

ROMANUCCI & BLANDIN LAUNCHES ADOPT-A-VETERAN PROGRAM

A surge in requests to help war veterans who suffered brain injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan has led Romanucci & Blandin, LLC, to launch Adopt-a-Veteran, a program that will increase the number of vets at Chicago's Midwest Brain Injury Clubhouse.

The firm, which concentrates its law practice in traumatic brain injury, has committed to two one-year "adoptions" for a five-figure sum. In addition, the firm hosted a friend-raiser on March 18 to recruit other adopters.

The only facility in the Midwest offering post-acute care to traumatically brain-injured patients, the Clubhouse provides a setting where members and staff work side by side to complete the facility's routine work. This real-life opportunity enables members to be productive while advancing their skills.

"Adopt-a-Veteran is all the more necessary because it is war veterans who are keeping the Clubhouse afloat during these tough economic times," says law firm partner and clubhouse co-founder Antonio Romanucci. "What began as basic internships for four young veterans with brain injuries, has transformed into a critical role. They perform necessary office, marketing and other tasks to ensure the Clubhouse's survival."

"As with many not-for-profits, funding from the state of Illinois has been sparse and inconsistent," says Deborah Giesler, a Clubhouse founder and its executive director. "As a result, a 50 percent reduction in staff had to be made to keep the doors open. The veterans have been a godsend in their determination to take over basic Clubhouse functions and keep the doors open."

"I thought I would never be able to go back into the community," says Ryan Krantz, a veteran who was treated at Hines V.A. Hospital and who now works at the Clubhouse three days a week. "I thought I would be damaged for good, but the Clubhouse showed me I can heal from my injury with this great veteran internship program."

For details, call 312-226-8720 or visit www.braininjuryclubhouse.org.

