



**CONARD HOUSE HOSTS COMMUNITY FORUM:  
DEVELOPING SUPPORTIVE EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES  
FOR PEOPLE SELF-MANAGING CHRONIC MENTAL ILLNESS**

**San Francisco, Calif. –October 29, 2008–** [Conard House](http://www.conard.org), a pioneering nonprofit organization providing community-based, mental health resources since 1960, announced today that its upcoming community forum on November 6, 2008 ([www.conard.org](http://www.conard.org) for details) will bring leaders in public and community-based mental health organizations together with partners and friends in the private community – to hear from “the experts.” The forum will be moderated by a former client of Conard House and will include a panel of three Conard House clients, who will discuss their experiences in returning to the workplace and their visions for recovery through meaningful work.

What began in 1980 as Vocational and Activity Services at Conard House has evolved into Work Sights, a strategic initiative launched in 2006. Today, this program provides more than 450 Supportive Housing residents with vocational assessment, counseling, job placement and job retention training. Employment opportunities include desk clerk positions, janitorial staff and messenger work. Placements within Conard House have included program, clerical and IT positions.

“For many of our clients, work is essential to their recovery process,” explained Richard Heasley, Executive Director of Conard House. “Their success depends upon the commitment and cooperation of local government, nonprofit organizations like Conard House, employers and members of our community. This Forum brings together these stakeholders to consider what’s needed and how they can help.”

The Conard House Work Sights initiative is successful because of its strong ties to local government and private organizations to find the most suitable job opportunities. Organizations such as Boudin Retail, RiteAid, Peets Coffee, Divisadero Car Wash and Left Coast Café have stepped up to become willing partners in the recovery process by providing supportive employment positions.

In addition, the Work Sights program works closely with community agencies, including:

- Community Vocational Enterprises (CVE)
- Goodwill Industries
- Independent Living Resource Center
- Laguna Honda Hospital and Rehabilitation Center
- Mental Health Association of San Francisco
- San Francisco Fully Integrated Recovery Services Team (FIRST)
- Mission Assertive Community Team (Mission ACT)
- Richmond Area Multi-Services (RAMS)
- San Francisco Behavioral Health Center (SFBHC)
- Volunteer Center of San Francisco

“No individual person or organization can deliver results in a vacuum,” said Heasley. “Only through the much-valued participation of many organizations, and through community forums such as the one we are sponsoring next week, can we make solid headway in impacting the lives of those living with chronic mental illness.”

## **About Conard House**

Conard House, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization, providing mental health services to residents of San Francisco. Founded upon core principles of self-empowerment, self-determination and the least restrictive, community-based living, Conard House opened its doors in 1960 as the first "halfway house" for adults following hospitalization. Today it serves more than 2,100 people in a dozen locations. Support for its programs and services come from various city agencies, service fees from organizations, rents from residents, grants from foundations and gifts from donors. For more information about Conard House and its programs, please visit [www.conard.org](http://www.conard.org)

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