



Gainesville Opportunity Center

# GAZETTE

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## Fall Festival Almost Here!



Mark your calendars for the GOC annual Fall Festival Open House on Friday, November 15, 2024, from 11 AM to 5 PM at our facility, located at 1210 NW 14th Avenue. This is a free event, open to everyone in the community!

Come meet our Members, tour our Clubhouse, and experience the supportive environment that helps adults living with mental illness thrive. You'll have a chance to see how we're empowering individuals to lead meaningful, productive lives.

There will be music, fun activities, and a delicious lunch—suggested donation is \$10. We expect a fantastic turnout from community partners, local agencies, supporters, business and community leaders, and more. Last year's event was a true who's who of people who believe in making a difference for those living with mental illness.

Don't miss this opportunity to see the impact we're making together and to show your support. We can't wait to welcome you!

# Big Thanks to our Fall Festival Sponsors:



**ELITE DNA**  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH



AIR CONDITIONING, PLUMBING & ELECTRIC



**HCA Florida**

**North Florida Hospital**



A Smarter Internet Choice

We are incredibly grateful to our generous sponsors who help make the Gainesville Opportunity Center thrive. A big thank you to IQ Fiber, HCA Florida North Florida Hospital, Cintas, Elite DNA, and Snyder Air for their sponsorship of our Fall Festival. These contributions will directly impact the lives of adults living with mental illness, helping them gain confidence, build meaningful connections, and rejoin the workforce.

But it's not too late to get involved! We're still accepting sponsors, and we would love for you to join this incredible group of supporters. By sponsoring, you are investing in our community and making a difference for people who need it the most.

## **We offer several sponsorship levels:**

**Advocate Sponsor – \$1,000**

**Friend of the GOC Sponsor – \$250**

**Supporter Sponsor – \$500**

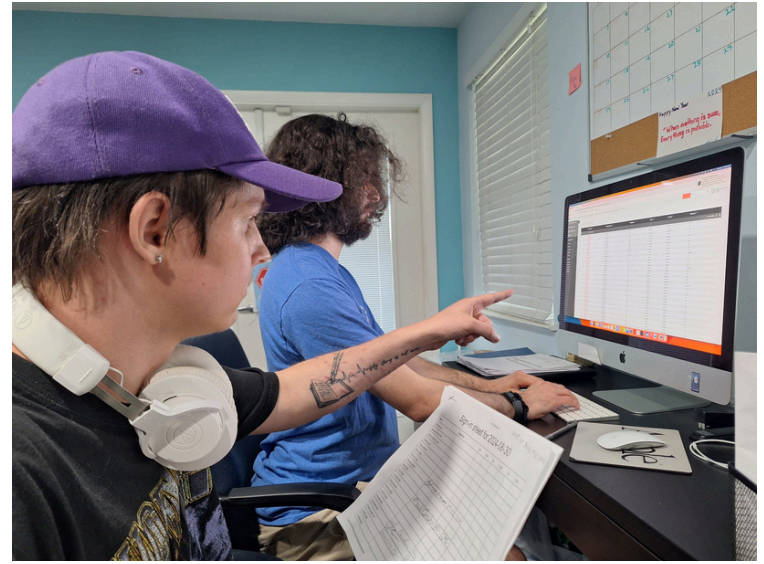
**Raffle Sponsorship – \$50-200**

Each level includes recognition at our events, in our newsletter, and on our social media platforms. This ensures your business is visible to a wide audience. Your sponsorship helps us provide services that empower people with mental illness to lead fulfilling lives.

If you're interested in becoming a sponsor or want more information, please contact Brett Buell at [brett@goclubhouse.org](mailto:brett@goclubhouse.org). We'd love to partner with you!



# Our Standards in Motion



*Jacob and Zach are entering important data that needs to be tracked. Our jobs are not busy work; they need to be done. Therefore our Members feel needed as they complete these tasks.*

***Standard # 16 : The work done in the Clubhouse is exclusively the work generated by the Clubhouse in the operation and enhancement of the Clubhouse community. No work for outside individuals or agencies, whether for pay or not, is acceptable work in the Clubhouse. Members are not paid for any Clubhouse work, nor are there any artificial reward systems.***

The GOC uses the Clubhouse International Standards to guide our mission of empowering adults living with mental illness. This month, we're highlighting Standard #16, which focuses on the Clubhouse work day.

Standard #16 states: "*The work done in the Clubhouse is exclusively the work generated by the Clubhouse in the operation and enhancement of the Clubhouse community.*" In simpler terms, the work done at the GOC is all about keeping the GOC itself running smoothly and improving our services so our Members feel empowered.

The work at the GOC is designed to help Members build their confidence and skills so they can eventually return to paid work in the community.

The GOC has units in which Members can decide to volunteer: Office/Media and Culinary / Janitorial. These provide meaningful work. Members and staff work side-by-side as colleagues in a structured, supportive environment.

Together, we make a healthy lunch every day, prepare all publications, answer phones, reach out to Members we haven't seen in a while, work on administrative tasks, and so much more!

Through dedication to Standard #16, the GOC provides our Members with a sense of purpose, belonging, and accomplishment, while helping them develop valuable skills and confidence for the future.

# Forward Focus

## *UFCC and United Way*



*The Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC) is proud to be a participant in the University of Florida Campaign for Charities (UFCC) and the United Way. Through these partnerships, we have made it easier than ever for the community to support our mission of helping adults living with chronic mental illness regain independent and rejoin the workforce.*

*In most United Way Campaigns, employees at participating companies and organizations can donate directly through payroll deductions, making it easy to give. Contributions are often tax deductible and can be directed toward specific causes or organizations that are part of the United Way network, including local nonprofits like the Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC). This allows you to support critical services in your community in a simple and impactful way. Many people in the Gainesville community—especially those connected to the University of Florida—can make a meaningful difference by donating to the GOC directly through payroll deductions. This ensures that contributions are made pre-tax. The fall season is typically when open enrollment occurs for both the UFCC and United Way Campaigns, making this the perfect time to sign up and make a lasting impact.*

*If you or someone you know works at UF, you can visit the UFCC website at [ufcc.ufl.edu](http://ufcc.ufl.edu) to make your donation. Your contributions support local programs that provide a safe, supportive environment for people in our community who need it most. Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive community.*

*Thank you for your support of the GOC and our mission!*

*Brett Buell  
Development Director  
Gainesville Opportunity Center*



# Employment Update: County TE Positions

Lasheka Roberts is a long-time Member of the Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC). When she's volunteering at the GOC, she helps in the Culinary/ Janitorial Unit, so it's no surprise that she is currently excelling in her Alachua County Transitional Employment janitorial position.

Lasheka has the opportunity to work in a real-world job setting at the Alachua County Administration building while receiving support from the Clubhouse. Her job puts her front-and-center for customer service: she is sometimes the first face that people see as they walk into the building.

Placement Managers Cristina Quiroga and Paul LeBlanc helped her settle into her position by attending orientation with her and trained her for the first two weeks of her position. If Lasheka has to miss work, they fill in for her.

The GOC is proud of Lasheka's accomplishments and is committed to helping her succeed in her employment goals.



*Kyana's outgoing personality is a great fit for her job delivering mail between Alachua County offices. Gina Peebles, the Assistant County Manager, is excited for Kyana too.*



*Lasheka's supervisors have been happy with her work, noting her attention to detail and punctuality. Showing up on time is an important part of any job, and it is something that Lasheka excels at.*

Kyana began attending the GOC in June 2018. While working alongside staff and other Members, she struggled to build the stamina needed for employment. We don't place Members in jobs right away because we first need to understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Recovery is a process, and we never gave up on Kyana. Mia Chisolm, our Employment Lead, Placement Manager Robert Ellis, former Executive Director Deidra Simon, and the Alachua County Support Staff all provided support and assistance with getting her settled into her position. GOC staff attended orientation with her and trained her for the first two weeks of her position. If Kyana has to miss work, we'll fill in for her.

After building her stamina and confidence, Kyana was ready to start her Transitional Employment journey, learning what it takes not just to get a job but to keep one. With preparation for her Office Assistant position, Kyana and the GOC are confident she can succeed and move into Supported Employment afterwards.

Her hard work on social and emotional wellness has paid off. She describes her job as something she excels at and enjoys, and she is grateful for the warm welcome from all the Alachua County Administration Staff.





# Month In Pictures

Gainesville Opportunity Center



**Wok this Way?** Not quite! Program Coordinator Paul LeBlanc, and Aaron Ramirez, a Culinary Unit regular, embarked on a culinary adventure with a brand new carbon steel wok. Their mission: to conquer the art of lo mein. Let's just say the wok had other plans! Despite the comical kitchen chaos, this dynamic duo embraced the spirit of teamwork, proving that even culinary mishaps can't dampen the GOC spirit.



At the GOC, we made sure our Members were ready for the storms. We made sure that Members had everything they needed. Being prepared helps with some of the related anxiety. Here at the GOC, we take care of each other like a family. Members were happy to be involved in our debris clean-up. Fortunately for us, we had very minor damage, unlike some of the Clubhouses south of us.