

THUNDERBIRD CLUBHOUSE QUARTERLY

The quarterly update from your friends at Clubhouse
***FALL* 2026**

Blake Owens Memorial Golf Tournament

Thunderbird Clubhouse seeks community support in a challenging fundraising climate.

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Two-Week Training at Alliance House

A member, board member, and staff attend intensive training at a Salt Lake City clubhouse.

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Oklahoma Policy Institute: Justice System Reform

Exploring one form of advocacy at Thunderbird Clubhouse

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Musings on Suffering

Considerations on the Buddhist concept of suffering by Antonio Garringer.

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Welcome New Staff!

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Annual Blake Owens Memorial Golf Tournament

Kareem Taylor

This year, Thunderbird Clubhouse hosted the 19th annual Blake Owens Memorial Golf Tournament at The Trails in Norman. The tournament was created in honor of Blake Owens, a member of TBCH who passed away due to mental health. The golf tournament would not be a success running it every year without the dedication of our members and staff. It is the biggest fundraiser run by the Clubhouse every year. The fundraising from donors who support Thunderbird Clubhouse help to run our programs each and every year.

Don Craft who was the emcee for our 2025 Golf Tournament, was the emcee once again for this year's golf tournament. Teressa Field, known to her friends and family as Tess, was this year's member speaker. Tess gave a passionate speech about not only her history throughout the clubhouse but also current challenges that she is going through. We are so excited for next year's 20th annual golf tournament.








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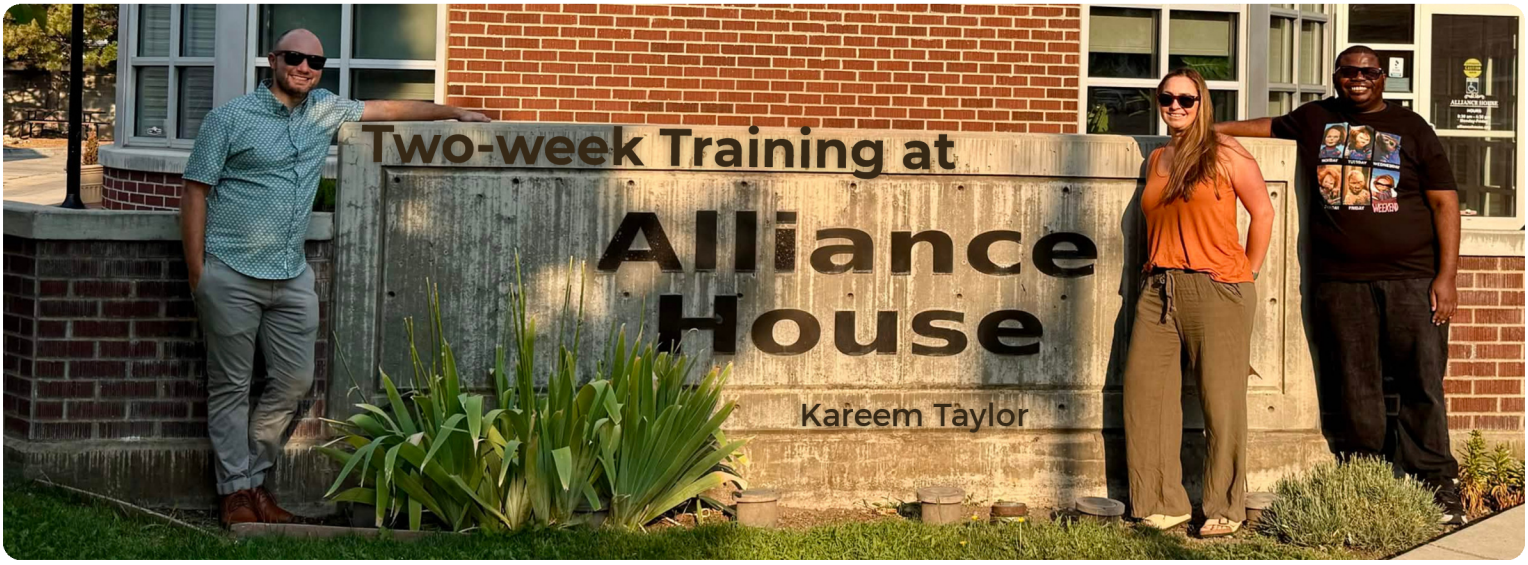

The 2-week colleague training is an opportunity to expand our knowledge of the clubhouse model.

Myself, Elliot Springer , and Kaimee Kellis were chosen as the people to go from Thunderbird Clubhouse. The colleague training is a more in-depth learning experience which leads to a better understanding of the model itself. Five clubhouses were a part of the training as well as Alliance House from Salt Lake City, Utah, who gave the training. The clubhouses not only learned from Alliance House, but all the clubhouses learned from each other. That is one of the most important parts of any colleague training.

When asking Kaimee about her experience from the 2-week colleague training, she has this to say: “This was a wonderful experience allowing me to fully understand the culture of Clubhouse. I am so grateful for the opportunity to go and see what it truly means to so many and why.”





Thunderbird Clubhouse at the Summer Policy Institute: Justice System Reform

Tess Field



On July 9th, at the Summer Policy Panel held by Oklahoma Policy Institute, I observed a roomful of people dedicated to positive change—individuals learning how to improve policy after earning their degrees. These young movers and shakers are poised to make a real difference.

The breakout session focused on criminal justice, and our panel consisted of Debbie Maddox, the current head of the Oklahoma Indigent Defense System; DeBorah Boneta, Director of Oklahoma Prison Support; and Matthew Allen-Morgan, whose considerable lived experience informs his work at Thunderbird Clubhouse and on the boards of Continuum of Care 504 and Food and Shelter Inc.

Criminal justice policy requires legislative reform. Statistics show that harsh sentencing has not positively impacted crime rates in Oklahoma, and a report from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs states that likelihood of being caught—not draconian punishment—is a stronger deterrent to crime. The current punitive model of our justice system does not align with our goals. Significant reform is required, as current practices are not achieving desired outcomes. When individuals are incarcerated, the resulting fractured families and long-term consequences cause persistent societal issues. Jails and prisons are unsafe; detention centers often lack sufficient, well-trained staff, and facilities are frequently obsolete and over-capacity. The trauma from incarceration can be disabling even for previously healthy individuals, and for those with pre-existing health or mental health concerns, incarceration can be difficult to survive. Panelists agreed that while effective diversion organizations like Diversion Hub and alternative courts like the Anna McBride Mental Health Court are valuable, the best interventions would avoid the criminal justice system altogether. When interaction with the justice system is unavoidable, panelists noted that a more "social work" approach is necessary to achieve positive results.

Debbie Maddox, drawing on her 26-year career as a public defender, argued that systems serious about improving outcomes for justice-involved individuals must include those with "boots on the ground"—people like DeBorah, who works directly with these individuals, and Matthew, who has firsthand experience with the justice system.

DeBorah Boneta provided an invaluable and unique perspective. Her work as the only Islamic prison chaplain in Oklahoma offered deep insight into the lives and minds of individuals who have been incarcerated for extended periods.

Staff member Matthew Allen-Morgan was impressive. His story regarding the injustices of the "justice system" moved many in the room—and everyone at our table—to tears. His input on the panel was earned through his fearlessness in sharing his firsthand navigation of the legal system, and his story of experience, strength, and hope will undoubtedly fuel new policymakers to create a more humane and effective system for managing crime in our state.

By bringing together expert legal perspectives and the powerful, lived experiences of those directly impacted, this panel highlighted the urgent need for a more humane, social-work-oriented approach to justice. The stories shared served as a poignant call to action, inspiring the next generation of policymakers to advocate for systemic change that prioritizes rehabilitation over punishment. Ultimately, moving beyond the current punitive model is essential to building a safer, more equitable future for everyone in Oklahoma.

Musings on Suffering

Anthony Miguel Averrous de Spinoza

One thing about suffering is it is an inescapable part of the human experience; the richest man experiences unavoidable loss and the degradation of old age and sickness as does the poorest man.

Much of the suffering we feel is because we get locked into certain traps; the trap of “I should” and “I want.”

I should have this certain type of job, or this person should love me in a certain way.

In my own life, I found it brought me great suffering because I was locked into the idea that the woman who gave birth to me should love and care for me in a certain way. Only when I realized that, due to her sickness, that was not possible was I able to begin to release that pain and suffering.

This is not to deny the reality of suffering or that others affect us in ways out of our control, but to say we get to choose the meaning we attach to those things and how we face them.

Everyday, I try to live by my values and face the world with loving-kindness, and that is the power I have.

The pain did not disappear, but I get to choose what I do with it and exercise my agency.

Often, to borrow from Buddhism, we become like hungry ghosts, never satisfied, and end up wandering aimlessly in life, trapped in our pain.This week, I invite you to stop running from your pain and sit with it and the discomfort. I would then ask you to think about what value you ascribe to that and what you want to do with that.

We have ultimate power even in the face of suffering; a man can put a gun to my head and tell me to do X, and I can choose to die as I have lived—in accordance with my deepest values, with my head held high.

I cannot control others, but I can choose to live every day showing compassion to others and being open to new experiences.

Joy is not the Pollyanna feeling of being happy all the time, but the contentment that comes from living a life by our values and choosing joy even in spite of pain.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CLUBHOUSE STAFF!



HUNTER (left) and (not pictured) BRENNA (right)

CLUBHOUSE WORD SEARCH

M	A	A	Y	O	T	T	D	S	P	W	R	A	N
H	C	N	U	L	L	R	B	L	A	O	E	L	G
H	N	W	A	R	L	A	L	S	M	R	A	P	Y
T	D	T	T	G	A	N	T	T	C	K	C	E	T
L	E	N	M	P	N	S	R	A	O	O	H	M	R
A	U	E	T	T	O	P	O	N	M	R	O	E	R
E	G	M	E	E	I	O	P	D	M	D	U	A	T
H	A	Y	U	M	T	R	P	A	U	E	T	T	A
L	E	O	N	E	I	T	U	R	N	R	T	L	S
A	L	L	I	M	S	A	S	D	I	E	D	O	K
T	L	P	T	B	N	T	R	S	T	D	S	A	S
N	O	M	S	E	A	I	H	O	Y	D	I	F	A
E	C	E	D	R	R	O	L	A	O	A	O	O	M
M	O	R	D	E	T	N	M	C	A	Y	M	L	C

Transitional
Reachout
Member
Transportation
Colleague

Support
Standards
Mental Health
MAP
Units
Tasks

Meatloaf
Work Ordered Day
Lunch
Community
Employment



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