


Building a
Better World
One Child at a Time



**GEORGIA CENTER
FOR CHILD ADVOCACY**

2021 Annual Report





Our mission is to champion the needs of sexually and severely physically abused children through prevention, intervention, therapy and collaboration.

Dear Friends,

2021 was a year of **rediscovery** – forging ahead while recapturing pieces from pre-pandemic life. Across all of our programming, we started seeing signs of pre-pandemic normalcy with increases in referrals, forensic interviews, and training requests during the second half of the year. We excitedly held our first in-person fundraising gala Cheer for Children Ball, conducted hybrid trainings and workshops, and celebrated our first in-person staff holiday gathering. Despite these small victories, we continued to see severe ramifications from children coming out of social isolation. We faced higher instances of suicide ideations, cases of physical abuse, and abuse where technology was involved.

With the year still riddled with uncertainty, I spent much of it contemplating the pandemic's impact on the future of the **Georgia Center for Child Advocacy**. How do we incorporate collective trauma into our core programming? What types of services should we place our focus? Do our current goals and vision still align with our mission?

With flexibility now a cornerstone of our planning, we established our **2022–2024 Strategic Plan** to reflect our goals and new ambitions. Because of the immense support from friends like you, we possess the confidence to *rediscover* how to adapt our services for the community during times of uncertainty.

And we learn from the best – the vulnerable children we serve are experts in *rediscovery*. Speaking out can be scary, but they share their account of abuse with bravery. Healing hurts, yet they show up to their therapy session every week. Releasing shame and guilt is difficult, but the *rediscovery* of themselves combat the lifelong impacts of abuse and reinvigorate their self-worth. Our staff is often in awe of their ability to recognize, unpack, and then release their traumas.

Thanks to you, our services are **free** of charge *each and every time* a brave kid walks through our doors. As you read through our 2021 Annual Report, know that your support restores self-worth and encourages child victims to live empowered.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sheila Ryan".

Sheila Ryan
Chief Executive Officer



Intervention

We conduct **forensic interviews** for children living in DeKalb and Fulton counties. Following an allegation, the forensic interview is a developmentally and culturally appropriate conversation that gives a child the opportunity to share their account with a trained professional in a confidential, safe and supportive environment. This model works to reduce the trauma a child experiences both from the incident itself and the response they receive upon disclosure. We also serve as the critical conveners of state agencies and partners during the case management process through bi-weekly **multidisciplinary team meetings** and our **family advocacy** services.

- 27% increase in forensic interviews conducted and began testifying in court again in November 2021
- 76% of our forensic interviews involved allegations of child sexual abuse or assault
- Approximately 72% of the kids we see live in areas with very low or low child well-being scores
- Working with our local partners, both Fulton and DeKalb counties updated their Child Abuse Protocols – aligning our services with procedures to be used throughout the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases

“The Georgia Center is helping combat the fight for abuse against children in Georgia. Every GCCA Team member delivers amazing results, not only for law enforcement assistance, but also for the victims who suffer the abuse and trauma. The Georgia Center and all the hard work they provide gives victims the opportunity to recover, heal, feel safe and more important have hope for the future.”

Detective J. King
The City of South Fulton Police Department



671

FORENSIC INTERVIEWS
CONDUCTED

16,793

UNITS OF SERVICE
TO ENSURE ONGOING
SAFETY & WELL-BEING

827

REFERRALS FROM
48 UNIQUE SOURCES,
REPRESENTING 12
DISTINCT COUNTIES

546

ONGOING CASES OF
ABUSE MANAGED ACROSS
45 MDT MEETINGS



11,884

INDIVIDUALS EDUCATED ON
CHILDHOOD ABUSE & TRAUMA,
PROTECTIVE MEASURES, AND
HEALTHY BEHAVIORS TO
INCREASE RESILIENCY

500+

TRAINING & EDUCATIONAL
EVENTS DELIVERED

160,000

MILESTONE CUMULATIVELY
NUMBER OF GEORGIANS
TRAINED IN DARKNESS TO
LIGHT'S STEWARDS OF
CHILDREN SINCE 2006

Prevention

Our statewide **Prevention Program** aims to prevent child sexual abuse, reduce childhood trauma, and promote healthy outcomes in Georgia through a collaborative effort that equips adults with awareness, education, and resources to take action. This initiative raises awareness by conducting trainings and engaging communities at the local level. Since 2006, this program has transitioned from a single-focused program to now a comprehensive, multi-dimensional program that performs a variety of services – recognizing how layering our efforts results in enriched protections for children.

- Hosted first annual **Prevention Palooza** with over 350 participants attending one of our free educational events or trainings offered throughout April
- With a concentrated effort to expand Connections Matter to communities across the state, trainers provided trainings in 10 out 13 Georgia Regions
- Established new partnership with the Pro Consul/Mental Health First Aider from the British Consulate in Atlanta to deliver Stewards of children training to their entire staff. One attendee remarked, *"This was one of the best trainings she's received on this issue"*
- Since the inception of the Connections Matter Georgia training program 2 years ago, over 2,600 adults have been educated on Adverse Childhood Experiences with 9 new trainers added in 2021

"I would love to share with others that Connections Matter is the perfect training to remind staff of the importance of connectivity, engagement, and being that person we all need when life gets hard."

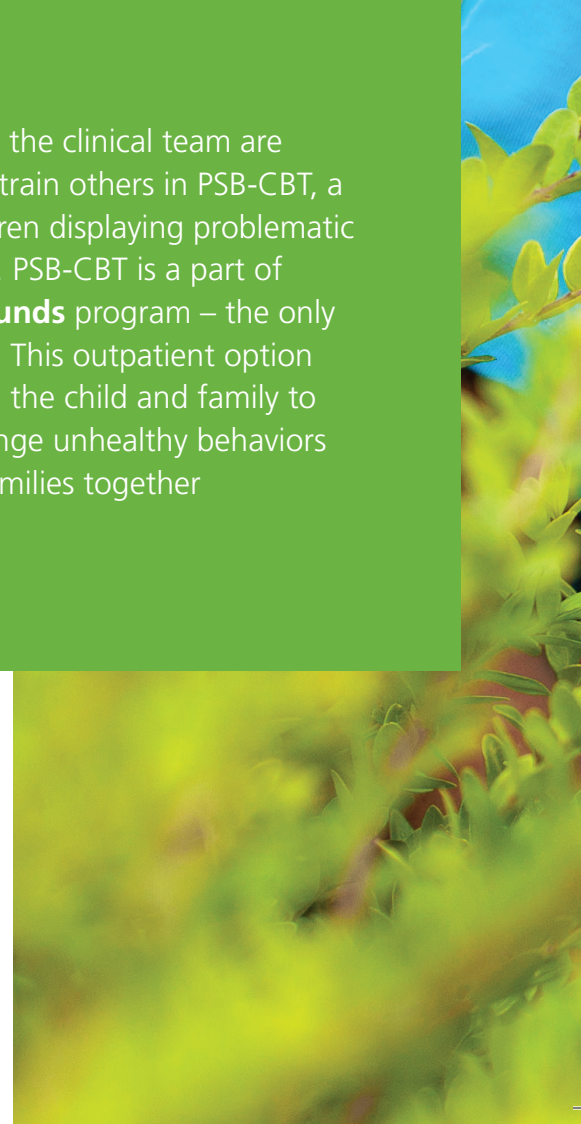
Connections Matter Georgia Attendee

Therapy

Beyond the crisis response, we are committed to the child's long-term healing and provide them with the tools they need for a healthy, successful future. We know that when therapy is offered on-site at a child advocacy center, the child is more likely to attend the first session, and subsequent sessions for a longer duration. Because our **therapy services** are free and on-site, we are reaching those most at-risk for suffering negative impacts who would not otherwise be able to afford evidence-based, trauma-informed mental health treatment. Our Ph.D. and Masters' level licensed therapists are trained in modalities that address childhood trauma, physical abuse, sexual abuse and problematic sexual behaviors.

- 85% of kids who completed TF-CBT reported –
 - ▶ Increased sense of safety
 - ▶ Improved coping skills
 - ▶ Decreased impact of trauma on accomplishing future life goals
- Continued telehealth, providing iPad devices to families for increased access and flexibility to therapy services
- Two members of the clinical team are now certified to train others in PSB-CBT, a therapy for children displaying problematic sexual behaviors. PSB-CBT is a part of our **Leaps & Bounds** program – the only kind in the state. This outpatient option encourages both the child and family to address and change unhealthy behaviors while keeping families together

“The best thing about telling was that I feel better. If I could tell other kids something I would tell them to be brave.”





884

THERAPY SESSIONS
PROVIDED

1,176

HOURS OF LIFE-SAVING
TRAUMA FOCUSED-
COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL
THERAPY DELIVERED FOR
83 YOUTH & FAMILIES

51

FAMILIES SERVED THROUGH
LEAPS & BOUNDS PROGRAM



31

SPECIALIZED FORENSIC
INTERVIEWS FOR
RECEIVING HOPE CENTER

99

YOUTH SERVED BY
CSEC TRAFFICKING
SPECIALIST ADVOCATE

117

REFERRALS AND 61
CACGA HOTLINE CALLS

48

EVENTS TOTALING 323 YOUTH
PARTICIPATION THROUGH
THE ENVISION PROJECT

100+

THERAPISTS TRAINED WITH
MONTHLY CONSULTATION
THROUGH PROJECT INTERSECT

Improving the Lives of Trafficked Children

More than 90% of children who are commercially sexually exploited have been sexually abused in the past. Unfortunately, 25% of child pornography content is produced by a neighbor or family friend – with 18% produced by the parent or guardian. Nearly 50% of runaway and homeless youth report being physically abused, 38% report being emotionally abused, and 17% report being forced into unwanted sexual activity by a family or household member. Unfortunately, these are the children who are most vulnerable to the trappings of a sex trafficker and of being commercially sexually exploited. These are the children we treat every day. We provide specialized services and education to combat the trafficking and exploitation of minors, also known as CSEC.

- From August, our new position of **Trafficking Specialist Advocate** delivered 935 services last year
- GCCA is identified as a primary responder to the **Statewide CSEC Response Team** led by the Children’s Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CACGA)
- **Envision Project** offers specialized services to CSEC with our residential partners Wellspring Living, Devereux, and Gigi’s House. In 2021, launched “*Bridge to My Future*” advanced level program to provide intensive and individual planning for survivors
- **Project Intersect** conducts TF-CBT trainings for mental health providers serving trafficked youth. Last year, the project collaborated with the CSEC Response Team to develop adaptations to our caregiver training; this is an intensive multi-week training for parents caring for trafficked youth

“This class brought me and my wife closer because we had to be a team in our parenting.”

Foster Parent from Trafficked Youth Caregiver Training

Educating the Frontlines of Justice

The Response Training Program enhances local community's response to childhood trauma through trainings, supervision, peer review, and consultation. This supports CACs, District Attorney's Offices, DFCS, Law Enforcement, and other frontline professionals working with at-risk children across Georgia.

Child First + CF Expanded –

Nationally recognized forensic interview training program to serve traumatized and sexually exploited children.

CSEC-Specialized Trainings –

Works with the CACGA CSEC Response Team to deliver specialized trainings:

- Conducting High Risk Forensic Interviews
- Conducting CSEC Forensic Interviews

Peer Review & Ongoing Supervision –

Leads three separate forensic supervision groups, each meeting once a month for approximately three hours .

Expert Consultation & Testimony –

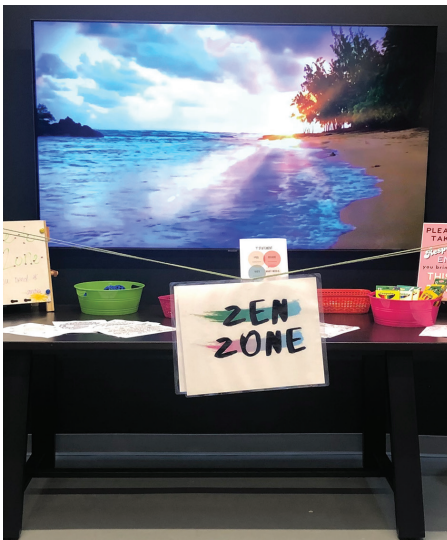
Assists District Attorney's Offices in GA so that jurors understand FI, process of disclosure, and children's responses to abuse.



- 95 professionals from 38 districts attended Child First training
- Attendees scored 96/100 for overall effectiveness of CF Expanded training
- 242 participants from 42 different CACs attended a CSEC-Specialized Training
- 350+ hours of supervision, consultation and technical assistance

“Not only did Mary Beth provide feedback on our interviewing techniques and skills, but she also assisted us in prepping to testify in court. I feel better equipped to conduct forensic interviews and more at ease about testifying in the future.”

Forensic Interviewer
Under Supervision Program



Fostering with Equity and Inclusion

As a child advocacy center, we naturally build our programs through the equity lens. Equity-focused programming recognizes that all children deserve the same opportunity to recover from trauma, but that some children face greater barriers and require specialized responses so that healing can begin. Equity requires us to listen to and work alongside our families. Learning from families elevates their voices and recognizes how the best solutions often lie with the caregivers and youth themselves.

A-Team Plus – A staff-driven committee who meet monthly and is dedicated to evaluating and implementing trauma-informed practices across the organization.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Antiracism Policy – Approved by our Board of Directors in 2021. Through this policy, we strive to maximize the psychological and physical safety of our staff, partners, and most importantly the children and families we serve every day.

Implicit Bias Training – Led by Dr. Marks at the National Training Institute for Race and Equity, our entire staff participated in two half-day trainings. We were happy to be able to extend an invitation for free to our partners, registering over 130 people outside GCCA.

Friendly Competition Among Staff – Promoted Black-Owned businesses with a restaurant challenge in Summer 2021, celebrated Black History Month with daily trivia, and recognized Hispanic Heritage Month with a Bingo-inspired month-long game.

Enhancing the Vision – A small staff-driven design committee formed and began shaping our new intentions for our spaces – working to strengthen our core values by infusing our physical spaces with welcoming murals, artwork, and other design features.

2021 Supporters

Thanks to the generous contributions of our supporters, we are able to provide our specialized services at no cost to the children and families we serve. We also appreciate the numerous agencies that choose to partner with us and entrust us to provide professional services – helping reduce program costs. Because of you, hope and healing for these children and families is possible.

Individuals

David and Cameron Alkhazraji	Todd and Sharon Cohen*	Amy Goldstone*
Stacey Alston	Milissa L. Cole	Carrah Christiana Golightly*
Linda A. Ambrose	George and Pat Cole	Katrina Harden
Alan Anderson	Sachi Cole*	Sylvia Harris
Heather Anderson	Rosalie and Robert Collado*	Raymond and Candice Herndon*
Jenn Anderson	Miranda Collard*	Edwin Hoenderos
Mirna and James Andrews	Dean Conn	Hollis Houk*
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Catherine Baxter*	Tony Crapolichio	Erik Huovinen
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Jenn Coalson*	Lia and Jim Gilmer, Jr.*	Alexander Lemmer*

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Steven and Maura Lewis
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Amy Wilhoite
Patricia Q. Williams*
Karoline Wilson*
Robert E and Lynda Wilson*
Theresa Wortham*
Bill and Angela Young*

*Change Maker Society members

Organizations

A Child's Voice Children's
Advocacy Center
Active Productions
Adults Protecting Children Inc.*
American Family Insurance
Dreama Foundation*
Amerigroup Community Care*
Ameriprise Financial
Services, LLC*
Anthem Foundation*
Arketi Group
BIS Benefits, Inc.*
Backlight Productions*
Board of Commissioners of
Fulton County*
Bobbie Bailey Foundation*
C.D. Moody Construction
Company, Inc.*
Catoosa County
Charlotte Mecklenburg
Community Foundation*
Cherokee Child
Advocacy Council*
Children's Advocacy Centers
of Georgia*
Children's Healthcare of Atlanta:
Hughes Spalding*
Choate Construction*
Cobb County School District
Coca-Cola United
Colquitt County Board
of Education
Community Health Solutions
Courts Foundation, Inc.*
Criminal Justice Coordinating
Council (B50-8-193, C19-8-
047, C20-8-062, C51-8-015,
C80-8-026, V20-8-054, V21-8-
054, U21-8-005, U22-8-005)*
DECAL – Bright from the Start:
Georgia Department of Early
Care and Learning*

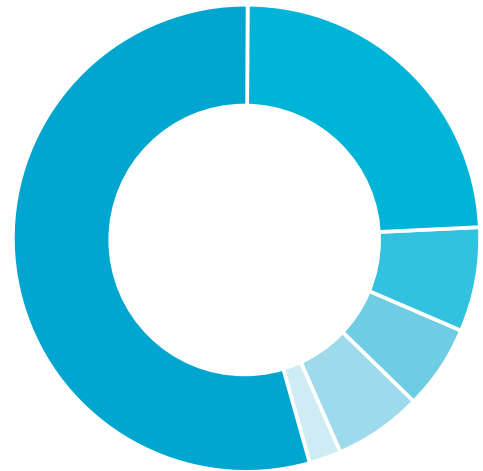
DFCS Region 14*
 Darkness to Light
 DeKalb County Human Services Department*
 Dekalb School Employees Foundation, Inc.*
 Dynamic Marketing Systems*
 Edge Design Group
 Emory Rollins School of Public Health
 Exelon Corporation: Constellation
 FAITH Powerhouse For Kids*
 Facebook Payments, Inc.*
 Family Connection and Communities in Schools of Washington County
 Family Support Council*
 Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta*
 First Baptist Church Bainbridge
 Forsyth County District Attorney's Office
 Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, Inc.*
 Fulton County Community Services Program*
 Fulton County Healthy Heart Coalition
 The Gateway Center*
 Georgia Attorney General's Office*
 Georgia CASA
 Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential*
 Georgia Department of Human Services (OPFS)*
 Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice*
 Georgia Department of Public Health
 Georgia State Charitable Contributions Program
 Georgia State University*
 Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society*
 Gwinnett Coalition for Health and Human Services*
 Habersham County Family Connection
 Help for Children*
 Hometown Health*
 IBM Employee Charitable Contribution Campaign*
 J.B. Fuqua Foundation*
 Janet and Bucky Johnson
 Jerry-Grace Sadler*
 Jesse Parker Williams Foundation*
 John and Mary Franklin Foundation*
 John and Polly Sparks Foundation*
 Junior League of Atlanta*
 Kirby Smart Family Foundation*
 Kiwanis Foundation of Atlanta, Inc.*
 Mayberry Electric, Inc.*
 McIntoch Trail Community Service Board
 McKinsey & Company, Inc.*
 Morgan Fund of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta*
 Network for Good*
 Northside Hospital*
 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention*
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 Ruth's Cottage & Patticake House CAC*
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 SK Project Consulting, LLC*
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 The Home Depot Foundation*
 The RFP Fund, Inc*
 The Summit Counseling
 The Tree House
 Theisen Consulting
 Total Retail Group*
 Towaliga CASA, Inc.
 Towaliga Judicial Circuit Office of the District Attorney
 Trinity Center for Spiritual Living
 Tull Charitable Foundation*
 Twin Cedars Youth and Family Services*
 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*
 U.S. Department of Justice: Office of Justice Programs*
 Unified Government of Webster County
 United Way of Chattahoochee Valley*
 United Way of East Central IA*
 United Way of Greater Atlanta, Inc.*
 United Way of Southwest Georgia*
 Vashti Center, Inc.
 Walter G. Canipe Foundation*
 White County Board of Education
 Youth Villages Inner Harbour Campus*

**Change Maker Society members*

Financials

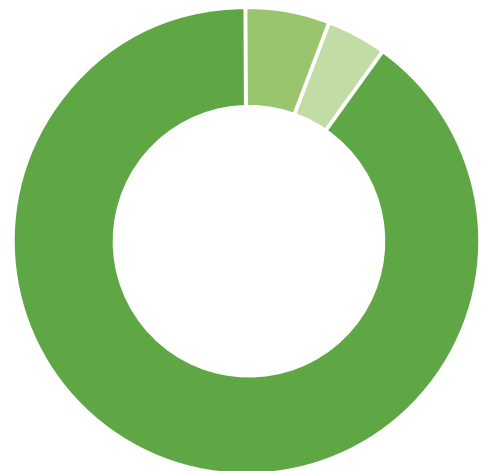
Income

Grant Revenue	\$1,903,304	■ 54%
Contributions (restricted)	\$831,645	■ 24%
Contributions (unrestricted)	\$242,145	■ 7%
Program Income / Materials	\$220,158	■ 6%
Special Events (net)	\$219,390	■ 6%
Bequest	\$87,412	■ 2%
<hr/>		
Total		\$3,504,054



Expenses

Program Services	\$2,973,118	■ 90%
Management & General	\$209,645	■ 6%
Fundraising	\$136,258	■ 4%
<hr/>		
Total		\$3,319,021



“It has been an honor for Help For Children (HFC) to provide grants to support Georgia Center for Child Advocacy. They have been leaders in the Greater Atlanta area by initiating preventative measures to stop child abuse through awareness and education to parents, caregivers, and community members. Their commitment to prevent child maltreatment through personal connections and outreach will have a lasting impact not only in the years to come, but also for future generations who will never have to experience abuse.”

Sumudu Waas
Help for Children

Board Officers

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CFO, Deluxe

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Sachi Cole, Secretary
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Private Wealth Advisor,
Ameriprise Financial

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Director of Shareholder Operations,
Federal Home Loans Bank

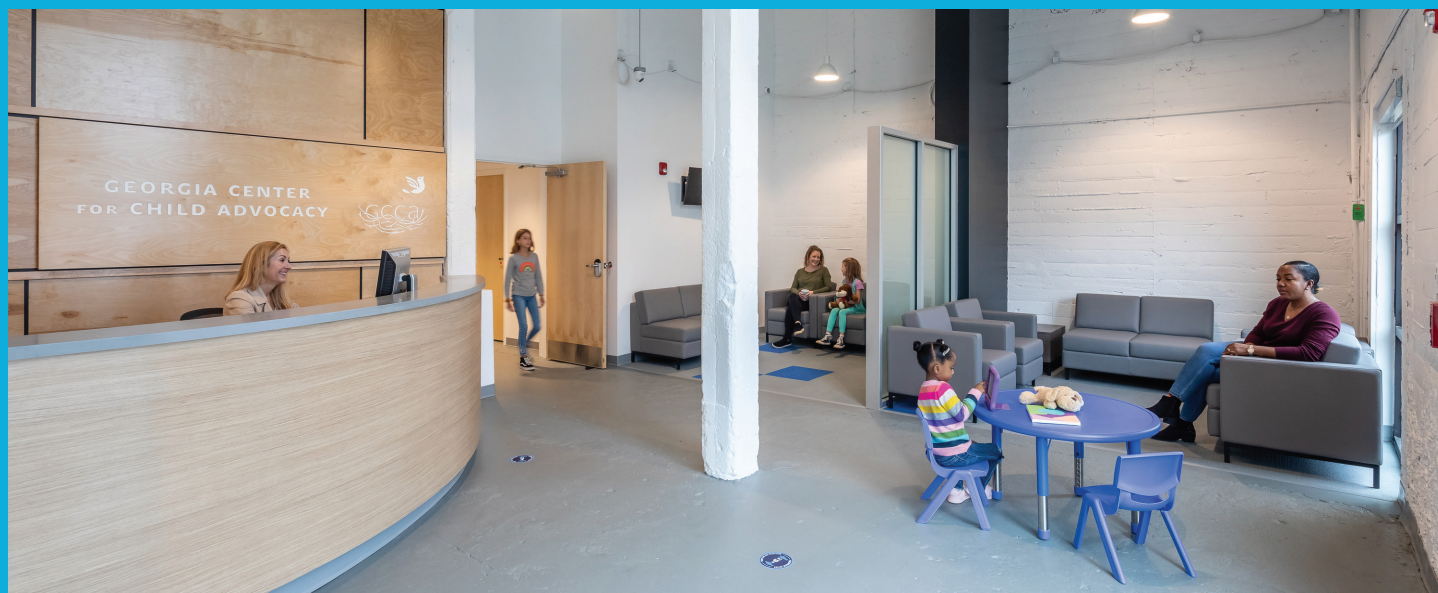
Michael Woodard
Senior Account Executive, BIS Benefits

Bill Young
Director of Information Technology,
Pattillo Industrial Real Estate



“The healing process for survivors of childhood sexual abuse starts with the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy. Knowledgeable staff in all areas of childhood trauma help guide these children and their families through an incredibly complex process and make it manageable. GCCA is a bright spot amongst so much darkness and has increased initiatives for its preventative training to help reduce instances of childhood sexual abuse across the state of Georgia.”

Sachi Cole
Board Secretary



Staff

Sheila Ryan
Chief Executive Officer

Zobida Dat
Director of Development

Marci Healy
Grants Manager

Yolanda Gaskin
Executive Assistant/Office Manager

Tisa Barnave
Client Service Coordinator

Natasha Hall
Client Service Coordinator

Jordyn Parks
Client Service Coordinator

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Director of Prevention Services

Nikki Berger, LPC
Prevention Program Manager

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Krista Gonce
Regional Prevention Coordinator

Lea Fantom
Regional Prevention Coordinator

Sarah Ren
Prevention Program
Support Coordinator

Jennifer Huffman
Connections Matter Coordinator

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Mary Beth Nelson, LCSW
Director of Training

Rebecca Trotta
Director of Forensic Services

Mindy Paylor
Fulton Forensic Program Manager

Latoya Mitchell, MAT
DeKalb Forensic Program Manager

Nicole Ardiles
Intake Coordinator

Kendra Martin
Intake Coordinator

Jorge Mendoza
Forensic Interviewer

Jillian Oates
Forensic Interviewer

Monet Patrick, LMSW
Forensic Interviewer

Jessalyn Rushin, MPA
Community Family Advocate

Sophia Thomas, MSW
Trafficking Specialist / Family Advocate

Clinical Services

Kelly Kinnish, PhD
Director of Clinical Services

Le'Keldric Thomas, PhD
Clinical Program Manager

Giselle Balfour, PhD
Envision Project Coordinator

Starr Davis
Envision Youth Development Specialist

JaKarynn Conyers, LPC
Psychotherapist

Margaret Huddle, LMSW
Psychotherapist

Sydnee Keys
Psychotherapist

Jennifer Hossler
Project Intersect Manager

Lauren Salamacha
Project Intersect Coordinator

Joan Lewis
PSB Specialist Family Advocate

Camelia Narez, MSW, ACSW
Psychotherapist

Amy Shipp, LCSW
CSEC Specialist / Family Advocate



The Georgia Center for Child Advocacy presents the following trainings:

Stewards of Children

Educates youth-serving adults how to prevent, recognize and react responsibly to child sexual abuse and exploitation. (2.5 hours, \$15 per person)

Connections Matter Georgia

Focuses on effectively educating communities about Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma and resiliency to develop a healthier, stronger community. (4 hours, \$20 per person, group rate available)

Circles of Safety Understanding the Role of Healthy Sexual Development

Highlights child sexual abuse facts, opportunities to practice safety planning strategies and what steps they can take to promote healthy sexual development. (2.5 hours, \$15 per person)

Specialized Training Topics

- Human Trafficking/Sex Trafficking
- How to Talk to Children about Safety from Sexual Abuse
- Child Protection Policy Development
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Building Resilience in Children in a Post COVID World
- Child-Focused Curriculum Implementation in Schools
- Georgia's Technical Assistance Resource Guide for Schools

Link to register

bit.ly/GCCAPreventionTrainings

Email or call for more information

Prevention@gacfca.org / 770-830-4016

To volunteer on our Special Events Committee, email SpecialEvents@gacfca.org



678-904-2880
P.O. Box 11270, Atlanta, GA 30310
[GeorgiaCenterForChildAdvocacy.org](https://www.GeorgiaCenterForChildAdvocacy.org)



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