

# IN MEMORIAM

# GOC GAZETTE



Rebuilding lives  
 Removing stigma  
 Restoring dignity  
 Resource for mental health recovery

It is with great sadness that GOC announces, it has lost one of its own. Sandy Callan, a Founding Member and former Vice President of Board of Directors, died in February 28th, after an illness. This issue is dedicated to her. Below is an article that Sandy wrote for our very first newsletter and inside we have re-published Sandy's stories that she wrote, as well as some thoughts and memories of her that we have shared. She has made a great difference in the lives of those she touched, and was an inspiration to us all.

We will miss you greatly.



## OUR FIRST NEWSLETTER...A GREAT RESPONSE



We are a new clubhouse started in Gainesville, FL. We have a lot to do and we have a lot to share! As of right now we call ourselves a "clubhouse without walls" because of funding and we are still trying to locate a building for the clubhouse.

*Funding is humbly asked for and proudly accepted.*

The Gainesville Opportunity Center is dedicated to providing help for any person who has any type of serious mental illness with the goal to make their life better. You can come by when you don't want to be alone. You can do jobs that are offered in the clubhouse that keeps it running. You can even work yourself up to go to work for 6 months a time. We call it Transitional Employment. The clubhouse is a great place to come!

*-Published April 2008*

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The Gainesville Opportunity Center's Board of Directors	
<b>Bruce Stevens - President</b>	
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## SANDY'S OBITUARY



Sandra Marie Callan, age 59, of Gainesville, died Friday February 28, 2014 at Shand's UF in Gainesville. She was born on May 29, 1954 in Jacksonville. Ms. Callan was a counselor for Meridian in Gainesville and a volunteer at the Gainesville Opportunity Center.

She was pre-deceased by her father: Woodrow Callan and her brother Mickey Callan. She is survived by her mother: Virginia M. (Rinearson) Callan. Her daughter: Catrina Latrice Cole of Gainesville. Brothers: Joe (Janet) Callan of GA and Danny (Patty) Callan of Merritt Island. Half-brother: Derrick Callan and half-sister: Pamela Callan both of Lawtey. She is also survived by her grandchildren: Trinity Callan, Olivia Cole and Dominic Cole.

## My Story and What the Clubhouse Has Done for Me



*This is a testimonial that Sandy wrote for us, in 2007.*

My name is Sandy Callan. I have been diagnosed as mentally ill since 1994. I was ill before that but I self-medicated with drugs and alcohol. Now my mental illness is pretty much under control with meds and some therapy. I have pretty well learned when I am not in control.

I don't remember much of the first years of my mental illness, but I have progressed now to where I can remember the last four or five years. Before I became into control with my illness, I was suicidal for many years. At one time I attempted to kill myself with an overdose of drugs. After I took them, I started thinking hard about my daughter and granddaughter and what this would do to them so I made myself throw up several times to get the medicine out of my system and went into a hospital.

Anytime I feel like I want to give up now I put myself in a mental hospital and stay there until I feel safe to go out in the world again. It has been almost five years

since I have felt that way. I still have days where I don't want to get out of bed and do anything but they are fewer and far in-between. I am proud of the fact that I can take care of myself now and not have to depend on someone else to stay and take care of me. Before, it was my mom taking care of me but now that burden has been lifted because I have been able to live by myself. I have even more independence by having my own car! Now I have the freedom to drive whenever and wherever I need to go!

When I was asked to come to the meetings to help develop the clubhouse, I wasn't sure what the clubhouse could do for people like me. But, I've learned it could do a lot when it is fully-funded. I have visited other clubhouses and have seen for myself that a Clubhouse could give anybody with mental illness the opportunity to come to a place where they can be themselves. In a clubhouse there is not therapy or classes.

A big part of what a club offers is the opportunity to reenter the world of work at various places of employment for periods of six to nine months at jobs developed by the clubhouse. We call these job placements "Transition Employment" from there we move on to our own independent job or career. Transitional Employment is

real jobs for real pay! Area businesses work with the clubhouse to secure positions that are then filled with members who can't wait to work. There is support for the member. If a member can't go to work that day then the person that found the job for that member will go in that person's place. The position will never be empty for the company that gave them that job. Most of all it helps reduce the Stigma community employees have of mentally ill members. They learn that most members are better employees than regular employees.

I began to believe that this is just what we needed for our state and county so I became a board member of the clubhouse now called Gainesville Opportunity Center. I now attend all meetings and am a part of making decisions about the functions of the clubhouse. I am proud to be a member of the board. There is still a lot to learn about the clubhouse and I am ready to learn.

Lastly, I need to tell you we are not going to do this without the support of the community. We need more funding and to secure a building that will be comfortable and safe for all who come. You can help today by calling the Gainesville Opportunity Center at: (352) 224-5523.

## Memories of Sandy...

Sandy and I went to the Peer Network Conference in the Summer of 2012, and Peer to Peer training together. We would also meet at her house to prepare for and co-mentor Peer to Peer classes together. I co-mentored my first Peer to Peer class with Sandy. We were a great team! She was really resilient. I told her something like, "You have had some difficult experiences, but never seem bitter or resentful," and she said something like, "Well, all you can do is move on." She was a strong person. I miss you, Sandy; I believe that the opposite of death is not life, but birth, and that you continue to live on in heaven, wherever that is! -David S.

I had the privilege of knowing Sandy for over 7 years, and I have so many memories of her, that it was hard to choose just one, so I didn't. Instead I will tell you what I will miss most. Sandy had the most positive "Can Do" attitude of anyone I've ever known. She had an infectious smile, a great laugh and taught me how to make killer collard greens and rice and beans! She knew my family well and when things were hard, she was always there with a smile and encouraging word and a hug. She was a great friend, and I will miss Sandy more than words can say. -Pam D.

Sandy...although I didn't know you all that well...my condolences go out

to your family and friends who have loved you. I will always remember you as the great Peer Specialist whom I have had the privilege to work with. May you rest in the Lord's loving embrace. -Greg U.

"I've known Sandy for a while, we worked on the Clubhouse Without Walls together. I remember once, when we were at our old site on 9th Street and Sandy was leaving for the day. I'd been having a bad day, and she just looked at me, smiled and winked. That little act made a difference that day. She always made time for anyone no matter what. Thank you Sandy" -Mike L



*We will miss you greatly Sandy, but were blessed to have you with us...even if it was for a short while.*

## Member In School Interview: Sandy Callan



**Q** Where do you go to school?

**A** Argosy University, its an online University

**Q** How do you like being in school?

**A** I love it. Learning new things that I can use in my job is great!

**Q** What class(es) are you taking?

**A** Math and Psychology right now. I'm majoring in Psychology

**Q** When did you start school?

**A** April 8, 2011

**Q** What do you find the easiest part about going back to school?

**A** None of it is easy...(she says laughing)

**Q** What is the hardest part about going back to school?

**A** Getting myself on schedule. I get up really early then am tired during the day. I have to readjust my sleep and wake times so I can work and go to school

**Q** How are you dealing with the hard parts?

**A** I take a break, and psych myself and do it

**Q** What advice would you give to members that are thinking about going back to school?

**A** Go for it. If it is what you want to do, go for it

*-By David S. Published December 2010*

## GOC Has Helped Me



When we had our board meeting last night, I was talking about when G.O.C. first started and how energetic and how much hope and feeling we had for G.O.C. I stared thinking where I was when I started on the board and then met Mike (new Executive Director) and how far I have come as my own person because of being a member of G.O.C.

When I first started all I did was stay home, watch T.V. and sleep when I was able to. The only time I was out was to go to the doctor's appointments, or get groceries. My only enjoyment was spending time with my granddaughter, Trinity. One day Debbie O. told me about the clubhouse starting up and would I be interested in it. For some reason I said yes. That was the

best thing I could have done. When Mike finally came on board and we started working together and my confidence and enthusiasm built up, I began to feel so much better. I had never thought that I would ever want to work again but I started to get more confidence, and the more confidence I got in myself, the more I wanted to do.

By the time we started the Clubhouse "without walls" I was totally sold with G.O.C. and knew one day I would be out in the community more not as a mentally ill person, but as a person. I also knew that one day I may possibly be able to work only a part time job.

When I was offered the position at Meridian as Peer Specialist I was ecstatic. I was able to work there for over 2 years except for about 3 months when I was extremely ill and almost died and I finally had to leave the job because of a seizure disorder, not a mental illness.

Since I haven't been working I have been coming to G.O.C. every day and working. I have enjoyed every minute of it. I have learned so many things here and have gained the respect of my peers at G.O.C. I do a lot of the functions of the G.O.C.'s everyday activities and as I learn when I do decide it's time for me to return to another part time job I will have many, many more skills than I had when I started in the beginning. I have seen many others go through the same process here and are now in the community and employed and have very full lives.

The Gainesville Opportunity Center was a life saver for me and I have seen it be so for others. Please let us continue having the support of G.O.C. by helping us with funding and the encouragement to continue doing the good works that are being done by the program.

*By Sandy C. Published March 2011*

*"Coming to the clubhouse has helped keep me from being inside and keeps me active"*

**Sandy Callan 1954-2014**

**Rest in Peace**