

## Our Role in the Community



*Interim Director Brett Buell stands with Brendan Shortly of Helping Hands Clinic. Helping Hands provides no-barrier-to-entry services to residents of Alachua County.*

At the Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC), our Members play a vital role in running the daily operations of our organization. By volunteering their time and skills, they become part of a team that accomplishes important tasks, helping to ensure that our Clubhouse runs smoothly.

This participation is more than just a way to keep things running—it's a crucial part of our Members' recovery journey.

Engagement with staff and fellow Members is essential. It's through this collaboration that our Members build confidence and develop the stamina needed to become more independent.

By tackling real-world responsibilities, they gain valuable experience that can lead to future employment opportunities. The sense of accomplishment they feel from contributing to our Clubhouse is

transformative, helping them to see their own potential and worth.

However, not everyone is immediately ready to take on the responsibilities of being a Member. Becoming part of the GOC requires a level of commitment and readiness that not everyone may have at the outset.

But for those who are ready, the impact is profound. Being a Member of the GOC can make a significant difference in their lives, providing them with the support, skills, and confidence they need to move forward in their recovery and towards greater independence.

At the GOC, we understand that each individual's journey is unique, and we are here to support our Members every step of the way by offering them the tools and opportunities to thrive.

**Continued on page 2**

# Where does the GOC fit in the Continuity of Care?

## CRISIS



When a person experiences a mental health crisis in our area, our community partners are the first to respond. Grace Marketplace, the Alachua County Crisis Center, Alachua County Sheriffs, Gainesville Police Department, Helping Hands Clinic, and the City of Gainesville's Community Resource Paramedics are on the front lines each day serving people in acute crisis.

## Stabilization



Law enforcement and mental health front line workers then refer persons in acute crisis to community partners that provide stabilization. HCA Florida North Florida Hospital, UF Health Psychiatric Hospital, and the CSU at Meridian provide short-term stabilization care to get people out of acute crisis.

## Prevention and Personal Growth



For many who suffer from chronic, persistent mental illness, they repeat the process of crisis and stabilization many times. Without a community to surround them with the support they need, the cycle can last for years.

At the GOC, Members gain a social network they can rely on, stamina from the work they do here, and confidence because all of their work is essential to run the Clubhouse.



# Our Standards in Motion

At the Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC), we recently did something really special. Our Members—Jacob Warshofsky, Akeem Johnson, Kyana Williams, and Zach Scarton—worked with our Program Coordinator, Paul LeBlanc, to create two videos. These videos help explain some important fundamentals from Clubhouse International, which are like a Bill of Rights for our Members, making sure everyone feels safe, included, and important here at the GOC.

One of the standards we focused on is about working together. This standard is all about making sure everyone has a chance to contribute and feel like they're part of something bigger. The other standard is about reaching out to Members when they are isolated.

Members participated in each part of the process: directing, filming, acting, and post-production. Each of these tasks helps Members to build stamina and confidence.

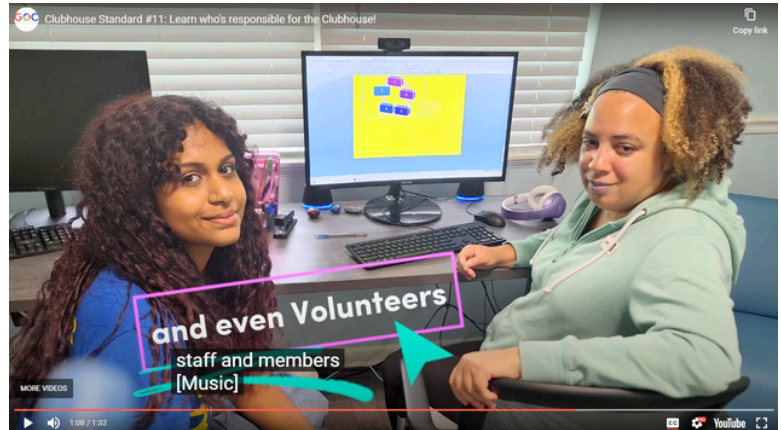
We're excited to share this with you because it's a great example of how our work at the GOC changes lives—one video, one project, one day at a time. You can watch our videos by clicking on the links below.

## **Standard #11:**

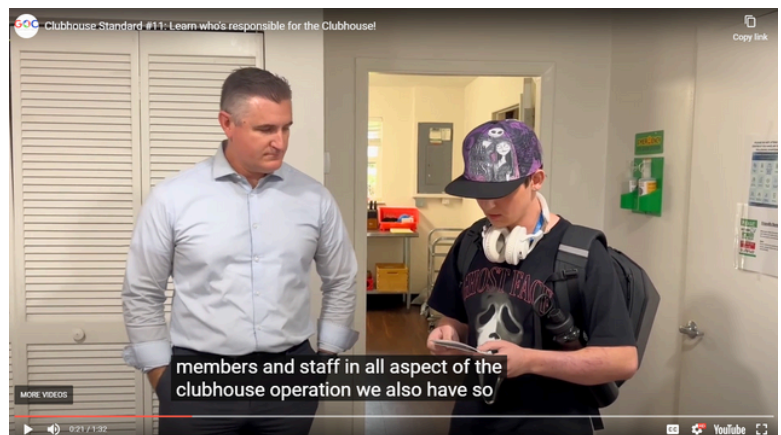
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=so1Xfz\\_LkcU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=so1Xfz_LkcU)

## **Standard #7:**

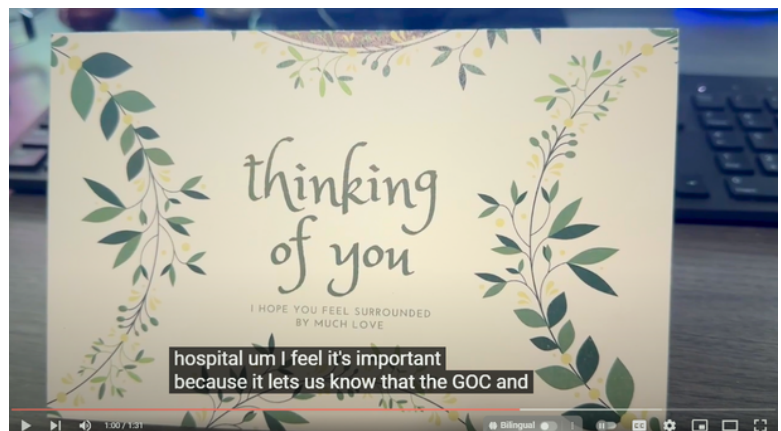
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_mTKE4nLiM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_mTKE4nLiM)



*In our video about Clubhouse International Standard #11, we focused on how everyone, Members, Staff, and Volunteers, work side-by-side, and are responsible for the running of the Clubhouse.*



*Member Zach Scarton, pictured here in our video, gives a tour to UF Health Psychiatric Hospital Director Joe Munson.*



*Standard #7 focuses on outreach, and how the Clubhouse recently came together to make a card for a Member that was in the hospital.*



# Director's Report

As we look ahead to the future, the GOC continues to strive towards creating a supportive, empowering environment for everyone. Our mission is to foster collective progress and personal growth, and we couldn't do it without your unwavering support.

## Upcoming GOC Events You Won't Want to Miss!

Celebrate with us at the GOC Fall Festival Open House: Mark your calendar for November 15, from 11 AM to 5 PM, and join us for a day of fun, connection, and inspiration. This is a perfect opportunity to experience the amazing work happening at the GOC and see how we're making a difference in the lives of our Members.

GOC Bike Day is Back! Get ready for an exciting ride on March 29, 2025! Whether you're an avid cyclist or just love a day of community spirit, GOC Bike Day will be packed with energy, laughter, and great memories for everyone involved.

## Help us make these events a success – Call for Sponsors:

These events are not just celebrations; they are vital to sustaining our programs. We are actively seeking sponsors to help us continue supporting our Members. By sponsoring, you'll directly contribute to the success of these events and make a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

**Elite DNA Behavioral Health** and **HCA Florida North Florida Hospital** have already agreed to help sponsor the Fall Festival Open House, but additional sponsorships are available. Please contact me (Brett) for sponsorship information.



**ELITE DNA**  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**HCA Florida**  
North Florida Hospital



*Thank you for standing by us as we continue to grow and help our Members reach their full potential.*

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Brett".

Brett Buell  
Development Director  
Gainesville Opportunity Center



# Month In Pictures



On August 16, 2024 we thanked Deidra Simon for two years of service as our Executive Director. She took a position as Executive Director of the Girls Club of Jacksonville, closer to her home. She will be greatly missed.



Every month the GOC has a Member appreciation breakfast. Like anything else here, it won't happen without Member help. Thank you Alina for coming in at 7am to help cook.



Bill from our Sister Clubhouse, the Academy at Glengary, is producing a video that will be shown to an international audience. The Florida Clubhouse Coalition is hosting the Clubhouse International Conference in St. Petersburg this year. All of the Clubhouses in Florida came together, on short notice, to help get the conference moved from Canada due to a labor dispute.



# Call for Ambassadors



## **Community Partners and Ambassadors**

On Pages one and two we demonstrated where the GOC falls in the continuum of care. We showed you how the GOC works with all of our great community partners, often serving the population in different roles.

Along with working with our great community partners, we are launching an *Ambassador Program!* Ambassadors play a crucial role in helping us spread awareness about the GOC and its mission.

By sharing success stories, advocating for our cause, and connecting with the community, Ambassadors ensure that our work continues to thrive.

Who would make a great Ambassador? Maybe you would. There may be skills that you have that can promote us in the community and garner support. As an Independent non-profit, we need support and awareness in order to thrive!