

Testimony in Support of HB2044
Presented to the House Health and Human Services Committee
January 26, 2017

Kevin Dohrer, Member

Chairman Hawkins, member of the committee, my name is Kevin Dohrer. I am 29 years old and have a schizoaffective disorder diagnosis. I was a 19 year old student when I received my diagnosis and I did not have a good outlook. My worst fear was not being able to ever become independent and that I would wind up institutionalized. After a few stays in Good Sheppard and also Prairie View, my parents and I decided that I needed something more than just a 3-5 day stay to get the right treatments. So my parents sent me to Menninger's Clinic in Houston, TX where I received the treatment that I needed. Upon my arrival back home here in Wichita, I was told by my Aunt to check out Breakthrough Club because I was looking for something to do with my days. I went to Breakthrough, got a tour, met other members and staff, and filled out the application. I was excited when I received a phone call telling me that I was accepted and that I was now a Breakthrough Club member. Since becoming a member in 2007 my life has changed for the best and would not be where I am today. I am currently working at O'Reilly Auto Parts Store and going to Wichita Area Technical College. I previously worked as a Peer Support Specialist at the Mental Health Association; I have my own 1 bedroom apartment, vehicle, and a great support group, most of whom I have met at Breakthrough. Without Breakthrough Club I would not be the contributing member of society that I am today. Because of Breakthrough and their supports, I am able to do all of the things that I never thought I would be able to do when I first received my diagnosis. I hate to think of what I and my fellow members will do without Breakthrough Club. Without Breakthrough we won't have a place to socialize and feel wanted and be treated as equals, which is important for us, not just to prevent isolation, but to be among other people who understand your struggles and can often help you through them. Also without Breakthrough, it would be one less resources for people with mental illnesses to utilize. And considering the already dismal lack of resources the community has to offer for people with mental illness, we need organizations like Breakthrough Club to stay open and prevent people with mental from getting isolated, hospitalized or ending up in jail.