



Rebuilding lives  
Removing stigma  
Restoring dignity  
Resource for mental health recovery

## Carter has cancer



**(Left) President Carter and Executive Director Pam Demers share a smile at a GOC fundraiser in March; (Right) President Carter seems at peace with his diagnosis at a news conference in August.**

Former President James “Jimmy” Carter, a long time mental health champion, announced that he has cancer and it has spread to his brain. “I’ve lived a wonderful life,” he said at a Press Conference announcing it in Plains, GA. In March, the 39th President payed a surprise visit to Gainesville where he attended a benefit dinner for the GOC, among other events. Though Rosalyn had been scheduled, she was ill that day, and so The President filled in. Why? Because mental health is important to the Carters. It always has been. Though maybe the least talked about, mental health will be a major part of the Carter legacy.

“One of the things I’m most proud of is that nearly every mental health initiative we sponsored we have come to see through,” Carter said.

Shortly after taking office in 1977, Carter created The Presidential Commission on Mental Health. It was groundbreaking and revolutionary, and brought cohesion to a fragmented system. Though presidential commissions are common, mental health had never been addressed at that level. As a direct result of Carter’s efforts, the Commission laid out the National Plan for the Chronically Mentally Ill in 1980. Though never adopted by President Ronald Reagan, the Plan laid out a road map for advocates to follow for the next two decades.

Ironically, when you read mainstream works about Carter’s legacy, you will find peace agreements, working with the poor, and even advocating for human rights abroad. You usually won’t find his mental health achievements listed with the other great things he has done. But they are there, as he was here.

And we must not forget.



**President Carter with Dr. Christine Cauffield, Executive Director of Lutheran Services Health Systems.**



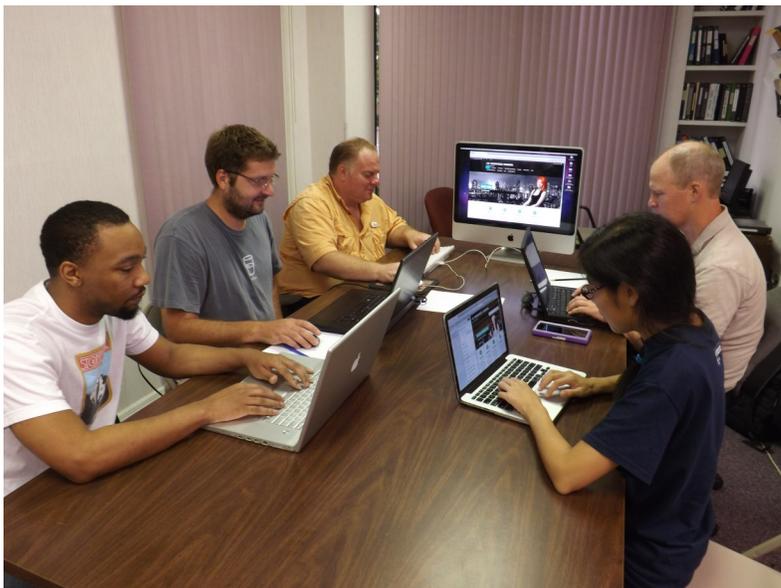
**Carter with Dr. Regina Bussing, interim chair for the University of Florida College of Medicine Dept. of Psychiatry .**



**Carter shares a campaign memory with Deborah Butler as Councilman Craig Carter and Dr. Scott Teitelbaum look on.**

## GOC Web Class

by Jessica T.



**Pictured Left to Right: Andrew B., David S., Lloyd B., Joel A., Jessica T**

Members interested in acquiring useful computer skills have recently been given the opportunity to learn how to construct a WordPress website. GOC member Ouida M. began teaching the class on July 22. Ouida has been working with websites since the early 1970s, and programming since the age of 13. In regards to WordPress, Ouida says, "Creating websites has never been so approachable." Her goal for teaching the class is "so that people can learn a skill they can put to use." The class time has had its share of technical difficulties - that is, server timeouts - but this has not prevented attendees from staying engaged and having fun with the process. Topics covered so far have ranged from how to add pictures to a page from the media library to selecting and installing plugins to add functionality. (Ouida refers to plugins as "superpowers.") She plans to teach e-commerce and how to add video and audio files to a page in upcoming class sessions.

## Artist Ann

by Lloyd B.

Pablo Picasso said "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Those who have traveled the road of life with a mental illness know that there are many twists and turns, detours, and potholes. It is far from an easy journey and most difficult if you have to travel alone. However, the Gainesville Opportunity Center has started to incorporate some new programs that are helping members lighten their load a bit.

Every other Wednesday at 1 pm, GOC is hosting an art class with Ann Cooper. I spoke with her recently during one of the classes where we were doing still-life sketches. Ann is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and Design in Toronto. After graduation, she taught art class there for fourteen years. Her work is featured locally at the Shady Oaks Gallery and Art Glass Studio in Micanopy and the Ice House in McIntosh. Ann's favorites are oil painting and drawing, although she admits to be better at drawing as she has been doing it longer.

The class has only been meeting for about a month and Ann told me the most rewarding thing is "to see that people are having fun." The main thing she wants members to know is that everyone's welcome and that art is something everyone can appreciate and do. She is hoping to put some our work up perhaps even in a gallery someday.

Ann had people who encouraged her early on and called her an artist when they saw she had a propensity for art. If enough people identify you as something, then you start to believe in yourself as that.



**Pictured Left to Right: Ann C., Ouida M., Susan T.**

Removing the stigma and misconceptions about mental illness can be done by showing people that we can produce beauty as well as anyone. In fact, a good number of famous artists had or have a diagnosis. So, if you have the time, come check out the class. Look for reminders on the GOC Facebook page and in your email. Don't be afraid or say, "I'm not good at art". If you don't dip your brush in paint and put it to canvas, no one will see the vibrant colors inside you.

# It's Here!

## Peer Specialist Training Comes to Gainesville

To keep with the growing trend of peer led mental health recovery, Lutheran Services of Florida has announced Peer Specialist Training here in Gainesville. The 40-hour class will take place the week of October 5th and will be held at the Alachua County Health Department. There will be no cost for the training.

Since Medicaid will reimburse certain organizations for services performed by Certified Peer Specialists, the training should open up new jobs in Alachua County for people living with mental illness.

To apply please select the link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V5HKBVN>

**Job Tip: Dress for Success!** When going to a job interview, always look your best. Make sure you are clean and groomed, and get in to get a haircut if you need one. But what to wear is always something to think about. Overdressing is rarely a bad thing, but if you wear a suit and tie to a yard service interview, the hiring manager may wonder if you are willing to get dirty. That being said, wearing a suit to any professional atmosphere is not a bad thing. But if you are interviewing in food service or where certain attire is worn, try to find out what employees wear and wear something similar. That way the employer will see how you present yourself when attired like their employees.



## GO(C) Fish!

by Jessica T.

Gainesville Opportunity Center is now home to several Amazonian/Central American fish. GOC member Troy F. selected three skunk cory, a handful of neon tetras, one platy, and one platinum molly for members, staff, and visitors to enjoy as they go about their daily routines. The tank also contains cabomba plant, parrot feather, temple plant, and anubias. He recommends shopping at PetCo for aquarium equipment and Aquatropics for the plants and fish. Troy attained his aquarium knowledge through reading books on the topic. He set up his first serious tank at age 16, and



continues to experiment with unconventional aquarium setups at his own home. Troy propagates the plants in the tank at the GOC on a weekly basis. When asked if he would consider training other members to help him take care of the tank, he said, "It would be great to have help, but the process would take a lot of time and dedication." For now, Troy is single-handedly managing the upkeep of the fish tank just...swimmingly.

# charity belk

## SALE

support the  
Gainesville  
Opportunity  
Center

SAVE UP TO **70%** AT BELK

Pay \$5 for a ticket to attend this **special event**  
all ticket sales proceeds go directly to support charities

**Get your \$5 back** on your first purchase!

*sale includes special savings on rarely discounted brands!*

4 HOURS – 1 DAY ONLY  
Saturday, November 7 • 6-10am

Call us at **352-224-5523**  
Tickets **MUST** be purchased in advance!



For those who shop at Belk, a \$5 ticket purchase is a great way to benefit the GOC. 100% of your ticket sales goes to benefit us and is applied to your purchase during the four hour sale on November 7.

Please call Pam Demers or stop by the GOC to purchase tickets!

## Maggie's AnArtists

### Join The



4th Tuesday of  
the month

Helping Hands Clinic  
509 NE 1st Street

Community of artists sharing Ideas, Talents, & Support

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Maggie Hannon: [hannom@shands.ufl.edu](mailto:hannom@shands.ufl.edu)

Find Us on Facebook:

AnARTists Community Group

For those living with mental illness and looking for an outlet of self-expression, you may want to check out AnArtists. The group meets monthly for drawing, painting, and crafting, and materials are provided by the group.