

Hi my name is Alexis Henderson. I have a story and a something for you to consider...

It seemed like it took a long time for me to get sick. At the beginning of my freshman year in high school, I made the first of several suicide attempts, and was hospitalized. After I crashed through hospitals a few dozen times before I realized it was going to take that much longer for me to get better. It has been almost a year since I was last hospitalized. It took over three years for doctors to properly diagnose me as having bipolar disorder.

Managing to stay out of the hospital has become a remarkable accomplishment for me. I don't drink or use drugs anymore. I stay away from people who do and I don't isolate by attending clubhouse meetings and my participation. Right now I am still too scared to even think of getting a job. Lucky for me I found out about the beginning stages taking place to start a clubhouse.

The clubhouse, which is called the "Gainesville Opportunity Center" will serve those people in Gainesville with mental illnesses. Clubhouses are safe places to make friends with people who understand what you are going through, and will accept you for who you are. Overtime, a sense of purpose is built that helps you feel more comfortable being a part of something. Both staff and members work together within the clubhouse community as partners, walking each other through everything, including the job process. They are there for support along the way. Healthy living is promoted effectively and people show up because they want to.

We are in need of support for our clubhouse community. We don't have a building yet, and are just now trying to get the word out. We are definitely looking for support from individuals and businesses as well to help us. As you know donations of any kind will be gratefully accepted. For more information contact our Executive Director, Mike Demers at 352-224-5523 or E-mail: [MikeDemers@GoClubhouse.org](mailto:MikeDemers@GoClubhouse.org). To learn more please check out our website at: [www.GoClubhouse.org](http://www.GoClubhouse.org) Thank you.