

GOC GAZETTE

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE
GANINESVILLE OPPORTUNITY CENTER

Gainesville Opportunity Center, Inc.



A World of Growing Opportunities
www.GoClubhouse.org

This edition of the GOC Gazette is a tribute to the Catholic Charities staff, volunteers and Board Members who have so generously supported us for the last 2 years. On behalf of the staff, members, and Board of Directors of the Gainesville Opportunity Center, thank-you for all that you have done to help us along our journey. You have made a difference in our lives

FAREWELL CATHOLIC CHARITIES



In July 2008, a small group of members, along with Mike Demers moved into a small room in a building at 1717 NE 9th Street. It was leased by Catholic Charities, and they were giving us a deal on the rent. We brought in our tables, and chairs, our desks and computers. We had a small kitchenette to make lunches in and were very grateful. Our new little home, room #140, was small, but it was ours and we finally had walls.

It was an educational experience for many of us. For the many of the Catholic Charities Staff it was the first time that they were seeing adults with a mental illness on a daily basis, and not just as, the once a month client in need of services (food, rental assistance etc.). For GOC staff and members it was the first time we would be sharing space with anyone, it was the beginning of our clubhouse and we desperately wanted to make a good first impression.

It wasn't always easy or perfect. We worked through our difficulties; tripped circuit breakers that turned off computers, smoking in the front of the building, preconceived notions of what mentally ill adults look like, act like, and can do. We educated each other about what each organization did, how we did it and who we serve.

We helped each other. Catholic Charities made sure that our members knew what services were available, helped struggling families

make sure they had Thanksgiving meals and Christmas presents. They helped members pay rent and utilities, get health insurance and of course get food. We helped Catholic Charities staff by providing a resource that they could send their clients to if they needed help.

As time went by we found that we enjoyed each others company. We found ourselves looking forward to seeing Debbie or Susan daily, seeing Nancy and Erica during the day, or our weekly visits by Karen to get "her clubhouse fix". We found ourselves needed by Catholic Charities to bring in donated food, new desks, or hold a door open. We enjoyed the compliments that our cooking got, and we enjoyed meeting their volunteers.

We also found out how much we needed Catholic Charities. They gave us our first TE's (remember the paper shredding jobs), and Karen Slevin was instrumental in getting us connected with her husband, who's the Chef at St. Francis High School, where we now have a Supported Employment Position. Mostly though, when times got tough and we lost two grants, they kept supporting us.

We celebrated with them as they began the process of asking for money for their new building. We celebrated the large individual donations as well as the small ones, and were as shocked as they were to find out that they were ahead of schedule and were going to break-ground. As scared as we were and still are for our own future we are ecstatically happy for Catholic Charities and their future. They have worked so hard for what they have and we are grateful for the time that we had together.

Thank you Catholic Charities staff and board members. Thank you for your commitment to a grassroots organization, thank you for taking a chance on us, when others would not. Thank you for being willing to push your limits while we explore our own. Thank you for incubating us for over two years. Without your support, we would not be here. We would be homeless, without walls.

It is with a heavy heart, that we say goodbye. Thank you for everything. Whatever we become, we will be because of your support as much as our own hard work. We wish you all the best, and our thoughts and prayers are with you as always.

-The Staff, Members and Friends of GOC

OUR CALENDAR

September

- 4 GATOR FOOTBALL OPENING GAME
- 6 LABOR DAY CLUB CLOSED
- 8 ROSH HASHANAH
- 14-16 US CLUBHOUSE COALITION MEETING, ST. LOUIS MO
- 15 EMPLOYMENT DINNER
- 17 YOM KIPPUR BEGINS
- 23 AUTUMN BEGINS



BIRTHDAYS

September

SARA O., ARIEL G.
REGIS G., JOEL A.



CONGRATULATIONS

CONGRATULATIONS TO REGIS GATES FOR HIS NEW FULL-TIME JOB AT THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND TO SARA OLNEY FOR HER NEW POSITION AT MERIDIAN! GREAT JOB GUYS!!

CLUBHOUSE EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION AND VOLUNTEERISM - *OUR MEMBERS AT WORK*

Education		
Location	Degree	Member
Santa Fe College	AA Humanities	Mike Leyman

Volunteer Work				
Place of Work	Position	Schedule	Hours	Member
Gainesville Pet Rescue	Dog Walker	Saturday	4	David Stevens

Supported and Independent Employment		
Member	Position/Employer	Hrs/Week
Andy Bernard	Dishwasher/Meridian	16
Dave Byrd	Peer Specialist/Meridian	20
Sara Olney	Peer Specialist/Meridian	16
Greg Umlauf	Crew Member/Burger King	0
Regis Gates	Counselor/Dept. of Corrections	40
Jane Perez	Courtesy Clerk/Winn-Dixie	30
Dave Jefferies	Groundskeeper/Meridian	4
Joel Andreasen	Kitchen Asst./St. Francis High School	25

Employment quote of the month:

“The crowning fortune of a man is to be born to some pursuit which finds him employment and happiness, whether it be to make baskets, or broad swords, or canals, or statues, or songs.”

- [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#)



- *Need a job?*
- *Don't know what you should do?*
- *Submitted applications but haven't gotten a job?*
- *We can help!*

Stop by Monday, Wednesday or Friday to see Pam or call her at 224-5523

Interviews with Catholic Charities Staff

GOC spent a few days in late August and early September walking around Catholic Charities and asking the staff a series of questions about GOC, and how we have influenced them. Below are their responses.

Karen Slevin

What do you do and how long have you been here? I am the Executive Director. I have been here 4 years and 4 months.

Do you like having GOC here? Why? I like having the GOC here because I enjoy watching people work together, and it's nice to have more people to chat with.

Are you excited about moving into your new building? I am

excited about moving into the new building.

How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness? I am less frightened of people with mental illness.

What will you miss the most about having GOC around? I will miss running into people in the hall, all the smiles and "hellos".

Erica Haines

1. **What do you do here?** I'm a Social Worker in the HOP Program and have been here for 4 years

2. **Do you like having GOC here?** Yes, I love having GOC here, the food you cook always smells good, and the sink is always clean.

3. **Are you excited about moving into the new building?**
Yes

4. **How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness?** I've learned that there are people behind the illness

5. **What will you miss most about not having GOC around?** The food you cook is great and the people are so nice.

Jackie Oliver

1. **What do you do & how long have you been here?** I have been here 2 years and help in emergency services.

2. **Do you like having GOC here, why?** Yeah.

3. **Are you excited about moving into your new building?**
Very excited

4. **How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness?** I Think GOC is great

5. **What will you miss the most about having GOC around?** Tommy.

Debbie Long

1. **What do you do and how long have you worked for Catholic Charities?** I run the FAITHH Program, and have worked here 6 years.

2. **Do you like having GOC here? Why?** Absolutely, I like to have the folks here. She has met a lot of good friends by having GOC here. And I have seen a lot of happy group.

3. **Are you excited about moving into your new building?**
Yes, absolutely.

4. **How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness?** At first I was afraid because I didn't understand, but now I think the staff and members are some of the best people I have ever met.

5. **What will you miss the most about having GOC around?** The interaction, the smiles, willingness to help each other going.

Interviews with Catholic Charities Staff (cont'd)

Susan Rizzo

1. **What do you do here?** I am the HOP Coordinator. I have been here for 9 years
 2. **Do you like having GOC here?** Yes, I love having GOC here
 3. **Are you excited about moving into the new building?**
Yes
 4. **How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness?** I've learned that the members are Regular People.
 5. **What will you miss most about not having GOC around?** Just seeing everyone and being able to say hi every day...and the lunches you cook.
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Larry Little

1. **What do you do and how long have you been here?** A: case manager, for 1 year
 2. **Do you like having GOC here?** . It's OK
 3. **Are you excited about moving into your new building?** .
Yes
 4. **How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness?** Hasn't changed
 5. **What will you miss the most about having GOC around?** Seeing all the people walking down the hallway.
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Nancy Roman

1. **What do you do and how long have you been here?** I work in Emergency Services, and have been here for 3 years.
 2. **Do you like having GOC here?** Yes, I love having GOC here. It's nice not to be alone in the building
 3. **Are you excited about moving into the new building.**
Yes
 4. **How has your interaction with GOC changed your view of mental illness?** I've learned that the members are wonderful and have been a great help.
 5. **What will you miss most about not having GOC around?** Tommy, he's been great.
-

Ray Milligin

1. **What do you do and how long have you been here?** Computer System Coordinator.
2. **Do you like having GOC here and why?** Don't dislike it. Good to see you.
3. **Are you excited about moving into your new building?**
Yes
4. **How has your interaction and GOC changed your view of mental illness?** Yes.
5. **What will you miss the most about having GOC around?** The smells of lunch.