

June 2021

GOC GAZETTE



Gainesville Opportunity Center

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For the first time in our history, the GOC has not one, but two brand new vehicles.

Most GOC Members are at the poverty level and do not have their own transportation. Just getting to the GOC can take hours of travel on the bus. That makes transportation a barrier for people who want to receive our services. These two minivans will help us solve that problem. They will be used to transport Members to job-related activities, events such as the NAMI Walk and to the GOC itself.

GOC's model is to involve members in every aspect of the Clubhouse, including major financial decisions. For that reason, I (GOC Member Rose Ann Walker) worked with GOC co-Director Brett Buell on finding the right vehicle. We visited five car dealerships to explore van and minivan models. It turned out that there was a lack of availability of 15-passenger vans across the dealerships, due to a world-wide semiconductor shortage. Therefore, GOC would choose from among the minivans. Each minivan would need to hold 8 passengers and be accessible to our disabled Members.

Brett and I looked at every factor including price, ease of accessibility, gas mileage, warranty, total mileage allowed and other lease terms.

In the end, the Toyota Sienna minivans met GOC's needs. The Sienna is a hybrid which gets 36 miles per gallon, so it has the side benefits of saving money on gas and being better for the environment. The Sienna has three rows of seats. The second row can fold down and the third row stows away, so that a wheelchair or other equipment can be loaded into the back when needed.

As the GOC continues to grow, we have more and more opportunities for our Members. These vehicles will make it possible for more Members to receive more services from our organization.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us move forward!

Strong Presence at NAMI Walk

The GOC had a major presence at this year's Gainesville NAMI Walk. This is an annual community event to raise awareness about mental illness, to break down stigma associated with the disease and support people living with mental illness and their families.

The event ran all day, from 8am-4pm, which meant Members and staff got up early to bring awareness as our contribution to the community.

The GOC had two tables that the public visited. We had materials on the GOC and our impact, and we signed people up for our newsletter. We also had a crafts table selling goods made by Members. The majority of sales went to the Members who made the handbags, necklaces, postcards, and other GOC originals.

In all, it was a great showing and we had a great time. Members participated in the walk, the tabling and even taking photos. Members worked shifts at both GOC tables to educate the public and other agencies about the impact we are making on people's lives.



GOC Connection: Memorial Day

Many of us who are working enjoy the holidays. We spend them with family, friends and loved ones. Things are no different at the GOC where Members turned out in force to celebrate Memorial Day.

At the GOC we follow a work schedule. Members come, participate in activities, as if this were a job and go home feeling a sense of accomplishment. They are happy to be here and proud of the work they do. Come the holidays, members are ready to relax and celebrate.

On Memorial Day, we had 25 Members attend, which is 66% more than our average daily attendance. Members got to listen to music, play outdoor games such as cornhole and eat good food.

Lloyd worked the grill, Susan made trifle and others brought dishes they made from home. JJ's homemade banana pudding was a big hit. Members in our kitchen prepared chicken and vegetarian kabobs.

The GOC, like other mental health Clubhouses, is open on holidays. This way our Members do not face loneliness and isolation at these key times. The GOC is proud to be open on holidays like Memorial Day. It is just another way that Members are making connections with other people, accomplishing tasks and having fun.



Member Spotlight - Pat Bateman

by David Stevens

Meet Pat! Pat's therapist recommended she get out of the house and socialize, which brought her to the GOC. Along with meeting new people, Pat works in a variety of GOC areas.

In the garden, she has learned the names of plants and how to re-pot them. In the kitchen she preps food by cutting up vegetables. Pat has also learned how to take care of fish in an aquarium.

In the Office Unit, Pat shreds paper and organizes our work spaces. Outside she waters plants, rakes and blows leaves.

Pat says she keeps coming back to the GOC "to help out and to give me something to do." Without the GOC, Pat says she, "would be at home all day, going to doctor's appointments and being a hermit."

Pat worked at Goodwill until COVID hit. Since then, the GOC helped her get a temporary job with Alachua County. Pat hands out masks and gloves for public County Commission meetings.

Pat's long-term goal is, "to take care of myself, so I can help others." She is grateful to the GOC for helping her reach that goal.



Food Truck Visits GOC



Have you ever worked at a company that did things like bring a Food Truck out for lunch? That way employees can relax, socialize and get to know each other. We do things like that at the GOC.

Like many jobs/companies that have bonding events, the GOC decided to do the same. We had a wonderful time on a beautiful spring day under the oak and pine trees in our own back yard. Thank you to GOC Board Member Mike Conlon for sponsoring the event.



GOC GAZETTE

Unit Update:

Employment

Employment for Members is on the rise!

The GOC now has 3 jobs at Culvers and 5 with Alachua County. All eight of these positions will get support from the GOC. On top of that, we have 9 additional active GOC Members who are working.

Coming to the GOC, building skills stamina and confidence has helped all of these Members get back into the work force. We are so proud of our team and the support we provide to help people increase their independence and live meaningful lives.

Culinary

The GOC garden continues to be a fun place where we are getting food. Members water the garden daily and monitor the plants to make sure they are growing.

This month we harvested cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers and squash.



Media

With proceeds from the Amazing Give, the GOC purchased a new camera. The camera has a wide range of professional features and is also super easy to use. Members and staff will use this for our newsletters, social media and recording our history. Using the camera is one more skill our Members are learning.



Office

A Mental Health Clubhouse standard says that Members have a say in our governance. Every week we have a program meeting with staff and members present where we decide, mostly by consensus, what we do here and how we prioritize our daily business operations. On top of that, we just sent a survey to our Members.

The survey was sent out via email and is also available on paper at the GOC.

For those who need assistance, Clubhouse staff will work with Members to help them answer the questions.

Among the questions asked will be how we can use our new vans to benefit our Members employment, wellness and social needs.

GOC GAZETTE

How You Can Help

If you are a regular reader, you know the GOC is growing every month. Do you want to help? Below are various ways that you can help us help others.



United Way Campaign and Link

If you work for a business that's part of the United Way, you can donate pre-tax through your employer. The United Way has a sign up period near the end of the calendar year. Think GOC!!!!

United Way
of North Central Florida



When you shop on Amazon, think of the GOC! You can designate us as your charity on Amazon Smile. A small percentage of every purchase will go to the GOC.

We are in need of specific items. Check out our wishlist at



<https://tinyurl.com/yum48cu3>

Paypal Donate



You can also donate through the Paypal button above. Or, use our email info@goclubhouse.org as the recipient.

GOC is funded by: The Florida Dept of Children and Families, and Lutheran Services of Florida.



LUTHERAN
SERVICES
FLORIDA

GOC GAZETTE

Monthly Calendar and Events

June 5 - Saturday Art Day 10a-2p
 June 19 - Saturday Art Day 10a-2p
 June 25 - June Birthday Party 12:30pm
 June 30 - Employment Dinner 5pm

Newsletter Credits:

Brett Buell
 Producer / Writer/
 Layout

 Susan Thomas
 Contributing Writer

 Rob Ellis
 Photographer

 David Stevens
 Writer

 Rose Ann Walker
 Writer/Editor

Weekly Meetings

Monday 2:00 p.m.- Programming
 Tuesday 2:00 p.m.- Culinary, Wellness, Garden
 Wednesday 2:00 p.m.- Website
 Wednesday 3:00 p.m.- Newsletter
 Thursday 2:00 p.m.- Adobe/Media

Daily Events and Meetings

8:30am Culinary Unit Arrives to start Breakfast
 9:00am Clubhouse Opens, Breakfast is served.
 9:30am Wellness Walk
 10:00 am General Membership Meeting
 10:30 am Work Day commences in Office, Culinary, Media and Garden
 1:30 pm Office Unit Meeting
 5:00 pm Clubhouse Closes

Birthdays

Joel Ferguson	June 3
Jane Bernard	June 7
Jacob Robinson	June 16
April Hugar	June 22
Lisa Stearns	June 26



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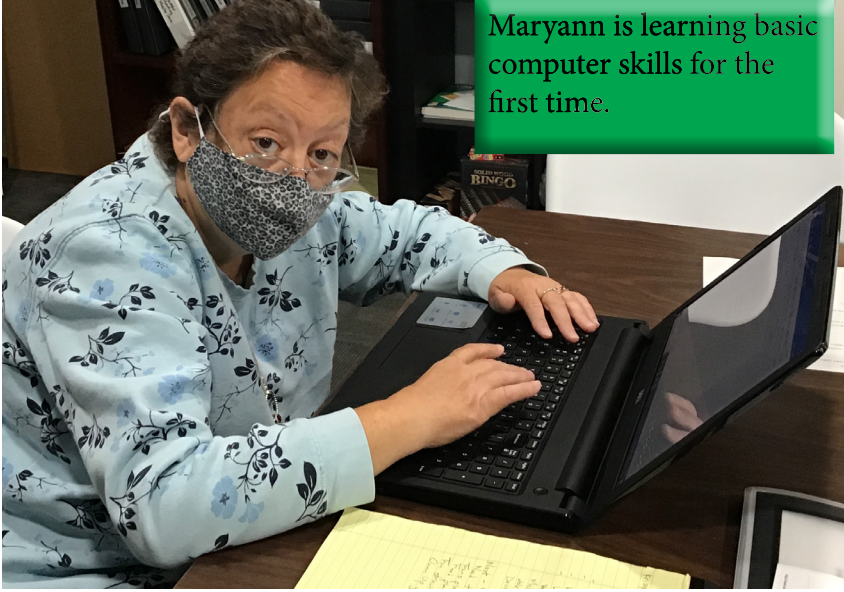
Our garden is exploding with fruits and vegetables.



Zenny shows that working can also be fun.



Our grill isn't just for social occasions. We make lunch with it, too. Jimbo and Jeff are learning to cook burgers and hot dogs for others.



Maryann is learning basic computer skills for the first time.



LeWayne is keeping our sidewalks clean.