



Gainesville Opportunity Center

GAZETTE

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Fourth Fall Festival



The Gainesville Opportunity Center (GOC) proudly hosted its 4th Annual Fall Festival, a splendid tribute to connection, community, and collaboration. This enchanting gathering united Members, families, community partners, and sponsors to celebrate the strides being made in supporting adults living with mental illness.

A highlight of the Fall Festival was the active participation of our devoted community partners. Esteemed organizations such as the Alachua County Sheriff's Office, Gainesville Police Department, Alachua County Crisis Center, and Meridian Healthcare graced us with their presence, demonstrating their unwavering commitment and fortifying the network of services essential for empowering our Members.

While the GOC provides unique services beyond the reach of other agencies, our Members also flourish through the invaluable support of these allies, aiding them in their journey toward well-being and independence.

The day's triumph was made possible by the benevolence of our sponsors, including HCA Florida North Florida Hospital, Snyder Electric and Air, UF Health Psychiatric Hospital, IQ Fiber, and Elite DNA. Their generous contributions cultivated a warm atmosphere brimming with delectable food, engaging activities, and opportunities for genuine connections.

GOC Fall Festival

The Fall Festival stood as a poignant reminder of the power of collaboration. By weaving together the strengths of the GOC and our community partners, we are illuminating the path toward a brighter future for adults living with mental illness. A heartfelt thank you extends to all who contributed to the success of this magical event, and we eagerly anticipate celebrating together again in the coming year!



HCA Florida is always at our events.



IQ Fiber also sponsored our Bike Day.



Ted Toole from Elite DNA drove up from Sarasota to be at our event.

Big Thanks to our Fall Festival Sponsors:



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THANKFUL Thanksgiving THANKFUL



One of the major goals of our program is to help our Members break isolation and get out into the community. That's why we are open every holiday.

Thanksgiving at the GOC is more than a handout. With our support, Members take responsibility for helping plan and put on the event. The confidence Members gain in our environment truly helps them move forward in their lives.

Being together. Feeling needed. It is important for everyone. That is why GOC is here.



Social Saturday



Members enjoyed fresh cane syrup and hand made biscuits.



Karen and Kyana made 19th century crafts.



Each month, our Members get together outside of normal business hours to enjoy a social event. This is an important part of what the GOC does: keeping our Members from isolation. Social Saturday brings together Members that attend our center daily and those that have moved on to full or part-time employment. At Morningside Nature Center, they enjoyed a cane boil, a working forge, heirloom farm animals, and a great time together!

Forward Focus

A New Year

2025



Save the date for January 28th as we host our first-ever Ambassador Dinner at the Gainesville Opportunity Center! This special fundraising event is a chance to celebrate our GOC Ambassadors and the vital role they play in connecting us to the community.

GOC Ambassadors help link the GOC with donors, local businesses that can sponsor us, and employers for our Members. For this event, we're asking Ambassadors to bring a friend or colleague who is interested in supporting our mission to help adults living with chronic mental illness.

To RSVP, email Brett Buell at [**brett@goclubhouse.org**](mailto:brett@goclubhouse.org).

See you there!

What a great year we have had at the GOC. In this issue you can see how integral our role is regarding mental health services for adults living with chronic mental illness and how many people support us. We hope you can support us too.

Our programs are free to our Members, but as you know, everything has a cost.

Together, we can make sure that no one living with mental illness has to face their journey alone. Please consider joining our mission by making a contribution today.

[Donate Now](#)



Thank you for being part of our community and helping us make a lasting difference.

Our Standards in Motion

Standard #27: “Community support services are provided by members and staff of the Clubhouse. Community support activities are centered in the work unit structure of the Clubhouse. They include helping with entitlements, housing and advocacy, promoting healthy lifestyles, as well as assistance in accessing quality medical, psychological, pharmacological and substance abuse services in the community.”



Co-responder teams of a deputy and a licensed mental health professional go to calls involving mental illness. Agencies like North Florida Hospital provide outstanding care.



Co-responders like Ofc. Bill Gough not only help people in crisis, they work with our Members as they move forward.

At the Clubhouse, community support services truly embody the spirit of togetherness and care. They operate like a warm embrace, fostering a nurturing environment where every Member feels valued and understood. The vibrant activities within the work unit not only provide essential assistance with entitlements and housing but also advocate for healthy living, ensuring that everyone has access to the resources they need to thrive.

The dedicated staff and passionate Members form an incredible support squad, guiding individuals toward high-quality medical, psychological, and substance abuse services available in the community. This collaborative effort creates a safety net which empowers Members to navigate challenges and pursue their goals with confidence.

Through workshops and outreach initiatives, the Clubhouse enhances the lives of its Members, reinforcing the idea that no one has to face their struggles alone. The connections forged here extend beyond support; they cultivate friendships and a sense of belonging, making the Clubhouse a true sanctuary for personal growth and community engagement.

GOC Community Partners

Gainesville Opportunity Center



Along with the Sheriff's Office and Meridian, we work with the Community Resource Paramedics, City of Gainesville, HCA Hospitals, and sponsors like IQ Fiber, Snyder Electric, Elite DNA, and a lot of great people.



Sarah Slimak from the Alachua County Crisis Center is someone we see around a lot. Sarah coordinates the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) officer teams which train at the GOC.



GOC Member Carrie with two great people from Meridian who know Carrie very well.



Partnership in Action: Our Cintas team takes care of our weekly needs. Their corporate office not only sponsored the Fall Festival, they went shopping with us and bought all of our food. Thanks to volunteers from the UF Brown Center, we had enough people to work the grills. Therefore the GOC was able to keep the proceeds from the day at no cost to us. This is how partnership works.





Due to our our connection with Rotary, Rotarians Bree Guiterman and Chris Camps came to our Fall Festival. They work at Associates Realty. At the event they decided to donate turkeys for our Thanksgiving.



Jacob Rush from the Rotary Club of Greater Gainesville smoked the turkeys and delivered them to GOC.

Members helped serve the turkeys on Thanksgiving Day.



These are more ways we can work together with private community partners. Thank you to Associates Realty for the donation!



Gainesville Opportunity Center

Fall Festival Photos



Davida Simmons from our primary funding agency, Lutheran Services of Florida, made the trek from Jacksonville to our event. She loved seeing the impact our program is having.



Greg Young attends our events regularly. Dalton Baker oversaw our kitchen and dining room renovation through DB Construction.



Gainesville Opportunity Center

Fall Festival Photos



Margie with nephew James Gibson, his wife Brittany, and their son Isaac.



Daoud Rana, GOC Board Member Shoab Rana, Nancy Ryan, and former Board Member Kathleen Ryan enjoyed the day.



Mia and Kyana worked our photo booth. Thank you for some great pictures.



Alina and her mom Camilla enjoyed the day. Alina took photos throughout the event all day.



Gainesville Opportunity Center

Fall Festival Photos



Members who participate in a program like the GOC are less likely to need crisis services or have interactions with law enforcement. We had a strong showing of support from our local agencies.



Joanna Brouades, Wendie Selene, Fred, and David Stevens enjoyed lunch together



Community partners, community leaders, GOC Members and friends made the event one to remember.