GILDA'S CLUB
MINNESOTA
An Affiliate of the
CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY

Member Handbook

Welcome to the Clubhouse…



…a place where no one faces cancer alone.

www.GildasClubMN.org | 10560 Wayzata Blvd Minnetonka, MN 55305 |612.227.2147
facebook.com/GildasClubMN @Gildas_Club_MN

Welcome to Gilda's Club Minnesota!



Mission

Gilda's Club Minnesota uplifts and strengthens people impacted by cancer by providing support, fostering compassionate communities, and breaking down barriers to care.

Philosophy

No one should face cancer alone.

These simple words sum up our philosophy. We provide emotional and social support for anyone impacted by any form of cancer at any stage. We offer a place for you to build connections to a community of support – other members, licensed mental health professionals, and volunteers – who just "get it."



A Legend, A Legacy

Gilda's Club is the legacy of original *Saturday Night Live* cast member and famous comedian, Gilda Radner. Shortly after Gilda's death from cancer in 1989, her family and friends opened the first Gilda's Club in New York City to honor her wish that no one face cancer alone. Gilda received life-changing support through an organization called the Wellness Community and learned how to live with cancer by connecting with others and reducing her stress and isolation.

A "Clubhouse"

Why a clubhouse? It goes back to a comment Gilda Radner made after her cancer diagnosis: "*Cancer gave me membership into an elite club I would rather not belong to*." This is why we refer to our place as a "clubhouse" and the people participating in our program as "members." Membership means you belong.

Membership Means Connection

Behind the red doors of the clubhouse, you'll find a welcoming, supportive place filled with knowledgeable staff and committed volunteers. It is a place of understanding where people impacted by cancer learn from one another and use the power of their shared experience and collective wisdom to support each other. *We welcome you to come as you are.*

Who Can Be a Member?

Members are individuals – adults of all ages, children, and teens – whose lives are being impacted by **any type of cancer at any stage of diagnosis or treatment**. We know cancer doesn't just affect the person with the diagnosis. So, we provide support for the whole family the whole time.

Members are:

- People who are *currently* experiencing the emotional, social, and psychological impact of cancer
- Actively living with cancer, in post-treatment, remission, or recurrence
- Family, friends, caregivers, and co-workers supporting someone living with cancer.
- Individuals grieving a loss due to cancer.

Being a member means:

- You, or someone you care about, is affected by cancer.
- You filled out a New Member Participation Form
- You attended a New Member Meeting and possibly a Customized Membership Plan (CMP) meeting.
- You get involved at Gilda's Club.

Free for Everyone

Central to our philosophy is that our program is free. There are no membership dues or fees. We understand the financial burden that can accompany a cancer experience and believe there should never be a financial barrier to accessing social and emotional support. As a non-profit, Gilda's Club is 100% financially supported through the generosity of volunteers who donate their time and talents and individual and corporate donors in our community.

Language

Our philosophy is expressed in every Gilda's Club Minnesota (GCMN) program, as well as in the language we use:

- *People living with cancer,* NOT cancer victims or patients
- *Living fully with cancer, whatever the outcome,* NOT coping with cancer or facing a life-threatening illness
- *Regaining control and well-being,* NOT battling, struggling with cancer, or fighting for recovery
- *Learning skills and gathering information* NOT receiving education
- *A place to express a full range of feelings,* NOT a place to "stay positive."

General FAQs

Do I have to attend a New Member Meeting (NMM) to be a member?

Yes. This is the first step to getting involved at Gilda's Club.

I have a friend or family member who wants to try out Gilda's Club. Can they attend without going to a NMM?

Of course! If you have a friend, family member, or out-of-town guest who is curious about GCMN, they are welcome to come as a guest. They do not have to attend a New Member Meeting before attending an activity. However, they need to sign up for the class in advance and fill out a New Member Participation Form. *If they want to continue getting involved at Gilda's Club on an ongoing basis, they should attend a New Member Meeting.* Guests cannot participate in support groups.

Do members have ways of giving back or donating to Gilda's Club?

Absolutely! If you value your experience and have the means to give or can connect us to others who can, we invite you to help us ensure our red doors stay open for years to come. There are many ways to do so – make an online donation, become a monthly donor, purchase from our wish list, consider a legacy gift, or host a third-party fundraising event on our behalf. For more information, please contact a development staff member.

I can't give financially, but I would like to give the gift of my time or talent. Can I be both a member and a volunteer?

At Gilda's Club Minnesota, we encourage new members to focus on their self-care first, allowing us to support you before you begin giving back. While some volunteer roles are open to all, others may involve confidential or sensitive material and are not typically recommended for active members receiving support. If volunteering feels like the best way to meet your needs, please speak with your NMM facilitator about connecting with our volunteer coordinator to explore options.

Many members "graduate" and return as volunteers after their primary cancer crisis, finding it a meaningful way to stay connected and give back. Should a volunteer need support again, we assess each situation individually to ensure they can prioritize their well-being while serving in a volunteer role. We appreciate any contribution you feel ready to make, knowing that your health comes first.

Our Program

The Gilda's Club program is a one-of-a-kind model of social and emotional support, professionally facilitated and designed by and for those who know first-hand what it means to live with cancer. Our program honors all viewpoints and encourages members to create a customized plan based on their personal needs and wants. **Our nationally acclaimed, comprehensive, evidence-based program rests on five cornerstones:**

Support | Healthy Lifestyles | Education | Social Opportunities | Information and Referral



Support

Individual Support

Most of the support we offer at Gilda's Club is group focused. However, there are opportunities for individual, couple, or family support.

Customized Membership Plan (CMP)

This one-time 1:1 opportunity is *your* time to discuss your cancer experience and individual needs with a licensed mental health professional. Together, we will design a plan to get you involved in our program of support and discuss additional local and national resources.

All members who want to join a Support Group must complete a CMP. However, any member can sign up for a CMP if they are seeking guidance on getting a plan to be involved in programming or learning about additional resources.

As part of our CMP process, we ask members to complete a brief web-based survey called **Cancer Support Source** that addresses areas of distress and will provide a starting point for the discussion and links to resources.

CMP meetings are by appointment only. You can schedule a CMP at the end of the New Member Meeting or by calling (612) 227-2147.

Open To Options

Before you make decisions about your treatment, ask about your options.

Are you facing a cancer treatment decision within the next few weeks? We can help. Through the Open to Options process, we help you identify important questions about your treatment options based on your personal needs and values. Our goal is to help you gain clarity and enhance your next conversation with your medical provider to help ensure they understand what is important to you.

To schedule an appointment for this service, contact the Cancer Support Helpline at 888-793-9355.



Arts Legacy Initiative

Members who have a life-limiting diagnosis and are preparing for end-of-life often find meaning in creating art pieces as a legacy for their loved ones. The process is customized, and legacy pieces could include letters, art, poetry, handmade books or journals, etc. These sessions could be done individually or as a family under the direction of our registered art therapist or interns. This project-based support typically lasts 3-4 sessions and is coordinated by referral. These sessions are by appointment only.

Short-term Expressive Therapies

Graduate-level art therapy interns and dedicated art therapy facilitators provide short-term support through expressive arts therapies. These sessions are for individuals and families. In the first session, you will discuss your needs, challenges, and interests to determine goals for future sessions. These sessions are by appointment only and require a staff member to make a referral.

Support FAQs

Can I do my CMP meeting with a family member or spouse?
Couples and family members who talk openly and honestly with each other are welcome to do a session together. However, if you feel you are "protecting" your loved one from your feelings and innermost thoughts, you might want to consider doing individual sessions so you can each have the space to express your thoughts and feelings. If circumstances make it difficult for you to attend your CMP meeting alone, please let us know when scheduling your meeting, and we will do our best to make accommodations.

Does my child or teen need to do a CMP?
No. CMP meetings are for adults. However, we encourage you to discuss a plan for getting your kids and teens involved and assist in looking for support resources by discussing this during your CMP.

Can I go to a support group without doing a CMP?
No. Completing a CMP is a required step for joining a support group.

Can I do a CMP even if I don't want to be in a support group?
Sure! This can be a wonderful opportunity to connect 1:1 with one of our mental health professionals while getting questions answered about our program and learning about additional resources. Or if you feel overwhelmed by the number of calendar offerings, you can get help creating a customized plan to get started.

Do you offer individual talk therapy sessions?
We don't currently offer individual talk therapy. However, we have a referral list of private and group practice therapists who specialize in cancer support.

Group Support

Licensed mental health professionals facilitate Gilda's Club Minnesota (GCMN) support groups. Group support provides opportunities for connection with others sharing a similar experience and offers a sense of comfort in knowing you are not alone.



What makes our groups unique?

- Groups are focused on circumstance rather than diagnosis or prognosis.
- They meet weekly for 1 ½ hours and are ongoing.
- Most groups have daytime and evening options.
- Small-in-size, our groups typically have between 8-10 members.
- They are not 'drop-in' and require potential members to undergo an intake process.
- Members make a commitment to **attend as regularly as possible**.

The following groups are for adults only:

- **Living with Cancer** | For people with any type of cancer, at any stage, currently undergoing treatment, living with chronic cancer, recurrence, or choosing no treatment as an option.
- **Young Adults Living with Cancer** | Young adults 18-35 living with cancer, in post-treatment or survivors.
- **Family & Friends** | Individuals supporting or caregiving for adult spouses, siblings, family members or a friend
- **Living with Loss** | Adults who are grieving the death of an adult child, spouse/partner, parent, sibling, or close friend due to cancer.
- **Post-treatment** | Adults who have completed active treatment (surgery, radiation, chemotherapy) and are looking for support as they move forward to life beyond cancer.

Note: If current openings don't suit your availability or our groups are at capacity, your name may be added to a waitlist.

Reminder: Completion of a Customized Membership Plan (CMP) is required to participate in all support groups. During a CMP, individuals will discuss support options that best meet their needs. During your Customized Membership Plan meeting, if appropriate, you will be placed by a staff member into the support group that will best fit your needs.



Art Therapy

In addition to traditional support groups, GCMN offers other expressive therapy groups. Sometimes, there are just no words to express how we feel or fully communicate the depth of our experiences. In these groups, we use art to explore emotion, gain self-insight, have fun, and seek creativity and connection. You don't have to be an artist to participate. Stick figures are welcome.

You can sign up for art therapy groups without going through the CMP process. These are drop-in sessions.

Outside Groups & Meetings

Gilda's Club Minnesota (GCMN) hosts space for monthly meetings of other cancer-specific groups. These groups meet monthly and are featured on our calendar. They are not run or facilitated by Gilda's Club staff and are not part of the GCMN program. Any concerns related to these groups must be directed to the group lead. **For more information on these groups, refer to the Community Partners flyer with group contact information.**

Group Support FAQs

How long can I be in a support group?

There is no set time limit for your participation in a support group. The length of your involvement is up to you and depends on how the group meets your social and emotional needs. When you are first placed in a group, we ask that you attend at least three group sessions to decide if you want to continue participating.

How big are the groups?

Typically, there are between 8-10 individuals in a group.

Is there a set theme or topic?

No. Group members direct the conversation for the session. If you want to talk about something, bring it up!

If my situation changes, can I change groups?

Yes. Sometimes, people transition into different groups to meet their changing needs. Some individuals move from Living with Cancer groups into post-treatment support. At times, after the death of a loved one, caregivers will transition from Family & Friends groups into a Living with Loss group. The best thing to do is talk to your facilitator.

Can I start a support group right away?

Before starting a support group, you must first complete a Customized Membership Plan. Support Groups are not 'drop in' and require you to be placed in a group during your CMP meeting. If current openings don't suit your availability or our groups are at capacity, your name may be added to the waitlist.

Can family members be in the same groups?

No. It is best for the group to have family members and close friends in different groups.

Can kids come to support groups?

No. These weekly groups are only for adults over the age of 18. If you are looking for support resources for your child, please discuss that during your Customized Membership Plan.

I'm unsure if a support group is for me; what should I consider?

Being in a group works best for those who have the emotional resilience to balance both the sharing of their story with listening to and empathizing with others. However, support groups may not meet the needs of some members. Sometimes, individual, couple, or family therapy might be a more supportive and effective option.

This could be the case if you have a history of trauma, complicated grief, a significant or complex mental health diagnosis, active substance abuse, or unresolved complex family dynamics. For some individuals, group dynamics can increase anxiety rather than provide a feeling of support by triggering troubling emotions from unresolved conflicts not directly related to cancer. In these situations, another form of support may be a better choice.



Healthy Lifestyle

These classes and workshops are led by professionals and skilled volunteers and are aimed at empowering members with skills to reduce stress and adopt new habits for wellbeing:

- Nutrition
- Exercise
- Mind-body wellness
- Expressive arts





Mind-body practices such as yoga, tai chi, meditation, and qigong provide a space for people to reconnect with the breath and body though gentle movement. Experience the mind-body connection while reducing tension and improving emotional balance.

Expressive arts such as handmade card making, visual arts, Improv, and writing provide a creative outlet for expression, are life-affirming and enhancing, and a welcome respite from treatment, caregiving, grief, and daily stress.

Healthy cooking and nutrition classes led by dieticians, nutritionists, chefs and volunteers provide information and insight on maintaining and improving health and habits while facing changing circumstances. And they taste great!

Exercise is critical to survivorship. Get involved in a class to maintain and build strength, balance, and endurance.

Healthy Lifestyle FAQs

Are caregivers allowed to attend these classes, too?

Absolutely! Caregivers often struggle with giving themselves permission for self-care. We encourage all members to attend classes that will support their well-being.

Do I need previous experience?

Nope. You need not be an artist, musician, chef, comedian, or professional stretchy-bendy-flexi-yogi to participate. In fact, classes are accessible to people of all abilities, and instructors can make adaptations and modifications upon request. Be your advocate and inform them of any special needs or circumstances.

Are these ongoing classes?

You will see many of these classes on a weekly or series basis. In fact, individuals who don't identify as a "support group person" will find the weekly classes to feel a lot like a support group as they regularly see the same people.

Do I need to sign up for these classes?

Yes. Always. Sign up in advance to ensure you get a spot. Many of these classes are popular and at times can have a waitlist. You are always welcome to try to sign up at the last minute but call to make sure of last-minute changes. See page 11 for more details on signing up for classes.

Education

Educational workshops provide opportunities for acquiring new skills, information, and techniques to learn how to live with cancer. We offer a variety of topics taught by subject matter experts. Our educational sessions allow access to community experts in a safe, informal group setting where you can ask questions and get answers.



Frankly Speaking About Cancer© (FSAC) is Gilda's Club/Cancer Support Community's own educational series that provides an in-depth look into various concerns cancer patients and their loved one's face. These educational sessions include booklets and professionally led workshops. **Various free FSAC booklets are available in the clubhouse and the library.**

Education FAQs

Do these classes repeat?

At times. However, these classes typically change each month so we can offer different topics. Check your program calendar!

Can guests attend educational sessions?

Sure can! These classes are open to the public. All guests should still be signed up in advance and will be asked to fill out a Participant Form.

Can I take Frankly Speaking About Cancer© (FSAC) materials?

Please do. These are free and available for you to take at the clubhouse and are also available to download for free at

Social Opportunities

Among the most popular offerings at Gilda's Clubs, social activities vary from breakfast gatherings, creating cards, bird watching, and knitting or crocheting. Members and families who gather for fun create bonds that enhance other individual and group experiences.

Social Activities

These social opportunities include Knit Wits, Dudes & Donuts, Birds & Brew, Cranes of Hope, and virtual Coffee Talk.

Social Events

These are monthly gatherings such as Euro Café or Mocktails & Mingle and some annual events.



Information & Referral

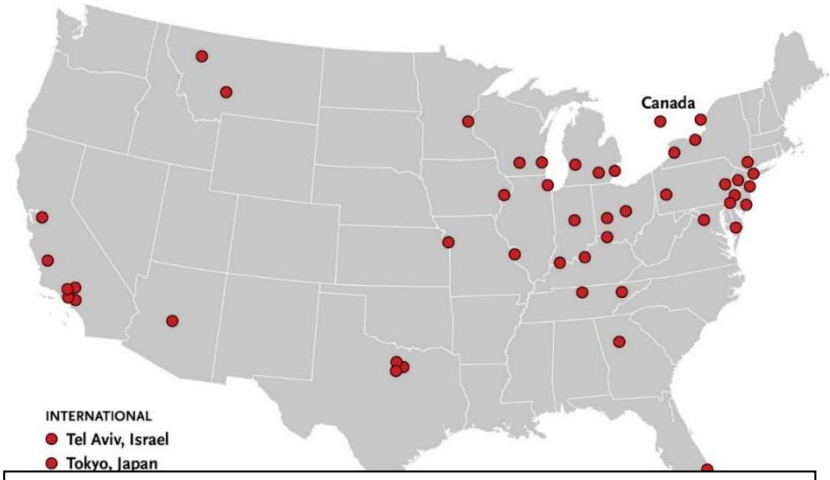


Our library is a place to nourish your mind and gather information on relevant local and national resources. Find a spot to rest and enjoy a cup of coffee while reading some of our cancer-related materials.

For additional referral and assistance in accessing information, email info@gildasclubMN.org or call 612-227-2147 and ask for a program staff member.

Gilda's Club is an affiliate of the Cancer Support Community

A large part of our Information & Referral is provided through our national affiliate, the Cancer Support Community (CSC). CSC is an international non-profit dedicated to providing support, education, and hope. Gilda's Club Minnesota is part of a network of 50 network partners and over 100 satellite sites.



CSC provides support to people impacted by cancer by focusing in three key areas:
direct service delivery, research, and advocacy.

Direct service is delivered through their affiliates across the world like Gilda's Club Minnesota. The Research and Training Institute conducts cutting- edge psychosocial, behavioral, and survivorship research. The Cancer Policy Institute furthers CSC focus on patient advocacy.

Cancer Support Helpline | 888-793-9385



Children, Teen, and Families

A program for our youngest members and their families – kids and teens *living with cancer* and kids and teens who *have cancer in the family*. The activities and program offerings are similar to the other five parts of our program but utilize age-appropriate support and educational activities. We believe in support for the whole family, the whole time™.

Children, Teen, and Families Program FAQs

Can I leave my kids at Gilda's Club for a program while I run errands?
Sorry, GCMN does not provide onsite childcare and requires that all children under the age of 16 always have a responsible adult present at the Clubhouse. Teenagers between the ages of 16 and 18 may be in the Clubhouse and attend classes independently. We encourage families to participate in GCMN activities together.

Can my kids participate in other activities with me that are not specific to Children, Teen, and Families activities?
Some classes and activities are more appropriate for children than others. And any courses that are geared toward adults will likely have adult content in the conversations. If there is a specific class you are interested in for your child or teen, please talk to a program staff member.

Signing up for Classes

All members must sign up for ALL classes and activities they wish to attend. If you are NOT signed up for class, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to participate. ***Class sizes are limited and require preparation. Activities without sufficient enrollment will be canceled. If you cannot attend a class you signed up for, please cancel your registration. This will allow someone on a waitlist the spot***.

You can sign up for classes in 3 ways:

1) Using the My GCMN mobile app (available in the Apple App Store and the Android Marketplace)
2) Go to GildasClubMN.org and click **Member Account Log In** on our homepage.
3) Call the Clubhouse at 612-227-2147

The My GCMN Class Scheduler

My GCMN is our online sign-up system and mobile app. It is the easiest way to sign up for classes and activities! Using this tool, you will be able to:

- Sign up for classes
- View your scheduled activities
- See your status on a class waitlist for popular classes or
- Set up automatic reminders and add classes to your personal calendar
- Easily cancel when you can't make a class

You will set up an account the first time you use the My GCMN app or online registration site. Once that is set up, you can access all the features available as part of My GCMN.

You can download the My GCMN app from the Apple App Store or Android Marketplace if you have a smartphone.

You can also access My GCMN class scheduler from the Gilda's Club Minnesota homepage by clicking **Sign Up Online** in the red box.



Sign Up FAQs

Do I really need to sign up?

Yes. If you aren't signed up, we can't contact you in case of class change or cancellation, we can better manage class sizes, and it allows us to more efficiently track our clubhouse usage and program activities.

When are your calendars published?

Calendars are published three months at a time**.** Please ensure on your paperwork that we have your correct contact information and preference for communication.

If I can't attend, do I need to cancel if I signed up for a class?

Yes. Canceling in advance allows us to open your spot up to someone on a waitlist. Facilitators and instructors can better prepare for class setup and supplies.

Do I need to sign up for a Support Group?

This is the one exception for signing up. After you attend a CMP, your facilitators will place you into a support group. You will not need to sign up for weekly support. We will sign you up.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance and Registration Policy

Gilda's Club Minnesota is committed to providing high-quality programs at no cost to anyone impacted by cancer. Every class, support group, workshop, and educational event is made possible through the generosity of donors, volunteers, facilitators, community partners, and staff.

Because many programs have limited capacity, we ask members to honor their registration commitment so that available spaces may be offered to others.

Attendance Expectations

By registering for a program, members are reserving a space supported by charitable donations and the time of facilitators, volunteers, educators, and fellow members.

If you cannot attend, please notify Gilda's Club Minnesota as soon as possible.

Definitions

- Late Cancellation: A late cancellation occurs when a member cancels less than 24 hours before the scheduled start of a class, workshop, or educational program.
- No-Call / No-Show: A no-call/no-show occurs when a member registers for a program but does not attend and does not notify Gilda's Club Minnesota before the program begins.

Both late cancellations and no-call/no-shows prevent another member from participating and result in unnecessary use of donor-funded resources.

Attendance Policy

Following each late cancellation or no-call/no-show, staff will reach out to check in with the member to identify any barriers to participation and review this policy.

If a member accumulates three (3) late cancellations and/or no-call/no-shows within a rolling twelve-month period, Gilda's Club Minnesota may take one or more of the following actions:

- Suspend advance registration privileges for selected programs.
- Require same-day registration when space is available.
- Place the member on a registration review status.
- Revoke membership privileges when repeated non-attendance demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to honor program commitments.

Membership revocation is not automatic. Each situation will be reviewed individually by the Executive Director and/or Program Director, taking into consideration medical treatment, hospitalization, family emergencies, transportation challenges, and other extenuating circumstances.

Compassionate Exceptions

We recognize that cancer treatment and caregiving can be unpredictable.

Medical emergencies, hospitalization, treatment side effects, family crises, severe weather, or other significant life events will always be considered when reviewing attendance concerns.

Members are encouraged to communicate with staff whenever possible so we can work together to identify appropriate

accommodations.

Stewardship
As a nonprofit organization, Gilda's Club Minnesota is committed to being responsible stewards of the generous gifts entrusted to us. Every reserved seat represents an investment of donor dollars, volunteer time, staff coordination, facility resources, and educator preparation.

By honoring registrations and communicating when plans change, members help ensure that our programs remain accessible to everyone in our community.

Scent Aware

Out of consideration for members of our community who are scent-sensitive, please refrain from wearing perfumes, colognes, and other strongly scented products when coming to the clubhouse.

Inclement Weather & Emergency Clubhouse Closing

Gilda's Club may close early, not open, or cancel classes and activities in the event of inclement weather or conditions that threaten the health and safety of members, volunteers, and staff.

Factors considered include:

- Severe weather warnings or watches such as rain, flooding, tornado or snow
- Road surface conditions & limited visibility
- Extreme air temperature
- Existing and predicted weather conditions
- Actual occurrence or imminent possibility of any emergency condition that would make facility operations difficult or dangerous
- Inability of staff and volunteers to report for work

During the school year, Gilda's Club follows Hopkins School District weather-related closings. If you think inclement weather may interfere with scheduled programming or clubhouse activities, listen to local TV and radio, check out Facebook & Twitter or call the clubhouse for an outgoing message.

Gilda's Club staff will attempt to contact scheduled program participants by phone, text and/or email to notify of program cancellation or clubhouse closure.

Illness

If you are sick, have a fever or contagious cough, please be considerate of fellow members with compromised immune systems. We'll be here when you feel better, so rejoin us when your illness has resolved.

Animals in the Clubhouse

We know – we love them, too! Unfortunately, pets are not permitted in the clubhouse. Designated service animals are welcome. Sometimes we offer activities with certified therapy animals in partnership with other organizations.

Lost and Found

Lost or found an item in the clubhouse? A designated basket is located at the Welcome Desk; please check in with a Gilda Greeter or staff. Unclaimed items in the basket will be donated at the beginning of January and July.

What's next?

Consider yourself a member! Go ahead…pick something and get involved.

Here's a list to get you started:

1) **Schedule a Customized Membership Plan (CMP)** – at the end of this meeting or call 612-227-2147
2) **Create your My GCMN account** for easy class sign-ups, schedule management, and cancellations.
3) **Sign up for a class or activity -** Try a healthy lifestyle class or attend a social get-together or education workshop.
4) **Connect with us on social media** – Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn to keep posted on clubhouse happenings.

See you at the clubhouse!