

Rationale:

Promote feelings of **acceptance** and foster the formation of **social connections** among people with emotional illness.

Provide **group activity**, in a safe **multi-program setting**, to those who have limited opportunity for social activity.



Impacts:

Group members have shared:

"I enjoy making new friends and enjoy the activities and social interaction."

"I enjoy the socialization and relaxation."

- An average of **8-14 members** attend **weekly**.
- Community Friends members have meaningfully **contributed to other programs** at *Town House* – e.g. baking for *Meals on Wheels*; making center pieces for *Seniors Brunches*; sorting clothes for the *Clothing Depot* and setting up for fundraising *Yardsales*.
- *Community Friends* plays a role in helping to **destigmatize mental health issues**.
- Participants lead better lives through **improved social and learning opportunities**.

Processes:

- *Community Friends* meets **one afternoon a week** at *Town House*.
- The group is facilitated by volunteers – who contribute approximately \$3700 ‘in kind’ per year.
- **Activities** that group members might partake in include: listening to guest speakers, taking part in life skills sessions, bowling, bingo, darts, card games, making crafts and decorations, music, movie watching, planting bulbs, planning seasonal/holiday parties.

Strategic Innovations:

Citizens Service League Board of Directors has **approved a strategic plan** to guide their work over the next number of years.

Actions from the strategic plan that fall under the *Community Friends* Program would be:

- ▶ Find ways to sustain the group through the summer.
- ▶ Support people towards a goal of independent community living.
- ▶ Provide engaging activities and sessions.
- ▶ Engage members through skilled facilitators and guest speakers to help to develop life skills and hobbies.

