



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ORANGE GROVE CENTER AND CHATTANOOGA STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
COLLABORATE ON STUDENT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

*Chattanooga, TN* – Orange Grove Center and Chattanooga State Community College are proud to announce their collaboration on a new Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training program taking place in a dedicated space on Orange Grove Center’s main campus on Derby Street. The program is an intensive two-week course involving classroom and experiential learning which culminates in students taking the State of Tennessee CAN Licensure Exams, which test both knowledge and skills.

“Orange Grove’s mission has always been to provide the highest quality of care possible to the people it supports. One of the ways we do that is by constantly looking at how we train staff. The State of Tennessee provides excellent and required training materials for new staff, as well as annual refresher courses, we wanted to look for ways we could do more,” says Orange Grove CEO Tera Roberts. “We are absolutely thrilled to partner with Chattanooga State to offer this program,” Roberts stated.

Students in the program have been hired by Orange Grove Center, completing all required background checks, but for the CNA program, enroll through Chattanooga State and will receive their certification from Chattanooga State. Also partnering in the program is NHC Chattanooga

Start-up costs for the program are being funded in part by the United Way of Greater Chattanooga as well as an anonymous funder, and Orange Grove has applied for additional grants from local foundations.

“Since our founding in 1953, this community has supported all of Orange Grove’s efforts to do more and do better as the needs of the people we support and our community change,” says Heidi Hoffecker, Orange Grove’s Director of Development. “In a sense, the community has been supporting ‘start-up’ costs for 70 years, because Orange Grove is constantly tweaking existing programs and creating new ones to meet demands -- in this case, offering this certification program as a commitment to workforce development, which in turn drives better care and programs for the people we support.”

Orange Grove Center is celebrating 70 years of providing community-driven and person-centered services and programs for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) by hosting a party at the Chattanooga Theatre Centre on November 9, 2023, from 5:00pm until 8:00pm. The celebration will include two showings, at 5:30pm and 6:30pm, of a new short film looking back at the Center’s history. In 1953, a group of parents banded together to provide an alternative to institutionalization for their children born with disabilities. In October 1953, two classrooms opened for

nearly 30 children in what had been Orange Grove Elementary School on Main Street. Two retirement group homes now stand in that place – a testament to the lengthening life span of people with IDD.

Over the course of its storied history, Orange Grove grew programs and services to address new demands, adding a sheltered workshop in 1955, summer camp at Double G Ranch in 1956, transportation in 1961, its first group home in 1964, Special Olympics in 1968, the opening of the new Derby Street campus in 1970, the dedication of the Gus McCravy Health Care Clinic in 1992, the dedication of the Morton J. Kent Habilitation Center in 1993, the dedication of the John F. Germ recycling center in 1997, a significant expansion of employment-related services and programs in the early 2000s, the opening of services in Georgia in 2012, and the addition of unique mental health programs for people with dual diagnoses in 2019 and 2021.

Today, in addition to its continuing school program and employment services, Orange Grove operates 60 group homes, including its first in Georgia, which opened in early 2023. Its transportation fleet manages 150+ vehicles traveling over 1,000,000 miles per year. Its healthcare services range from primary care, dental care, Orange Grove's volunteer board has benefitted from the leadership of hundreds of philanthropic, business, and community leaders in the Chattanooga area over the last seven decades, and more recently has enjoyed the next generation of community leaders planning and hosting its most successful fundraiser, Bingo for the Grove.

Rosie Russell, current President of the Board of Directors, says, "Orange Grove has been part of my family for more than 20 years – my son started going to Orange Grove when he was six years old. I am so happy to be serving as President of the Board during this exciting time!"

For more information about our current programs, please visit Orange Grove's official website at <https://orangegrovecenter.org/www>.

### **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://orangegrovecenter.org/www>. For weekly updates, follow @orangegrovecr on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

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