



MISSISSIPPI STATE HOSPITAL

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OPPORTUNITY HOUSE CELEBRATES WITH CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

WHITFIELD— Mississippi State Hospital Community Services observed its 5th Annual Opportunity House Christmas luncheon on Friday, Dec. 17 at its Capers Avenue location in downtown Jackson.

Founded in 1989, Opportunity House is based on a rehabilitative clubhouse model in which members have a chance to learn and strengthen skills they can use to live independently. It provides opportunities for individuals to return to the job market in a gradual and less stressful environment.

The program featured a passionate recitation of Whitney Houston's "The Greatest Love of All," an a cappella rendition of the Christmas classic "Chestnuts Roasting On An Open Fire," and a poem entitled "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," all from program participants. One lucky person also won a drawing for a cash prize. In addition, certificates of participation were awarded and a thank you card was presented to MSH Support Services Director Kelly Breland, who represented event sponsor Friends of Mississippi State Hospital.

"This entire program was put together by our participants with the help of Community Services staff," Opportunity House Director Charlie Hardy said. "They really take pride in this program and look forward to it every year."

Community Services provides psychiatric medication management, psychiatric nursing services and psychological services. Psychology staff also provides individual and group counseling, and vocational training instructors provide daily living skills training.

Opportunity House began as a pilot program, and has now become one of the longest running psycho-social rehabilitation programs in the state.

"We've experienced a lot of growth recently," Hardy said. "We average about 55 members daily and can currently accommodate 64 members. We hope to increase our capacity to 72 members eventually, pending DMH approval."

Hardy also said they are looking to become certified by the International Center for Clubhouse Development, a symbol of quality and commitment based on whether a clubhouse organization is providing a full range of opportunities to its members.

MSH, a facility of the Mississippi Department of Mental Health, was founded in 1855 and facilitates improvement in the quality of life for Mississippians who are in need of mental health, chemical dependency or nursing home services, by rehabilitating to the least

restrictive environment, utilizing a range of psychiatric and medical services, which reflect the accepted standard of care and are in compliance with statutory and regulatory guidelines. The hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission.

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PHOTO ATTACHED:

Opportunity House 1: Mississippi State Hospital Director James Chastain presents a Community Services client with a certificate of appreciation for his participation in the Opportunity House programs. Opportunity House offers clients a rehabilitative clubhouse model in which they have a chance to learn and strengthen skills they can use to live independently.

Opportunity House 2: Another certificate of appreciation changes hands at the Opportunity House Christmas luncheon. After a brief ceremony, program participants were treated to a lunch and served by Mississippi State Hospital Community Services staff members.