

August 2023

# GOC GAZETTE



Gainesville Opportunity Center

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## Rotary Kitchen Complete!

Good things come to those who wait.

The new kitchen is complete. Members are back in the building and our lives are returning to normal. A new normal. A better normal. We have so many people to thank. We have the Rotary Clubs of Gainesville Foundation, which is made up of community-minded people from the four Rotary Clubs here in Gainesville. The Clubs come together every year to plan and host the Wild Game Feast, which brings in money for local community organizations. The



GOC was chosen by Rotarians from all four clubs, with a pledge to help us make things better. We also have several individual Rotarians who contributed significant time, effort, and resources to the project. From the Gainesville Rotary Club, Dalton Baker of D.R. Baker Construction put the entire project under his license. During the time of our project, he and his wife had their baby and were married. Architect Michael Pellett contributed drawings to make our space more efficient. Veteran commercial builder Mike Conroy negotiated better prices and made sure we had the best equipment money could buy.

# GOC GAZETTE

Thank you, Grace Presbyterian



During our construction, we were unable to use our building. But thanks to Grace Presbyterian Church we were able to operate. The GOC moved a mile away to this church on NW 13th Street where we used the recreational hall as our home base. With their kitchen and our laptops, we were able to perform the tasks we usually do at the GOC. Our culinary, office, and media units stayed busy and productive.

Top left to right: Cristina and Sierra count money. Akeem serves lunch. Bottom left to right: Lasheka works on making breakfast. Susan and Claudia make lunch.



# GOC GAZETTE

## Member Spotlight: Sierra Reynolds

After a two year hiatus, Sierra Reynolds returned to the GOC. She is helping us, other Members, and most importantly, herself. Sierra first came to the GOC in 2020. She was always helpful, but she was not in a place in her life where she was ready to truly focus on her mental health recovery.

In April of this year, Sierra came back. Things are very different for her. For our program to be most effective, Members need the right mindset. Self-care, such as taking your medicines, is important to our Members' ability to take the next positive steps in their lives.

"I was going through a rough time. I decided to get back on my medicine," she said. It was after making those decisions that the GOC became an option. Sierra jumped right in upon her return. Wonder what she does here? Sierra posts to our social media pages. Sierra cleans the bathrooms, does media postings like TikTok, helps in the kitchen, and works on the daily Gazette. She helps clean up in the afternoon and helps count money for breakfast and lunch.

"The GOC keeps me busy and keeps me from doing negative things. It keeps me on the right track and keeps me focused on my goals," she said.

Sierra comes to the GOC several times a week. She also participates in our social outings. Whatever Sierra's struggles might be, she enjoys helping other members. Learning to help others despite their struggles is a key part of our program. "There are things that others can't do for themselves that I am able to help them with. It makes me feel good to help others. This program is teaching me leadership skills and how to be a productive part of society," she said.

Since returning to the GOC, Sierra is also taking part in programs with our community partners. Through CareerSource and Santa Fe College, she is taking courses on Microsoft Office. "The GOC is teaching me to be more resourceful. If the GOC doesn't have it, someone in Gainesville does. The GOC is connecting me to other places that can help me and teaches me to find those [resources] on my own." Along with productivity, she says she has real friends here. She knows she is not alone. And all of that gives Sierra more strength.

"I want to own a business one day. That is why I like to work in the office unit here. The experience I am getting will help me talk to my employees when I get them."

At the GOC we are helping Members dream. And with people to help you walk the path towards those dreams, they can come true. There is reason for hope. Sierra proves that every day. Thank you, Sierra, for all that you do for the GOC and others around you. We are proud of you for all that you do for yourself. We are looking forward to seeing you continue your growth.



**Sierra Reynolds feels comfortable trying new things. She is learning and growing every day.**



**Feeling connected and making friends is a big part of our program.**

# GOC GAZETTE

## Updates

### Special Olympics

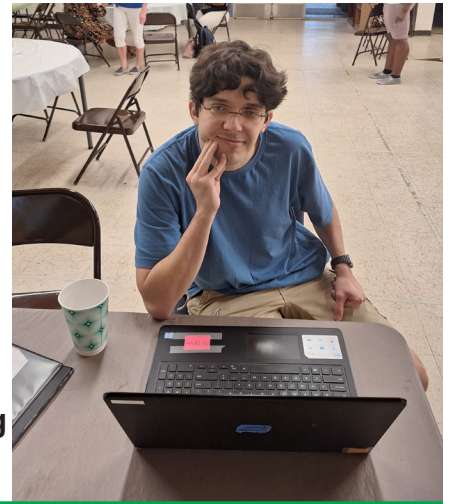
Accomplishing something you didn't know you can do brings confidence and helps you feel like you belong to something greater than yourself. The GOC participated in the Special Olympics. Our teams placed first place in bowling. Along with the competition and event, the Special Olympics provides access to medical care. They sent us home with paperwork to provide to doctors with any podiatry issues Members had. What a great weekend and what a great service. It is



all part of being part of a community and working to make peoples' lives better.

### Office

David Turull made sure our laptops had up-to-date software while we were at Grace. Our office unit was able to perform most of its functions while we were relocated during construction. We did data entry, completed billing, and prepared our daily newsletter for Members and staff. It was great to be able to keep this part of our program during a period of transition. Now we are back home, and getting settled in again.



### Culinary

While our kitchen was under construction, the Grace Presbyterian Church provided a great temporary home for our culinary unit. We were able to fully operate in their kitchen. When it was time to leave, Susan Call and Claudia Cuadros worked together to leave Grace's kitchen as clean as when we moved in. This was an expression of gratitude for being able to provide meals to our Members and staff every day. Thank you, Grace, for allowing us to use your space!



### Media

At the GOC, we help give everyone a voice. That is why we have started a TikTok channel. You get to hear from our Members in their own words what is going on in their lives and what they are accomplishing from participation in our program. If you aren't sure why the GOC matters to people's lives and to our community, you can see it and hear it from our Members. Check out @TheRealGOC.



# GOC GAZETTE

## Monthly Calendar and Events

August 5th: Social Saturday- Welcome Back to the House!

August 11th: De-Escalation Training

August 19th and 20th: Walmart Tabling Event

August 22nd: Art For All at UF HealthStreet

August 25th: Birthday Party

August 30th: Employment Luncheon

### Newsletter Credits:

Brett Buell

Jordan Castle

Rob Ellis

Marie Fishman

Paul LeBlanc

Reid Schreiber

David Stevens

### Weekly Meetings

Monday 2:00 pm- House

Tuesday 2:00 pm- Culinary

Wednesday 2:00 pm- Website

Wednesday 3:00 pm- Newsletter

Thursday 1:30 pm- Computer Workshop

Thursday 2:00 pm- Adobe/Media

Thursday 2:30 pm- Wellness



### 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 GOC Work Day Commences

12:00 pm Lunch

1:00 pm Afternoon Meeting

4:30 pm Clubhouse Closes

### Birthdays

August 7 Lasheka Roberts

August 9 Steve Fox

August 10 Deborah Best

August 15 Joanna Broaudes

August 27 George Cudjo

August 29 Kyanna Williams

# GOC GAZETTE

## July 4 Celebration



The holidays are a time that many of our Members end up alone. Some Members do not have their own transportation, and bus schedules are reduced or canceled entirely. With the GOC, Members have a community to be with each other. At the GOC, we celebrate holidays on the actual holiday. We utilize our vans to pick up Members and bring everyone together. Members take responsibility and help facilitate the program. Kristy, pictured above, folds the US flag according to custom. These celebrations help Members feel pride in their country, their community, and themselves.

## Santa Fe College Shares Opportunities

At the GOC, helping Members achieve their educational goals is part of our program. On July 19, six educators from Santa Fe College visited the GOC to talk about their programs, which provide opportunities for success for our members. When the needs of our members are outside of the scope of the GOC, we help them connect to resources that meet those needs. It is vital that community agencies work together and connect people to services they may not otherwise have access to. Santa Fe's Adult Education programs increase overall independence. The skills people learn in these programs may also increase employability and income. Thank you to all of our community partners. Working together, we can, and do, make people's lives better.



Santa Fe College leaders came to see us at Grace Presbyterian Church in order to share educational and advancement activities with Members. GOC will assist Members in enrollment and participation in life-changing programs.

# GOC GAZETTE

## Officers Train at GOC

Mental illness is not a moral failing. It is not a crime. Yet our law enforcement officers are often the first to respond when someone is in crisis. Criminalizing mental illness costs the tax payer money and may hinder someone from getting the support they need. Arrests can cause barriers to employment when someone is finally healing. Giving officers the tools they need to recognize a crisis and intervene appropriately helps everyone.

They have only moments to assess if the person needs help or is a threat. Every three months, local law enforcement officers come through Crisis Intervention Training. As part of the training, Officers come to the GOC to interact with our Members at times when they are not in crisis. Officers toured the GOC in order to get familiar with our services. Then we had a round table discussion where officers, Members, and staff talked about real world scenarios. Member shared some instances where officers made a huge, positive impact on their lives. We applaud everyone who takes part in this, from the trainers to the officers, to the GOC Members.

With the right help and support, people living with chronic mental illness can and do lead productive and meaningful lives.



# GOC GAZETTE

## Sponsors and Supporters



# DONATE

**Click here to donate with a bank card through the Community Foundation Philanthropy Hub. You can even make your gift recurring.**



**Check with your employer for pre-tax donations. The University of Florida and The United Way allow you to choose the GOC for payroll deductions.**



**United Way of North Central Florida**



**Our Amazon Wishlist has things we need. Check back from time to time as we update it.**

**Please Don't forget us in your will.**



# GOC GAZETTE

## Rotary Kitchen Complete! (Continued)

From the Sunrise Rotary Club, Bryan Nazworth and Quality Plumbing donated plumbing services, which included major demolition and reconstruction. Through a Rotary connection, Josh Elder and CarpetsPlus COLORTILE donated all laminate floors durable enough for a bowling alley. Even the Roteract Club got involved and refurbished some of our wood furniture.

This was truly a community effort that will help make our community better. The GOC helps adults living with chronic mental illness get back into the community, find and keep jobs. We help people live more productive lives where they can contribute. As part of our

program, our Members, not patients or clients, help us run our daily program. They gain confidence and stamina as they accomplish tasks that need to be done. They leave every day with a feeling of accomplishment that builds confidence and propels them into the next phase of their lives.

Rotary has a lot in common with the GOC. Members come together to accomplish common goals, help others, and help themselves. "Create Hope in the World" is the international Rotary theme this year.

Want to know how the GOC creates hope? Research shows that people that participate in clubhouse programs

like the GOC are less likely to be in crisis or need hospitalization. When you feel productive, form friendships, and become part of something greater than yourself, you create hope.

Rotarians have a lot to be proud of. Many worked hard, made some friends, and had fun along the way. They helped accomplish building a kitchen for people who needed it.

And those people, will now work hard, make some friends, and have some fun along the way too. They will leave here with confidence and pride. Thank you, Rotary, for being part of our lives.



# GOC GAZETTE

## Month in Pictures

More photos from our daily activities and operation at Grace Presbyterian Church. Our culinary unit worked nicely in the Grace kitchen. We kept each other's morale up during the transition. Marie and others took great photos for the newsletter and social media. George and other Members helped keep the facility clean. In all, it was a great team effort.

