Clubhouses Gain International Attention During U.N. General Assembly Gathering

Last week — as dozens of world leaders convened in New York City for the annual meeting of the U.N. General Assembly — Clubhouse International was pleased that CEO, Joel Corcoran, was invited to participate when Fountain House hosted Queen Mathilde of Belgium, and representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) at Fountain House's Manhattan Clubhouse. Fountain House also hosted First Lady of Estonia Sirje Karis.

Each guest spoke with members — all of whom live with serious mental illness — and were given a tour to see the inner workings of a Clubhouse and to learn firsthand the impact of the Clubhouse Model. Created by and for people living with serious mental illness, Clubhouses go beyond medication and therapy to leverage the power of an intentionally designed community to help people recover from mental illness. The Clubhouse environment represents a unique, holistic, and nonclinical approach to addressing the social symptoms and repercussions of serious mental illness that cannot be managed by medication alone.

Queen Mathilde and First Lady Sirje Karis each share a distinct interest in mental health with a focus on the well-being of youth in particular. The event on September 22 — which was co-hosted alongside Clubhouse International — included a visit from Queen Mathilde and representatives from the WHO, who sat down for a conversation with members and staff in the Young Adult Connections Center (YACC), which provides support for people with serious mental illness ages 18-30. The First Lady of Estonia similarly met with members of YACC on September 23rd. During both meetings, members were given a chance to connect and share personal experiences and advice on what's needed in today's mental health care system.

Since 1948, the Clubhouse Model has significantly expanded internationally and has been replicated in nearly 40 U.S. states and in more than 30 countries around the world, which includes a Clubhouse in the city of Tallinn in Estonia. Clubhouse International is a global mental health nonprofit that helps communities around the world create sustainable solutions for mental illness. To date, Clubhouse International's network has grown to over 360 Clubhouses worldwide.

"Fountain House was profoundly grateful for the opportunity to host mental health changemakers and public health experts from around the world," said **Ken Zimmerman, CEO of Fountain House.** "We thank Queen Mathilde of Belgium, First Lady of Estonia Sirje Karis, and Dévora Kestel and Eva Kiegele of the World Health Organization for meeting with our community and for their deep commitment to mental health and bettering the lives of those living with serious mental illness. The potential of Clubhouses cannot be understated: Our model is uniquely positioned to dramatically improve people's recovery and quality of life while providing tremendous economic savings and public health opportunities. We are excited by this opportunity to work together as a united front to expand global awareness of our holistic, proven approach."

"It was an honor to meet Queen Mathilde of Belgium along with Dévora Kestel and Eva Kiegele of the World Health Organization, and tour Fountain House, the original Clubhouse in Manhattan and a leader in our Clubhouse International global network of 367 Clubhouse communities," said **Joel**

Corcoran, CEO of Clubhouse International. "Clubhouses are saving lives and fundamentally changing how we see and treat people with serious mental illness. We firmly believe that every single person with serious mental illness can lead a fulfilling, personally satisfying life by developing meaningful relationships, gaining access to opportunities for employment and education, and developing their talents, skills and hope for the future. This was a welcome opportunity to highlight the effectiveness and promise of the Clubhouse Model in making that a reality for more people around the world as we grow the reach and impact of our work."

"My story is living proof that the Clubhouse Model is transforming lives," said **Aida Mejia, a member of Fountain House** serving on Fountain House's Executive Committee, who also led a tour during the events. "Being in a Clubhouse helped me to succeed when traditional mental health approaches were failing to provide what I needed. At Fountain House, I was given access to housing resources and work experience while also finding purpose and a community that authentically cared about my well-being. It was an honor and privilege to have international leaders and advocates at the Clubhouse, learning more about our personal experiences. My hope is that we can continue to open more Clubhouses globally so that people can benefit from the same life-changing resources that I was given."

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[Clubhouse International](#)

Clubhouse International is the only global mental health nonprofit that expands and enhances recovery opportunities for people living with mental illness by integrating the proven recovery model — the Clubhouse Model of psychosocial rehabilitation — into community-based approaches worldwide. Clubhouse International's network has grown to over 360 Clubhouses in 33 countries.

Fountain House

Fountain House is a national mental health nonprofit fighting to improve health, increase opportunity, and end social and economic isolation for people living with serious mental illness. Founded in 1948 in New York City, Fountain House originated the clubhouse model of community mental health that has been replicated more than 300 times in nearly 40 U.S. states and in more than 30 countries around the world.

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