New Home!!!!!

As you know, the GOC has been making tremendous strides and we are growing. We have put an offer on a building and the owners accepted it. We are very excited as this new location will enable us to expand our operation and serve more Members during COVID-19 restraints. This facility will also allow us to grow to serve more people in the Greater Gainesville community.

The location is even better than where we are now. It is one block off 13th Street near a bus route. It is also walking distance to both 16th Avenue and 6th Street bus routes.

The house is single story which makes it accessible to all of our Members. There is much more open space which will allow us to function better as a Mental Health Clubhouse. Parking is available and there is room on the lot for expansion of both the building and the parking.

All of these new amenities come at a cost, even though our mortgage will be less than what we are paying in rent, and our expenses to execute this move will be in the six figure neighborhood. This includes a down payment, insurance, inspections, closing costs, moving, furniture, and miscellaneous expenses.

It is with excitement and high hopes that we are announcing our kickoff campaign to raise $100,000.

The Right Move

- The house is more than 500 sq feet larger than our current building with room for expansion
- Our mortgage will be less than our current rent.
- We still need to raise money for a down payment and our big move.
There are plenty of wide open spaces in the building which will make things wheelchair accessible.

On the west side there is a parking lot. On the east side, there is room for more parking or building expansion.

The building is on over 1/2 acre of land, which is the size of two residential lots. Though the setting looks rural, it is located 1 mile from the University of Florida and 2 miles from Downtown Gainesville.

The entrance is on the South side of the building. As you can see there is a lot of property.
We have been making sandwiches, soup and simple food since we are only serving about ten people at the most during lunch. We plan our lunches a week ahead of time.

We are expanding our Transitional Employment position at Culvers. Instead of one Member working 15 hours a week, we will now have two Members working almost 25 hours per week.

During our time of limited capacity we are restructuring our work ordered day. Staff and members have come up with a list of meaningful tasks to help us run our day to day activities.

We are having a dance class and we will learn different dances. We are currently reading The Giver book by Lois Lowry. We are reading a chapter on Monday’s and a chapter on Wednesday’s. We are having discussions about the book as well.

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First Job Ever!!!

Joevan Jenkins (center) stands with Megan Olson, Culver’s owner. (left) and Brett Buell of the GOC (right.) He is working as the lobby attendant keeping things clean and sanitary during this pandemic.

Through the Transitional Employment Program at the Gainesville Opportunity Center Joevan Jenkins is starting his first job... EVER!

Joevan is involved in our TE program, or Transitional Employment, where the Clubhouse partners with a local business to fill a needed position with a GOC Member.

“The GOC has helped me with both working and social skills.” Joevan says. “I know how to cook, clean, and how to get along better with people.”

The GOC staff trains the Member on the job. The Member is accompanied by the staff until the Member feels comfortable on the job and can do it on their own. If the Member gets sick or for whatever reason can’t go in, the staff from the Clubhouse goes in instead and works their shift. This helps the Member by giving them support to help them keep their job. It helps the employer by guaranteeing the job will always be covered.

Joevan has been coming to the GOC for almost five years. His counselor at Meridian Behavioral Health thought there is importance for Joevan to get out of the house and be productive.

Joevan enjoys coming to the Clubhouse because it gives him a sense of purpose and helps him with skills. You might find him in the kitchen cooking meals for members, staff and visitors. He’s always cracking jokes and eager to help others.

Filling the ice machines is one of many important duties Joevan performs every day to help Culver’s operate.
## Monthly Calendar and Events

### August

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There are many ways for people to give to the GOC. Please help us spread the word.

https://www.theamazinggive.org

How can you help the GOC? Participate in the Amazing Give. The Give is an annual online donation portal that helps charities in the Greater Gainesville area grow. The GOC has seen tremendous growth over the past five years which has allowed us to provide more services to our Members and make a greater impact on the community. We have gone from one employee to five, and expanded our facility twice. We now have a contract to purchase our own building, and you can be a part of that.

Helping people with chronic mental illness rejoin the community and find and sustain employment makes lives better and saves the taxpayer money. When you meet or see our Members you can tell the difference we are making in their lives.

UF Campaign for Charities

The GOC is proud to be recognized by the University of Florida as an eligible non-profit for their UF Campaign for Charities drive. This allows employees of UF to donate to their favorite charity or charities right out of their paychecks. Donations are pre-tax, so each dollar donated goes even farther.

The campaign is held each fall and is divided into a Leadership Campaign and General Campaign. In 2020, the Leadership Campaign will run from September 8th - 25th, and the General Campaign will run from September 28th - October 16th.

During the campaign, UF employees will receive e-mails from the UFCC with links to the online contribution site. UF employee donations may be made through payroll deduction or by check, cash, bank card or direct bill. Pledge cards are available for those who do not have e-mail. You also can volunteer to help your college or department’s committee member with special events and collecting donations.

Are you a UF employee? If so you can sign up at

https://ufcc.ufl.edu

Or maybe you aren’t a UF employee, but your spouse, relative or close friend is. If that is the case please make sure they know about the great things the GOC is doing for people living with chronic mental illness right here in Gainesville. We need your support!!!
I’ve been a Member at GOC since 2008 and have been teaching NAMI Peer to Peer (a recovery education course for adults living with a mental illness) classes about one to two times a year since 2012. And since the COVID-19 pandemic things have been a little different for me.

GOC has always been very important to me. It was and still is a place where I can go during the day to do meaningful work where people understand me. (I have a lot of anxiety sometimes to the point where a regular job is out of the question, but at GOC I can close my eyes and meditate to de-escalate the anxiety even in the middle of a meeting if I need to. And during the pandemic, GOC is very important to me too. I choose not to go to the physical building because of COVID-19. (The GOC was closed to all Members but is now open on a limited basis) but I do choose to join Zoom meetings that the GOC has been having since the beginning of the pandemic. GOC is open to Members, but still has meetings on Zoom at the same time as in the physical building.

Before the pandemic I would write articles for the newsletter at GOC, but now work on it remotely, writing the articles at home and emailing them to GOC, where they edit it and then add them to the newsletter (like this article you are reading now!)

Before the pandemic, I would also sometimes prepare food in the kitchen at GOC, but now I just make myself something like a sandwich at home for lunch!

Before the pandemic, I would teach the eight-week NAMI Peer to Peer classes, but since the pandemic, we have had to postpone the Spring, 2020 class, until further notice to comply with CDC guidelines.

And the pandemic has even benefited me by helping me to go deeper inside myself, and appreciate doing things with other people on a deeper level, as well as helping me to have an overall less anxiety level, in part by forcing me to be more alert, conscious, and relaxed in public (For example when I go grocery shopping and waiting in lines for people)

So since the COVID-19 pandemic, I still do most of the regular stuff I’ve been doing (basically), like attending meetings, writing articles for the GOC newsletter, hanging out with friends and family, going for walks and playing video games, but I just do some of it a little differently.
Kristy, Janelle and Lee are participating in one of many Zoom meetings we have each day. The meetings not only allow Members to join from any location, it also helps us spread out when we are here at the GOC.

Even with COVID 19 there are still jobs out there. We post current jobs on our Job Board every week.

Pat and Brett are cleaning our fish tank. We have an African Cichlid in this tank who makes quite a mess!