



Resilient Georgia Regional Grantee Annual Report Outline Summer 2021

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About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants

[Resilient Georgia](#), in partnership with the Pittuloch Foundation, has been working with 12 cities across Georgia and the surrounding counties to provide a regional 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.



VASHTI CENTER
for children and families



Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA Coalition Mission

The Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA coalition has focused on seeking community partners and youth serving organizations that benefit from Youth Mental Health and Trauma-Informed Care trainings, to help raise awareness around the health disparities that exist in SW Georgia, especially those related to youth and behavioral health, and to advocate for more a trauma-informed and connected community. Our initiative 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 coalition focuses on the rural counties in our region, with targeted populations including:

- Foster Parents & Families
- School Systems
- Faith-Based Programs
- Local Non-Profits

The coalition, among other efforts, holds trainings on Youth Mental Health, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Child Abuse Prevention & Resiliency. Our coalition includes partnerships with Adoptive & Foster Parents Association of Georgia (AFPAG), Williams Family Foundation, Colquitt County Schools Systems, and SWGA RESA.

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



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

- **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

Professional Development/Training

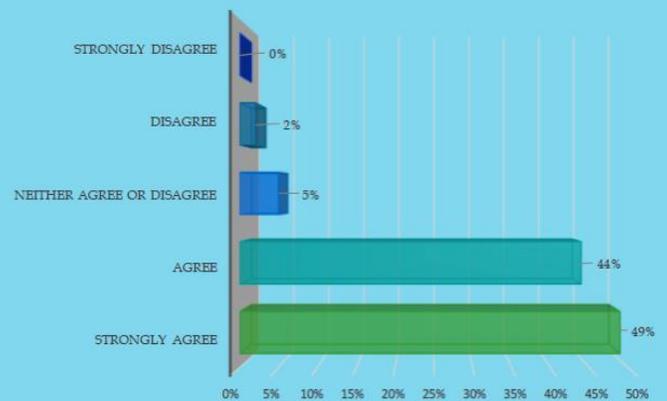


1,082 people trained in FY 20-21 from **22** youth serving organizations
 83 foster parents from **4** FP associations in SWGA
 5 evidence based trainings offered to YSOs



76% of Vashti staff trained in Connections Matter
 93% of trainees surveyed reported increase in TI knowledge

Percentage Reporting Obtaining New Knowledge in Trauma-Informed Practices



As a part of our Child Abuse Prevention month efforts in April 2021 we hosted **13 trainings** throughout the community.



As a part of our Children's Mental Health Awareness month efforts in May 2021 we ran a social media campaign through Instagram and Facebook which included relevant statistics, self-care messages, and other positive mental health posts. We also placed **200 green bows** in Downtown Thomasville to help raise awareness.



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

TIC/ACES Services – General (optional)



One of the areas of focus of the Vashti Center/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. One of the ways we are advocating is by leading workshops for different community groups, civic groups, as well as planning and participating in awareness month activities for children’s mental health.

Prevention/Intervention

Prevention is a key aspect 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 have provided ACEs and Behavioral Health Education workshops to the following groups:

- Thomasville Police Department
- Rotary Club of Cairo
- Kiwanis Club of Cairo
- Mitchell County Family Connections Collaborative
- Colquitt County Family Connections Collaborative
- CASA Volunteers (Partnership with Never Lost to include as part of their volunteer training)
- Resiliency Clubhouse Parents
- Southwest Georgia RESA/Wraparound Collaborative

Advocacy and Policy

- **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.



- NAMI Moultrie, a local branch we have partnered with to be a panel member in *Partnering for a Healthy Community: Addiction, Prevention, and Recovery* forum. With drug and alcohol addiction being a growing problem with youth in our communities, the goal of this forum is to highlight prevention strategies and showcase recovery resources.

Research

- Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA partnered with Resilient Georgia to begin collecting data from the Foster Parent Associations in our region. An Intern from Bucknell University is interviewing foster parents via phone-based surveys to gather information about their experience as well as challenges and barriers of being a foster parent and additional resources that would assist them.
- Our initiative also distributed survey's to training recipients. Preliminary findings found the following:
 - **87% of respondents** reported an increase of interest in Trauma-Informed Care post training.
 - **92% of respondents** reported implementation of Trauma-Informed Care practices into their work and personal lives post training.
 - **93% of respondents** reported obtaining new knowledge and skills in Trauma-Informed Care practices post training.
 - **96% of respondents** reported they would recommend these Trauma-Informed trainings to a friend or colleague.

Training

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

Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA organized the following trainings between August 2020-December 2020:

- **Youth Mental Health First Aid for Vashti Center's staff on July 29th, 2020 with 21 attendees, on July 31st, 2020 with 14 attendees, on September 25th, 2020 with 11 attendees, and again on November 7th, 2020 with 10 attendees.** The session was led by Adrian Stowers, LMSW our Clinical Director and Jackie Hopkins, MSW our Clubhouse manager from Vashti Center. This is a 6.5-hour evidence-based training, and all were hosted in-person. This opportunity was promoted only to staff members due to the



pandemic restrictions. **45 attendees** completed the training between July and November 2020.

- **Trauma 101 training on August 5th, 2020 with 39 attendees and Brain 101 on August 7th, 2020 with 22 attendees for Colquitt County Schools.** The session was led by Mary Catherine Hawks, LMSW a trainer from Georgia State University Child Welfare Collaborative. These are 3.5-hour evidence-based trainings, both hosted virtually. This opportunity was promoted to all Colquitt County School educators & staff members, and the general community through GSU's network. **61 attendees** completed the training between August 5th & 7th, 2020.
- **The Child Welfare Training Collaborative (CWTC) series for Thomas University- School of Social Work, beginning on October 12th, 2020 with Trauma 101, which had 17 attendees, Brain 101 on October 13th with 8 attendees, Trauma & Brain 201 on October 14th with 19 attendees, and Recognizing & Managing Secondary Traumatic Stress on October 15th with 19 attendees.** The four sessions were led by multiple facilitators from Georgia State University Child Welfare Collaborative. Each course is a 3.5-hour evidence-based training, all hosted virtually. This opportunity was promoted to all Colquitt County School educators & staff members, and the general community through GSU's network. **63 attendees** completed the training series between October 12-15th, 2020.
- **Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training for Vashti Center staff on October 21st, 2020 with 15 attendees, on November 2nd for Dental Associates of SWGA for 18 attendees, on November 14th, 2020 for Thomasville Community Resource Center (TCRC) for 26 attendees, and again for TCRC on December 5th for 6 attendees.** These trainings were facilitated by Amanda Messer, Chaplain at the Vashti Center. This is a 2.5-hour evidence-based training, all hosted in-person. All opportunities were promoted to the individual organizations listed above, these trainings were not open to the general community due to pandemic restrictions/concerns. **65 attendees** completed the Stewards of Children training between October and December 2020.
- **Connections Matter Georgia training for Vashti Center staff on November 18th, 2020 with 14 attendees, and again on December 14th, 2020 for multiple local youth serving organizations with 15 attendees.** The trainings were led by Elijah Miranda, Executive Director of Vashti Center. This is a 4-hour evidence-based training, both hosted in-person. The first opportunity was promoted to all Vashti staff members only, and the second opportunity promoted to the general community through Vashti's network as



COVID restrictions started to lift. **29 attendees** completed the Connections Matter training between November and December 2020.

- **Stop It Now's Circles of Safety: Awareness to Action training on December 21st, 2020 for Vashti Center staff with 13 attendees.** The session was led by Alex English, Training Manager for Vashti center. This is a 4-hour evidence-based trainings. This opportunity was promoted to Vashti staff members only. **13 attendees** completed the training.

Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA organized the following trainings between January 2021–July 2021:

- **Connections Matter Georgia trainings in our region:**
 - **Grady County Foster Parent Association on January 7th, 2021 with 11 attendees**
 - **February 2nd, 2021 for Thomas County Foster Parent Association with 13 attendees**
 - **February 8th, 2021 for multiple local youth serving organizations with 23 attendees**
 - **March 12th, 2021 for Early County High School staff with 15 attendees**
 - **April 1st, 2021 for Merge, a faith-based organization with 6 attendees**
 - **April 7th, 2021 for Child Abuse Prevention month hosted an open to the community training with 5 attendees**
 - **April 14th, 2021 for Child Abuse Prevention month hosted an open to the community training with 12 attendees**
 - **April 17th, 2021 for Colquitt County Foster Parents with 37 attendees**
 - **April 27th, 2021 for Decatur County Foster Parents for 12 attendees**
 - **May 19th, 2021 for Mental Health Awareness month hosted an open to the community/Vashti staff training with 26 attendees**
 - **May 26th, 2021 for Mental Health Awareness month hosted another open to the community/Vashti staff training with 15 attendees**
 - **July 17th, 2021 for PCOM medical students with 6 attendees**

The trainings were led by Elijah Miranda, Executive Director or Alex English, Training Manager of Vashti Center. This is a 4-hour evidence-based training, all hosted in-person. **181 attendees** completed the Connections Matter training between January and July 2021.

- **Youth Mental Health First Aid for Serenity House (Women & Children's Home) and other community members on March 22nd, 2021 with 10 attendees, and again on April 5th, 2021 for Calhoun County Middle/Highschool staff with 39 attendees.** The session was led by Adrian Stowers, LMSW our Clinical Director and Jackie Hopkins, MSW our Clubhouse manager from Vashti Center. This is a 6.5-hour evidence-based training, and both were hosted in-person. This opportunity was promoted to the general community

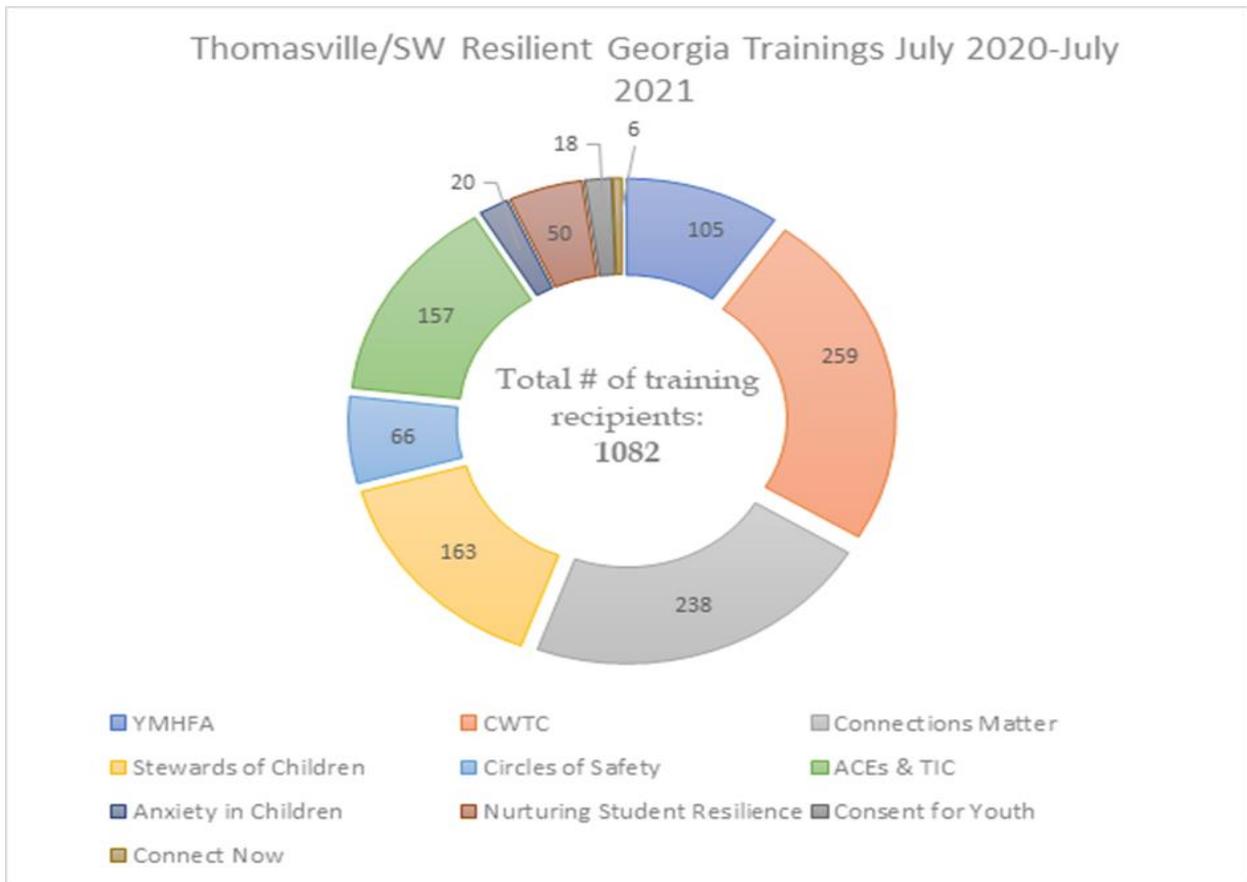


through Vashti's network, as well as all Calhoun County School System staff members. **49 attendees** completed the training between March and April 2021.

- **Trauma & Brain 201 on April 7th, 2021 with 25 attendees, and on April 8th, 2021 Recognizing & Managing Secondary Traumatic Stress with 25 attendees for Vashti staff and community members. As a part of Child Abuse Prevention month we organized Recognizing & Managing STS for a Mental Health Symposium for educators, social workers, and other youth serving organizations in South Georgia on April 13th, 2021 with 30 attendees and again on April 15th, 2021 with 30 attendees.** Both sessions were led by Mary Catherine Hawks, LCSW a trainer from Georgia State University Child Welfare Collaborative. They are 3.5-hour evidence-based trainings, both hosted virtually. This opportunity was promoted to all educators, social workers, and youth-serving professionals through the SWGA Children's Alliance network. **60 attendees** completed this training between April 13th & 15th, 2021.
- **Darkness to Light's Stewards of Children training for the following:**
 - **Thomas County Foster Parents on March 2nd, 2021 with 6 attendees**
 - **March 9th, 2021 for Decatur County Foster Parents with 12 attendees**
 - **April 7th, 2021 for Calhoun County Elementary School staff with 27 attendees**
 - **April 12th, 2021 for Grady Counter Parents with 8 attendees**
 - **April 13th, 2021, as a part of Child Abuse Prevention month, for the Mental Health Symposium with 16 attendees, and again on April 15th, 2021 for 11 attendees**
 - **June 19th, 2021 for Colquitt County Foster Parents with 12 attendees**

These trainings were facilitated by Amanda Messer, Chaplain or 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. **92 attendees** completed the Stewards of Children training between March and June of 2021.

- **Stop It Now's Circles of Safety: Awareness to Action training on July 1st, 2021 for Decatur County Foster Parents with 15 attendees.** The session was led by Alex English, Training Manager for Vashti center. This is a 4-hour evidence-based trainings, hosted in-person. **15 attendees** completed the training.



Innovative Partnerships

- Foster Parents/AFPAG: AFPAG and the Foster Parent Associations in our region were originally not a population or group that was on our radar but since connecting it has been an incredible partnership. Resilient SWGA connected with the current AFPAG president and the services offered by our initiative helped address a major gap in foster parent resources.
- SWRESA: The RESA serving SW Georgia has been a very supportive inclusive advocate and partner. Resilient SWGA could not imagine the connections created by our partnership with SWRESA especially with school counselors and school systems on the outer edge of the region. In year two we are already discussing with SWRESA to grow the partnership.
- Sonia Vick, Williams Foundation: Sonia Vick has been an amazing connector for Resilient SWGA. She has provided links to multiple sectors including the faith-based community and the library system. These connections help the overall impact of Resilient SWGA.



Opportunities and Future Goals

- One of the priorities for year two is to expand what trainings Resilient SWGA offers in our region.
 - Our initiative has one individual who will begin TBRI Practitioner Training in August and will complete the training in October. TBRI trains providers and caregivers on how to offer effective support and treatment for at risk children. It is also a training that can be offered to multiple sectors enabling it to have wide ranging community impact.
 - Another training our initiative is adding is Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA). This training is tailored for 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students, therefore helping us focus on another goal which is providing direct impact on youth. We currently have three individuals in our initiative who are scheduled to complete the facilitator training by August.
- Future partnerships that our initiative hopes to expand upon are with more school systems, other county foster parent associations, police and fire departments, and libraries.
- Resilient SWGA aims to diversify our efforts and our work by inclusion of multiple sectors from multiple communities to become more trauma informed and understand the disparities affecting our region and equipping these key stakeholders and making them aware not only of the resources available in the community, ways to strengthen those resources, but also ensuring them of the value and importance of their role in creating a more resilient trauma-informed community.

Spotlight

- Our coalition has hosted many awareness campaigns throughout the year to reach our local and surrounding communities to let them know there are training and resources available to them.
- This year we used the story of Vlad Bonds, a consumer at Vashti Center, to showcase what a positive outcome of ACE's can look like. Our staff has been trained in Connections Matter, and we like to think a big part of his healing has come from the Trauma-informed trainings we have provided them.
 - This campaign reached 6,500 people through social media and engaged 85 churches in our district.
- Resilient SWGA has formed a partnership with Adoptive and Foster Parent Association of Georgia (AFPAG).
 - We have trained more than 80 Foster Parents in our region on a multitude of relevant topics.



(Click the link here to watch the full video)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Coj7xP4XBRnAMvNtgfeTYCvChbRPdGg7/view>





Vashti Center Professional Development Video (click link for video):

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1N6ykW3SKidjkDCnIBtBGGUOlz27m_-na/view?usp=sharing



Local newspaper writes article highlighting the success of Vashti Center's training initiative (click link for full article): https://www.timesenterprise.com/news/local_news/grant-helps-vashti-center-spread-mental-health-awareness/article_e2c96b05-f18c-5ba0-8ca7-29eebd69cbbc.html

A screenshot of a news article from the Thomasville Times-Enterprise. The article is titled "Grant helps Vashti Center spread mental health awareness" and is dated July 15, 2021. The author is Lenah Allen. The article text discusses a \$100,000 grant awarded to the Vashti Center for mental health training. A quote from Susan O'Neal, development director, is included. The article also features social media sharing icons, a "COUPON DEALS" section, a "NEWSPAPER ADS" section, and a "TRENDING RECIPES" section with images of Fried Cream Cakes and Peachy Peach Cobbler.



Inspired Action

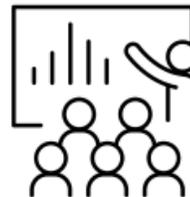
- Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA has strived to make our trainings as accessible to the community as we possibly can. We wanted to remove any potential barriers to being trained. Our initiative also wanted to make sure we spread the word about our awareness and training efforts. We have been very proactive with our website and social media. On our website we created a landing page on our website for people to learn further information on each training as well as request a training through a digital form. On social media our initiative shares training opportunities, self help tips, and other awareness raising efforts.
- Visit our website to learn more at <https://www.vashti.org/training-opportunities/> and follow us on Facebook ([@vashticenter](https://www.facebook.com/vashticenter)) and Instagram ([@vashticenter](https://www.instagram.com/vashticenter)).



Income and Expenses/Financials



- The grant has allowed Resilient SWGA to train facilitators in the following evidence based curriculums:
 - Youth Mental Health First Aid
 - Connections Matter
 - Stewards of Children
 - Circles of Safety
 - Teen Mental Health First Aid
 - Trust Based Relational Interventions



- Resilient SWGA has provided trainings to nearly 1100 individuals between August 2020-July 2021

	EXPENSES	
	Salaries	\$30,944
	Food and Childcare	\$6,093
	Facilitator Training	\$11,395
	Travel	\$1,595
	Marketing	\$4,831
	Training Materials	\$2,407
	Technology/ Office Supplies	\$3,084
	Total	\$60,349



Please see attached appendix for a breakdown of grant fund expenses. Through July 23rd, **\$60,349** of the grant funds had been utilized. The second six-month period there was nearly **\$40,000** spent on our coalition's awareness, training, and advocacy efforts. Due to loosening COVID restrictions our ability to engage with the community in the last several months increased allowing us to participate in more awareness events and provide more trainings throughout the community and region. The remaining funds will be used to conduct more professional learning in our region, cover the expenses related to those trainings including food and childcare which have been integral to trainings especially with the foster parent population. Additionally, the funds will be utilized for further awareness day events that the coalition was not able to due to COVID restrictions.

Vashti Center/Resilient SWGA coalition has also utilized **\$27,000** in System of Care funds from DBHDD to support awareness raising efforts as well as other training and professionally development costs.