

January 2023

GOC GAZETTE



Gainesville Opportunity Center

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What a Year!

2022 was a great year with the GOC! We celebrated 15 years in Gainesville, added to our staff and leadership, started new programs, and received new funding sources. All in all, it means more services for our Members.

We were one of the recipients of the Rotary Wild Game Feast Funds for 2022. The GOC helped at the site of the feast for several Saturday work parties that helped put on the event. We also helped work the event itself. Members greeted guests, sold raffle tickets, helped cut meat, helped wash dishes, and helped with the garbage. The result is \$60,000 that we will be using to renovate our kitchen.

We reorganized and added to our staff. We hired Deidra Simon as Executive Director, hired two additional staff, and added a driver. The GOC now has 8 employees and is providing a variety of additional services. Development Director Brett Buell and Program Director Maggie Hannon remain in their leadership roles. Our additional staff have more time to work with Members and provide transportation. Most of our Members live below the poverty level. Lack of transportation is one of the largest barriers that prevents Members from attending the GOC. Now that we have two vehicles and additional staff, we are helping our Members access the GOC and other key services that are paramount to their mental and overall health.



Our first ever Bike Day, leadership expansion, expanded services, and our 15 year anniversary highlight 2022.



Can you believe we have been around for 15 years? At our anniversary luncheon, we honored the people who had the forethought to bring the GOC into existence. 2022 was quite a year! We couldn't have done it without you! We



The Importance of Holidays Together

by Reid Schreiber

Through the GOC, Members enjoy fun and happy holidays. From the model we follow (the International Clubhouse Model), we emphasize recovery through work. We know that people need other meaningful activities in their lives. For that reason, the GOC also focuses on social and other activities to give people a sense of community and belonging. These actions help our Members build confidence, self-worth, and friendships. Having fun can be a great way to break the symptoms of mental illness and empower people to move forward in their lives.



When individuals experience isolation, neglect, and loneliness, this has a detrimental impact on mental health. Those living with mental illnesses are greatly affected by a lack of connection to a community or family locally when most come together for the holidays. There is a high importance of social connectivity and engaging in a community for both physical and mental health. If someone is isolated instead, this has a strong correlation with worsening depression and anxiety, and an individual can lose their sense of purpose for living. Socialization is an integral part of recovery from mental illness. That is why the GOC is open for all major holidays, a key component in the Clubhouse Model. This year, the GOC celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve. Members and staff came together on a Saturday morning to enjoy each other's company, share delicious food, and play games. All of these made for an excellent celebration of the holidays at a time when a community such as the GOC is greatly needed. Thank you, GOC, for following the standards of Clubhouse International so Members have a place to come together for the holidays.



What is a great way to cope with mental illness?
Create an environment where people gain a sense
of community, accomplish important tasks that
mean something, and find friends.

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Holiday Party Pictures



A community is where people sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals come together for a purpose. At the GOC, we provide a sense of community that helps people feel good about themselves and heal.



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Member Spotlight: Alexis Henderson by David Stevens



Alexis was our featured artist at one of our ArtWalk events in 2022. You can come to GOC as a part of ArtWalk on the last Friday of every month from 5-8 pm.

Meet Alexis! Alexis started coming to the GOC in 2007 because she was struggling with isolation and having a hard time connecting with other people. She also wanted to be around other people who understood her. Alexis' mom also saw that Alexis was struggling and told her about the GOC because she thought it would help.

The GOC has helped Alexis by giving her a place of structure which enables her to be around other people. This helps her stop isolating, helps her feel more connected, gives her a feeling of purpose, and helps her feel that she is a part of something. The GOC also helps Alexis feel less anxiety by providing her a safe place where there are people to interact with. She knows that—and that helps get her motivated to come to the

GOC!

At the GOC, Alexis helps with the wellness program by writing articles for the GOC wellness magazine. She is also on the GOC Board of Directors and participates in Social Saturdays. Alexis says, "When I participate at the GOC, it helps me feel connected." She also says, "The GOC is a safe space to connect with peers and find purpose and recovery through the work ordered day."

Alexis is very involved with art at the GOC. During Social Saturdays, she creates art and crafts with other GOC Members. She also makes and sells paintings and purses which the GOC puts on display during Gainesville's ArtWalk (ArtWalk is on the last Friday of each month). Alexis wants to write a book which would include the art she created, as well as words to share her experiences and reflect on her art. Creating this book would be considered "going to work" for Alexis.

Alexis is proud of the progress the GOC has made since 2007. When she came to the GOC, the organization was also struggling with the funding needed to have the necessary staff. She says it has been wonderful to see our growth as an organization over the years.

Because of the GOC, Alexis can manage her anxiety better, has more structure, feels more connected, has an outlet for her creative side, and had help identifying her goal of writing a book! Now, about that book, Alexis... Just kidding!

Alexis is considered a founding Member of the GOC.



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Updates

ArtWalk

The GOC is a host site for ArtWalk, held on the last Friday of every month. Please join us at 1210 NW 14th Avenue from 5-8 pm on January 27. There will be original art by GOC Members and others. The featured guest artist will be Namaste, an Indian folk artist from Anu Arts.



Lockers

The GOC is a great community. Members truly support each other. But as we grow, Members need their personal belongings safe as well.

So we bought lockers, something we have never had in our 15 year history. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this possible.



Basketball

The GOC has fielded a basketball team for the Special Olympics. The five-person team has already begun weekly practices and will compete locally for the chance to advance to statewide competition.

Everyone deserves the feeling like they belong. Our first game will be January 14 at 9 am at Countryside Baptist Church.



Walgreens

We're participating in the myWalgreens donation program! You can donate your myWalgreens cash rewards to the Gainesville Opportunity Center through 02/28/23. At Walgreens, you'll earn unlimited 1% Walgreens Cash rewards when you shop and you can choose how much to donate. It's that easy. Whether you'd like to contribute \$1, \$5, or more of your Walgreens Cash rewards, you'll be making a big difference. It really adds up!



<https://www.walgreens.com/mywalgreens/donation.jsp>

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Monthly Calendar and Events

January 1 New Year's Day
 January 7 Social Saturday
 January 16 Martin Luther King Jr Day
 January 21 Social Saturday
 January 24 Art for All at UF HealthStreet
 January 25 Employment Dinner
 January 27 Birthday Party

Newsletter Credits:

Brett Buell
 Producer / Writer/
 Layout/Photos

Rob Ellis
 Photographer

Marie Fishman
 Photographer

Reid Schreiber
 Writer/Editor/
 Layout

David Stevens
 Writer

David Turull
 Layout/Consultant

Weekly Meetings

Monday 2:00 pm- House
 Tuesday 2:00 pm- Culinary, Wellness, Garden
 Wednesday 1:00 pm- Computer Workshop
 Wednesday 2:00 pm- Website
 Wednesday 3:00 pm- Newsletter
 Thursday 2:00 pm- Wellness
 Thursday 2:00 pm- Adobe/Media

Daily Events and Meetings

8:30 am Clubhouse Opens
 9:00 am Breakfast starts
 9:30 am General Membership Meeting
 9:45 am Unit Meetings
 10:00 am Work Day commences in Office,
 Culinary, Media and Garden
 12:00 pm Lunch
 1:00 pm Work Day Continues
 4:30 pm Clubhouse closes

Birthdays

Sean Seigel	January 3
Susan Thomas	January 7
Carrie Ferreiro	January 8
Pat Bateman	January 17
Maryann Zaatari	January 24



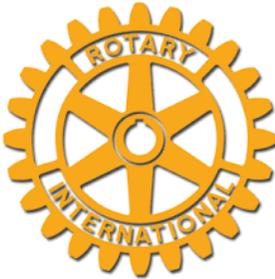
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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
of North Central Florida

**Click here to donate with a bank card
through the Community Foundation-
Philanthropy Hub**

Want to help? Below are various ways that you can help us help others.



United Way
of North Central Florida

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!!!!

When you shop on Amazon, think of GOC!



Any and all help is appreciated. Simply search for us on Amazon or click the images to the left and to the right. (Wishlist-> <https://tinyurl.com/yum48cu3>)



Please use our email info@goclubhouse.org as the recipient.

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Month in Pictures



Kim loves to help out in the kitchen.



Maggie working with Akeem and James.



Seeing the Co-Responder teams are a regular occurrence. They are made up of a law enforcement officer and a mental health professional. They respond to mental health calls. They refer people to appropriate agencies, and we have received new Members due to their hard work. GOC Member Marie works with them frequently and advocates on their behalf.



Deputy County Manager (and Rotary President) Carl Smart visited. He is pictured with Jon and Claudia.



Marie is pictured with Chamber President Eric Godet at a Rotary meeting. Marie helped greet guests and sign people in.