



## Volunteer Attorney Accomplishment for Internal and External News



**Lawyers Alliance**  
FOR NEW YORK  
Connecting Lawyers, Nonprofits, and Communities

<b>Date:</b>	December 14, 2022
<b>Names of Attorneys:</b>	Brian Helweil and Ross Silver
<b>Name of Firm:</b>	Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP
<b>Client Served:</b>	Venture House
<b>Accomplishment:</b>	Following a review of the previous lease, Brian Helweil and Ross Silver negotiated a more advantageous lease agreement, resulting in ownership of a portion of the lease and expanded capabilities for Venture House.

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### ***Specific Case Highlights:***

Since 1988, Venture House has provided a range of quality services to adults living with mental illness, enabling them to live and work successfully in the community with independence and dignity. The organization, which has served almost 2,000 member-residents in Queens and Staten Island, utilizes a clubhouse model in which members work alongside staff to facilitate programs and maintain the community center. Venture House offers a breadth of services tailored to members' needs, including housing support, employment, community-based services, educational advancement, advocacy/public benefits, and social programs.

In July of 2021, Venture House requested assistance with reviewing and negotiating a new lease agreement and advising on the option to purchase a portion of the lease. The new agreement would entail a significant expansion of their space in Staten Island.

**Brian Helweil and Ross Silver of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP** assisted Venture House by providing counsel on the best way forward with the new lease agreement. Mr. Helweil and Mr. Silver conducted due diligence and remained dedicated, offering valuable insight and responsiveness amidst numerous delays.

With this pro bono legal help, Venture House was able to secure a favorable new lease agreement that allowed for the expansion of its space into two neighboring properties. This increased space brought a heightened capacity to serve its constituency and expand programs, including a new Wellness Center that opened in Spring 2022. Juliet Douglas, Executive Director of Venture House, said, "We were able to obtain an additional 5,000 square feet of space which is being utilized as a Wellness Center where yoga, dance, and other exercise is available to our membership, as well as conference rooms and offices. The additional space is also designated for an upcoming build of our Clubhouse Media Center. We were also able to acquire several new units for our Supportive Housing program. We are now able to increase our capacity and to accommodate our ever-growing membership which has recently reached 500 Staten Islanders who are living with serious mental health conditions."

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**About Lawyers Alliance:** [Lawyers Alliance for New York](https://www.lawyersalliance.org) is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations and social enterprises that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities, Lawyers Alliance for New York helps organizations to provide housing, stimulate economic opportunity, improve urban health and education, promote community arts, and operate and advocate for vital programs that benefit low-income New Yorkers of all ages. During the past year, staff attorneys at Lawyers Alliance worked with more than 2,000 volunteer attorneys to represent 700 nonprofit clients.

**Inquiries:** Please contact Marketing and Communications Director Emily Crossan at 212-219-1800 ext. 233 or [ecrossan@lawyersalliance.org](mailto:ecrossan@lawyersalliance.org).

Photos of new Wellness Center and Conference Room:

