

YEAR 3

Annual Report



RESILIENT
CHATTAHOOCHEE VALLEY



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About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants

[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.
- In their third year of partnership with Resilient Georgia, coalitions have bolstered their work to create bold, systemic, sustainable change in consistent ways across statewide issues, to affect policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change and incorporated a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) lens in their action plans.

Coalition Mission

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is a regional initiative that seeks to improve outcomes for children and families in the Chattahoochee Valley through the implementation of 3 equity-based strategies: Resilient Chattahoochee Valley, The Basics Chattahoochee Valley, and Community Schools United. Collectively, these strategies aim to foster a resilient community where children enter school ready to learn, are supported academically, emotionally, and socially, and graduate high school on time ready for college or career. Visit our website to learn more at www.resilientcv.org.



Summary

To fulfill our mission, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley's child-equity strategies, as well as, a cross-sector of key stakeholders and partners, work collectively to effectively address the barriers that exist for children and families in our community, preventing them from being able to thrive. United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley's child-equity strategies are outlined below:

- The Basics Chattahoochee Valley is a community-wide initiative that strives to give every child a great start in life by enhancing children's social, emotional, and cognitive development through the five Basics Principles. The Basics are: Maximize Love, Manage Stress; Talk, Sing, and Point; Count, Group, and Compare; Explore through Movement and Play; and Read and Discuss Stories.
- Community Schools United coordinates transformative services into the fabric of schools to support the whole child. By following the national strategy's four evidence-based pillars: Collaborative Leadership and Practice, Family and Community Engagement, Expanded Learning Time, and Integrated Students Supports; Community Schools United eliminates barriers to success so that every child has the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.
- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley increases knowledge and awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma, and resiliency through creating a common language and understanding around adversity; as well as, offering online, on-demand, and in person trainings that encourage local trauma-informed practices and ACEs prevention, reduction, and intervention techniques.
- Our coalition is fully committed to JEDI and continues to strengthen, expand, and support this commitment as foundational to our strategy. We continually reflect on our JEDI strategy and are intentional about how this informs our activities and partnerships. One of our five core values is Equity, and we seek to ensure that our efforts, actions, and results reflect this value across our community and all coalition activities.

Leadership Team and Contributors

Ben Moser

President and CEO, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley

Betsy Covington

President and CEO, Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley, Inc.

Jennifer St John

Chief Impact Officer, United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley



Sidney Houck

Project Coordinator, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley; Director, Community Schools United

Grace Nagel

Director, The Basics Chattahoochee Valley – left organization in May 2023

Pam Romero

Vice President, Community Schools United

Coalition Partners

Organization Name	Engaged Partner
<u>Non-Profit</u>	
2-1-1 United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley	Melinda Klamer
Boys and Girls Clubs of the Chattahoochee Valley	Rodney Close
Business Inc.	Sherricka Day
Chattahoochee Council, Boy Scouts of America	Juan Osorio
Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry	Malinda Shamburger
Columbus Alliance for Battered Women dba Hope Harbour	Lindsey Reis
Columbus Wellness Center	Luella Rhodes
Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley	Betsy Covington
Easterseals West Georgia	Sharon Borger
Empowered Youth of Columbus	Samantha Miller-Gurski



Enrichment Services Program, Inc./Head Start, Early Head Start	Belva Dorsey, Kelvin Thomas, Mary Jean Miller, Toccare Deberry, Sabrena Stephens
Feeding the Valley Food Bank	Frank Sheppard
Ferst Readers, Inc. of Muscogee County	Warren Steele
Georgia Center for Adolescent Power and Potential	Dion Walker-Smith
Georgia Center for Child Advocacy	Krista Gonce
Gigi's Pearls	Shameika Averett
Girls Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc.	Rick Lemyre
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers	Tricia Llewellyn Konan
Greater Columbus GA Chamber of Commerce/Columbus 2025	Tabetha Getz
Home for Good: A program of United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley	Pat Frey
Love Like Lexi Project	Andrea Mills
MercyMed of Columbus	Billy Holbrook
Men Act This Way	Keith Mitchell
Micah's Promise	Bobbi Starr
Open Door Community House, Inc	Kim Jenkins, Barbara Moushon
Overflo Outreach	Catosha Riley
Parents as Teachers	Tammy Keith
Pastoral Institute	Amarylis West, Laura Cardin



Prevent Child Abuse Georgia	Sarah Ren Mich
Resilient Georgia	Emily-Anne Vall
St. Anne Community Outreach	Katie Byers
The Family Center	Jay Cannon
The Salvation Army	Captain Jason Smith
Teen Advisors	Tabata Boyd
Twin Cedars Youth and Family Services, Inc.	Rosalind Alston
United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley	Ben Moser
Valley Healthcare System	Dr. Asante Hilts
YMCA of Metropolitan Columbus, GA	Chris Bryant
Youth In Action Family and Children's Services	Tae Smith
Private	
Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club of Columbus, GA	Greg West
Bradley-Turner Foundation	Jennifer Wellborn
Columbus Pediatric Associates	Dr. Donna Yeiser, Kamie Theobald
Columbus Pediatrics GA	Dr. Devica Alappan, Amy Higgins
Columbus York-Rite Men of Distinction	Nathanial Cox
DBI Broadcasting	Geniece Granville
First Baptist Church-Columbus, GA	Howie Hooper
Food Mill	Olivia Amos
New Horizons Behavioral Health	Armanda Spears
Piedmont Columbus Regional	Cary Burcham, Dr. Rebecca Reamy,



	Lea Werner, Resa Lord, Miranda Julian, Chamaine Bjornson, Melonese Close
Piedmont Physicians Pediatrics	Dawn Harbin Brown, NP (interim)
Rivertown Pediatrics	Dr. Kathryn Cheek, Dr. Susan McWhirter
St. Francis-Emory Healthcare	Pamela Steele
St. Mary's Road United Methodist Church	Lawrence Gibbs
Synovus	Lisa Lassiter
The Brain Center	Dr. Franciska Kocsner
Truist	Stephanie Johnson
Village Creed	Kermit Farmer
Public	
Chattahoochee County Family Connection	Christina Young
Chattahoochee Valley Library	Alan Harkness, Greta Browder, Christie Rudd
Clay County Family Connection	Eddie Watson
Columbus Housing Authority	Jonathan Evans, Carla Godwin
Communities In Schools	Raven Hart
Cure Violence - Columbus	Dr. Asante' Hilts, Reggie Lewis, Cedric Hill
Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice	Hermanda DeMines
Georgia Department of Public Health - West Central Health District	Kiara Loud, Dorcas Woody
Georgia Family Connection – Region 8	Michael Johnson



Harris County Family Connection	Terry Edwards
Marion County Family Connection	Chevina Phillips
Marion County School District	Cassandra Porter
Muscogee County Family Connection	Zoe' Hightower
Muscogee County School District	Dr. David Lewis, Keith Seifert, Dr. Kenya Gilmore, Courtney Lamar, Matt Bell, Meredith Adams, Kimberly Thomas, Ron Wiggins, Patricia Woodall, Kaprice Bentley Brown
Quitman County Family Connection	Sara Lee Crumbs
Stewart County Family Connection	Edwina Turner
Stewart County School District	Dr. Le Lang, Dr. Michael Robinson
Talbot County Family Connection	Dot Bass
Taylor County Family Connection	Lula Neal
Taylor County School District	Kim Yvek

Key Impacts/Accomplishments

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley Snapshot

Year Three



Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is a regional initiative that seeks to improve outcomes for children and families by aiming to foster a resilient community where children enter school ready to learn, are supported academically, emotionally and socially, and graduate high school on time ready for college or career.

Through the shared efforts of 3 child-equity strategies, support of strong community partnerships, and leadership from Resilient Georgia, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley has successfully completed year three of implementation with the following highlights to share!





Description of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)- Related Efforts

Prevention/Intervention

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley holds the belief that prevention and intervention efforts are crucial in relation to trauma-informed care and ACEs. Therefore, the shared efforts of the collaborative have extensive prevention and intervention components. Collectively, over the past year, the coalition would like to spotlight the following achievements in this space:



- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley hosted a **book club** with the goal of increasing knowledge and awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences in effort to increase our community's shared level of resiliency. To achieve this goal, members of the first book club, in April 2023, read **"I'm Glad My Mom Died" by Jeanette McCurdy**. Jeanette's memoir details the adversity she experienced in her childhood. The club read the book in two sections, participated in shared discussion with guided questions, and provided feedback to Resilient Chattahoochee Valley on their experience.
 - Guided Questions included:
 - Depending on your age, you might have grown up idealizing Jenette McCurdy, or you may have never heard of her. How did this affect your reading of the book? *Compare thoughts shared between those who knew of her and did not – or relate it to childhood actors in general.*
 - Of all of the warning signs of trauma/"red flags" in Jennette's relationship with her mom, which stood out to you? Or to you, what was the most alarming thing about Deborah's relationship with Jennette?



- McCurdy's mother's actions clearly cross the line into abuse, but when it comes to making decisions for children, the line can be blurry. How much control should parents have over their children's lives and activities? Is it always wrong to push our children, especially if they have talent but not necessarily drive?
- When you hear stories like this (and other high profile child star meltdowns from Lindsay Lohan and Brittany Spears), does it make you view young actors differently? How can you be a discerning consumer of entertainment that features minors? And what should the studios and agents be doing differently?
- When thinking of mental illness in relation to Jenette's life - there are her own struggles, and also that of her mother, boyfriend, and perhaps even her father. How did you respond to reading about it?
- Feedback on the Book Club included:
 - Please share any examples of how you were able to increase your knowledge of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through being an active participant in this book club.
 - "Reading this book helped my notice behavior that I might have thought was normal. I think it just opened up how I look at my own childhood and maybe some of the abuse I endured that I didn't know was abuse"
 - Please share any thoughts that may be used as testimonials for future book club recruitment.
 - "Great time sharing with a group of different women from different backgrounds"
 - A great way to connect with people over thought-provoking literature and how the themes impact children in our community"
 - Being able to hear the perspective of others brought out different parts of the books and shed light on different situations"
- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continued to strengthen its partnership with First Readers/Imagination Library whose mission is to strengthen communities by providing free quality books and literacy resources for children and their families. The collaborative innovated this partnership by altering the delivery method of the books to occur at our community schools to address high student mobility rates. This year, **8064 books** went into the homes of our students to build their **at home libraries**.
- The collaborative was able to reinforce supports and services within 3 Community School Resource rooms within Dorothy Height, Brewer and Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary Schools. These **resource rooms**, led by community school coordinators, are inviting spaces for students, parents, educators, and community members to access and utilize. The spaces, conveniently located inside the schools, are stocked with basic needs, social-emotional learning libraries, resource racks, calm corners, electronic stations, and academic supports



to meet the need of the whole child, their students, the school itself, and the outlying community.

- Prevention and intervention efforts within these resource rooms, across all three community schools, over the past year include:
 - **158 referrals** given to community school coordinators from school leadership in attempt to further build relationships with school families, identify root cause of the identified need, and increase access/connection to community resources for assistance.
 - **98 behavioral interventions** conducted by community school coordinators in accordance with PBIS tier two and three interventions, actively utilizing resources within the social emotional learning libraries built on site.
 - **21 home visits** initiated due to concerns related to attendance and affidavit of residency.
 - **2,204 Buddy Packs** distributed in collaboration with Feeding the Valley Food Bank. Buddy Packs, a program of Feeding the Valley Food Bank, serves children who live in food insecure homes and are likely to experience hunger and bridges the gap between the school week and the weekend when free breakfasts and lunches are not available.
 - **593 uniform separates** distributed to identified families based on need.
- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley team members are actively involved with the **City of Columbus' Juneteenth Executive Planning Committee**. The Committee is responsible for leading efforts around the Bi-City area that educate and celebrate Juneteenth as a holiday through history, music, arts, and family fun. The Executive Planning Committee is tasked with the planning, logistics, compliance, and overall operations and management of Juneteenth Jubilee sub-committees. Sub-committees range from educational programming, entertainment, vendors & resources, volunteers, marketing, sponsorships, and production. 2023 marked the 2nd Annual weeklong Juneteenth Jubilee for the region and broke record numbers of attendees and community participation. United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley received the "Community Impact" Award.
- The Basics Chattahoochee Valley continued to strengthen **The Basics Insights messaging program** through continuous encouragement of parental enrollment. The program helps parents and caregivers incorporate early childhood learning into everyday routines through text messages that relay simple, science-based tips and activities to support children's social, emotional, and cognitive development from birth through age five. Registrations for Insights Text Messaging typically increase after a parent workshop or outreach event. For instance, after the Teddy Bear Tea Party, we had six parents register for Insights messages. Combining parent engagement with prompts to sign up for text messages appears to be the most effective approach, and we are looking at ways to incorporate similar activities with other partners. Our rack cards include information about the text messages, including a QR



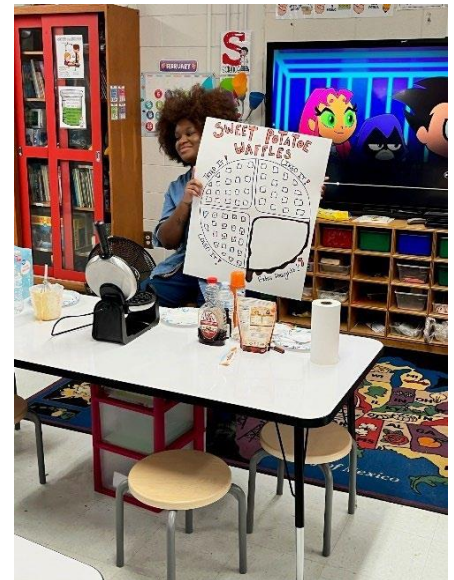
code to the signup page as well as testimonials from parents about how the texts have improved their daily activities with their children.

- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continued to strengthen and expand the creation and operation of **social emotional learning libraries** across the Chattahoochee Valley. Previously, the social emotional learning libraries were only housed in Muscogee County School District. However, the collaborative presented on this initiative at Resilient Georgia’s Annual General Meeting to 142 Resilient Georgia Partners and Stakeholders and received interest from leaders to expand this effort into Stewart County School District. This expansion aligned well with the coalition’s intentional expansion to all counties in our region. These Social Emotional Learning Libraries provide books, tools, and environmental supports within the walls of schools to help children acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, and feel and show empathy for others. Unique to the library housed at Stewart County School District, is a **JEDI shelf** as well – created based on feedback from the school’s Principal, Dr. Le Lang, and superintendent, Dr. Michael Robinson. To provide inspiration around this initiative, the collaborative created a starter list for other Resilient Georgia coalitions and partners to create their own [Social Emotional Learning Library](#).
- The collaborative’s strong leadership and expertise on Social Emotional Learning in the region led to an invitation from the Boys and Girls Club of The Chattahoochee Valley to conduct social emotional learning lessons off site at their club and within their after-school programs housed in select Community Schools. One social emotional learning lesson worth highlighting was on Naming our Emotions. The coalition, read aloud “The Color Monster” to the 3 small groups, led shared discussion, conducted a group activity where we created our own color monsters, and distributed social emotional learning bags where each student was able to take home their own version of the story, as well as activities to do with their families to continue their learning.





- The partnership between the collaborative and the **Food Mill** has not only strengthened but expanded over the past year.
 - Since last year, the partnership successfully expanded the **Farm to School program** into two more Community Schools, Dorothy Height Elementary school, and Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. This program operates with a unique take on building raised beds inside the school grounds, by also including weekly lessons to the students and garden maintenance by a trained Food Corps Service Member.
 - In addition to the expansion of the Farm to School program, the collaborative added monthly stops of the Food Mill's **Mobile Market** to a total of four Community Schools, as well as several housing communities in the surrounding neighborhoods. Customers of the Mobile Market have the ability to purchase fresh produce with cash, card or EBT points. If customers use their EBT points, they receive an additional 50% discount. Through this collaboration, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley advocated for the best time slot for the Mobile Market to stop at the school, during student dismissal so parents picking up their students can park their cars right at the school and shop while waiting for their students to be dismissed.



- Additionally, the collaborative has also strengthened the offering of **Cooking Matters Workshops**. In an effort to deepen this reach, The Food Mill has adopted the Emory University Healthy Homes, Healthy Families initiative. This is a research-tested program to promote healthy eating and prevent weight gain by creating a healthier home food environment. In conjunction with the curriculum and cooking demonstrations included with the Cooking Matters workshops, families will receive a healthy action checklist that lists eight easy changes to make at home, a tailored home environment that points out positive



aspects of the home food environment and areas for improvement, and a family contract for implementing at least three of the healthy actions listed on the checklist. This initiative tracks the family over three months and provides stipends to the family for participation.

Advocacy and Policy

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley's advocacy and policy efforts are embedded in increasing regional knowledge and awareness about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), trauma and resiliency. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley, and its shared child equity strategies' engagement would like to report on the following efforts in this space over the past year:

- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continues to operate as a lead in [Region 8's Child Abuse and Prevention Plan](#). This statewide plan outlines a vision for child and family well-being that brings equitable opportunities and necessary supports to regions around the state so that children and families may thrive in a safe, stable, connected, and nurturing community. Specifically, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley serves as a project lead and participant in increasing family mental well-being through promoting trauma-informed training for personnel in all youth-serving programs and all school personnel. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley includes all partners within the plan on training invites, and leverages relationships built through plan creation and implementation to bring these opportunities to outlying counties identified within the prevention plan.
- As shared previously, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley recognized that as violence and exposure to trauma continued to climb in our communities, it was important to play a lead role in exploring and implementing solutions that sought to alleviate negative impact on our youth. **Handle with Care** quickly rose to the top of this solutions list. Handle with Care is an evidence-based program and collaborative effort between law enforcement and schools. When a law enforcement officer encounters a child during a call, that child's name and the words, "Handle with Care" are sent to the school before the next school day. The school and affiliates are now informed and can offer individual, class, and whole-school trauma-sensitive curricula so that traumatized children are "handled with care." If the child needs more intervention, on-site trauma-focused mental healthcare is available at the school. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley has benchmarked other communities – to include a meeting with Resilient Georgia partner, Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, as well as another United Way community with history implementing Handle with Care, in addition to our collaborative's local domestic violence shelter based on their extensive knowledge on the operations of local law enforcement agencies. In attempting to further implement this systems change, the collaborative has experienced extensive roadblocks within our region. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley seeks to utilize office hours with Resilient Georgia to discuss these challenges with a goal of brainstorming various solutions as a team. The collaborative was enlightened to see Resilient Georgia poll the statewide coalition on interest in statewide implementation, as our region could use additional assistance.

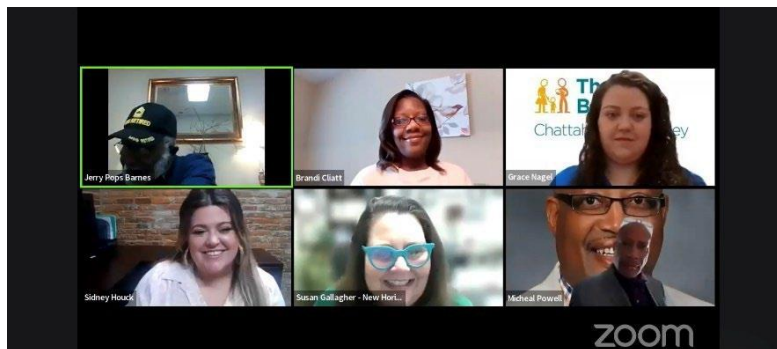


- The strategies of Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continue to be recognized at both state and national levels as leaders in the space of child well-being. Therefore, our collaborative continues to advance advocacy and policy efforts across the state related to our child-equity strategies.
 - **The Deal Center** continues to expand The Basics as its Collective Impact Grant focus to make Georgia a statewide Basics Community. The Basics Chattahoochee Valley has continued to lead this effort by providing mentorship and technical support to The Deal Center as well as to the 17 Basics Communities across the state.
 - **The Coalition of Community Schools** and **The Institute for Educational Leadership** have both issued a call to action in support of the goal of the establishment of 25,000 Community Schools nationwide by 2025. In addition to the statewide leadership role, our team members engage in leadership networks, as well as **United Way Learning Networks for Community Schools**. Pam Romero, VP, of Community Schools United was elected in June 2023 to lead this national collaborative. Leadership in this space also includes key roles in the development of two bodies of work to include: The Community Schools Guide Book: [Building A Community Schools System](#) and an enhanced framework for [Community Schools Forward](#), which places emphasis on three core strategies: Alignment, Scaling, and Building Community Schools
- Dorothy Height Elementary School is unique to the Chattahoochee Valley Region because of its **School-Based Health Center (SBHC)** operated by Valley Healthcare. This SBHC was launched in 2020 but has been underutilized due to the COVID pandemic and rigid healthcare policies in Georgia and the school district. Students and families in the community of Dorothy Height Elementary School continue to see their health needs unmet due to barriers within the healthcare system. Valley Healthcare System is working to meet these needs by providing comprehensive primary health care to these families regardless of circumstance. Valley accepts most insurances including Medicare but operates on a sliding scale for services to those who do not have insurance. The leadership at Valley knows that the School-Based health center is a way to reach many families in underserved communities. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is working with Dorothy Height School leadership and Valley Healthcare school leadership to promote policy change within the school to help promote the use of the SBHC and Valley Healthcare as their Primary Care Physician. The school is changing the referral of students who are sick at school to be sent to the SBHC instead of sent home. If a family at the school is identified as in need of health insurance, the Community School Coordinator at the school is alerted and then contacts the family to connect them to Valley Healthcare who has professionals who can walk them through the process in both English and Spanish. In working with the Valley outreach program, the Valley Healthcare team has been invited to all school events where they are able to reach the parents and families of the school. The school-based staff has also been included in staff and leadership meetings to be more informed on school policy and procedure. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley and the Valley Healthcare outreach team have also been working together to better utilize the Valley Mobile Medical Unit to meet families



and students at additional schools who do not have a School Based Health Center. The Mobile Medical Unit has made stops at Brewer Elementary School and Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School to provide families with COVID testing, school-required vaccinations, and Sports Physicals. With the help of the Community School Coordinator at each school, these stops were extremely successful in helping families who were not connected with a Primary Care Physician to get the healthcare they needed to stay in school. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continues to advocate for onboarding of additional SBHC, specifically in the surrounding rural regions, with great support from the tools passed forth by Resilient Georgia.

- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley was spotlighted on our regions local news station in honor of **Child Abuse Prevention Month**. The title of the article was “Resilient Chattahoochee Valley works towards preventing childhood abuse through education”. The link to the news broadcast can be found [here](#).
- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley presented **twice** on our work to becoming a trauma-informed region with **Columbus City Councilman Jerry “Pops” Barnes on his Facebook Live Show**. Councilman Barnes is dedicated to sharing healthcare resources, including mental health and public health initiatives, on his Facebook page. These videos gain hundreds of views over time.
 - Resilient Chattahoochee Valley & The Basics Chattahoochee Valley: March 6th
 - Community Schools United: April 6th



- In addition to the efforts outlined above, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley also continues to hold dynamic connections to the following groups that reflect further efforts in the space of advocacy and policy:
 - **Basics Learning Network:** a global network of communities who have adopted The Basics. The BLN meets monthly to learn new strategies to effectively share positive childhood experiences.
 - **Campaign for Grade Level Reading/Get Georgia Reading:** Get Georgia Reading is the state’s official Campaign for Grade Level Reading program. The Campaign is a collaborative effort that



seeks to ensure that more children in low-income families succeed in school and graduate prepared for college, a career, and active citizenship.

- **Columbus 2025:** Columbus 2025 is our community's collaborative plan to create a more competitive, prosperous region.

- **Community Action Network (CAN):** CAN is a collaborative led by the West Central Health District that seeks to bring together agencies in our region to collaborate on work related to public health.

- **Home for Good (HFG):** our community's plan to end homelessness. In collaboration with HFG, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley aims to ensure that the needs of our transient and homeless youth are met.

- **United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley Affinity Groups:** Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continues to foster the opportunity to train, partner, and/or engage with two United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley Affinity Groups: Emerging Leaders United and Women United. Emerging Leaders United is a group of young professionals who value philanthropy and have a vision of making our communities the kind place we all want to live, work, and play. Women United, is a group of dynamic women leaders who seek to mobilize the power of women to advance the common good in our community.



Research

The Resilient Chattahoochee Valley coalition continues to participate in extensive research activities to inform strategy implementation. Research over the past year to inform guide our efforts includes:

- Parent, student, and community voice** is essential to the success of the Resilient Chattahoochee Valley. To ensure voices are being heard and lifted up into practice, each Community School was assigned an electronic tool to conduct **surveys** on a consistent and continual basis. A survey frequently details 11 questions to assess the need of certain opportunities within the community. Within the surveys, participants are asked to rank the accessibility of each opportunity as extremely necessary, necessary, or unnecessary, the results are in the table below. Each opportunity was consistently ranked in the high 80 or 90th percentile as either extremely necessary or necessary. This line of questioning specifically will guide how community school coordinator chooses to implement workshops and resources at each Community School. These results are also shared with school districts and partners as new avenues are explored within collaborative leadership and practice.

Question	Extremely Necessary	Necessary	Unnecessary
Adult Education Opportunities	59	38	4
Support for your student's education	88	13	1
Employment opportunities	87	25	20
School based workshops	67	26	4
Connection to legal services	63	27	8
Connection to housing services	90	23	17
Connection to health services	100	21	12
Connection to childcare services	70	22	6
English Language Classes	74	18	5
Access to health affordable food	109	12	11
Access to transportation	102	17	10

Workshop topic	Yes	No
Parenting Workshop	13	4
Financial Education	14	3
Healthy Cooking, Healthy shopping	15	2
Job Preparedness	13	4



- In Spring 2023, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley attended a **Crime Prevention** community meeting with The Columbus Police Department and other local youth service agencies. The purpose of the meeting was to share resources and brainstorm ideas to collectively address juvenile crime prevention that continues to increase across the region. Attendees shared about the work their agencies do and some plans that they'd like to implement. The Columbus Police Department shared some outreach and engagement events that they participated in and listened to the community agencies offer suggestions. The Columbus Police Department funds several of the agencies through these grants to fight and prevent crime.
- Over the summer of 2023, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley collaborated with Shaw High School leaders to plan implementation of a **podcast** that is scripted and produced by the students as a way to lift up **student voice**. In the spirit of lifting student and youth voice, college interns working at United Way for the summer were tasked with this project. This group of college students met on several occasions on a way to present the project to the students of Shaw High School who were participating in Summer Learning. This included a projected schedule of episodes throughout the year, subject topics, and potential guest speakers. These plans were then presented to the school leaders for implementation during the school year. We are excited to work towards the production of this podcast through Shaw High School's magnet program with these youth leaders!

Training

Through training our community on PACEs, ACEs, trauma, and resiliency, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is mitigating the effects of adversity locally and increasing our region's shared level of resiliency. Over the past year, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley conducted a total



of **59 trainings & workshops** to an estimated **838 participants**. Highlights from these efforts include the following:



- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley continues to implement and expand the **Connections Matter training** opportunity in our region. Over the past year, an additional trainer was onboarded to the training team, totaling 3 trainers for Resilient Chattahoochee Valley. Collectively, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley has conducted **6 Connections Matter trainings**, with **203 trainees**. Additional Connections Matter trainings are on the calendar for the fall to include all of Stewart County School District, select schools in Muscogee County School District, and actively working on bringing this opportunity to Troup County as well.



- **The Basics Chattahoochee Valley** provides training, coaching to organizations who commit to incorporating and sharing The Basics with the families they serve. The Basics Chattahoochee Valley continues to provide training and other resources to our partners in order to achieve socioecological saturation of The Basics within our community. We continue to focus on building Basics Champions to achieve both broad and deep connections with professionals and families. Our focus has been to empower our partner organizations to share The Basics and embed it into their staff training and service delivery.



Over the past year, The Resilient Chattahoochee Valley collaborative has trained several key partners who are critical to our ongoing efforts to include the following:

- **3 staff** of The Family Center/Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Chattahoochee **Valley** who work directly in counseling and support services for families, particularly families with very young children. They also shared our rack cards and information with parents at an informational outreach to recruit more families into their services.
- **25 Family Advocates** who are employed with Enrichment Services Program to provide family support services to families who attend Head Start and Early Head Start programming and provide multigenerational support to enhance family self-sufficiency.
- **6 staff members** on the science of The Basics activities that align with the Basics Principles and how to communicate these behaviors and activities with parents at Our Lady of Lodes in conjunction with their Mother Boniface Family Literacy Program. This program targets Spanish-speaking families with young children to provide multigenerational supports, including English as a Second Language courses for the parents, parenting classes, and supervised Parent and Child Time, with the goals to increase parent-child bonding and improved English literacy to help families acquire more stable, higher-paying jobs. While this program is new and currently serves around 10 families, they expect enrollment to increase substantially in August 2023 and beyond.
- An interactive parenting workshop was held in conjunction with the Preschool classes at Brewer Elementary School. The collaborative supported a 'Valentines Day Breakfast with the Basics' for the students and their families. With direction and support from the site's community school coordinator, families of students were invited into the school to have breakfast with their students and take part in a fun interactive workshop hosted by The Basics Chattahoochee Valley. With support from the Pre-K teachers, the workshop was able to reach **35 caregivers**. The Workshop included a presentation on The Basics with a deeper dive into the first principle of the five parenting practices, Maximize Love, Manage Stress. Parents were provided strategies to use at home to implement this principle with their children, and also completed fun Valentines Day themed activities on site as a family together.
- At Dorothy Height Elementary School, a parenting workshop was strategically planned in conjunction with the school's field day – so the Resilient Chattahoochee Valley coalition could meet parents where they are. Through coordination with the site's community school coordinator, the Basics workshop was included in the rotation/schedule of events for preschool students and their families. This collaboration made the event successful; the workshop was able to connect with **10 caregivers** from the two Pre-K classes. The workshop started with an overview of the Basics and a handout of rack cards and additional resources around the Basics. To keep with the 'field day' theme, the workshop included a deep dive into the fourth parenting principle, **Explore through Movement and Play**. This included fun

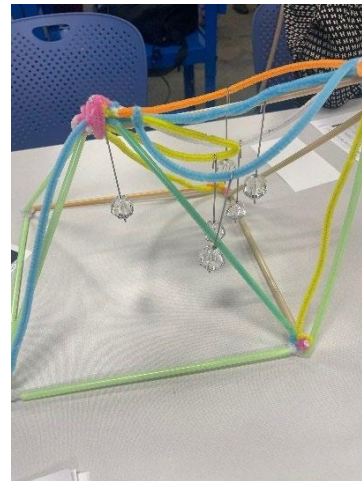
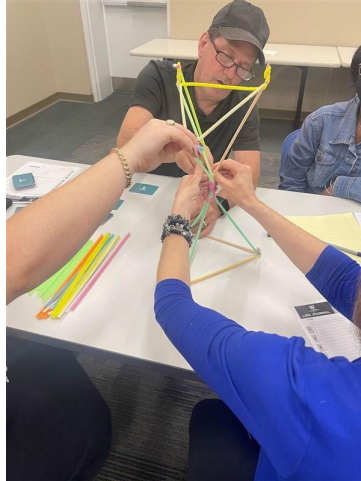


stretching and exercise activities that parents and students did together on the field and tips to continue the movement once home.

- In partnership with a local non-profit, We Have a Purpose Inc., operated by Licensed Master Social Worker Tiesha Bryant, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley was able to bring a **series of 3 parenting workshops** to the families of Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. In partnership with this Community School, those families attending the workshop were provided with childcare, transportation, and dinner to attend the workshops. Through this collaboration, the workshop reached **13 caregivers**. We Have a Purpose Inc., provides prevention and intervention services to at-risk youth and their families. The parenting workshop's overall theme was 'imperfectly perfect' and focused on a different subject each class, participants were set in a group counseling style to promote openness and vulnerability. The three subjects included Focus, Freedom, and Foundation. Within these themes, participants took personality tests with their students to discover their love language and then provided tailored parenting techniques unique to each relationship.
- During the Spring Semester at Brewer Elementary School, Safe Kids Columbus, held a car seat and booster seat giveaway. **Safe Kids Columbus** works to reduce the rate of unintentional injuries in children by providing car seats and booster seats to those in need. These giveaways include safety workshops and installation workshops. In an effort to reach all families in need of this service, Safe Kids Columbus comes to the school with a team of volunteers to weigh and measure each student in Pre-k–1st grade and provides a ticket that goes home to their family. In total just under **200 students** were provided a ticket to take advantage of this program. Once the family receives the ticket, they can take that ticket to the Safe Kids Columbus location at Piedmont Hospital to pick up a free car seat or booster seat after attending the two quick workshops. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley boosted the event held at Brewer Elementary School by working with the Community School Coordinator to identify parents who are most in need of this service and provide any support to overcome additional barriers to take advantage of this program.
- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley began offering guided sessions of the **Brain Architecture Game** to our region in February of 2023. The Brain Architecture Game is a tabletop game experience that builds understanding of the powerful role of experiences on early brain development – what promotes it, what derails it, and with what consequences for society. Participants' goal in the session is to build a brain that is as tall as possible, which represents functionality, and as sturdy as possible, which represents the ability to withstand stresses. Participant groups then work together, drawing Life Experience cards to gain materials for brain building. In the game, positive experiences earn a pipe cleaner and a straw for support. However, negative experiences only receive a pipe cleaner, but no straw. After the initial period of early childhood brain development in the game, weights must be hung from the structure of the brain when life hands out stressors. Afterward, groups use the notes in their Life Journals to discuss the experiences that strengthened, or weakened, the



architecture of their developing brains. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley will be easily able to make connections to collaborative efforts throughout the game and provide action steps to participants to remain involved after the game ends. Since February, the collaborative has hosted **3 games, to a total of 75 participants.**



- Resilient Chattahoochee Valley committed for the entire Community Schools United team up to be trained in **Stewards of Children** in June of 2023. 5 staff members completed the training which enabled those employed with United Way of the Chattahoochee Valley, working most directly with children, to learn how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

Innovative Partnerships

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is eager to present on innovative partnerships created over the past year through two micro-grants.

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley & The Food Mill/U-Grow: Georgia is an agriculturally rich state. As the fifth largest fruit and vegetable producer in the U.S., Georgia has a tremendous capacity to feed its communities. Yet many residents lack adequate access to the local food regional farms produce, as evidenced in Georgia's higher rates of 30% adult obesity and 18% who have food insecurity. The statistics are not much better in Muscogee County where Columbus, GA is the county seat: 30% of adults living in the county report obesity, 22% have poor or fair health with heart disease as a leading cause of death (20%), and it scores in the 50th percentile or higher for diabetes prevalence.

The lack of access to healthy food perpetuates the situation. According to the West Central District Health Summary Report 2019, 21% of Muscogee county residents are food insecure, in



contrast to 16% statewide. Further, 12% of Muscogee county residents report having limited access to healthy food, and Georgia Healthy Cities states that 59% of residents do not have access to food within walking distance.

In addition, in areas with high rates of diabetes and related risks, there are greater numbers of single parents with limited incomes correlating into constraints impacting healthy living, including long commutes to grocery stores with fresh food, limiting their access to healthy choices. While 12.7% of households fall below the poverty line, 32% of female-led households fall below the poverty line. As a result of the pandemic, the numbers of food insecure populations have risen and so has the percentage of those reporting having limited access to healthy food.

Simultaneously, Georgia's small to mid-sized farmers financially struggle to stay in operation, most often because they lack timely and cost-efficient methods for getting their products to market. Whether it's direct-to-consumer, retail, or institutional markets Georgia lacks some of the most basic of services—packing, aggregation, cold storage, and distribution channels that help small and mid-sized farms reach and compete for new market opportunities.

UGROW, Inc. was founded in 2017 with the goal of efficiently increasing access to locally produced healthy food for all residents of Columbus, Georgia and surrounding rural counties. UGrow, Inc. focuses on hunger and food access by building access to fresh, healthy food, supporting regional farmers, and creating access to jobs and opportunity within the food and agricultural industries. It serves as an umbrella organization for The Food Mill that supports or collaborates with several of the other organizations, harnessing resources to support their common goals and work. The Food Mill, thus, exists to eliminate barriers and identify the root causes of food insecurity in Columbus, Georgia and our rural communities. The Food Mill has built a collaborative operating model that includes an ecosystem of like-minded businesses, nonprofits, organizations, and individuals each working to address the inequities of the Columbus, Georgia and surrounding counties food system. These partners have created an informal collaborative model that examines food access, poverty and homelessness, hunger, healthcare access, nutrition and agriculture education, and job insecurity in their communities through the lens of food. Individually, these partners are working to produce programming that directly addresses each of these issues and their collaborative efforts in turn are providing fresh food, opportunity, education, and training to support long-term development and change in their community. While this is not an established structural collective, these collaborative organizations have come to recognize where their business activities intersect and overlap to the benefit of both parties involved. These intersections have yielded more formal operating partnerships defined by agreements, economic or programming arrangements, and/or shared locations.

Their collaboration combines efforts to use produce from local farmers, improves awareness around the nutrition and health implications of food, works to build a health-minded culinary



culture, creates opportunities for new food entrepreneurs from the local community, and improves food access for all members of the community. With its partners, The Food Mill seeks to reduce the burden of food insecurity for residents, improve overall health, and help in the treatment and prevention of disease.

In 2020, The Food Mill worked with a consultant to complete a plan that unified these businesses and partnership programs under one operating model. The operating model was developed from a series of conversations with stakeholders some of whom also work in the food space and that run agencies or directly share resources with The Food Mill. Using the operating model as a guide, the Food Mill identified lines of business that would support the collaborative mission to promote food and wellness in Columbus. The Food Mill is now in its third year with a positive track record in program design and implementation, strategic collaboration with other nonprofit and community-based organizations, tracking measurable outcomes with a solid funding strategy that is a unique social enterprise nonprofit model with well-matched federal, state and local grant funding in addition to private donations. This model is a more sustainable model with 60% of our operating expenses being covered by program revenue through the café, indoor and mobile farmers market sales, SNAP sales, and Healing Roots Medically Tailored Meal sales. The Food Mill's partnership with Wholesome Wave Georgia and the Georgia Fresh for Less program allows us to extend a 50% discount to SNAP recipients for fresh produce purchases to motivate individuals to make healthier choices while preserving the dignity of their shopping experience and allowing for individual choice that aligns with their taste and cultural preferences. The Food Mill also offers a 6-week long healthy cooking class through our partnership with Open Hand Atlanta to provide the nutrition education and hands on cooking class component that is needed to give participants the self-confidence needed to sustain the healthy behavior change over the long term. Providing affordable access and the education needed to understand why making healthier choices are beneficial, and how to shop and prepare food in a healthier manner are equally important components to reaching the goal of significant increase in fruit and vegetable consumption and sustained behavior modification to achieve a healthier state. The Cooking Matters curriculum is offered for adults and teens through our healthcare partners, MercyMed Columbus and Valley Healthcare, teen classes have also been conducted through our partnership with Muscogee County School District, elementary aged students and their families also have the opportunity to participate in the family classes through our farm to school program that is in partnership with Foodcorps of Georgia, Community Schools United, and Resilient Chattahoochee Valley.

Through our mobile farmers market program and partnership with Valley Healthcare, The Food Mill has started to expand its footprint into the rural communities surrounding Columbus. Valley Healthcare has a satellite location in Talbot County that offers primary care, pediatric, vision and dental services. According to the West Central Health District data for Talbot county, 54% of children are in single parent households and 29% of all children are living in poverty. Obesity disproportionately affects this community at 34% and 20% report food insecurity. The Food Mill has been implementing the mobile farmers market resource at the Columbus location



of Valley Healthcare, providing affordable access to fresh, locally grown produce that can be purchased with SNAP and provides the 50% discount incentive for produce purchases to motivate SNAP participants to make healthier choices when using their SNAP dollars. The Cooking Matters curriculum is also offered at Valley Healthcare in the expanded PRX model where patients are followed for a total of 6 months and receive a box of produce each week for 6 months. Pre-program data is collected at the first-class to evaluate outcomes on weight, blood pressure and A1c levels in addition to fruit and vegetable consumption and confidence in preparing healthy food at home. Data is collected at the end of the 6-week class and then again at the end of the 6-month program. Combining affordable access to fresh produce, nutrition education and hands-on cooking classes have shown to significantly improve our participant's overall health, increase fruit and vegetable consumption and they also have the self-confidence to replicate what they have learned in class at home. Rates of nutrition insecurity have also decreased and can be sustained through providing access to the mobile farmers market on a consistent basis after the end of the program. The Food Mill will begin to implement the PRX model of Cooking Matters in the Talbot County location of Valley Healthcare in addition to the mobile farmers market that was implemented in July of 2023. The mobile market will be used to conduct taste testing utilizing the produce that is in season and provide healthy recipe ideas that are simple to replicate at home. This will also be a recruiting opportunity for a family-based Cooking Matters class due to the number of single mother households that could benefit from a family-based approach.

The Food Mill understands the importance of strengthening our local food system and how supporting our local farmers can contribute to reducing nutrition insecurity in a community. Through the Georgia Fresh For Less program and our partnership with Georgia Organics as a Farmer Champion awardee, The Food Mill has made a commitment to playing an integral role in this work. We source our produce from within a 150-mile radius of our facility or purchase Georgia grown products. The Food Mill has operated its own urban farm and is establishing a new location for the farm on 2nd Avenue. Produce grown from our farm will go into our mobile market program to be distributed throughout Columbus and Talbot County. Historically, The Food Mill has produced an average of 4,000 pounds of produce each season for our mobile market program. The farm will also be an outdoor teaching facility that ties into our farm to school program where children can come for field trips and learn how to grow their own food, the importance of supporting local producers, and the positive benefits of eating healthy and choosing fruits and vegetables over shelf stable food items.

The Food Mill is working on a strategic collaboration for further development and implementation of rural services with our mobile farmers market program and Cooking Matters classes. In addition to partnering with Valley Healthcare we are working on a partnership with Direct Services which delivers Meals on Wheels to their rural community centers. We have also been working with Mercer Medical School and the Georgia Rural Health Initiative on additional partnership opportunities with Mercer's evaluation team to include technical support for a Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program, Produce Prescription application for 2024 that will



provide produce prescription boxes to participants who are food insecure and suffer from one or more chronic, diet related illnesses such as heart disease or diabetes. Nutrition education and the Cooking Matters curriculum will also be implemented as part of this program. The Food Mill is currently implementing our farm to school curriculum in 8 Muscogee County schools and would like to expand this to our rural counties as well. Data from our partner, Foodcorps of Georgia, shows that after just 10 hours of participation in farm to school curriculum, students significantly increase fruit and vegetable consumption by 52% compared to students who do not receive this curriculum in school.

Both The Food Mill and Valley Healthcare are also partners with Emory Prevention Research and the Healthy Homes/Healthy Families program that is a 12 weeklong family-based intervention to encourage and support behavior change at the family level for implementing a healthier diet and reducing foods and drinks high in sugar or trans-fat.

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley & Teen Mental Health First Aid: In partnership with Teen Advisors, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is eager to offer Teen Mental Health First Aid to our region. Two staff have been sponsored to be trained within Teen Advisors to offer this training to our community. In this partnership, a minimum of 250 teens have been committed to be trained. Teen Mental Health First Aid teaches teens in grades 10-12, or ages 15-18, how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among their friends and peers. We know that this age range encompasses a time of critical change and development, and the time when mental health challenges may first emerge. Those challenges may be the cause of falling grades, problems with close relationships, and substance use. Teen Mental Health First Aid helps prepare students to provide support for their peers as well as better cope with mental health challenges themselves, as well as get assistance from a trusted adult.

Spotlight

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley's annual spotlight goes to a coalition effort that rose from a need identified within the community after an unfortunate accident in our region. In the fall of this past year, the Columbus Police Department responded to a deadly hit-and-run accident near a local elementary school. Two minor pedestrians, ages 11 & 13, were struck by a vehicle. This [story](#) sent shockwaves through the community, employing many into action – including Resilient Chattahoochee Valley.



Members of the collaborative worked with the local city council member where the accident occurred to advocate for policy changes around equitable sidewalk access, school district crossing guards, and other means to increase safety not only in this school zone, but communitywide. In partnership with Rothschild Middle School, where the students attended, and community partner, Brasfield and Gory, the coalition was able to coordinate a supply of safety vests to donate back to the school for the student walkers to use. This helped alleviate immediate concerns from students and families, showcased community collaboration, and served as a stepping stone for further conversations to occur.



Many of those conversations occurred inside of our community schools. A specific related initiative spearheaded by the coalition is the quarterly “Walking School Bus” event that currently occurs at Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School. Implementing the Walking School Buses came from needs identified by the on-site Community School Coordinator in collaboration with school site and strategy leadership. Low attendance rates, high crime volumes, and additional health considerations, as well as the story above, called for the coalition to find a creative solution that would help children arrive to school on-time, ready to learn. Formation of a “Walking School Bus” rose to the top of the list, as it effectively accomplishes this mission, while efficiently strengthening relationships with the school, students, their families, and community members.

A “Walking School Bus” involves the collaborative recruiting community members to volunteer their time in the early morning, to walk along routes surrounding the school site to accompany students on their way to school, who would otherwise be likely be navigating the route alone, potentially intersecting barriers such as leaving the house on time, traffic, weather, stray



animals, and crime. As the 'Walking School Buses' funnel into the school, the students, families, and school staff are also greeted by additional volunteers welcoming them into the school building with a positive smile.

The positive impact of this effort spreads well beyond starting the day with a smile. This event is a reoccurring avenue to have physical presence within the community and build lasting relationships that result in positive changed behaviors depicted in an increase in attendance numbers, growth in health and wellness, and nourishes a culture of belonging, safety, and care. The team was able to have this effort featured on our region's news station. That story can be found [here](#).





Inspired Action

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley: Resilient Chattahoochee Valley invites all members of the community to join our road to resilience. Through sector specific training, partner engagement, and strategy implementation, Resilient Chattahoochee Valley believes that everyone has a critical role in our community's fight against ACEs. To learn more about how you can be a champion for resilience, visit Resilient Chattahoochee Valley's [website](#).

Community Schools United: The National Coalition for Community Schools Steering Committee has set an ambitious goal of 25,000 Community Schools by 2025 that will reach over 10,000,000 children and youth. Resilient Chattahoochee Valley is eager to add to this number by expanding into 2 more schools in Columbus, Georgia this coming school year, for a total of 3 Community Schools. We invite all parties interested in learning more about our efforts with our schools to read about this [strategic commitment](#) and visit our [website](#).

The Basics Chattahoochee Valley: The Basics are an important cross-sector community tool that can empower parents, caregivers, and community organizations to give every child a great start in life. The Basics Chattahoochee Valley continues to lead local and statewide efforts in early childhood development and envisions a future where all children enter kindergarten happy, healthy, and ready to learn. Help support our work by visiting our [website](#), sharing our content on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#), and encouraging caregivers to [sign up](#) for Basics Insights Text Messages.

Income and Expenses/Financials

Resilient Chattahoochee Valley has outlined the requested financial report in an attached appendix.