Opportunity Project
BRAIN INJURY PROGRAMS AND AWARENESS

RWJBarnabas HEALTH

OPdate 2026

Fundraising Unit

NEW

This year we added a work unit to the Clubhouse! The fundraising unit meets with Julie London, Development Coordinator each week to plan and organize fundraising events throughout the year.







Members and community gather at Opportunity Project's 2nd annual Walk a Thon

Welcome Molly!

NEW



Opportunity Project, is a clubhouse designed specifically for adults with brain injuries. Over the last several years we have grown in membership, and services provided. Members can receive an array of rehabilitation services including occupational therapy, speech therapy, and physical therapy. Along with developing their individual goals related to vocational success, health and wellness, social emotional intelligence, mental health and so much more! We are thrilled to introduce our new Director Molly Bucciero, OTR/L! Molly has over 12 years experience as an Occupational Therapist. She will be working towards increasing program services and providing both program and administrative oversight. She is excited to step into this dynamic environement! Welcome Molly!

A Clubhouse for Adults with Brain Injuries

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Physical Therapy @ OP

NEW



Thanks to the Healthcare Foundation of NJ

With the grant funds provided by the Healthcare Foundation of NJ we were able to incorporate the addition of Phycial Therapy at the Clubhouse. Our Physical Therapist, Suruch Patel works with members on mobility challenges, gait training, flexibility, range of motion and so much more! This added service is per diem at the moment but provides a valuable service to our members.

Montclair University

Gianna Riccio, MA CCC-SLP

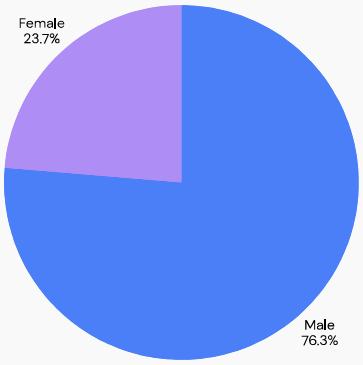


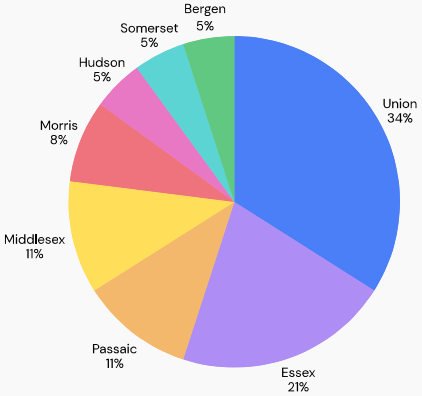


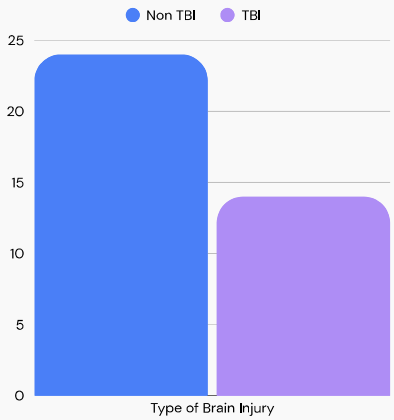
Montclair State University speech language pathology program hosted our members in December 2025. Members enjoyed sharing their stories and participating in an engaging discussion regarding brain injury.

Clubhouse Statistics

- Our current active members make up 76% male and 24% female.
- The top counties we serve are Union 34%, and Essex 21%.
- 63% of our members sustained Non-TBI and 37% sustained TBIs.







Clubhouse Groups

Mental Health Support
Adulting
NextGen
Weekly Meetings
Life beyond Brain Injury
Nutrition Education
Food and Culture
Healthy Cooking
Clear Communication
Team Building
Occupational Therapy
Job Club
Life Skills
Hot Topic
Book Club
Health & Safety Team
Yearbook
Higher Order Thinking (HOT) Skills
Opportunity Project Member

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Program Manager | Health & Wellness Coordinator

Melissa A. Moyer, MS







Over the past 14 years, Opportunity Project's Health and Wellness program has grown substantially. The mission has remained the same, to promote and enhance the health, wellness, and fitness of our members. Through nutrition education, cooking classes, and fitness sessions we educate and empower members to make healthier decisions to better their mind, body and spirit. Members have worked on personal goals, gone on community integration outings, received produce boxes complimentary from Common Market, increased their health literacy, expanded their palates with food and culture groups, and have been thriving learning about healthy habits.

We continue to look forward to growing a **Culture of Health at the Clubhouse!**



Community Integration

Community reintegration encompasses various facets, including but not limited to:

- Embracing and actively participating in social networks.
- Engaging in routine activities both within and beyond one's residence.
- Empowering individuals to pursue activities of personal interest with a focus on fostering independence and achieving personal fulfillment.
- Engaging in activities that individuals perceive as contributing to a sense of normalcy.

"The Primary goal of neurorehabilitation for individuals with acquired brain injuries is successful community reintegration which commonly focuses on home independence, productivity, and social engagement." Perumparaichallai, Lewin, Klonoff

"Community integration is an essential component for rehabilitation among traumatic brain injury (TBI) survivors, which yields positive outcomes in terms of social activities, community participation, and productive work." Lama S. et al.




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Mental Health Support

Jacqueline Marino-Rizzi, CBIS

Brain injury often brings about drastic life changes and recovery is a life-long journey.

Jacqueline Marino-Rizzi, Mental Health Support Specialist, helps members address and cope with crucial mental health challenges that significantly influence recovery, quality of life and one's overall well-being.
Groups such as Mental Health Mondays, Life Beyond Brain Injury, Team Building Fridays and monthly fun-filled theme days help promote inclusion, diversity, creativity and empowerment, all of which lessen the incidence of mental health disorders and behavioral health related illnesses.

Additional program services spearheaded by Jacqueline include The OP Caregiver Support Group, OP Peer-2-Peer Resilience Squad and Reverse Mentorship as incentives to help build stronger social supports, create emotional connections and gain critical resources to navigate and adjust to life following brain injury.







Member Access Representative

Alexandra Depena

NEW



We recently added an Access Representative to our staff. The Member Access Representative will be working with adminstrtaive staff on insurance authorizations, scheduling, referrals and more! Welcome Lexi!

Member Highlight

Marquise has been a member at Opportunity Project since March 2025.
His smile is contagious and he enjoys participating in the maintenance and recreation units.
This year he was able to raise $790 for our annual Walk a Thon!!
Great Job Marquise,
we are so happy your here!



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Occupational Therapy

Antonella Rubio, OTR/L





When AJ began Occupational Therapy, he demonstrated difficulty with emotional awareness and expressing his thoughts and feelings in meaningful ways. Through individualized interventions focused on emotional regulation and coping with symptoms of anxiety, AJ has worked consistently to develop healthier strategies for recognizing, processing, and communicating his emotions.
Using journaling through writing, drawing, and creative crafts as therapeutic tools, AJ has discovered a meaningful outlet to channel his emotions in a safe and productive way. These occupations have fostered greater self-awareness, encouraged emotional expression, and supported the development of effective coping skills that extend beyond the therapy setting.

AJ's progress is a powerful reminder that healing often begins with finding a way to express what words alone cannot. His commitment to the therapeutic process has been inspiring, and it is a privilege to witness his continued growth in confidence, resilience, and emotional well-being.

Vocational Services

Thomas Shea, PsyD





The past year has been transformative, marked by numerous changes and new implementations. I take particular pride in mastering the hospital's EPIC System. Although this endeavor presented challenges, our team collaborated effectively to ensure the system aligned with the program's needs.
Moreover, I am proud of our members' dedication to maintaining employment and supporting those seeking job opportunities. Additionally, I had the privilege of assisting a member in resolving an issue with their ABLE savings account, which had the potential to jeopardize their Social Security status. Overall it has been a successful year for our vocational program!



Member Highlight

Helen, has been working with our Vocational Counselor this year on identifying a vocation and to pursue training. She is in the process of completing her Somatic Movement Certification which will allow her to teach Somatic Movement Classes. Excellent Work Helen!

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Member Highlight



MJ has been a member since 2019. Since 2024 he has been able to maintain employement at AMC movie theraters! MJ works hard towards his goals and is a great contributor to the Clubhouse! Way to go MJ!









