

December 2020

GOC GAZETTE



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by Brett Buell



November 18, 2020. It was time to celebrate. It wasn't Thanksgiving, though we gave thanks for where we are at and where we are going. It wasn't Christmas, but we cut a big red ribbon and officially opened something special. We announced our new facility, the first one the Gainesville Opportunity Center has ever owned.

With joy and with hope, the community is taking notice. City leaders, county leaders, business leaders and mental health professionals joined us in celebration. People are realizing that mental illness is an illness. It's not a moral failing. People with mental illness need medical treatment and support.

Who in the photo above has mental illness? Can you tell? Do they look happy? Proud? People living with mental illness are just like everyone else. They want security. They want independence. They want to do something meaningful to help themselves and others.

Some people need someone to stand with them as they take steps back into the community. That is where the GOC comes in. GOC Members participate in the workday of our Mental health Clubhouse. They help in every aspect of our operation. They cook. They clean. They work our reception desk. They even write and design this newsletter that you are reading now.

Through participating in meaningful work, GOC Members do something greater than themselves. They accomplish meaningful tasks. They gain confidence. They take steps forward at their own pace. They see others like them succeeding.

All of this is the effect of a Mental Health Clubhouse on people in our community. It is empowering. It is enlightening.

Please turn the page to see who came out to support us.

Event Photos starting Page 2

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Community Supports GOC



Reid Schreiber makes sure everyone has a temperature check. Reid is not just a Member. He is Secretary of our Board of Directors.



Steve Cannon, Gainesville Chamber of Commerce.



Sharla Hood-Jones, GPD



City Commissioner David Arreola with Chamber President Eric Godet and Hawthorne Mayor Matt Surrency.



Amber Miller, United Way, with Brett Buell.



GPD Assistant Police Chief Lonnie Scott

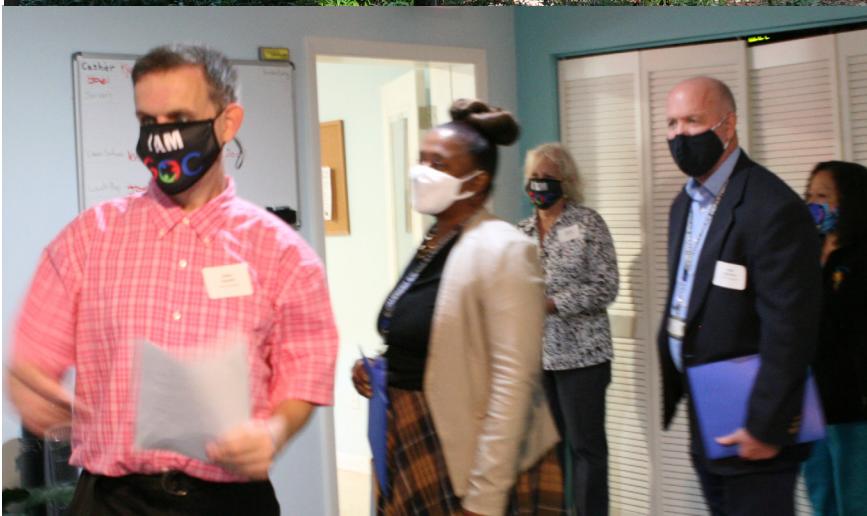
GOC GAZETTE



People standing in line waiting to go in.



Keenen Vernon from Sen. Keith Perry's office was on hand.



GOC Member John leads Sharla Hood-Jones and Will Halvosa of GPD on a Tour.



Rose Ann is another Member who led tours.

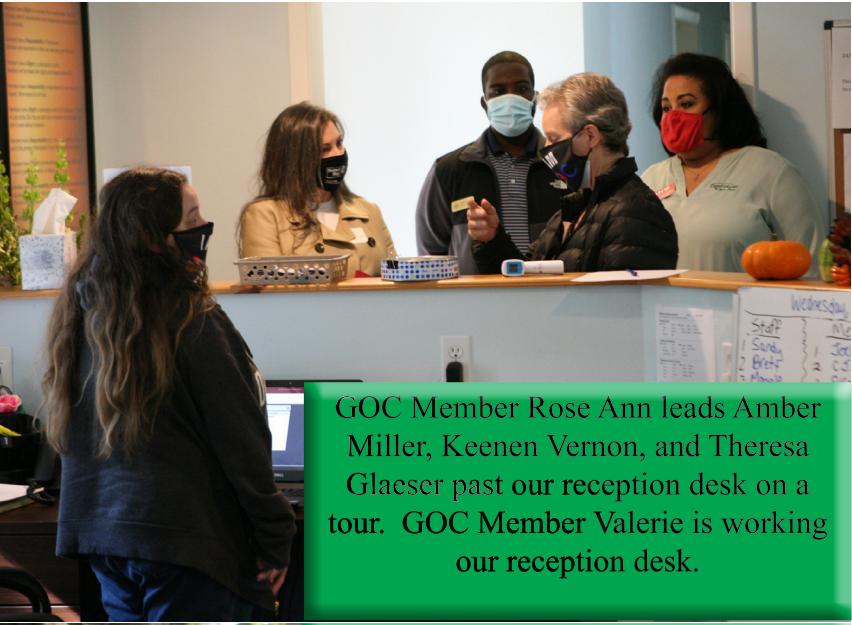


Meridian CEO Don Savoie speaks with GOC staff Sandy Munson.



GOC Board members Mike Conlon and Manny Quiroga share a moment.

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Brenda Chamberlain of the United Way is with GOC's Brett Buell and Culver's Owner Operator Megan Olson. Our first Transitional Employment Position is with Culver's.



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Brett kicked off the ribbon cutting ceremony, followed by County Commissioner Marihelen Wheeler, City Commissioner David Arreola, Dr. Christine Cauffield, and Chamber President Eric Godet. Then we cut the ribbon!!!!

Thank you for your support!!!!



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Unit Update:

Media

Our green screen is here. We will be producing videos in house for use on Facebook and our website.



Culinary

In order to hook up our commercial dishwasher and our oven, our new building needed additional wiring. For the first few weeks of our occupancy, we cooked with skillets and crock pots. But now, with everything hooked up, our kitchen is fully up and running. All this means more jobs for our Members.



Garden

UF IFAS program for nutrition and families is helping us grow healthy food growing in our garden.

They will donate plants for us soon that we will be planting in our backyard.



Office

We are writing job duties and responsibilities for Member positions at the GOC. We finished the receptionist duties, which will allow Members to function in a more professional environment.

We moved our office meeting to 1:30 pm to make room for a 1:00 wellness walk.



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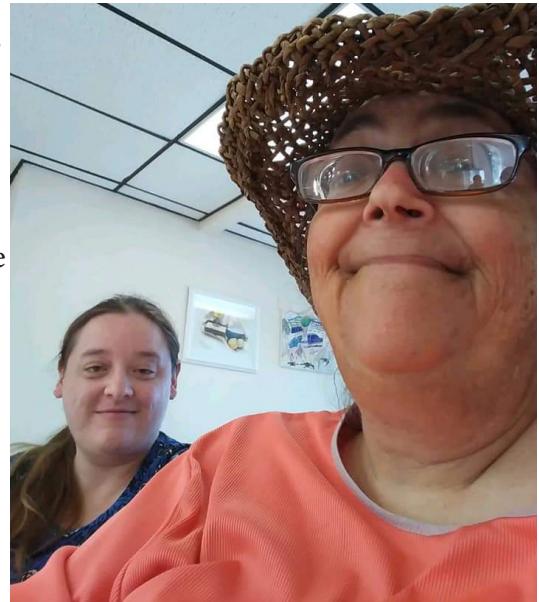
GOC Mourns: Robin Brokaw

By Valerie Sanders and Pat Bateman

On October 30th one of our active GOC members passed away. She always looked on the positive side of things. She was with the organization from the early days of 2008. Robin Brokaw, formerly known as Slonimski, was an awesome person inside and out.

Robin called herself the Chief Morale Officer of the GOC. She was always trying to cheer people up. No matter what setbacks occurred in her life, Robin could always find something good. At the GOC, she worked in our kitchen and at our reception desk. Serving others made Robin happy.

She volunteered at Gigi's playhouse, which is a place for developmentally disabled children. She loved everyone no matter where she went. She frequented Facebook and if she accepted your friend request she would send you a nice greeting every day by messenger. She liked cooking and ran a food pantry out of her apartment before the pandemic started. Robin would help anyone if she could. She made sure no one went hungry. She was a Christian.



GOC Members, staff and the general community came to remember Robin. We set up a bird feeder at our new home because Robin loved birds. In lieu of flowers we accepted donations to Gigi's Playhouse, which was another major part of her life.



Robin Brokaw: August 19, 1964 - October 30, 2020

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Spotlight: Joel's Journal

by Joel Ferguson

The new Clubhouse message is one of excitement. It is making me want to tell everyone I know to get them to join.

With the new house, Members are excited to find new ways to help. We are helping with cooking and cleaning and office work. There are new jobs because of the yard that people are helping with.

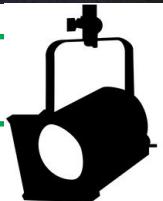
Joel is always busy at the GOC. When he isn't in the kitchen, he helps with cleaning and office duties. He loves to write for the newsletter. He also likes to take care of the fish tanks, which involves changing the water and filters on a regular basis.



Spotlight: Melissa's Triumphs

Melissa Devaney, who was featured in our October Member Spotlight, is continuing to move onward and upward.

by Rose Ann Walker



In August, Melissa started to work part-time as a Licensed Practical Nurse, a certification she achieved during her time at the GOC. Now she is working full-time! She said, "It's a lot of work, but I enjoy it. I have to be really organized to be able to get everything done and done thoroughly." Melissa added, "Part of my job is being in charge of the CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants.) I have to keep everybody on the same page to get everything done." When asked about her long term career goals, she replied, "My ultimate goal is to get my Bachelor's degree, maybe even a Master's, in Nursing."

Equally exciting news: Melissa just bought a house! "It's the first house I've ever bought on my own. I was living in an apartment, but I'd rather pay on a mortgage than pay rent, because eventually the house will be 100% mine."

Melissa says she still enjoys the GOC and plans to keep coming back for both friendship and support. "GOC helped me get on my feet so I can accomplish my goals," she said. "But now I am coming back because of my bond with friends here."



As a newly licensed LPN, Melissa has taken significant steps forward. She is now working full time and a first time home owner!

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Monthly Calendar and Events

December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5 GOC Art Workshop 10a-2p
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17 	18	19 GOC Art Workshop 10a-2p
20	21	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day GOC Open 9:30 - 12:30 pm.	26
27	28	29	30	31 Monthly Birthday Party 1pm	1 New Year's Day Open 1-4pm	

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Member Pictures



Ivan is pressure washing our sidewalks. You wouldn't believe the before and after.

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Valerie Sanders Writer



Chris is spray painting our seedling racks. We start garden plants here!

Valerie and John put meals together for Members for the holiday. We delivered more than 20 meals to Member on Thanksgiving. Interacting with Members on holidays is a Clubhouse Standard that we follow.

On Black Friday, we had an outing at Tom Petty Park. Members played Cornhole and other outdoor games.

