

# GO Center ready to forge ahead

By Tom Hamilton

I had just settled into a comfortable retirement after 42 years in the education world when I became aware of the Guthrie Opportunity Center position. What started out as a little conversation about the great things happening at the GO Center turned into me saying goodbye to retirement and hello to becoming the executive director here. What a transition!

My new job comes with a big learning curve. Linda Spalding, the GO Center's new executive assistant, and I have only been on the job for a few weeks, but the first thing we have learned is there are some amazing people here. From our adult participants, our staff, the board of directors and a wonderful cadre of volunteers, everyone is committed to the mission of changing lives and making a difference in this community. As some are aware, we partner with Communicare to provide meaningful work opportunities. I cannot say enough about those folks who provide work, rehabilitation, socialization and education through Nelson County Industries. In the words of an old coach, everybody is a winner here!

Speaking of winners, our business partners who provide contract work and employment support have really been the backbone of the success here. Our participants gain skill development through a variety of contract work including sorting, assembly, labeling, packaging and much more. There are work opportunities provided right here at our facility with On-the-Go Foods, the Garden Center and Bardstown Recycling. We have a unique lease agreement with ReBart Bottling Company, which is housed in our building and employs several of our workers. We also partner with Nelson County and Bardstown Schools to provide transition services from school to work for our participants.

I would like to mention another group of winners, and those are the people who have supported this organization through their time, talent and treasure. This place is dependent on our volunteer program. Folks from this community are here giving their time in so many ways to help with this massive organization. I hope it is just as rewarding to them as it is to the folks around them when they share their time with us. There are also many local organizations that provide their talent and services to the GO Center. And, of course, we could not provide these services without the people in this community sharing their treasure with us. A little more than 10 years ago, generous members of this community stepped up and raised enough money to purchase this building. Many people have continued to support the GO Center with donations and participation in our events, such as the Bubbles and Bourbon Gala. If you're interested in providing your time, talent or treasure, give us call, we need you!

As we emerge from these challenging times, I am pleased to say the GO Center is coming back! On-the-Go Foods is catering and providing wonderful lunch items for pickup or delivery. In addition, please check out our Garden Center and Greenhouse. It is packed with wonderful flowers, plants, seeds and helpful gardening tips from our expert horticulturist. The 20,000 square-foot event center is again open for rental, and we are ready to provide anything you need for your wedding, party or special event.

Our mission is to provide work opportunities that change lives — lives that have many times been forgotten or ignored. Everybody wins when the community comes together like they have at the GO Center. I am so proud to be a part of this wonderful organization.