call 602-376-2871.
Fourth Monday of the month: 8am-11am	Southwest Network Northern Star 2311 W. Royal Palm Rd. Phoenix, AZ 85021. For scheduling contact Andrea Dorman: andread@southwestnetwork.org or call 602-931-1304.