



Gainesville Opportunity Center

GAZETTE

February 2024. Volume 6, Issue 2

gainesville.opportunity.ctr@gmail.com
www.goclubhouse.org • (352)224-5523



Creating connection, community and culture of employment, Akeem & Mia showcase member accomplishments



**Member
Zach Scarton
Finds Hope
at the GOC
(Page 2)**



**The GOC
Holds itself
To Higher
Standards
(Page 6)**



**Rotary and
Clubhouse
Creating
Hope
(Page 7)**

Culture of Employment

When most Members first enter the GOC, they typically have not worked in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years or ever in their adult lives. We see Members with the fundamental belief that they are capable of having a job.

For that reason, the GOC, like others who follow the Clubhouse Model developed by Clubhouse International, has a culture that leads our Members towards employment.

The GOC takes this seriously, and as we continue to grow, we continue to build on our employment culture here at our center.

How do we help people with lengths of unemployment get back to work? Please continue reading.

(Continued on Page 4)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

M

By: David Stevens

Meet Zach Scarton. Zach started coming to the GOC in November, 2023 because he was looking for a community that would accept him. He wanted to feel like he is accomplishing something meaningful and to find new friends. Zach's therapist thought that the clubhouse would be a good fit for him. The GOC was what he was looking for. He has been coming ever since.

Zach feels happier here. This is because he is around people more often.

At the GOC, he has learned how to make PowerPoint presentations, use Canva for the Daily Gazette, and use Flourish program for data entry.

At the GOC, Zach is welcomed with kindness. He works side-by-side with his colleagues in Office and Media. This helps him to feel more comfortable. Zach has already grown a lot and made new friends. Being at the center gives Zach something to look forward to.

Zach says: "The GOC makes me feel like I am accomplishing something—not being alone all day." The center has helped him to feel more confident because he knows that together, we will sit down with him to reach his goals.

Zach's goals are: to budget his money better, use a calendar for his appointments, get a certificate to be a mental health advocate, get a car, and move out of his parent's house. "With



Pictured: Zach Scarton

the help from the GOC, the goals I have now feel like they are achievable."

Zach keeps coming back to the center because he likes to be with his friends, to accomplish the tasks of the work ordered day, and to be around people who do not judge him. When he participates here he is helping a community of people who feel like family. He is in a place that he cares about. Zach feels a sense of connection at the GOC he has not felt in a long time.

The Gainesville Opportuntiy Center has given Zach purpose and helped him build more confidence. He now feels like he can succeed in a place he feels comfortable in.

Zach Scarton



Zach has personal goals at the GOC that focus on socialization. He wants to get better at being around people and feeling comfortable talking to others.



At the GOC, no job is staff-only and no job is Member-only. Members benefit from having vans to take them to important events and having responsibility for the maintenance of the vehicles, including updating the registration.

“ After coming to the GOC, I now have hope ...



You can tell by Zach's smile that he fits right in at the GOC. Together we are breaking stereotypes about mental illness and providing hope for our Members.

... I used to not see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Now, feel accepted for who I am here. I feel better, and I can succeed in a way that works for me.

I am ready to set goals and feel confident that I can reach them. ”

--Zach

Creating a Culture of Employment

Brett Buell, Development Director

Everything we do at the Clubhouse is voluntary. There are no rules that force participation. It is inherent for staff to motivate Members to take those important next steps forward.

In the Clubhouse, Members often feel an instant connection and a sense of community as they meet people who have similar lived experiences to them. Other Members making positive strides in their lives often serve as role models. When Members see others living with similar conditions to them moving forward, it plants the seeds that they can also move forward.

For these reasons, the GOC has created an employment room. Creating a culture here that employment is valued and showcasing Members' accomplishments in the employment arena is a great way to encourage our Members to look for jobs.

Having a dedicated employment room helps us foster a sense of community within the Clubhouse where Members feel valued and supported by both staff and fellow Members. We encourage open communication, mutual respect, and a non-judgmental atmosphere where individuals feel comfortable sharing their experiences and goals related to employment.

The GOC is also meeting regularly with Amber Weber, the Employment Program Officer from Clubhouse International, our accrediting agency. She has been sharing best practices for creating a culture of employment. The GOC is contracted to provide Mental Health Clubhouse Services under this



Cari, Paul, and Kyana work on their employment presentation

model for adults classified as having a chronic and persistent mental health diagnosis.

Mental illness is one of the leading causes of work related disability in the USA and in the world.

One of the many really cool things about Clubhouse Model is that we recognize and celebrate our Members' accomplishments. You see their photos on Facebook and in this Newsletter, among other things. For so many of our Members, it has been a long time since anyone acknowledged them for their accomplishments. Carrying that sense of recognition and APPROVAL throughout our daily activities will help give the determination to continue moving forward.

Creating a Culture of Employment



Cari and Kyana presented at the Employment Dinner about pre-employment training. The GOC offers this to all of our members.

The GOC has created a thriving and productive community to help adults living with mental illness lead productive, fulfilling and meaningful lives. The culture we are fostering here is breeding confidence, a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of self-worth. We are proud to embrace the Clubhouse Model of psychosocial rehabilitation and are working hard to refine our employment culture.

If you visit the GOC, read this newsletter frequently, or follow us on social media, we hope you can see the difference we are making in people's lives. We hope you will support us, so we can continue to grow and help more people live the meaningful lives they deserve.



Terrica is taking advantage of our new employment room to search for a job. She recently completed Transitional Employment.



Transitional employment allows our members to go bak to work. Our support also means there is no risk to the employer.

Standards in Action

Paul LeBlanc, Program Coordinator



Akeem puts up an information board about education. Standard #25 makes sure that each Clubhouse helps Members meet their educational goals by connecting them to resources in the community.

mental illness are indistinguishable from other people, and we know that.

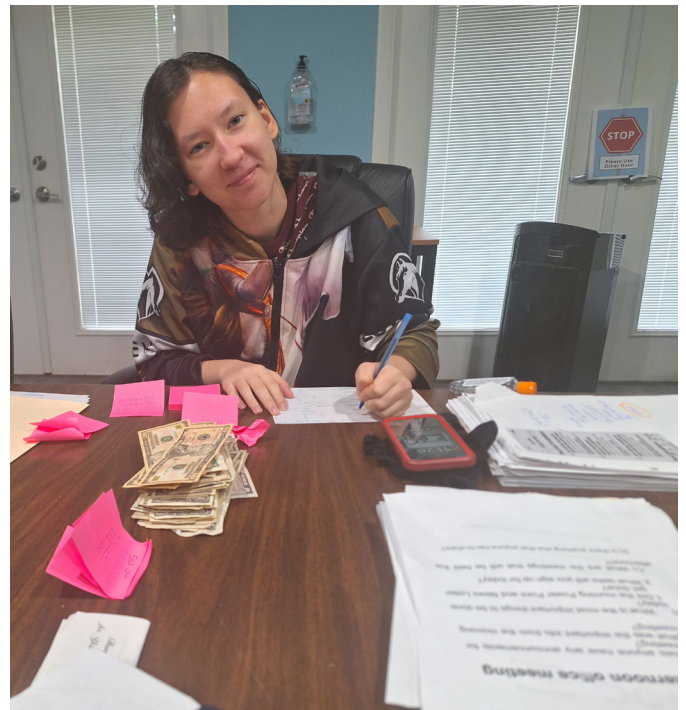
Another Clubhouse Standard that we believe deeply in is #25, which requires that we help our Members meet their educational goals. This can take the form of helping with college applications, helping Members find programs to finish their high school diploma or GED, or searching for vocational programs that improve their chances in the job market.

Whether through working side-by-side in the work ordered day or helping Members find educational resources in the community, the GOC is a place where Members make their dreams, their goals, a reality.

Clubhouse Standards are at the heart of every Mental Health Clubhouse. At the GOC, we take them very seriously. Sometimes, we go above and beyond what the standards ask of us. For example, Clubhouse Standard #8 says “There are no formal Member-only meetings or formal staff-only meetings where program decisions and Member issues are discussed”.

Not only do we follow that standard, making sure Members have a voice in daily meetings, the weekly house meeting, and seats on our Board of Directors, but we also have no tasks that are staff-only or Member-only.

At the GOC we do all tasks side-by-side, and pride ourselves on the fact that if someone walks into the GOC, you can’t instantly tell which of us are staff and which of us are Members. People with



One of the most important standards is Standard #8, which ensures that there are no spaces, meetings, or tasks that are staff-only. All tasks are open to Members. Above, Alina counts money for the week’s deposit.

Thank You, Rotary

Essential to sustaining a non-profit is thanking donors and showing that their time, effort, and money is going to good use.

Rotary and individual Rotarians renovated our kitchen and dining room. To say thank you, we hosted them with meals showing the impact of their donation.

The Sunrise Rotary Club meets at 7am every Thursday. This day they held their meeting at the GOC while it was still dark outside. Our Members and staff made a delicious breakfast with bacon and scrambled eggs.

In addition, the Gainesville Rotary Club had a Saturday social event at the GOC Clubhouse where we served Rotarians brunch. So many people helped make our renovation happen. We are proud to show we appreciate the contribution to our center by everyday use of our new kitchen and dining area.



GOC Member Wendie serves Rotarian Marie Collins

Grateful for our Community

From Executive Director Deidra Simon



*Deidra Simon,
Executive Director*

As we work through our New Year's resolutions, the GOC shows resolve in improving our services to Members and changing lives! Together, we strive to increase opportunities for employment, socialization, and education while reducing the need for hospitalization or incarceration.

We are grateful for our community of Members, employees, volunteers, and donors who believe in the importance of our work. My only request is that we continue to press toward making our community more inclusive and accepting of persons with mental illness.

Please support our cause in the upcoming months by participating in the Amazing Give on April 25th and GOC's Bike Day, a fun-filled morning to cycle or walk for mental health awareness on May 18th. Thank you in advance for your support!

With gratitude,

Deidra

Creating Hope in the World



Contractor Dalton Baker donated his services to run the project. Steve and Jennifer Elder helped secure a donation for the flooring used in our dining room.



GOC Members made fresh-squeezed orange juice for a toast at the Sunrise Club thank you Breakfast.



Reid shared his recovery journey and how the GOC has helped him.



Bill Schmidt, Sherry Houston, Yvonne Gilbert, and Kathy Canon showed their enthusiasm.

Service Above Self



Crystal, Ryan, and Caden Thompson, Wes Eubanks and J. Nordqvist showed their dedication to our project. Thank you!



Rotarians Patrick Dodds Director of Bread of the Might Food Bank and Lynda Reinhart Director of the Stephen C. O'Connel Center.



Nearly every rotarian pictured has been to the GOC. They have taken significant time and put significant effort into seeing firsthand how the GOC is impacting our community. Like Rotary, GOC members practice "Service above Self" as a driving force of our program.

GOC GETS RESULTS.

Gainesville Opportunity Center

**For Florida
clubhouse
Members that
attend for at
least a year:**

98%

achieved fewer
(or no) psychiatric
hospitalizations

97%

report fewer
interactions with
law enforcement

89%

report improved
quality of life

***DONATE NOW
TO HELP PEOPLE
FIND A COMMUNITY
LEARN NEW SKILLS
GAIN CONFIDENCE
GET BACK TO WORK***

**Point your smartphone's
camera at this code to
donate!**





Gainesville Opportunity Center

BIKE DAY

May 18, 2024 | 9:00 AM
First Magnitude Brewing Co.

*Registration at 9:00 AM Ride at 10:00 AM

Questions? Contact Brett Buell at: brett@goclubhouse.org (352) 872-3232

Join us in promoting awareness and support for people living with chronic mental illness by riding with us on the Gainesville-Hawthorne Trail.

We have three choices for all levels of riders!

Option 1) Circle Depot Park (Beginner)

Option 2) First Magnitude to La Chua Trail (Intermediate)

Option 3) First Magnitude to Hawthorne (Advanced)



REGISTRATION

Individuals: \$25 (1 T-shirt)

Families: \$50 (4 T-shirts)

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorships available for
\$250, \$500, and \$1,000