



GEORGIA'S FRIENDS

HOPE HEALS

NEWSLETTER VOL. 7 • FALL 2023

Dear Friends,

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks for your ongoing support of Georgia's Friends and Georgia's House. We are touched and humbled every day by your generosity, your kindness, and your commitment to helping women in recovery as they heal and build new lives.

2023 has been a busy and exciting year. We've served 18 residents and provided 2,400 safe bed nights so far. While we've supported each other through difficult days we've also shared many joys and achievements including two graduations.

As an organization, we're focused on continuously improving our program to better help the women we serve. This year we made some significant program enhancements that are designed to foster a more-empowering and person-focused peer support environment. Our hope is for every woman will play a driving role in creating the life she envisions.

Additionally, we've made it a top priority to become a more welcoming, inclusive, and safe space for residents, staff, volunteers, and everyone else in the community we interact with, particularly those in historically underserved populations. We've committed to digging deep to understand how we can hear, accept, and support all voices and perspectives. We've launched a diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) initiative that will include training for board, staff, and residents, and will map out a plan for moving forward.

We've also begun exploring ways we can better support Georgia's House graduates who aren't ready to move on to fully independent living. Even when women are ready to graduate from our program, they can often benefit from continuing to live in a peer environment that provides some level of oversight and guidance. Our longer-term vision is to provide a continuum of support services to help women in all stages of recovery increase their chances of attaining long-term sobriety.

We hope you'll find the updates in this newsletter inspiring. If you'd like to learn more about our services or discuss volunteer or giving opportunities, I'd love to speak with you. Please call or email!

In aratitude.

Denise McFadden, Executive Director
434.284.7817 • denise@georgiasfriendsville.org

GRADUATE PROFILE

Earlier this year, the Virginia Association of Recovery Residences (VARR), our accrediting organization, awarded Georgia's Friends a grant to hire a contract peer navigator. This position brings us a focused resource over the next 11 months to help Georgia's Friends engage our residents in recovery planning and measurement using the Advanced Recovery Management System, a software tool that VARR provides to all its member organizations.

We're thrilled to announce that Mercedes G., a Georgia's House graduate, will be filling this role! She joined us in August and brings a passion for lifting up other women in their recovery. We're very excited to be working with her!



Meet our peer navigator, Mercedes

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to supporters like you, we can continue to offer safe, supportive housing to women in recovery. We'd like to recognize the following foundations and funds for their generous contributions this year:

- 100+ Women Who Care, who donated funds for a security lighting upgrade
- Bama Works Fund of Dave Matthews Band @ CACF
- County of Albemarle
- Emmanuel Episcopal Church
- First Presbyterian Church
- Radar Foundation
- Rockfish Presbyterian Church
- Twentieth Century Merchants Fund @ CACF
- Zion Union Baptist Church, which provided startup donations and ongoing funding for our Community Pantry — see details below!



Diane Brownlee (L) & Nancy Markos (R), of 100+ Women Who Care, present a grant to executive director, Denise McFadden

All of our generous donors will be recognized in our 2023 Annual Report that will be published next year.

For a full list of last year's donors, please see our 2022 Annual Report at georgiasfriends.org/financials.

OUTREACH NEWS

In 2023, we began expanding our outreach efforts to build and strengthen relationships with like-minded individuals and groups to reach more women in need of recovery support services. Below are just some of our 2023 outreach activities.

- We began participating at monthly **One Stop Shops** (onestopcville.org). These community events are held at Carver Recreational Center monthly from 12 pm to 3 pm. They bring together service providers of all types to connect individuals who are returning to the community from incarceration with critical resources.
- We were honored to participate in the **Grace Episcopal Farm Tour** as an outreach partner.
- We launched a **Community Pantry** (see photo) with generous contributions from **Zion Union Baptist Church** and ongoing donations from board and community members. Our goal is to help all those in our community who suffer from food insecurity.



Kristina Smith (L), of Georgia's Friends, with Sharon Jones (C) & Eric Johnson (R) of Zion Union Baptist Church with Community Pantry donations.

Board of Directors

Executive Team

Charlotte Chapman, LPC
President

Laura Farrell,
Vice President

Lanie Veckman,
Treasurer

Elaine Oakey,
Secretary

Karen Turner,
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Dorothy Tompkins, MD,
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Ashley Barlow, LPC

Joanne Blakemore

Diane Brownlee

Ted Hogshire

Albe LaFavre

Annie Sartori

Tim Sims

Staff

Denise McFadden,
Executive Director

Kristina Smith,
Recovery Program
Manager

Ashley Fowler,
Manager of Operations

SPREADING JOY

We continue to be amazed by the outpouring of love and support from so many people who want to bring joy to our residents' lives. Many talented individuals have generously given of their time and expertise to lead fun, inspirational, and educational activities and workshops.

This year's Joy Projects have included haircuts by volunteer Willow Wolf, tie-dye t-shirt making, and flower bouquet creation and sunflower planting at Aisling Flower Farm. Residents visited Hogs & Kisses Animal Sanctuary and cuddled baby goats at board member Laura Farrell's farm. A planned river tubing session with two of our board members was replaced by a movie and lunch when Mother Nature had other plans.

We welcomed Mack McLellan from Simunye ("We Are One") for a meditation and self-exploration session and Eddie from @givingwordsva for instruction on basic car maintenance. Two residents participated in a equine-facilitated recovery program and all of the women gave back to the community by participating in Habitat for Humanity's Women Build event.

Life and recovery skills education included a financial planning workshop with board member Tim Sims, a discussion of career development goals with Charlottesville vice mayor Juandiego Wade, and a presentation on addiction and the brain with our founder Dorothy Tompkins, MD.

"Georgia's Friends' joy projects have given me 'happiness nuggets' that I can use as I restart my life, whether to declutter or to try to plant a flower garden", said a resident who graduated from our program this summer.



Meditation workshop with Mack McLellan.



Goat cuddling is always a crowd-pleaser!



A resident at Habitat's Women Build event.



A resident with her equine partner, Felipe.

"Once again our plans to spend a lazy Sunday afternoon tubing on the river were postponed due to high water conditions," said Karen Turner, Georgia's Friends' board member who planned the river tubing outing. "The women were good sports about the change of plans and agreed to an early movie and lunch. After seeing Mission Impossible, we all agreed that Tom Cruise needed to stop jumping off cliffs riding a motorcycle! Lunch gave us a great opportunity to share stories and laughs. I loved having a chance to hear first hand about their lives at Georgia's House."

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

It's been another busy year for Georgia's Friends! The board welcomed new leaders and said good-bye to others. It oversaw the launch of a new outreach committee and led two task forces—one to implement a diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) plan and another to research transitional living support options for our graduates. All this was in addition to providing ongoing guidance and support in the areas of personnel management, financial planning, program oversight, and strategic planning.

Once again, we want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to Page Gilliam, our retiring board president, whose many years of compassionate support have helped us provide a safe, supportive home for women in recovery. Page was our president for the past two years and board secretary for two years prior. She helped grow our faith-based community of support and strengthened many areas of our strategic plan. We will miss her presence, her leadership, and her passion for our mission.

We welcomed Charlotte Chapman, LPC, as our new president. She has served on the board for three years as a member of the program committee and as vice president. Sharing her thoughts about this new role, she said "I am honored to continue the work of all of the leaders of Georgia's Friends. I hope to contribute to the growth of our organization in meaningful ways. The board, staff, and residents are all wonderful to work with and the support we have from our volunteers and donors makes it a joy to serve on this board."

We also welcomed Laura Farrell as our new vice president. Laura began her relationship with Georgia's Friends as a volunteer. She has served on the board for the past year and chairs the outreach committee. Laura brings her passion for community partnerships and her experiences with our faith-based supporters to this new position.

Ashley Barlow, LPC, is the newest member of our board. She has extensive experience supporting women with addiction and mental health issues and is currently director of counseling at the Maxine Platzer Lynn Women's Center at UVA. On joining the board, Ashley shared that "Transitions are challenging and change is hard. Georgia's Friends provides women in recovery the safety, support, and continuity that can ease transitions and help realize change. My hope is to support the mission and the staff and, as a board member, build programming that guides women in their recovery. I feel fortunate, humbled, and appreciative for the opportunity to be a part of this amazing organization."



*Charlotte Chapman, LPC
Incoming President*



*Laura Farrell,
Incoming Vice President*



*Ashley Barlow, LPC
New Board Member*

Did You Know?

You can stay up to date with our events and activities on Facebook & Instagram!

 georgias_friends_cville

 georgiasfriends

A Simple Way to Help All Year Long

Becoming a monthly donor is a quick and easy way to support women in recovery throughout the year.

Visit georgiasfriends.org/donate or scan the QR code on the right. On the donation page, select "Show my support by making this a recurring donation"!





GEORGIA'S FRIENDS

HOPE HEALS

THE GIFT OF SERENITY & SECURITY



Volunteers from Lewinsville Presbyterian Church in McLean, Virginia, who transformed our garden.



The old fence, in serious need of upgrade.

This summer, Georgia's Friends received some very special gifts of time and talent. Some amazing volunteers, donors, and organizations helped us complete a few long-overdue projects, so we can continue providing a private and serene outdoor space for our residents.

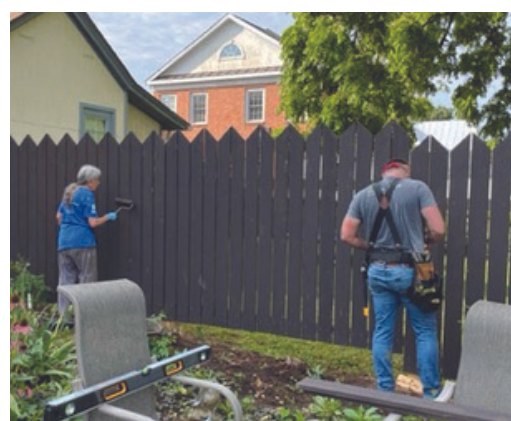
A team from Lewinsville Presbyterian in McLean cleaned out garden beds and cut back serious overgrowth. Thanks to Shana Pack at First Presbyterian Church and Rev. Layne Brubaker for coordinating! Then, volunteers from Building Goodness Foundation, Gaston & Wyatt, and Forward Financial Intelligence removed our crumbling privacy fence and designed, built, and installed a beautiful replacement, financed in part by Cville Builds. They donated all of the labor and half of the material costs. Many thanks to Kathy Garstang of BGF and Tony Witte of Gaston & Wyatt for their countless hours of coordination, planning, and hands-on work! Then, the organization 100+ Women Who Care added the finishing touch with a grant for outdoor security lighting. Special thanks to Diane Brownlee and Kathy Markos!



The fearless demolition team from Forward Financial Intelligence.



A team from Gaston & Wyatt gave up their Saturday for the build.



Volunteers put the finishing touches on the fence.



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405 RIDGE STREET • CHARLOTTESVILLE • VA 22902

Every
Gift
Matters.

Georgia's Friends brings together caring people, civic leaders, and health and human services professionals who are passionate about providing hope and healing to women in recovery. We are grateful for your interest and invite you to consider giving, volunteering, or sharing our mission with a woman in need.

Whether you donate financially or with your time, your gift makes a difference in the lives of women in recovery.



georgiasfriends.org



434.284.7817



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DONATE

Make a financial contribution to our New Beginnings Fund, donate house supplies from our Amazon Wish List, or contribute supplies for our Community Pantry.

VOLUNTEER

Lead a workshop on a life or recovery skill, share a special talent, deliver a meal, help us maintain our garden, or call us to discuss a special project you're passionate about.

SHARE

Help spread the word about our mission to help women in recovery heal and rebuild their lives.