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Deaf Individuals Find Hope at Hanson House

Contributed by Mavis Sullivan

East House Corporation is an agency here in Rochester that provides services to the people who have a diagnosis of mental illness, chemical dependency, or both at the same time.

The Crossroads program, under the auspices of East House, serves individuals who have chemical dependency issues. These are services within the program that serve individuals with additional needs along with their chemical dependency. Some have mental illness issues, and some are deaf or hearing impaired along with chemical abuse.

Hanson House is a coed halfway home for individuals who need additional support as they recover from the impacts of their illness. Staff at Hanson House help the fourteen residents of the house learn how to use new “tools” in a recovering lifestyle. The residents live at Hanson up to one year, depending on individual service plans. Staff provide 24-hour support to the residents as they learn how to get along with one another, attend outpatient programs, monitor their daily activities, and help them properly manage medications prescribed by their doctors.

The residents are expected to follow specific expectations while they live at Hanson House. Located in the city, Hanson is accessible on the public transportation line. This makes it easy for the residents to travel to their outpatient program, doctors, AA, NA, and other services they need to attend. Each resident is expected to attend at least four self-help meetings (NA, AA) per week. They also have weekly community meetings, small groups, individual meetings, daily chores, and weekly cook teams. All these serve to help a recovering individual to take care of responsibilities and learn how to be a sober individual.

At Hanson House, there are four beds reserved for the deaf and hearing impaired. An interpreter is on call for meeting and special events. A deaf counselor works with the deaf and hearing impaired. The house has signaling doorbell lights, TTY, and fire strobes. Other staff members have various levels of sign language and/or fingerspelling skills.

Discharge planning is included in a service plan. If a resident feels that s/he needs further support upon graduating from Hanson, there is a supportive apartment program called Crossroads Apartment Program, also known as CAP. CAP has four beds for the deaf and hearing impaired. There is no full-time deaf staff member at CAP since the need of these services by the deaf and hearing impaired is low. However, there are apartments equipped and ready for the individuals that need and/or desire this level of support. There is no staff available 24 hours a day in CAP, but there is an “on-call” staff to assist with any issues that residents are dealing with. If their counselor is not available at the time they need help, the residents can contact the on-call. Staffs are trained and able to use the telephone relay system as needed.

Any questions about this program, feel free to call Mavis Sullivan at (585) 454-3191 TTY.