



# Resilient SWGA 2022 Annual Report

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Completed by:  
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## About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants

***This section has been completed for you.***

[Resilient Georgia](#) has been working with 16 regions across Georgia to provide an emphasis on trauma-informed awareness and care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and child sexual abuse prevention training as a basis to transform systems and procedures crossing both public and private sectors.

- Resilient Georgia serves as a supportive and guiding resource during each region's planning and implementation process.
- These regional action plans each address the behavioral health needs of individuals birth through 26 years old and families in the community and surrounding counties using the Collective Impact framework (a diverse, robust and well-planned public-private partnership).
- Trauma-Informed Care, ACEs and child sexual abuse prevention can be the basis for systemic changes in a community. Each region has identified how one or more of these content areas are delivered to diverse community members through formal training, education, marketing and communications.
- Round 1 grants were awarded in Nov 2019 to regional coalitions based out of Athens, Augusta, Macon, Savannah and surrounding areas. Round 2 grants were awarded in July 2020 to regional coalitions based out of Albany, Columbus, Rome, Thomasville and surrounding areas. Round 3 grants were awarded in March 2021 to regional coalitions based out of Clayton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Valdosta and surrounding areas. Round 4 funding was awarded in December 2021 to regional coalitions based out of Atlanta, Brunswick, Gainesville, and Waycross and the surrounding areas.

## Coalition Mission

The Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA coalition focuses on seeking community partners and youth serving organizations that benefit from Youth Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Care trainings. Our mission with these trainings will help communities and organizations to identify and prevent at-risk situations that children may face, create a more trauma-informed community to engage with children who may have experienced trauma, while also raising awareness on children's mental health and identifying local resources.

Visit our website to learn more at <https://www.vashti.org/training-opportunities/> and follow us on Facebook ([@vashticenter](#)) and Instagram ([@vashticenter](#)).



## Summary

The Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA focuses on its evidence-based coalition efforts in the rural counties in our region, with targeted populations including:

- Foster Parents & Families
- School Systems
- Faith-Based Programs
- Local Non-Profits
- Other Youth-Serving Organizations

The coalition, among other efforts, holds trainings on the effects of trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Youth Mental Health First Aid, Child Abuse Prevention & Resiliency. Our coalition includes partnerships with Adoptive & Foster Parents Association of Georgia (AFPAG), Williams Family Foundation, Colquitt County Schools Systems, SWGA RESA, Thomas University School of Social Work, Southern Regional Technical College, Thomas County Resource Center, and the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy.

## Leadership Team and Contributors

### **Elijah Miranda**

Executive Director for Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA Coalition

### **Alex English**

Training & Development Manager for Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA Coalition

### **Sonia Vick**

Program Officer for the Williams Family Foundation

### **Dr. Irma Townsend**

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services for Colquitt County School System

### **Debra Gresham, PhD**

Former Associate Professor and Program Director of Social Work for Thomas University

### **Brenda Greene**

Deputy Health Director of South West Health District (DPH)

### **Sharon Maxwell-Ferguson, PhD**

Former Professor of Social Work for Florida State University

### **Tammie Patterson**

Director of Student Services for Brooks County School System

### **Chris Newman, PharmD**

Vice President of Clinical Service for Archbold Medical Center



## Coalition Partners

**\*\*update list and then include a graphic with partner logos\*\***

**Public:** Mitchell County Family Connections, Colquitt County Family Connections, Thomas County Family Connections, Never Lost (CASA)

**Private:** Williams Family Foundation

**Academic:** Colquitt County Schools, Early County Schools, Calhoun County Schools, Thomasville University School of Social Work, PCOM (Moultrie Campus), Southwest Georgia RESA

**Community organizations:** Thomasville Community Resource Center, Boys & Girls Club of Thomasville, FCA, Young Life, SWGA Community Action Council

**Non-profits:** Hands & Hearts for Horses, Open Door Adoption Agency, Joshua's Place

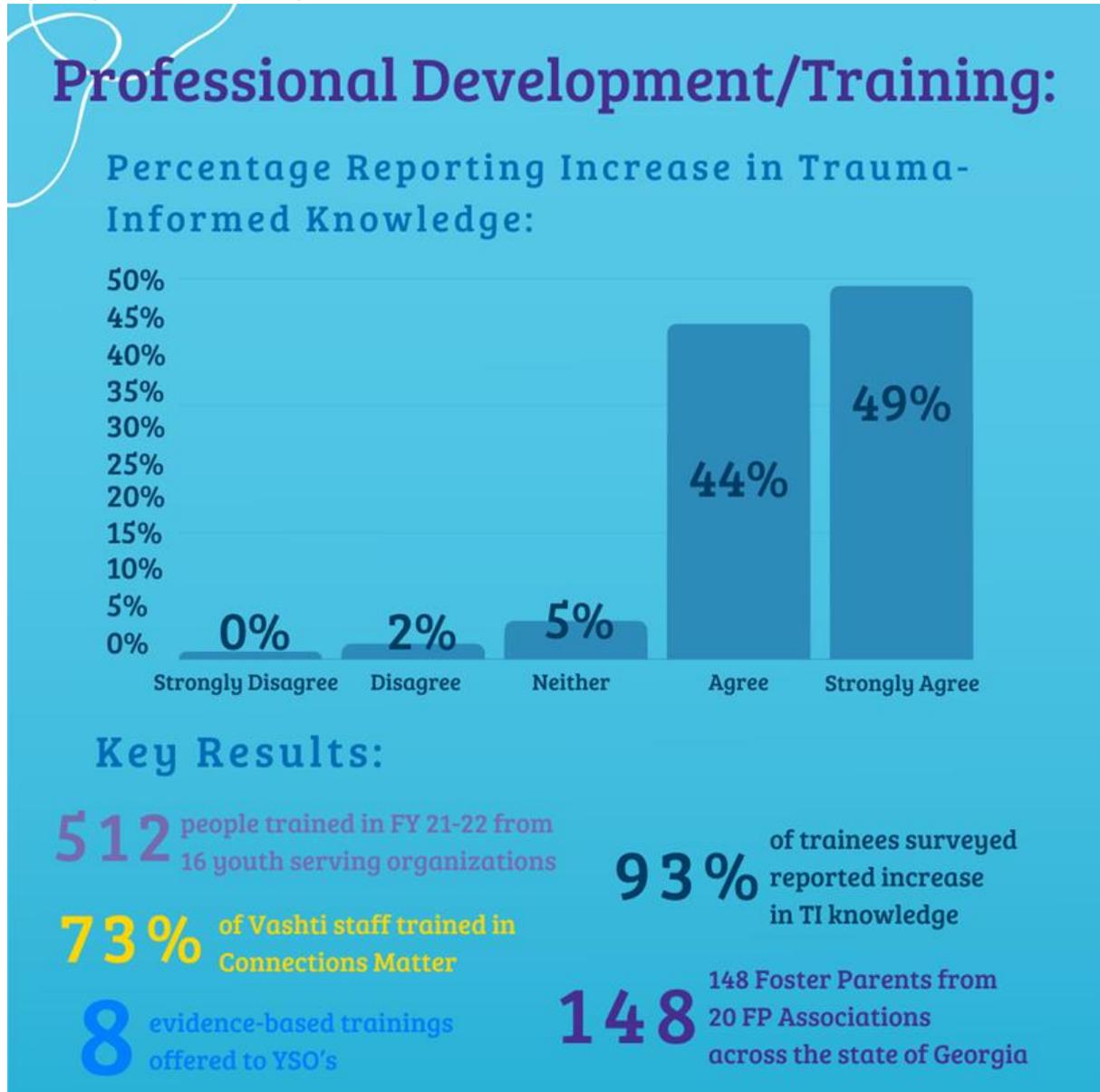
**Healthcare:** DBHDD, Dental Associates of Southwest Georgia

**Housing and food shelters:** Halcyon Home, Serenity House

**Other partners:** AFPAG, Foster Parent Associations for Thomas County, Colquitt County, Decatur County & Grady County, Kiwanis Club of Grady County, Rotary Club of Cairo



## Key Impacts/Accomplishments



✓ In February 2022, Vashti/Resilient SWGA presented at the Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG) annual conference in Jekyll Island, which hosts Foster Parents from all over the state. Over the 2-day conference we facilitated two trainings on the following topic, ***“Adding Tools to Your Toolbox: Trauma-Informed Practices and Trainings for Foster Parents.”***

- The workshop focused on the value of trauma informed care trainings, the work of Resilient Georgia, and a deep dive into the Strengthening Families framework on the Five Protective Factors.



- Two workshops were done and over 120 foster parents and child welfare employees attended the sessions.
- Vashti/Resilient SWGA will be presenting again at the 2023 AFPAG conference as a result of the positive response.



### Children's Mental Health Awareness month efforts in May 2022 included:

- A significant social media campaign through Instagram and Facebook which included relevant statistics, self-care messages, and other positive mental health posts
- Expansion of awareness raising efforts outside of just Thomasville, and placed over 350 green bows on downtown benches to also include: Bainbridge, Cairo, and Pelham.
- On May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Vashti/Resilient SWGA set out to break a **Guinness World Record** for **"Largest Group of People Dressed as a Butterfly."** The goal was to beat the current record of **367 people**. Over a 3-month planning period, we used many platforms to market this event using our social media, created flyers and passed them out to local businesses around town, spoke at local civic club events, and put out press releases to local newspapers and news channels. On the day of the event, the weather stymied our turnout, as we fell short of the goal number, and **we ended the day at 330 attendees**. While it was not a successful Guinness World Record Breaking Event it was a successful awareness raising event. The Mayor of Thomasville was present and read a proclamation highlighting the importance of Children's Mental Health and declaring it Vashti Day. The event was covered by two local television stations, and it was also on the front page of the Thomasville Times Enterprise newspaper. Interest in a 2023 event has already begun and we have begun the initial planning for it.







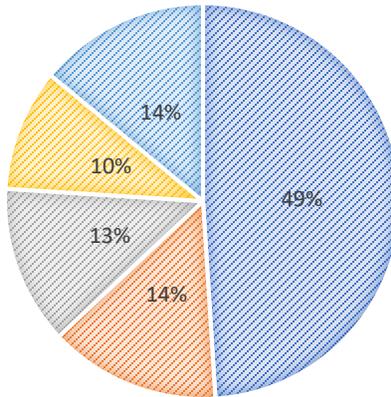
## Description of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood

TIC/ACES Services – General (optional)

One of the areas of focus of Vashti/Resilient SWGA is to advocate for more trauma-informed language and services in our region. Our work hopes to normalize children and families seeking assistance for behavioral health services and help destigmatize mental health in Southwest Georgia. A few different ways we are advocating is by leading workshops for different community groups, as well as planning and participating in awareness month activities for children’s mental health. During year two, we have added additional trainings to include teen Mental Health First Aid, and TBRI.

### ORGANIZATIONS/GROUPS REPRESENTED IN TRAININGS

■ Youth Serving ■ Education ■ Faith-Based ■ Foster Parents ■ Parents




**VASHTI CENTER**  
for children and families

The National Maternal Mental Health Hotline can help.  
Call or text 1-833-9-HELP4MOMS (1-833-943-5746).  
TTY users can use a preferred relay service or dial 711 and then 1-833-943-5746.




Training Spotlight:  
Connections Matter





### Prevention/Intervention

Prevention is a major component of our initiative as we aim to educate rural Southwest Georgia on the many health disparities that exist in this region. By educating different sectors of the community on the issues that exist as well as the resources available our initiative hopes to address these issues. We also use social media to educate the community and our followers on significant events, relevant awareness months, and ways to advocate during awareness months.

***Vashti/Resilient SWGA hosted our first documentary screening, inviting community members to join in on the conversation with mental health professionals from our school systems, Thomasville University's School of Social Work, and Vashti Center.***

***Vashti/Resilient SWGA attended the following community events/conferences:***

- *Imagine Thomasville Job Seekers Event*
- *AFPAG Annual Conference*
- *United Methodist Church Annual Conference*



***Vashti/Resilient SWGA provided ACEs and Behavioral Health Education workshops to the following groups:***

- *Rotary Club of Camilla*
- *Rotary Club of Pelham*
- *Thomasville Kiwanis Club*
- *Kiwanis Club of Cairo*
- *Albany Exchange Club*
- *Southwest Georgia RESA/Wraparound Collaborative*
- *Mitchell County Family Connections Collaborative*
- *Colquitt County Family Connections Collaborative*
- *Resiliency Clubhouse Parents & Caregivers*



A blue rectangular graphic with white and green text and icons. At the top right is a green number '6'. In the center, it says "COMMUNITY IMPACT" and "May 2022". Below that is the title "Children's Mental Health Awareness Month" in a cursive font. A ribbon icon is followed by the text "Over 350 Mental Health Awareness ribbons were placed on downtown benches in four different counties in our region". Below that, it says "May 6th, 2022:" followed by "Vashti/Resilient SWGA set out to break a Guinness world record for 'Largest Group of People Dressed as a Butterfly' bringing together over 300 people from our community to raise awareness and end stigma around children's mental health". A green ribbon icon is on the left and a butterfly icon is on the right.

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**  
**May 2022**

*Children's Mental Health Awareness Month*

 **Over 350 Mental Health Awareness ribbons were placed on downtown benches in four different counties in our region**

**May 6th, 2022:**  
**Vashti/Resilient SWGA set out to break a Guinness world record for "Largest Group of People Dressed as a Butterfly" bringing together over 300 people from our community to raise awareness and end stigma around children's mental health**



**Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA** is actively working with:

- Region 10 Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Planning group (CANPP) of PCA Georgia to implement a prevention plan focused on working with school personnel and families to become more trauma-informed.
- Partnering with Grady county to continue to provide resources, and connect the county to different resources. Vashti participated in the Mental Health Awareness Resource event on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022 in Cairo along with other community partners.
- Partnering with organizations such as Georgia Center for Child Advocacy and the Child Welfare Training Collaborative from Georgia State University throughout the year on the professional learning opportunities they provide us with, but also partnering together during prevention/awareness month campaigns to market for one another. For example, we marketed their "Prevention Palooza" training series held during Child Abuse Prevention month in April 2022. **Check out our partnership video for GCCA here** → <https://vimeo.com/698760731>

Downtown Green Ribbon Initiative:

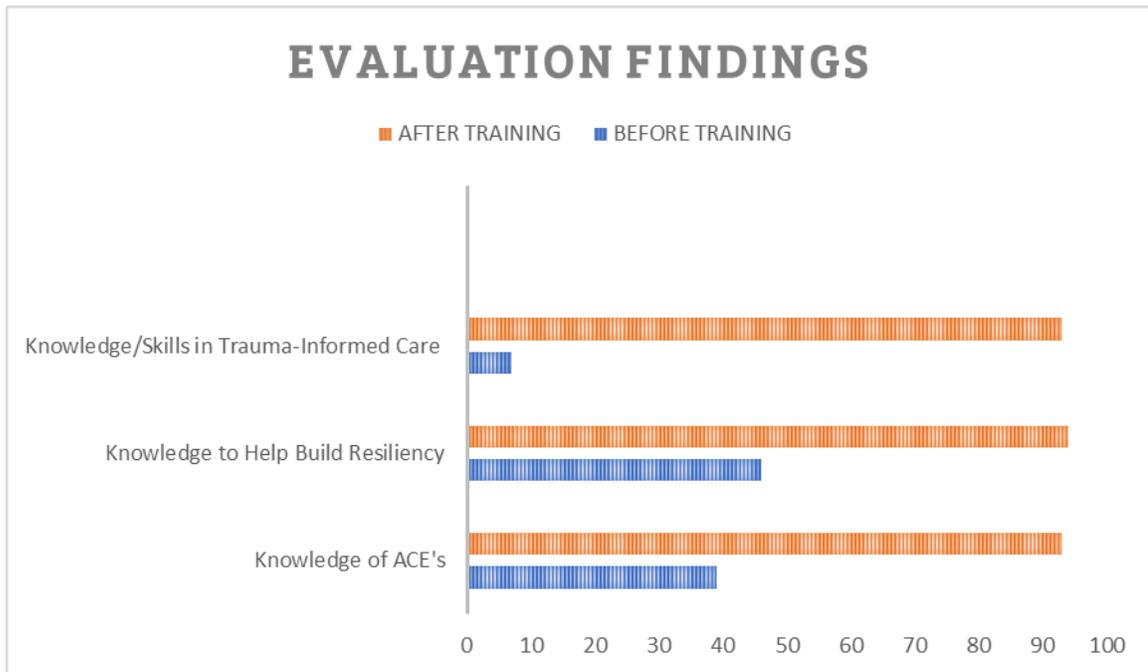




## Research

Vashti/Resilient SWGA partnered with Dr. Debra Gresham, Professor of Social Work with Thomas University. Using survey data collected from Connections Matter training evaluations Dr. Gresham analyzed the data. The following are some of the highlights:

- There was a **54%** increase in reported knowledge of the ACEs tool and the impact of ACEs on children and adults **AFTER** completing the training. (39% Before vs 93% After)
- **48%** increase in reported knowledge of resiliency and helping children develop resiliency **AFTER** completing the training. (46% before vs 94% after)
- **93%** of trainees reported either agreeing or strongly agreeing that the training prepared them with more knowledge and skills to better help individuals who had experienced trauma.





## Training

Professional learning/training continues to be our greatest focus area during the second year of our initiative. Those efforts have included identifying coalition members and potential training participants in our region. Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA also trained facilitators at the local level to help support our training efforts.

- **Connections Matter for PCOM Medical Students on July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with 6 attendees, on August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for Thomas County Boys & Girls Club with 15 attendees, on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 open to community members through our Mental Illness Awareness week efforts with 8 attendees, on November 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> with Colquitt County Schools with 35 attendees.** The sessions were led by Elijah Miranda, Executive Director, and Alex English, Training Manager from Vashti Center. The Colquitt County Schools training session was a collaborative with Dr. Irma Townsend, Assistant Superintendent of School Services, as she was leading her first training for her staff/school counselors. This is a 4-hour evidence-based training, and all were hosted in-person.
- **Stewards of Children training on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with 13 attendees from Bainbridge United Methodist Church youth leaders, on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with 43 attendees and again on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with 17 attendees with Vashti staff.** These trainings were facilitated by Amanda Messer, Chaplain and Alex English, Training Manager at the Vashti Center. This is a 2.5-hour evidence-based training, this was a mixture of virtual or in-person trainings.
- **The Child Welfare Training Collaborative (CWTC) - Differences are Good! Cultural Diversity training for Vashti staff on September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with 51 attendees, hosted in-person at Vashti.** Both sessions were led by Georgia State University CWTC facilitator, Mary Catherine Hawkins, LMSW. This opportunity was promoted to all Vashti staff. **CWTC hosted this training for Vashti staff who were unable to participate in-person, again on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for 21 attendees virtually.** This is a 3.5-hour evidence-based training.
- **Circles of Safety – Child Sex Abuse Prevention & Healthy Sexual Development training for Decatur County Foster Parents on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 for 15 attendees, and again on July**

## IMPACT

Since July of 2020  
Vashti Center/Resilient  
SWGA has trained  
more than **1,700**  
school counselors,  
foster parents, staff,  
youth, and community  
members .



**13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for 13 attendees.** This is a 2-part workshop, both were led in-person and facilitated by Alex English, Training Manager at Vashti. **On July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, Alex co-facilitated a virtual workshop with Tiffany Sawyer, Director of Prevention Services at GCCA with 4 attendees from Vashti.**

- **Addressing Self-Injurious Behaviors in Youth on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for Thomasville City Schools counselors/therapists with 16 attendees.** This workshop was facilitated by Cathy Marchant, LCSW and Clinical Director for the Vashti Center. This is an ongoing epidemic for youth in our region, and with Cathy’s 25 years of experience as the RBWO therapist at Vashti, she is a wealth of knowledge and a great resource that has helped bridge our partnership with the school system.
- **Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) training on October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 for Vashti residents with 8 attendees.** This workshop was facilitated by Elijah Miranda, Executive Director at Vashti. Attendees were between the ages of 15-18 years old. At the end of each training, the youth are required to fill out an “Exit Ticket” to let the facilitators know how everyone is feeling after going over sensitive material, as well as one thing they learned from the training. Here are some direct quotes from the exit tickets of the Vashti youth:
  - “One thing I learned today was the suicide hotline number.”
  - “One thing I learned today was how to ask for help when I need it.”
  - “One thing I learned today was everyone is different in how they respond to their mental health issues.”
- **Connections Matter was open to community members and Vashti staff on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 with 18 attendees, and again on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022 as a part of our Mental Health Awareness month efforts with 14 attendees.** These trainings both were led in-person by Elijah Miranda, Executive Director, and Alex English, Training Manager from Vashti. **On May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Connections Matter was held virtually for Gwinnet County Coalition with 10 attendees.** This training was co-facilitated by Alex English, Training Manager, and Sandy Chavarria, Hispanic Outreach Coordinator at GCCA.
- **Circles of Safety – Child Sexual Abuse Prevention training was open to community members on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 throughout the state of Georgia as a part of GCCA’s Prevention Palooza training efforts during Child Abuse Prevention month in April, with 10 attendees.** This workshop was held virtually, and co-facilitated by Alex English, Training Manager at Vashti, and Nikki Berger, Prevention Services Manager at GCCA.
- **Kate’s Club – Three separate trainings offered that were open to the community. March 23, 2022 *Child Bereavement 101* was offered virtually and there were 18 attendants. A second training, *Grief Interventions* was done in person April 19, 2022**



and there were **19 attendees** from the community. The third training, *Grief & Family Dynamics* was held on May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022 virtually and there were **18 attendees** consisting of community and Vashti staff. The Kate's Club trainings were all incredibly well received by those in attendance. Resilient SWGA looks forward to offering an even greater variety of these trainings and collaborating further with Kate's Club.

- **Consent/The Importance of Sexual Health training on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 for the girls in Vashti's residential program with 6 attendees.** This workshop was facilitated by Alex English, Training Manager at Vashti. After the workshop, the youth were asked to take a self-assessment on what they learned using the STAR analysis. Each youth checked off they felt very confident after the course.



## Innovative Partnerships

*Reflect: What collaborations has your coalition engaged in/ partnerships has your coalition brought to the table that are pioneering/varied/unique/diverse? How have you done so, and what have been the outcomes?*

Resilient SWGA partnered with the Thomas County Chamber, the City of Thomasville, and Downtown Thomasville to organize and coordinate a children's mental health awareness event by attempting to break the GWR of "most people dressed as a butterfly"

Participants included a large number of community members, with collaborative efforts done by the chamber, local schools, as well as church pre-schools to create butterfly wings. The mayor of Thomasville read a proclamation to the participants declaring it Vashti Day and recognizing the efforts to raise awareness for children's mental health and reduce mental health stigma.

Resilient SWGA organized Guinness World Record Breaking Attempt  
Thomasville Amphitheater  
May 6, 2022

Evaluation -The event was ultimately hindered by severe weather which resulted in over 330 people participating in the event but falling 30 people short of the GWR. Positive awareness effects include significant social media about the event, as well as coverage by both local TV and newspapers.

Next Steps/Future -There has already been significant interest for a May 2023 event. Initial planning has begun. Resilient SWGA hopes to capitalize on the success of the event to engage more partners and increase awareness even further.



Vashti Center invites Thomasville in attempt to break world record for mental health awareness

## Vashti Center invites Thomasville in attempt to break world record for mental health awareness

By Payton Fletcher payton.fletcher@gafnews.com Apr 30, 2022



Alexandria English and Elijah Miranda stand together in a Vashti Center office room.

### SPONSORED CONTENT



6 Strange Things Millionaires Do With Their Money, But...  
By The Penny Hoarder

ONESOURCE Global Trade

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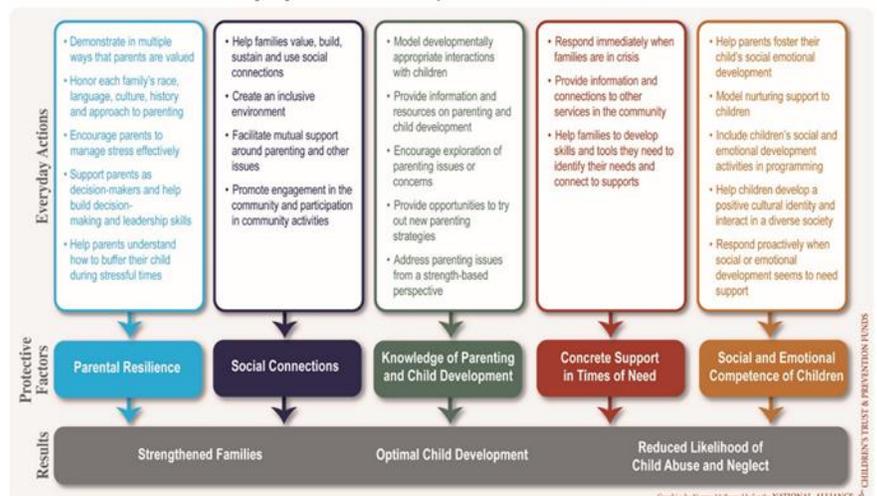
## Spotlight

- ***Our coalition has hosted many awareness campaigns throughout the year to reach our local and surrounding counties to let them know there are training opportunities and resources available to them.***
- ***This year, we are showcasing the story of Vashti Center, and our evolution of services over the past (almost) 120 years. The services we provided and continue to provide to our community and the entire state of Georgia have changed in some capacity over the years, but the need for mental health services has only increased. This outreach effort is to help educate people on our current services, and hopefully further destigmatize our programs. We would like all people to gain an understanding that the children in our lives don't have to be in the child welfare system to experience ACE's, trauma, or mental health issues. Our goal is to reach all school systems, foster parents, and other youth-serving organizations, so Southwest Georgia knows and utilizes Vashti/Resilient SWGA as resource for children and families.***
- ***Through our partnership with Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG), we were able to train 120 Foster Parents during the AFPAG annual conference on TIC, ACE's, the Strengthening Families' Five Protective Factors and how to access trainings throughout the state of Georgia.***



➔ <https://vimeo.com/732811606/7dba27d1ef>

### The Pathway to Improved Outcomes for Children and Families Everyday Actions That Help Build Protective Factors





## Inspired Action

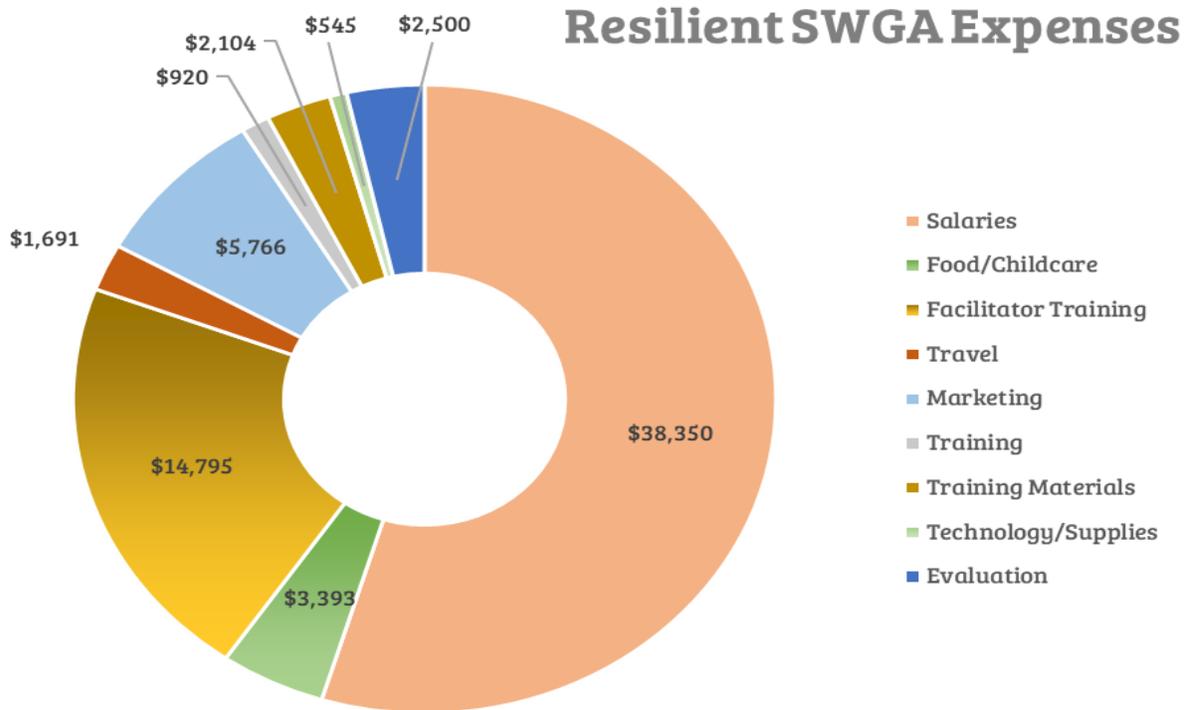
- You can join in on the Vashti/Resilient SWGA's coalition efforts by following us on social media and visiting our website →

Visit our website to learn more at <https://www.vashti.org/training-opportunities/> and follow us on Facebook ([@vashticenter](#)) and Instagram ([@vashticenter](#)).

- Other ways to support our organization is joining Vashti and our community for our 8<sup>th</sup> annual fundraiser, Dinner on the Bricks in Thomasville, GA on Saturday, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. It's a wonderful themed dinner event with music, food, and fun!



## Income and Expenses/Financials



The efforts of Resilient SWGA has allowed for the training of more than 1,700 individuals across Southwest Georgia since July 2020. The coalition has also been able to use funding from multiple sources to support our training and advocacy efforts.

### EXPENSES



<b>Salaries</b>	<b>\$38,350</b>
<b>Food/Childcare</b>	<b>\$3,393</b>
<b>Facilitator Training</b>	<b>\$14,795</b>
<b>Travel</b>	<b>\$1,690</b>
<b>Marketing</b>	<b>\$5,766</b>
<b>Training Materials</b>	<b>\$2,104</b>
<b>Technology/Office Supplies</b>	<b>\$545</b>
<b>Training</b>	<b>\$920</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b><u>\$2,500</u></b>
<b><i>TOTAL:</i></b>	<b>\$70,064</b>