



GEORGIA'S FRIENDS

HOPE HEALS

405 RIDGE STREET • CHARLOTTESVILLE • VA 22902

*Welcome to Georgia's Friends' Spring Newsletter!
Look inside to learn how you can continue to help women in recovery
find hope and healing and begin building new lives.*



Georgia's House residents enjoy an acrylic art class at Phaeton Gallery in Charlottesville.



GEORGIA'S FRIENDS

HOPE HEALS

NEWSLETTER VOL. 8 • SPRING 2024

Dear Friends,

2023 was a year of growth and discovery and all of us at Georgia's Friends are looking forward to building on that progress in 2024. Last year we served 21 women, celebrated four graduations, and made many enhancements to our program. We shared joys, sorrows, and incredible accomplishments. And, we said goodbye to Ashley Fowler who had served as operations manager since 2022. We wish her well in her next chapter and are thankful for her many contributions to Georgia's Friends.

We're looking forward to what 2024 will bring as we continue to focus on building out the programs we expanded in 2023, which include:

- **Diversity** – We're currently wrapping up a pilot diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) program led by Selena Cozart, PhD, in which several staff and board members are gaining valuable insight into ourselves and others through DEIB learning and discussion. We plan to use what we learn in this pilot program to develop and roll out DEIB programs to our board, staff, and residents in the coming year.
- **Transitional Living Services** – We will continue defining ways to support women who are ready to graduate from Georgia's House but who could still benefit from a modified level of peer and financial support.
- **Community Pantry** – We will continue hosting our community pantry on the first and third Wednesdays of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in our office at 318 Dice Street in Charlottesville. Through the pantry, we offer food, toiletries, and self-care items to vulnerable members of our community.
- **Day Programming** – In February we launched a new day programming schedule to provide additional support for women in their first 30 days of residency at Georgia's Friends. We will continue to build this program in 2024. Day programming requires significant community and staff support and we thank all of you who have reached out to selflessly offer your talents and skills.

We couldn't do this work without you. All of you – our supporters, donors, and volunteers – give the women we serve the space to focus on their recovery and rebuild their lives. 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!

With gratitude,

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



 georgiasfriends.org

 434.284.7817

 [georgias_friends_cville](https://www.instagram.com/georgias_friends_cville)

 [georgiasfriends](https://www.facebook.com/georgiasfriends)



DONATE

Make a financial contribution to our Fresh Start Fund, donate house supplies from our Amazon Wish List, or contribute supplies to 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.

ALUMNAE PROFILE

We would like to congratulate and thank two alumnae, Gilie and Lauren, for sharing their life experiences and strength in recovery with supporters at our third-annual Walk a Mile In Their Shoes fundraiser last November. Both bravely shared what led them to seek out Georgia's House and the ways in which the supportive, healing environment and peer support they found here helped them heal and rebuild their lives. Gilie is currently a registered nurse and Lauren is the associate chief medical officer at a local therapeutic technology organization.

Both continue to give back to Georgia's House and Georgia's Friends by volunteering, participating on committees, and offering support to current residents and alumnae. Congratulations to both Gilie and Lauren for their accomplishments and hard work — and for inspiring other women in recovery!

"Georgia's House saved my life."

"Georgia's House provided me with the perfect opportunity to transition back into society."



Gilie



Lauren



Supporters of Georgia's Friends at the Walk a Mile event.



WE HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE TO THANK!



We wish we had room to thank everyone individually, but please know we appreciate everyone who provides hands-on or financial support to help the women of Georgia's House.

On the left are Eddie Brown of Giving Words with Kristina Smith, our recovery program manager. On the right is the amazing team from UVA Imaging who helped out during the 2023 United Way Day of Caring!

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

At the Georgia's Friends annual board meeting in November, we reviewed our strategic plan, welcomed new board members and officers, and participated in continuing education to better understand the needs, challenges, and experiences of the women we serve. Board members Ted Hogshire and Albe LaFave led the educational component with guest Christie Cash, coordinator for the Charlottesville/Albemarle Drug Treatment Court. They gave an overview of the local court system to give us insight into some residents' experiences with the criminal justice system.

Welcome!

We're pleased to welcome four new board members in 2024:

Louise Gilliam, associate director for leasing at UVA, brings extensive financial and legal experience to the board. She holds a BA from Sweet Briar College and a certificate from the National Center for Paralegal Training. Louise has been a supporter of Georgia's Friends for many years and we're glad to welcome her to our executive committee as treasurer and chair of our finance committee.

Robert Gray is a social entrepreneur who has worked extensively with justice-involved youth and organizations dedicated to educating and empowering all people socially, economically, and politically. He holds a BA in political science from St. Augustine's University and is the executive director of The Uhuru Foundation. He will share his expertise as a member of Georgia's Friends' program committee.

Kathy Murphy has more than 30 years of financial experience in technology and venture capital sectors including 18 years as CFO of early stage and public software companies. She joins our finance committee where her knowledge of financial management best practices will be a great asset to the organization. Kathy holds an MBA from the University of California at Berkeley and a BS from Georgetown University.

Brooke Spencer is a design professional who has owned and managed several businesses and served on a variety of nonprofit boards. She has created public and private gardens and restored historic homes in Virginia, D.C., and Maryland. Brooke holds philosophy and history degrees from Sweet Briar College. She joins our finance committee and will co-chair our development committee, where she'll provide leadership for our 2024 Walk A Mile fundraiser.

Farewell but not good-bye...

At our meeting we also thanked two board members who finished their terms of office. We said farewell, but not good-bye, as both are continuing to support the organization and our mission.

Tim Sims joined the board in 2019 and has supported our residents and organization in many ways. He served on the finance committee, providing critical leadership that helped maintain our financial security and we appreciate that Tim is continuing to serve as a community representative on our finance committee. "As a board member, I've had the opportunity to interact with residents who brought me as much joy as I felt in being a small part of their recovery," said Tim. "My sincerest thanks to Dr. Dorothy Tompkins and board members who introduced me and invited me to join Georgia's Friends."

Lanie Veckman has volunteered with Georgia's Friends for several years and joined the board in 2021. She's provided support and guidance for our Walk A Mile events and served as treasurer for two years, providing critical leadership in enhancing our financial reporting processes. She was an advocate for staff benefits and was instrumental in implementing a health reimbursement plan for employees in 2023. Lanie says "Georgia's House is a safe place for women to begin rebuilding their lives and become a strong force for good. I am lucky to be among a small but mighty group supporting these women on their journeys."

Heartfelt thanks to Lanie and Tim from the board, residents, and staff of Georgia's Friends.

Our organization is off to a great start in 2024. To read about all of our board members, please visit our website at georgiasfriends.org/leadership.

In hope & healing,
Charlotte Chapman, LPC
President



GEORGIA'S FRIENDS

HOPE HEALS

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT



Above: A wreath-making workshop led by Daisa of We Grow.



We are humbled by the outpouring of love and support the community has shown our residents by leading life skills workshops and Joy Projects in the past year. In late 2023 and early 2024 our residents participated in a variety of fun and educational workshops that included holiday gingerbread house and pumpkin-carving contests; vision boards with Mercedes, our peer navigator; and yoga with Ayanna Hall and Amy Epp. They baked and decorated cupcakes at Cakes by Rachel in Crozet and learned about basic car care with Eddie Brown of Giving Words.

A highlight of 2023 was an acrylic painting class and reception at Phaeton Gallery in Charlottesville which was generously hosted by Lisa Hogan and Cate West Zahl with the assistance of board member Karen Turner. Even the residents who felt insecure about their art skills came away feeling accomplished, appreciated, and celebrated. The women also participated in a workshop at the Glass Palette where they created beautiful stained-glass art.

There are so many others to thank for their contributions to our residents' personal and professional enrichment, including Mack McLellan, Monica Cates-Rosko, Juandiego Wade, Frank Squillace, Jane DeSimone Dittmar, Alison Webb, Amina Stevens, Albe LaFave, Willow Wolf, We Grow, Jamie of Picasso Swig, and so many more! We will continue to highlight them in future newsletters.

Above and below left: Acrylic painting workshop at Phaeton Gallery.

Below: Stained-glass art workshop at the Glass Palette.



THEIR TIME TO SHINE

In 2023, we celebrated with four women who graduated from Georgia's House and moved on to independent living. We are thankful for the trust, love, and support they shared with their fellow residents and staff during their time here and for their commitment to being role models for others in the local recovery community.

Graduation ceremonies are a celebration of hope and have grown to incorporate several meaningful and fun traditions. At each ceremony, the residents and staff share dinner and then participate in a rose exchange where each resident presents the graduate with a flower and shares memories and wishes for the next phase of her journey. The graduate then places a commemorative stone in the Georgia's House garden. The stone has been created specifically for her and contains a quote or a saying that she has chosen to honor her journey. The evening ends with a piñata celebration to mark the frustrations and joys of recovery!

"I never felt that I had the right to an opinion or feelings before I came to Georgia's House. You made me feel loved and heard for the first time ever." - A resident

Congratulations to all the women who've graduated since Georgia's Friends first opened its doors in 2015. We wish you all continued success in your new lives.



HOLIDAY LOVE

Once again, our community of supporters went above and beyond this Christmas season to make sure our residents felt loved and appreciated. Holidays can be difficult for women who might not be able to celebrate with loved ones, so our volunteers send self-care gifts, thoughtful cards, meals, and gift certificates.

This year, the residents also hosted a white elephant gift exchange to express their appreciation and support for each other.

We are so thankful for the many supporters who generously donated their time or financial resources to support the women of Georgia's House during the holidays.



Board of Directors

Executive Team

Charlotte Chapman, LPC
President

Laura Farrell,
Vice President

Louise Gilliam,
Treasurer

Elaine Oakey,
Secretary

Karen Turner,
Past President

Dorothy Tompkins, MD,
Founder & Past President

Board Members

Tom Albro
Ashley Barlow, LPC
Joanne Blakemore
Diane Brownlee
Robert Gray
Ted Hogshire
Albe LaFave
Kathy Murphy
Annie Sartori
Brooke Spencer

Staff

Denise McFadden,
Executive Director

Kristina Smith,
Recovery Program
Manager