



Resilient Georgia Regional Grantee Annual Report 2023

Resilient Southwest Georgia - Albany

Our coalition understands that the transfer of childhood trauma from one generation to the next is the most powerful determinant of the public's health. Preventing ACEs and their intergenerational transfer is the greatest opportunity we have to improve the well-being of our community's health. Across Southwest Georgia, our partners are fostering resilience in various ways to develop a closely-aligned and trauma-informed public and private network, working toward a united vision to create a birth through 26 year old pathway to child well-being. By working together on our shared agenda, we will shape a brighter future for every one of us.



Table of Contents

About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants	3
Coalition Mission	3
Summary	3
Leadership Team and Contributors	4
Coalition Partners	4
Description of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)- Related Efforts	5
Prevention/Intervention	5
Advocacy	6
Research	7
Training	7
Other Efforts	10
Innovative Partnerships	11
Spotlight	11

Project Details

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 across 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

The Resilient Southwest Georgia – Albany coalition is our upstream move to tackle the root cause of the many challenges faced by our community. The goal is to dramatically improve the health and well-being of our community by addressing ACEs issues. Partnering with over 30 organizations and agencies across Southwest GA, United Way is working to raise awareness of the effects of trauma, and to reduce its incidence and impact, as well as build resilience in individuals, families, and our community. Visit our website to learn more at <https://www.resilientswga.org>.

Summary

The Albany coalition focuses its evidence-based coalition efforts on all sectors of rural southwest Georgia with targeted populations including but not limited to:

- Healthcare
- Government
- Judicial and Law Enforcement
- Education
- Daycare
- Housing
- Employment
- Business
- Civic Groups
- Religious Groups
- Parent Networks

The coalition takes on a holistic approach to tackle the root cause of trauma so that all individuals will recognize the impact of trauma on health from preconception through age 26. The coalition works to provide or support services for raising healthy children in safe, stable, nurturing environments. This is implemented through a variety of methods such as training on trauma and secondary trauma, therapy, and nontraditional interventions.

Leadership Team and Contributors

Dana Glass

Aspire
Executive Director

Ashley Nestale

Family Literacy Connection
Executive Director

Danita Wiggins

Dougherty County School System
Wraparound Services Coordinator

Ashley Williams

Family Wellness Outreach Center of Georgia
Program Director

Darrell Sabbs

Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital
Community Liaison

Marian Grant-Whitlock

Child Care Resource and Referral of SWGA at Albany
Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator

Rachael Oliver

GA Family Connection Partnership
Region 10 Manager

Coalition Partners

ASPIRE Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Services	Family Literacy Connection	
Albany Area Primary Health Care	Family Wellness Outreach Center of Georgia	Liberty House
Albany Area YMCA	Friendship Missionary Baptist Church	Lily Pad
Albany Housing Authority	Georgia Association of Housing and Redevelopment Authorities	Lorio Psych Group
Albany State University	Georgia Budget & Policy Institute	Mental Health America of Georgia
Albany Technical College	Georgia Center for Child Advocacy	National Alliance on Mental Illness,
Andrew College	Georgia Center for Nonprofits Georgia	Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Augusta University	Division of Family & Children Services, Regions 4 & 5	Phoebe Putney Health System
Black Child Development Institute(BCDI)-- Atlanta	Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning	Sandy Hook Promise
Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany	Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice	Southwest Georgia Community Action Council
Calhoun County School District	CSO Georgia Family Connection Partnership, Regions 8 &10	Southwest Public Health District
Childcare Resource & Referral Center of SWGA	Georgia Family Connection Partnership	Southwest RESA
Dougherty County School System	Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network	Terrell County School District
Early County School District	Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia	The City of Albany - Dept Community and Economic Development
	Kate's Club	The Sparrow Center

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

Prevention/Intervention

Resilient SWGA is working with parents throughout our region in various ways to increase financial and health literacy. Parents facing financial hardship are more likely to experience stress, depression, and conflict in their relationships and family, all of which compromise parenting and increase the risk for violence and other ACEs. Parents in our community also struggle with health literacy. This struggle limits their ability to access, understand, and use information in ways that promote and maintain good health for themselves, their families, and the community.

This year we committed to the following efforts:

GEARUP Dougherty County – meets monthly to provide financial literacy training to an average of 25 parents in some of the toughest neighborhoods in the county. GEAR UP Dougherty is a federal program funded by the U.S. Department of Education that proudly serves Dougherty County School System's class of 2024 and 2025. It brings together the resources of two institutions of higher education, as well as four community-based organizations. The program follows students from sixth grade to high school, offering them academic and extracurricular help. GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs. All GEAR UP Georgia students are provided supportive services to help them receive their high school diploma, prepare for post-secondary education, prepare for careers, and support through their first year of college.

211 Resource Line - adding mental health resources to our content. Resilient SWGA will bolster our offering with the help of Resilient Georgia in creating a mental health resource guide for our region.

Parents as Teachers – working with Family Connection to enhance this program by offering personal financial training to participants. The Parents as Teachers model is a unique combination of research, education, and empowerment. In practice, our methods are proven to help caregivers connect with their child's early development and build a lifetime foundation for academic success. The Evidence-Based Home Visiting Model is the comprehensive parent education model used by Parents as Teachers affiliates. The model provides a wide array of services to families with children from prenatal through kindergarten and also offers deep insights into early childhood development. Parents as Teachers is a leader in virtual service delivery. Virtual service delivery offers professionals additional methods for reaching families with young children for whom in-home visits were difficult or, at times, impossible. This includes but is not limited to: families with medically fragile parents or children, families living in remote areas, and families with other extenuating circumstances.

Courageous Conversations about Race – this partnership with the Albany Museum of Art aims to facilitate honest discussions by placing race at the center and using contemporary works of art to create a deeper understanding of the intersectionality of racial identity, politics, and social outcomes in the United States. The session speaks directly to high school students, college students, K-12 educators, and community professionals.

Anxiety Management Workshops - by way of the Sparrow Center Behavioral Health Counseling and Consultation Services, we now offer Anxiety Management Workshops to youth in the Southwest Georgia region. The Sparrow Center announced at the start of 2023 that they are willing to coordinate all schools to make the workshop available to their students. This program is led by a licensed clinical social worker and focuses on anxiety management and test preparation. Students will gain education on anxiety and will be equipped with coping mechanisms to manage their symptoms of anxiety and prepare for test taking. The first of many workshops was held at Randolph-Clay High School on Wednesday, March 1st, 2023. 75 Randolph County students attended this workshop.

Suicide Prevention Walk - Resilient SWGA held an intimate event in partnership with ASU Rams in Action. We walked with students to spread awareness of suicide and prevention resources. The county coroner, Michael Fowler, Sr., served as the special guest speaker. He spoke to the group about the value of life,

local death rates, and emphasized the lasting impact that suicide has on the family and community of those lost. ASU's Counseling and Psychological Services Department also detailed the resources and support options available to students on the campus and throughout the county. September 21, 2022. 20 students participated.

As we approached the end of Suicide Prevention Month and geared up for Bullying Prevention Month (October), Resilient SWGA held an exposé screening of *A Different Cry*. This piece explored the rising suicide rates among Black youth under 13 years old in the United States. The story, told through the eyes of two families who said they lost their sons to suicide, shows how school systems struggle to handle bullying complaints and how poor records and data are obscuring the true nature of the crisis in America. September 28, 2022. 15 people joined the virtual screening.

Our STOP School Violence Project, in partnership with Sandy Hook Promise, was kicked off this year. The project has shifted from working in Dougherty County to focusing on Terrell and Lee County School Districts, with hopes of bringing Dougherty County back on board. The STOP School Violence (SSV) program seeks to increase school safety. The program's objectives are to increase school safety using evidence-based solutions to prevent violence against schools, staff, and students and ensure a positive school climate. If successful, this initiative will train school personnel and educate students on preventing student violence against others and themselves.

Advocacy and Policy

The Resilient SWGA Coalition's Mental Health Advocacy Task Force is dedicated to promoting positive mental health and well-being for all, with a specific focus on early childhood challenges. The task force is committed to an equitable, inclusive, and respectful approach in their research, education, advocacy, and policy efforts. Working from a community-based lens, we endeavor to improve the health and well-being of individuals across southwest Georgia by ensuring mental health and behavioral health issues are at the forefront of the health equity work taking place.

The task force assisted in coordinating Senator Jon Ossoff's visit to Dougherty County to announce the expansion of Helping Mamas into southwest Georgia. Helping Mamas is a nonprofit organization that provides essential baby items to women and children living in poverty. They collect and distribute the necessities to organizations that serve vulnerable households. Their contention is that families can't focus on the skills needed to move out of poverty if their basic needs aren't met. They partner with social service agencies, schools, and hospitals to distribute baby items to the clients they serve. Helping Mamas has created a network of providers that serve women and children and help provide education and outreach about households living in poverty. The nonprofit works with companies, volunteers, and civic groups to further their mission to make sure no mom has to choose between diapers and food.

While at this event, our coalition spoke to the senator and his staff about the importance of also including mental health resources to the mothers receiving aid from this initiative. In the past, we have also met with members of his team to advocate for housing needs in the southwest region. We are confident that continued discussions on the toll that these burdens take on the mental well-being of our community will directly reflect in moving the needle here in southwest Georgia. As a result, we are currently working with Helping Mamas to incorporate mental health information in the supplies distributed to mothers in need in our region.

The Mental Health Advocacy Task Force in collaboration with the Commodore Conyers College & Career Academy (4C Academy) hosted Senator Jon Ossoff, Senator Freddie Powell Sims, and DCSS administration as Senator Ossoff announced new resources through the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. This historic \$3 million investment will be used to increase access to mental health services for kids in the Dougherty County School System onboarding 15 school social workers & introducing a new web-based depression screener.

Resilient SWGA also participated in our United Way of Southwest Georgia's Capitol Day. There our nonprofit partners met with lawmakers to push for systemic change across our region. During this experience our coalition had an opportunity to advocate for their respective focus areas and promising connections were established. We are eager to see how they will be leveraged to generate positive outcomes for communities in need in Southwest Georgia.

Research

In partnership with Albany State University, Resilient Southwest Georgia is exploring research endeavors that focus on the impact of Covid-19 on the mental/behavioral health of local youth. The coalition developed research questions specific to the local area to understand and address adverse events and their impacts on middle and high school students in three key areas:

1. Covid Isolation
 - Grades
 - Economic downfall
 - Grief/emotional
 - Physical health
2. Systemic Racism
3. Recent Natural Disasters

The expectation is that the research will culminate in a citywide parent engagement summit that will take place in Year 4 to review the results of the study and a goal to increase parental involvement in schools. The results of this study will also be used to educate community groups, nonprofits, and government agencies on systems transformation with the goal of creating more trauma-informed school systems for our region.

Our Youth Mental Health COPE Clinic served as the unofficial launch for this work. Albany State University is partnering with us for the event where we will pose related questions to a panel of high school students and also gather individual video content of students sharing insight on the key areas listed. The COPE Clinic was successful in engaging roughly 75 students and caregivers.

Training

Resilient SWGA has offered:

QPR – Question, Persuade, Refer. An educational program that teaches ordinary citizens how to recognize a mental health emergency and how to get a person at risk the help they need. QPR was developed specifically to detect and respond to anyone showing suicide warning signs. Indeed, QPR is widely applied as a universal intervention for anyone experiencing emotional distress. Irrespective of whether a person does have suicidal intent, if they are distressed they may still benefit from professional help. When properly used, QPR works from a foundation of knowledge, compassion, and understanding. The resulting intervention may help detect a wide range of personal problems that should respond to professional assessment and care. Early intervention may well prevent the development of suicidal thoughts and feelings resulting from a current crisis. Partners engaged to provide the training include the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Family Wellness Outreach Center of Georgia, Boys & Girls Clubs, Albany State University, and Georgia Family Connection. To date, we have trained 64 participants this year.

Connections Matter. Training is designed to engage community members in building caring connections to improve resiliency. It is a community-based initiative that explores how the connections we make in life profoundly impact our brain's ability to grow and our own individual abilities to cope and thrive. Through our workshops and training, we educate the public on the intersecting topics of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), trauma, brain development, and resilience. We utilize an evidence-informed program, along with real-world and concrete examples, to demonstrate how ACEs adversely affect brain development and health outcomes - and how caring connections serve as a primary buffer in the negative effects of trauma. Connections Matter ultimately strives to promote the building of more resilient, compassionate, and trauma-informed communities - thus allowing all children and individuals to succeed. Our target audience for this training is the overall community. Partners engaged to provide the training include Southwest Georgia Community Action Council, Georgia Family Connection, Albany Area Primary Health Care, The City of Albany, Albany State University, and Mt. Zion Baptist Church. To date, we have trained 112 participants this year.

Kate's Club - Supporting and Empowering Grieving Youth. Specialization training on resilience and post-traumatic growth in children and teens after the death of a family member. It empowers children and teens, their families, and young adults facing life after the death of someone important to them. Participants will learn the factors of resilience and post-traumatic growth and what care providers can do to promote these factors. The target audience for this training is youth-serving organizations, schools, parents and caregivers, faith-based organizations, and youth. Partners engaged to provide the training include the Family Wellness Outreach Center of Georgia, Boys & Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, Albany State University (ASU), and local school systems.

Mind Matters. Lessons that teach people ages 12+ to heal from ACEs and other negative experiences using innovative and researched methods. Mind Matters may be taught by non-clinicians in group or individual settings with adults or teens (12 and up) to build skills that help them cope with life's stressors. The program is successfully implemented in health classes, home visiting settings, career and technical ed programs, parenting classes, residential group homes, corrections, and staff development seminars. Partners engaged to provide the training include the Family Wellness Outreach Center of Georgia, Boys & Girls Clubs, Girl Scouts, Albany State University, Georgia Family Connection, and local school systems.

Community Resiliency Model (CRM). Resilient SWGA hosted Dr. Jordan Murphy as she led our workshops on the Community Resiliency Model (CRM). Participants gained a better understanding of their own responses to stress and trauma, and how to recognize and respond to these characteristics in others, particularly our local youth.

Resilient SWGA hosted the following trainings by way of the Childcare Resource & Referral Center of SWGA for early childcare providers:

Developing and Honoring Ways to Promote Partnerships with Families. This 2-hr training aimed to assist childcare providers in learning how to become aware of the different barriers and communications that can create problems between staff and families. The training was led by Bright From The Start (BFTS) approved trainer, Linda Davis. October 18, 2022.

Ready for Reading. This 2-hr training aimed to assist childcare providers in learning pre-reading skills and strategies for choosing good books in early childhood programs and infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The training was led by County Extension Agent, LaKeshia Levi. October 25, 2022.

Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships. This 2-hr lunch and learn session focused on assisting childcare providers in understanding that interactions set the tone for relationships, learning, and behaviors in a classroom. Attendees learned how to include interactions that help better approach, respond to, communicate with, and support children in all domains. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Tera Collins. October 26, 2022.

Reframing And Responding to Challenging Behavior. This 3-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers in learning how "reframing" a behavior allows us to see the child in a new way and respond more effectively. Reframing focuses on student development instead of punishment. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Linda Davis. December 10, 2022.

The Guidance Toolbox. This 2-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers learn the reasons why children misbehave, why time-out can be ineffective, and a variety of strategies for handling common behavior problems in the early childhood program. The training was led by County Extension Agent, LaKeshia Levi. December 13, 2022.

Embracing Diversity II. This 4-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers learn how to incorporate multiculturalism and diversity in classrooms and in designing assessment tools to measure the success of the program. The training was led by BFTS approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. January 14, 2023.

Standards 102: Child Development. This 2-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers learn basic milestones of physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development from birth to preschool. Learn how these milestones connect with GELDS indicators and have a special focus on social-emotional development. The training was led by BFTS approved trainer, Angie Morey. March 25, 2023.

Healthy Behavior Management Strategies. This 2-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare BFTS-approved providers in defining behavior management and help the caregiver differentiate between

challenging and difficult behaviors. It offers positive strategies that result from inappropriate classroom behavior. The training was led by BFTS approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. May 20, 2023.

Developmental Stages and Domains: Child Growth and Development: Infant/ Toddler. This 2-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers in enhancing their knowledge of the Developmental Stages and Domains of Infants/Toddlers and become more innovative in their approach to implementing age and developmentally-appropriate all-inclusive activities using GELDS. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. June 8, 2023.

Managing Stress Effectively: Love Thyself. This 4-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers in learning the steps in identifying/classifying various stressors as well as strategies for relieving stress. By using appropriate stress-relieving strategies, one can maintain a healthier and happier life, which leads to positive avenues in one's professional and personal life. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. June 17, 2023.

Child Development. This 2-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers in obtaining knowledge about child development and learning to support children in their progress. Acknowledging what children do at different stages of their lives helps educators provide developmentally appropriate achievable activities and develop appropriate learning goals for each child. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Linda Davis. July 18, 2023.

Creating Moods Through Music. This 4-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers in learning how integrating music through teaching can create a calm happy environment. It also enhances the overall well-being, growth, development, and learning of the children including those with disabilities and dual language learners. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. July 29, 2023.

Analyzing Behavior for Possible Adaptations. This 4-hr webinar training aimed to assist childcare providers in analyzing different situations and adapting them to increase positive behavior in children. When educators observe a child, they learn how each child behaves, learns, reacts to new situations, and interacts with others. Educators then must take that information and develop activities to enhance the children's skills in all child development areas thus reducing behavior situations. The training was led by BFTS-approved trainer, Linda Davis. August 5, 2023.

Developmental Stages and Domains - Child Growth and Development Preschool. This 2-hour webinar training aims to assist childcare providers by creating an opportunity to become more innovative in their approach to implementing age and developmentally-appropriate all-inclusive activities by using GELDS. This training will enhance knowledge of the Developmental Stages and Domains of Preschool Children. The training will be led by BFTS-approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. August 26, 2023.

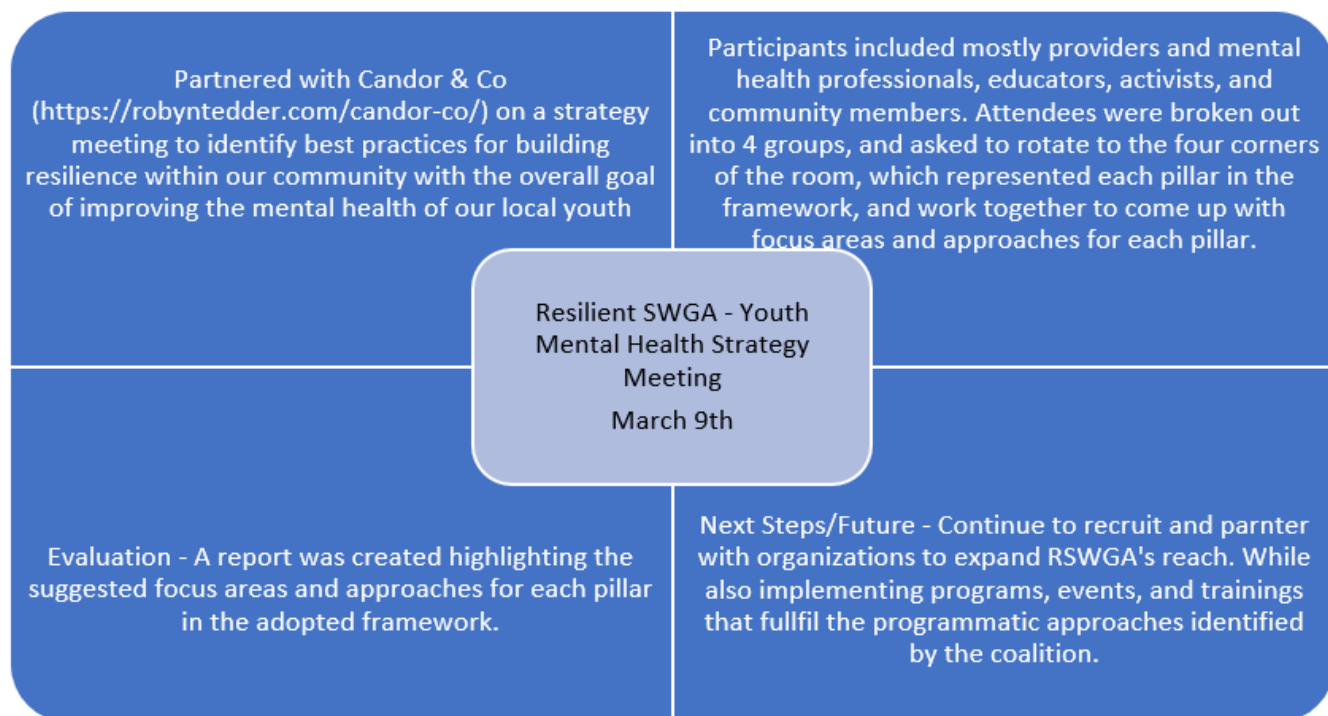
Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder. This 2-hr webinar training aims to assist childcare providers by bringing awareness of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The training will be led by BFTS-approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. Scheduled for September 21, 2023.

Creative Carnival. This 4-hr webinar training aims to assist childcare providers learn how to guide children toward unlocking their creative and explorative nature and open the doors over the developmental domains. Thus, creating opportunities that stimulate creativity, through activities in areas such as music, drawing, fine arts, drama, language, etc. including children with Special Needs. The training will be led by BFTS-approved trainer, Sandra Jackson. Scheduled for September 30, 2023.

Other Efforts that do not fall into the categories listed above?

- Resilient SWGA teamed up with Dougherty County School System - Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports - PBIS to kick off National Bullying Prevention Month and to show our community that we stand together against bullying and cyberbullying. The themes for this year are kindness, inclusion, acceptance, and unity. We want parents and students in our community to know that tackling bullying is one of our top priorities and to share our plan for doing so.
- United Way SWGA kicked off our campaign season with a city-wide scavenger hunt. We were able to incorporate our Resilient SWGA coalition by utilizing some of our city-based coalition members' offices as sites for the event. The scavenger hunt was designed to have participants complete service activities at each site before receiving the next clue to progress in the hunt. The event was titled "Run the Race SWGA."
- Resilient SWGA partnered with the City of Albany - Parks & Recreation Dept., Albany Area YMCA, and Boys & Girls Clubs of Albany, to bring a midnight basketball event to the local youth to promote unity and safe sanctuary in our community. The theme of the year's Midnight Basketball event was "United We Play, United We Win."
- Resilient SWGA partnered with NAMI-Albany for their mental health walk. It coincided with the ASU homecoming parade. We were able to pass out mental health resources and the ACEs fact sheet for southwest Georgia.
- Resilient SWGA participated in the Albany - Dougherty Homeless Coalition's "Stand Up for Our Homeless Community" event. Here we were able to advocate for the needs of youth in housing and had the opportunity to provide those in need with hygiene kits filled with everyday essentials.
- Resilient SWGA held a Financially Fit session in partnership with The Scholarship Academy, an organization based in Atlanta. The purpose of this session was to better prepare our local youth and their parents for college costs by participating in a Financial Aid Quiz Bowl, which is a fun interactive learning experience.
- Resilient SWGA, in partnership with the Albany Museum of Art's Courageous Conversations about Race initiative, took a group of exceptional high school students to Atlanta to participate in the Georgia Grantmaker's Alliance annual workshop.
- Resilient SWGA hosted Hope Givers and Digital Young Kingz at local high schools in Calhoun and Early County to speak to students about mental well-being and resilience. We were joined by coalition members, Family Wellness Outreach Center of GA and Aspire BHDD Services, for these events in distributing mental health resources to the student bodies.
- Resilient SWGA, in partnership with the Albany Museum of Art's Courageous Conversations about Race initiative, recently held the college edition of Courageous Conversations About Race. Gloria J. Wilson, Ph.D., and Sara Scott Shields, Ph.D., led our young people in discussions that explored the intersection of racial identity, politics, and social and educational outcomes in America.
- Resilient SWGA, in partnership with GearUp, held a financial literacy session. The session was led by an experienced financial advisor. The session was intended to increase students' and families' knowledge of financial strategies to prepare them for post-secondary education.
- Resilient SWGA kicked off Mental Health Awareness Month by participating in Albany Area Primary Health Care's inaugural Mental Health Expo. The expo provided resources to community members interested in learning more about finding providers/counselors, available local resources, and the opportunity to listen to helpful presentations by behavioral health providers with an overall goal of breaking the stigma surrounding mental health.
- Resilient SWGA participated in Southwest Georgia Project for Community Education, Inc.'s third Annual Farm Field Day. The annual event is part of their mission to educate, uplift, and inspire underserved Southwest Georgia farmers and the communities in which they live and serve. We were able to invite quite a few high school and college students out to learn about nutrition as well as various opportunities available in the agricultural field.
- Resilient SWGA hosted two Criminal Street Gang Activity lunch and learn sessions. The Dougherty County Gang Task Force led our community partners in an open discussion to learn about the local gang presence and decide on best practices for intervention for our youth.
- Resilient SWGA hosted Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies for a lunch and learn session focused on ensuring those who work with or have an interest in the well-being of mothers and babies in our community are well informed of the available resources, both state and local.
- Resilient SWGA partnered with NAMI to highlight BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month. We created an awareness campaign to share some of their stories, via social media, that highlight the unique struggles that racial and ethnic minority communities face regarding mental illness in the United States.

Innovative Partnerships



Candor & Co is an innovative company based out of Atlanta, GA with a mission of creating a better world through better outcomes for children. Candor & Co believes that quality outcomes for children begin with strong programs. The Resilient SWGA Coalition was grateful to have their assistance in creating quality program design, implementation planning, and project management. Candor & Co understood that positive early childhood outcomes occur when the entire community ecosystem is aligned around a shared goal and mission. When the Resilient SWGA Coalition was in need of vitalizing, Candor & Co assisted us in reengaging key relationships, facilitating alliances, effectively convening our partnership for the Youth Mental Health Strategy Meeting.

Spotlight

Youth Mental Wellness - COPE Clinic

On, April 8, 2023, Resilient SWGA-Albany and Silence the Shame partnered to bring their Youth Mental Wellness COPE Clinic to southwest Georgia.

The purpose of this event was to invite teens (13-19), as well as parents, to a safe place to engage in authentic and uncensored mental health and wellness conversations.

Participants were able to join in peer-to-peer discussions on managing stress and prioritizing wellness. They also had an opportunity to interact with coping and soft skills stations such as content creation, art therapy, and wellness strategies, like positive affirmations, yoga, and goal setting. Parents/caregivers/mentors were also invited to participate in a Parent Café session.

Teen Chat – Panel Discussion:

The panel discussion explored suicide prevention among teens, the impact of daily stress, how to manage wellness, and the importance of peer-to-peer and trusted adult support.

The Teen Chat panel was led by Albany Area Primary Health Care board-certified general psychiatrist Dr. Bianca Waters, MD. Dr. Waters received her Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty training at Emory University School of Medicine.

Parent Café - Building Resilient Teens:

Parent Cafés are physically and emotionally safe spaces where people talk and listen to each other on topics that matter to them, such as the challenges and victories of raising a family, navigating landscapes of inequality, and enhancing well-being. Through individual deep self-reflection and peer-to-peer learning, participants explored their strengths, learned about the Protective Factors, and created strategies from their wisdom and experiences to strengthen their families.

Learning objectives included:

- Understand the signs and symptoms of mental crisis and suicide
- Identify strategies for being a trusted adult and caregiver
- Explore healthy coping strategies and suicide prevention techniques for building resilient teens

Parent Café was led by Dr. Justin Ayankola, MD, Director of Behavioral Health at Albany Area Primary Health Care, and a board-certified general psychiatrist. Dr. Ayankola completed his advanced child and adolescent fellowship at the Yale Child Study Center.

Wellness Activity – Yoga Station:

Participants learned how to practice yoga as a form of mindfulness and as a stress management strategy. The yoga station was led by Hasana Pullens, a graduate student from ASU’s Health and Human Performance Department.

Art Wellness Station:

Participants of the art station utilized magazines to create visual journals and help “peel back the layers of ourselves.” The project promoted introspection, by forcing participants to think deeply about who we are and how others perceive us. Youth were encouraged to keep the journal as a visual reminder. It is also a great way to communicate feelings when words just do not work.

The Art Wellness Station was led by Annie Vanoteghem, Director of Education & Public Programming at Albany Museum of Art.

Content Creation Station:

During the content creation station, teens shared their perspectives and experiences on best practices for managing their mental health and wellness in an interview style.

Event Outcomes:

53 YOUTH SERVED

17 SUPPORTED CAREGIVERS

20 PARTNERS ENGAGED

As a result of this conversation, I feel more confident that I can recognize risk factors for experiencing a crisis.

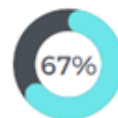


Strongly Agree



Agree

As a result of this conversation, I feel more confident that I can recognize things that impact my own mental health.

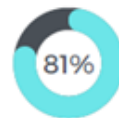


Strongly Agree



Agree

As a result of this conversation, I feel more confident that I can identify healthy ways to cope with stress.



Strongly Agree



Agree

As a result of this conversation, I feel more confident that I can ask for help.



Strongly Agree



Agree