



GEORGIA'S FRIENDS

HOPE HEALS

Dear Friends,

NEWSLETTER VOL. 4 • February, 2022

As we greet February 2022, I want to call for resounding virtual applause for our past president, Karen Turner. The fruits of Karen's vision and spirit of innovation are everywhere at Georgia's House. In 2019 and 2020, Karen oversaw a makeover of our campus with the renovation of Georgia's Cottage and garden. In 2021, she was inspired to develop the Joy Project, which provides our residents experiences that replace the highs of drugs and alcohol with the seeds of organic joy and confidence. In these and in many other ways, Karen has advanced our mission. Thank you, Karen, for your leadership!

2021 was a year of milestones for Georgia's Friends. We welcomed a new administrative team, and they hit the ground running. Thanks to a special group of donors we were able to pay off the balance of our mortgage, achieving a goal that but for these incredible people would have been years away. We expanded programs and developed new ones like the Joy Project, as you'll read in these pages.

Most importantly, we continue to serve recovering women who seek freedom from addiction to alcohol and drugs. Holidays can be difficult for people in recovery. In 2021, volunteers, donors, our faith partners and our wonderful staff set about "making spirits bright." Residents were so grateful for the gifts, special meals, and surprises that so many of you provided.

Women united in hope can lift one another and the whole community through the healing power of love. For Valentine's Day, I leave you with the words of a resident of Georgia's House.

"I'm happy. It's been a long time since I've been happy. Everybody loves me now. I feel like I'm loved and I'm loved HERE."

Thank you, Friends.

With gratitude,

Page Gilliam
President



Page Gilliam



Karen Turner

Graduate Profile: Christie Butterman

As the sole support for her husband and two children throughout her marriage and her 20-year career, Christie was depleted. After multiple attempts to quit drinking, she found herself out of work with her career at risk. She realized that getting sober was a life-and-death situation and she had to do whatever was necessary to survive.

Christie knew that finding a safe place to live was the key to healing, but with no source of income, she couldn't afford an apartment. That's when she turned to Georgia's House. Here she found an environment that helped her break free from an unhealthy living situation. She found a supportive program focused on recovery. She built relationships with other women going through similar situations. And, she gained access to community resources that were instrumental in helping her rebuild her life—a financial counselor to help her organize her debt, a lawyer, and a counselor.

After 16 months at Georgia's House, Christie was ready for the next step: she moved into an apartment with her teenage daughter. She is supporting herself again, maintaining her health, and pursuing a career as a nurse practitioner.

Congratulations, Christie. We wish you all the best as you continue to pursue your dreams!



"Georgia's House was a life saver for me and my whole family, particularly during the pandemic. We could feel the support of the donors and volunteers. The dinners, the care packages, being remembered at the holidays when it's so hard to be away from your family. It was amazing to feel loved during the darkest moments of our lives."

A Very Special Christmas

Our hearts were warmed this holiday season with the outpouring of love and support from our community. Our faith-based partners, board members, and individual and family donors gave generously of themselves to ensure that our residents felt the warm embrace of community. Their gifts included home-cooked meals, gift cards, personalized Christmas ornaments, stockings with a variety of fun and pampering items, an ornament-making workshop, and letters to each woman with supportive words and best wishes for a bright 2022.

A special thank-you to the Neale, Cooper, and MacDonald families who not only donated gift cards and made a generous contribution to Georgia's Friends, but who also purchased a new Mac and wireless printer to help the residents with job searches, resume building, online 12- and intensive outpatient therapy meetings, and other daily technology needs.



*Christmas stockings
& gifts*



New Mac & printer



Handmade ornament



*Slippers & candy for
St. Nicholas Day*



You Make the Difference!

In 2021, Georgia's Friends served 30 women in early recovery who were seeking a safe, structured, and healing environment. They depended on the generosity of the community to sustain our life-saving residence and program as more than 80% of our funding comes from individuals like you.

Please consider making a donation today—every contribution makes a difference in the lives of women suffering from addiction and gives them new hope for a happy, healthy, and productive future.

Or, volunteer at Georgia's House! Do you have special skills or interests you'd like to share? We can always use help and are currently in need of someone who can help us get the word out through social media and our web site. **Call us today at 434-284-7817 to discuss volunteer opportunities!**

Please use the enclosed donation envelope to make a contribution and help provide ongoing support for the women of Georgia's House.

News from the Board

In September 2021 we held our annual meeting where we reviewed our strategic plan, budget, staffing needs, and board of directors' needs. Our revised strategic plan includes some exciting new initiatives: enhancing case management and resources for our residents to help with stronger transitions; the Joy Project (see details in article below); and increasing our efforts of inclusiveness. We also welcomed new board members Joanne Blakemore and Lanie Veckman.

Joanne shares why she was interested in becoming a board member: "I was introduced to Georgia's Friends several years ago and provided Sunday dinners to the residents. Watching the progress made by the women was wonderful. Even more so are the programs that have been instituted for helping women in recovery. It is truly a wonderful organization and I am so proud to be a part of Georgia's Friends."

When asked about her interest in joining the board, Lanie replied: "I believe that raising women up can lift entire communities. Georgia's House is a safe place for women to begin to rebuild their lives after the pains of addiction and become a strong force for good. I am lucky enough to be among a small but mighty group supporting these women on their journey".

At our annual meeting we also strengthened our committee structure. Each board member serves on several committees. We include staff, residents, alumni, and community members on all of our committees. This helps us gain different perspectives and ensures we have input from the people we want to serve.

More excitement! In 2022 we established the new Faith-Based Initiative committee. This is in response to the very generous volunteer offers and donations that have come from many different places of worship. In addition, they frequently ask us for programs to educate their members about Georgia's Friends. With this new committee, we are better able to work in an organized way with these wonderful community partners.



Joanne Blakemore



Lanie Veckman

To read about all of our mighty board members, visit georgiasfriends.org/leadership.



Kumud Vanderveer (center) with two residents who participated in Kumud's Bollywood Fitness class.

Finding Joy in Recovery

In 2021, Georgia's Friends introduced the Joy Project, a holistic program of activities and learning that supports our residents' recovery journeys. The Joy Project offers positive, healthy activities that help the women rebuild an organic sense of joy, purpose, and well-being. Its goal is to fill the void created when our residents remove drugs and alcohol from their lives.

Activities to date have included equine-focused recovery, trauma-informed yoga, meditation, Bollywood Fitness, hiking, kayaking, and therapeutic horticulture. Initial resident response to this program has been extremely positive, with feedback like...

"This had a positive impact on my recovery because relationships are what I need to work on the most."

"No one wanted to be around me when I was getting high. But Maggie [a therapy horse] wants to be around me."

"The best meditations are out there in nature."

In 2022, we plan to expand upon the Joy Project with new programs and activities!



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WALK A MILE IN THEIR SHOES

November 6th 2021 introduced our fall annual event: Walk a Mile in Their Shoes. Held at a mountaintop home in Afton, clear blue skies and a group of 65 motivated hikers and supporters set the stage for a successful inaugural event.

Educational signage lining the hiking path presented facts and statistics related to addiction, recovery, and Georgia's Friends' program. Hikers were dazzled by the view while being enlightened by the staggering information laid forth.

Post hike, a robust country pancake breakfast was served in the dining room, great hall and living room beside warm fires,

while original music was played by performer Lily Bechtel. Guests enjoyed hot coffee, beautiful flowers, and the unique setting while learning about the trials of addiction and recovery. Graduates from Georgia's House spoke to the crowd about their journeys living the recovery program so unique to Georgia's Friends. The future of our organization was strengthened by this gathering of friends, old and new, supporting women in need.

Stay in touch as we make plans for our fall 2022 Walk a Mile in Their shoes event.



One of the educational signs lining the one-mile walk



Alum Andrea Carter shares her story



A stunning view for our inaugural fundraiser

With Gratitude . . .

There are so many people who help us day in and day out to support the women of Georgia's House. These are just some of the individuals who've helped us accomplish great things in 2021!


- **Kimberly Popovsky**, who leads yoga for our residents once a week.
- **Martha Ballenger, Oz Staley, Nancy Gordon, Lisa Drake, Annie Sartori, and Elaine Oakey**, who provide our residents with transportation to equine therapy and appointments.
- **Brian Mulcahy**, who takes Georgia's House recycling to McIntire Recycling Center every week.
- **Marcia Wilds**, a volunteer since 2018, who helps us with critical data entry and office work.
- **Corbin Harrison**, a volunteer from MVMNT Church, who has helped us with carpentry projects, painted donated beds, and created handmade Christmas ornaments for our residents.
- **Kumud Vanderveer**, who has led residents in yoga and Bollywood Fitness.
- **Gail Todter**, of Integrated Health & Horsemanship, who creates beautiful healing environments that nurture our residents in their equine therapy journeys.

Volunteer Spotlight: MVMNT Church

Who shows up at your house on the hottest day in July to pull weeds and shovel 3,000 pounds of gravel? The team from MVMNT Church, that's who!

Who arrives all-smiles on a 32-degree January day to clear storm debris? MVMNT Church, of course!

MVMNT Church started sending volunteers to do yard work at Georgia's Friends as part of their mission to "build stronger relationships with organizations that align with our values of Hope, Love, and Faith," says Conner Brew, a former Marine and coordinator of MVMNT's SERVE team. "We got plugged in to Georgia's Friends because we believe so strongly in the importance of grace and second chances, and the work that Georgia's Friends does for our community is such an awesome expression of grace!"

MVMNT has expanded from groundskeeping to the culinary arts, bringing Sunday night supper to Georgia's House twice a month. MVMNT Church, you are wonderful and we are so grateful for your ministry! 



Justin Lloyd and Connor Brew of MVMNT Church with our Georgia's Friends' founder Dorothy Tompkins and her husband Bill, finishing up January storm cleanup!



Georgia's Friends is a Cville Safe Space.

In 2021, Cville Pride led training for our staff that qualifies Georgia's Friends as a "Cville SafeSpace". The training familiarized us with terminology and concepts of sexual orientation and gender identity. Our goal is to help all visitors feel welcome and safe.

Board of Directors

Executive Team

Page Gilliam,
President

Charlotte Chapman, LPC,
Vice President

Gerri Carr, CPA,
Treasurer

Elaine Oakey,
Secretary

Karen Turner,
Past President

Dorothy Tompkins, MD,
Founder & Past President

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Joanne Blakemore

Diane Brownlee

Ted Hogshire

Val Newcomb

Annie Sartori

Tim Sims

Lanie Veckman



Staff

Denise McFadden,
Executive Director

Laura Pettit, QMHP,
Program Director

Celeste Goodman,
Manager of Operations

Wanda Smith,
Evening Monitor

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HOPE HEALS

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Celebrating Our Residents, Volunteers, & a Fullfilling Year!



Clockwise from left: Members of MVMNT Church's Serve Team with Georgia's House residents and staff; a resident with her equine partner Teva at equine therapy; Cleo, our therapy cat, helps staff surprise the residents with chocolates and slippers for St. Nicholas Day.