

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ORANGE GROVE CENTER HONORS JERRY SUMMERS FOR FOUR DECADES OF LEADERSHIP

Chattanooga, TN - With more than 40 years of dedicated service on Orange Grove's Board of Directors, Jerry Summers has been a steady and passionate supporter of the organization.

After being introduced to Orange Grove in the early 1980s, Summers joined the Board soon after. He was particularly interested in helping with Special Olympics, and continues to champion the program. "Special Olympics has long been an important part of Orange Grove operations," Summers highlights. "They're inseparable. Special Olympics is one of the many ways that Orange Grove accomplishes the needs of the individuals supported." Orange Grove's Special Olympics program allows athletes the opportunity to compete at local, state, and national levels in a variety of sports, including bowling, flag football, basketball, swimming, and many more.

Over the past four decades, Summers has witnessed remarkable growth at Orange Grove- not only in the number of people served, but also in the organization's impact on the broader community. Born and raised in Hamilton County, Summers specifically has seen how Orange Grove has been key in reducing stigma, fostering unity, and encouraging the community to engage with individuals with intellectual and development disabilities (IDD).

A practicing lawyer at Summers Rufolo & Rodgers, Summers contributed his legal expertise to help Orange Grove obtain its bingo license. "In the late 1980s, the Tennessee Legislature passed strict laws in response to illegal bingo games, prohibiting the practice for any commercial purpose," Summers explains. "A group of us filed an application, attended a hearing, and Orange Grove became the only agency in the state to be granted a license to operate bingo." That achievement paved the way for Bingo for the Grove, Orange Grove's annual fundraiser that launched in 2022, which has since generated thousands of dollars to support Orange Grove's transportation and enrichment services- including Special Olympics, art, and music.

Looking ahead, Summers is excited to continue to support Orange Grove as it continues to grow and expand. "Seeing the joy of the individuals Orange Grove supports continues to motivate me," he says. "They're an inspiration to me."

About Orange Grove Center

Founded in 1953, Orange Grove Center is a private, non-profit organization that serves 1,000+ adults and children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in the Chattanooga and North Georgia areas. For more information about programs and services, visit <https://www.orangegrovecenter.org/>. For weekly updates, follow @orangegrovecctr on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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