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GOC GAZETTE



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(352) 224-5523

www.goclubhouse.org

info@goclubhouse.org

GOC: Open and Thriving in a Virtual World

By: Brett Buell and Diane Childs

The GOC continues to operate during the pandemic. Like much of the world, we have gone virtual! While physical distancing is important, social connectedness is crucial. GOC Members are connecting with each other through daily virtual (Zoom) meetings and online classes. People living with Chronic mental illness tend to isolate. Our goal is to get them back into the community. A common symptom of mental illness is that it reduces activity levels. At the GOC our mission is to keep our Members moving forward. With Covid-19, we are now learning to do it virtually.

Through telephone, Facebook, Zoom meetings and other means we are in constant contact with our Members about their needs. We are making sure that they have their basic needs such as medications and food while giving them opportunities to connect socially and doing meaningful work. All of these supports break isolation, while boosting moods and self-confidence. It helps them move forward, while helping prevent major setbacks.

Members are key jobs such as doing outreach to check on each other. Two of our Members are taking grocery orders from Members. Others are writing for the newsletter. We intend for virtual work to continue in our program even after we open up physically.

Members are also sharing their home experiences. Some are sharing pictures of how they are preparing fresh and pre-packaged food that we provide. One of our Members is sewing masks for GOC staff and Members. They connect with each other socially during group video chats.

The valuable work of GOC continues, even through a pandemic using the social glue of caring, camaraderie and remote connections. Having the Members stay connected to their friends and the staff is very important, for the health of us all. The GOC is an essential part of our community. See you next month!



GOC member Alexis Henderson is helping keep people safe by making masks.

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Member Spotlight: Pat Bateman

Interview by John Smith

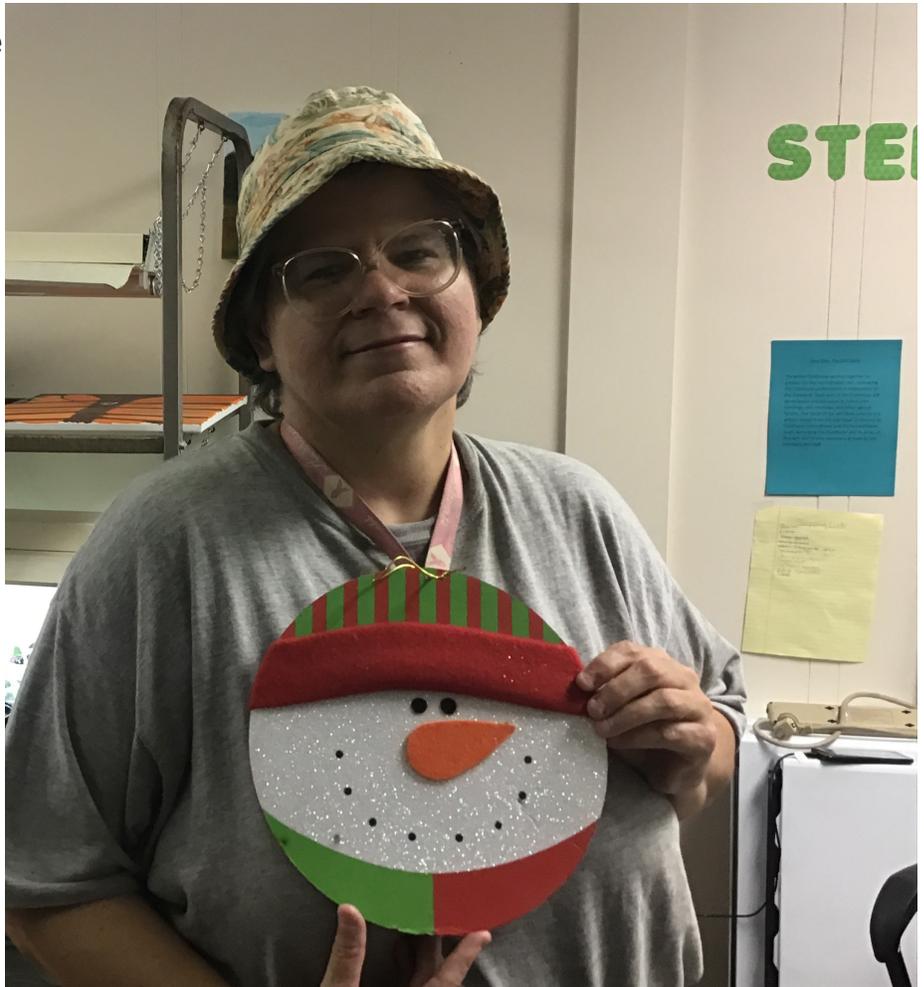
I recently had the opportunity to interview Ms. Pat Bateman for our Member Spotlight for our Monthly Newsletter.

Pat has lived in Gainesville and other Florida cities for most of her life. She did go out to California for a couple of months but returned to Florida. Pat has two siblings' one brother and one sister. Both her siblings are 18+ years older. Pat refers to herself in a jokingly way that she was the oops in the family.

When asked about her hobbies she chuckled that she had several. In the past she enjoyed collecting stamps and usually received her stamps via mail or friends collecting them for her. She also collect produce stickers, sea shells that she collects herself at the beach. Her favorite collection is Tweety Bird anything Tweety Bird!

Before the Covid-19 stay at home order she was working one day a week at Goodwill. She is looking forward to returning to work. She works on the floor as a sales associate. She enjoys the people she works with and the shoppers. Another job she would like to learn more about is a Professional Lawn Keeper. She enjoys working outdoors doing yard work and thinks this could be a cool job.

Pat enjoys being a member at GOC and is looking forward to when we can be open again.



Pat was not a frequent visitor of the GOC before COVID-19. But since we started doing virtual meetings via Zoom, Facebook, and others, Pat has been virtually attending almost every day. She has been helping with our food deliveries by calling Members and taking their requests.

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Jerry Baker was named Culver's Employee of the Month for April. He loves his job, and his customers and co-workers love him.

Member Spotlight: Jerry Baker

Jerry has been working at Culver's as their lobby attendant since October of last year. After a long period of unemployment, he is now working 5 days per week. Jerry has taken a lot of responsibility in his new job. Since going back to work, he has accomplished more and more every day. So much so, he was named Culver's Employee of the Month for April.

"Culver's means a lot because it has me working again. The people here are really nice and treat me well." Jerry will tell you.

And Jerry has come a long way. Having been unemployed since 2011, Jerry had also been homeless for 5 years. Since being back to work, Jerry has only missed one shift in over 200 days!!!!

When asked what it meant to him to be named Employee of the month, Jerry quipped. "I liked the idea because we get free food." The Employee of the month gets a free meal when they are working, Jerry's sense of humor is endearing, and is one of the many reasons GOC Members, his coworkers and customers love him. That being said, he is taking his job very seriously.

"It was like I accomplished something, that people are proud of you," he said. "Culver's is a good place to work."

One day our Development Director Brett Buell picked him up from lunch after his shift ended. He was sitting at a table waiting and had a whole group of senior citizens standing around him talking. He wasn't at their table, the customers were at his.

Megan Olson, the owner of Culver's says she is very happy she partnered with the GOC on this position and loves having Jerry as an employee. "Jerry is a crowd favorite," she said. "The guests just love him. He keeps the regulars happy. He shows up on time or early every day and works hard." come a long way and accomplished quite a bit.

When asked why they selected Jerry for Employee of the Month, Megan said, "Jerry's name kept coming up on crowd surveys. Jerry is very friendly, very polite. His attitude is great he emits positivity."

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Unit Update:

Wellness

Maggie has been hosting exercise and Meditation 4 days per week at 2pm. We email links to join the Zoom meetings to our Members and post the links in our GOC Member only closed Facebook Group.



Culinary

We have been averaging almost 10 deliveries a week of food and supplies to Members in need. Instead of making one meal a day for multiple Members, these deliveries are designed to give people enough supplies for a week.



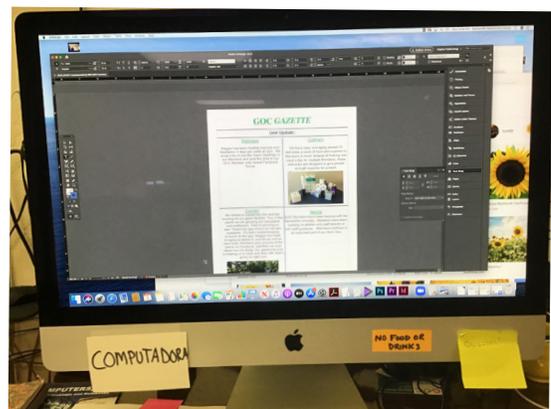
Garden

We started a Gardening club and are working on our green thumbs. Two of the plants we are growing are succulents and sunflowers. They're growing so fast. There's an app where we can ask questions. It's been helpful keeping in touch on the app. Maggie has been bringing us plants to care for as well as plant food. Members post pictures of the plants on Facebook, and then we chat about how it's doing. Our gardening club is helping us to relax and deal with what's going on right now.



Media

GOC Members have been helping with the Newsletter remotely. Members have been working on articles with staff directly or with staff guidance. Members continue to an important part of our Work Day.



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The Month in Pictures



Members receive a weekly food box from the GOC



GOC Member Alexis Henderson along with Rotary member Brenda Chamberlain of United Way made masks for GOC Members and staff

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