



**Resilient Georgia Regional Grantee  
Annual Report  
Coastal Georgia STRONG**

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## About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants

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In the fall of 2019, the Pittuloch Foundation and Resilient Georgia awarded two-year grants to four cities and the surrounding counties to provide a regional emphasis on trauma informed awareness, 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 is a not-for-profit established to work with public and private partners to design a unified vision and to create an integrated statewide birth through 26-year-old behavioral health system of care. Resilient Georgia serves as a supportive and guiding resource throughout each Regions planning and implementation process.

## Coalition Mission

The mission of the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition is to improve community well-being by engaging and leading the community to work collectively in its development of strategic priorities that guide policy, programs and resource allocation. The charge of Coastal Georgia STRONG is to increase the mental well-being of children and young people 0 – 19 years of age by providing training and support for families, educators and providers who serve them.

## Summary

The Coastal GA STRONG coalition concentrated its efforts in a three-county region including urban and rural areas. The coalition focuses its evidenced based endeavors with targeted populations including:

- Elementary, Middle and High School Students in public school settings
- Teachers and Counselors in public school settings
- Behavioral Health professionals
- Residents who are in recovery and those seeking mental health counseling.

Primary Partners include Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, Coastal GA Indicators Coalition (Chatham Family Connection Collaborative), Gateway Behavioral Service Board, and Loop It Up Savannah.



## Leadership Team and Contributors

**Lead Agency:** Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, Inc., The Chatham Family Connection (**CGIC**) Collaborative(CGIC):

*Lizann Roberts, Executive Director*

*Rachael McConathy, Operations Coordinator*

Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, Inc. (**CCSNPC**)

*Vira Salzburn, Program Director*

*Hannah Neal, Program Coordinator*

Gateway Behavioral Service Board (**Gateway**)

*Maureen McFadden, LCSW, Director of Child and Adolescent Programs*

*Jess Matthewson, MSCJ, CPRP, Youth to Adult Program Manager*

*Talia Terrell*

Loop It Up Savannah, Inc. (**Loop It Up**)

*Molly Lieberman, Executive Director*

*Amanda Meyer, Mindfulness Zone Program Coordinator*

## Coalition Partners

- Public – Chatham County Government, Savannah Police Department – Training/Professional Development and Behavioral Health Unit, The Front Porch (a multi-agency resource center and diversion program led by Chatham County Juvenile Court) and Youth Intercept
- Educational/Academic – Bryan County Schools, Effingham County Schools, Savannah Chatham County Public School System (faculty, staff and police), Georgia Southern University – School of Public Health and Department of Education and Instruction, Georgia State University – Child Welfare Collaborative
- Non-profit – Deep Center, Parent University, Savannah/Chatham CASA – Court Appointed Special Advocates and Frank Callen Boys and Girls Club, Front Porch Improv
- Food Distribution: America's Second Harvest and Savannah Feed the Hungry
- Hospitals – St. Joseph's/Candler Health System –the African American Health Information and Resource Center (HERO Database)



*Partnership with Parent University training online reached over 100 parents each week*

WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE SERIES

## Self-Compassion for Parents

Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, Inc.  
Gateway Community Service Board



*Mental Health First Aid - Front Porch*



*The Front Porch Second Anniversary*



*Trauma Informed Education Symposium*



*Annual Mental Health Symposium*



*Student at Juliette Lowe leads Mindfulness Practice*



*Gadsden Elementary Student and Bank of America Volunteer work on the Mindfulness Wall mural.*



*Students at Juliette Low Elementary practice yoga.*



*Demonstration of a mindful breathing exercise in one of our Mindfulness Zone*



*Reading Ruby Finds a Worry in a Mindfulness Zone @ Home video.*



## Message from the Principal Investigator

*On behalf of our coalition, it has been a privilege to work alongside Resilient Georgia and our community colleagues toward the development of a long-term plan to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences and become a Trauma Responsive Community. Our deep thanks to the Pittulloch Foundation for the opportunity to collaborate with partner communities, it is a rich learning environment.* **Lizann Roberts**

## Key Impacts/Accomplishments

### Coastal Georgia STRONG (Supportive.Training.Resilience.Optomism.Nuture.Grow)

Lead Partners: Chatham Safety Net Planning Council, Coastal GA Indicators Coalition, Gateway Behavioral Service Board and Loop it up Savannah

#### COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Over 8,000 community members participated in Suicide Prevention training to include ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and Mindful Self-Compassion Training in Bryan, Chatham and Effingham Counties
- 500 *Mindfulness @ Home Tool Boxes* were distributed to children and families throughout Chatham County including eight 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools in collaboration with 5 schools who are a part of GA - APEX and The Front Porch.
- 100 counselors and teachers from the public schools took part in the first Trauma Informed Education Symposium (TIES)
- 575 MH providers, non-profits agencies and public partners attended the Annual Mental Health Symposium held virtually over 5 weeks Topics included: From Empathy Fatigue to Empathy Resiliency, Wellness and Resiliency for Community and First Responders, Trauma Drama and Opportunities to Increase Access to Services.



#### CSNPC Key Impacts and Accomplishments achieved:

- Implemented and scaled up the Mindful Self-Compassion program as an upstream approach to suicide prevention in Chatham County and statewide.
- Established collaboration with the Savannah Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS) to provide Safety & Resilience School Training to all 5,000 SCCPSS employees and integrating it into the new employee onboarding process as a required training.
- Established collaboration with the Effingham County School System to provide SuicideTALK gatekeeper training to school staff (350+ people) and high school and middle school students (400+), and ASIST training to 50+ school counselors, administrators and behavioral health specialists.
- Strengthened partnership with Gateway Community Service Board (Gateway CSB) becoming an official MSC training provider and resource to their employees/consumers, offering weekly Trauma-Sensitive Yoga, MSC and Health & Wellness classes at Lakeside Crisis Stabilization Center for children and youth, and an Mindful Self-Compassion 8 week Course course to \_\_\_\_\_ Gateway Psychiatry Residency Program physicians as a part of their residency curriculum.





### **CGIC Key Impacts**

- 175 community members and providers completed the Brain, Trauma, Resilience or Secondary Trauma Stress training through Georgia State University - Child Welfare Collaborative. We worked directly with Chatham County Juvenile Court and CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates to schedule their staff and offered first choice for enrollment in the training.
- 100 social workers, counselors or teachers from the Savannah Chatham Public School System (SCCPSS) attended the first TIES - Trauma Informed Education Symposium on August 4, 2020, a collaborative effort with Georgia Southern, Department of Education, Savannah, SCCPSS and CGIC.
- Serving on the executive board of The Front Porch we addressed food insecurity of children and families who are being served by The Front Porch facility by providing food at the facility and connecting families to food pantries and distributions.

### **Gateway Key Impacts and Accomplishments achieved:**

In February 2020 Gateway held the first Youth Mental Health Symposium. Four of the youth who attended developed a podcast called TEENISH and continue to participate in the virtual option of the podcast.

- Thirteen (13) additional youth attend the meetings for the in-person podcast.
- To date, five full length podcasts have been completed and one mini-podcast.
- Six community members have been interviewed by the youth, including the three Juvenile Court Judges, a Chatham County Public School System Board Member, and a former City of Savannah Mayor.
- As a direct result of one of the interviews, a youth was asked to serve on the City of Savannah's Racism Task force being led by the current Mayor.
- Following the interview with the School Board Member, the school system began surveying students for input on school reopening and operation during the COVID virtual learning phases.

### **Loop it Up Key Impacts and Accomplishments achieved:**

- In January, February and March, Loop It Up Savannah continued their *Mindfulness Zone* program at Juliette Low Elementary School, which was launched in the fall semester of 2019. This program is focused on a school day collaboration with the Behavior Intervention program, which served about 50 students consistently. The students who work weekly with the behavior specialist and school counselor were also participating in *Mindfulness Zone* activities on a weekly basis. Data collection was interrupted by Covid-19, but the students who participated in the fall of 2019 and winter of 2020 experienced fewer instances of challenging behavior at school, and increased instances in which students used techniques that they had learned in the program to calm down and feel in control of situations which were overwhelming to them. In addition to the



programming at Juliette Low during the school day, Loop It Up offered Yoga and Mindfulness classes during the 21<sup>st</sup> Century after school program, serving about 75 students on a weekly basis. They also worked with school leadership to implement school-wide programming, including Artwork by the students about Mindfulness techniques which were to be displayed in the hallways, Mindful Corners in each classroom, Monthly Mindfulness practices with All Staff and access to training materials. The school leadership team was planning to start the school day off with a 15 minute school-wide Mindfulness Practice in the 2020-2021 School year, but this was of course interrupted by covid-19. This work will resume once SCCPSS and Loop It Up return to face to face learning.

- In January, February and March we worked with Brock and Gadsden Elementary Schools to set up physical *Mindfulness Zone* spaces, and to co- create a vision for how the Mindfulness Zone program would be used at those schools. Working with School Leadership teams including principals, assistant principals, counselors, school social workers, behavior specialists and teachers to design an application of the program which they felt would best support the unique needs of their schools.
- By the middle of March, Loop It Up began making adjustments due to Covid-19. They had already started working on a 12 Month *Mindfulness Zone* manual, which was to include monthly units for Elementary School students featuring Mindfulness Practices, Yoga, creative projects and experiences to support healthy self-expression etc. They shifted their focus to developing this curriculum so that it would be ready to use when we returned to school.
- It became clear during the summer that Chatham County would be dealing with Covid-19 for a longer time than anticipated initially. Loop It Up began developing their *Mindfulness Zone @ Home* curriculum and program materials, which now includes three units of programming, each featuring a 30-40 minute video lesson. Loop It Up is in the

process of distributing their first 500 *Mindfulness Zone @ Home Tool Boxes*. Each video lesson includes a mindfulness practice, breathing exercises, yoga, reading a book and doing a simple art project which reflects and reinforces the story and also the concepts in the mindfulness exercises. *Mindfulness Zone @ Home Tool Boxes* are currently being to students in the Elementary School 21<sup>st</sup> Century Programs, Students who were regular participants in the Mindfulness Zone program at Juliette Low, students identified by the behavior specialists at Gadsden and Brock Elementary Schools, the Georgia APEX program, and the Front Porch MARC.



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

### Prevention/Intervention

**CCSNPC** team encountered multiple successes in execution of the prevention/intervention deliverables funded by this grant, to include:

- Partnered with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) of Georgia to provide statewide ASIST training to schools and communities with limited access to prevention/intervention resources.
- Partnered with NAMI of Georgia and Mental Health America (MHA) of Georgia offering multiple statewide MSC workshops to over 400 people including teachers, counselors, non-profit organizations, mental health providers and consumers, parents and more.
- Established partnership with non-traditional partners such as Front Porch Improv (theatrical comedy group) bringing family-friendly improv shows to children and parents, providing improv workshops to children to build resilience and develop self-awareness skills, and offering “creativity boost” workshops to school teachers.
- Partnered with Parent University (a community collaborative that supports families) providing multiple self-compassion and mindfulness workshops to over 120 parents.
- Collaborated with the Chatham County Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) training all of its employees (100+) in MSC90 and using the DFCS facility to offer in-person MSC workshops (prior COVID-19 pandemic).

### Advocacy and Policy

**CCSNPC** Advocacy and Policy accomplishments include:

- Working closely with the Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS) to improve and strengthen policy for implementing suicide prevention training for all school staff.
- The Chatham County Board of Commissioners recognized the Prevent Suicide program for its work with a proclamation in September 2020 was shared with Dr. Heather Bilton, SCCPSS Director of Human Resources, in recognition of our partnership. Read the article published by the SCCPSS here:  
<https://spwww.sccpss.com/Pages/SCCPSS-Recognized-for-Partnership-With-Prevent-Suicide-Today.aspx>
- Began working on developing a policy for the Effingham County School System for all school staff to be trained in effective suicide prevention and postvention, and have taken steps to train key staff in ASIST and provide school-wide SuicideTALK training.
- Park Place Outreach, a non-profit organization serving homeless and runaway youth, developed a policy requiring all their staff to be trained in suicide prevention, Mindful Self-Compassion and Trauma Sensitive Interactions (TSI) training that we offer.





- We worked with *Women's Health and Adult Health Coordinator at the Georgia Department of Public Health / Coastal Health District (DPH/CHD)* to help develop a policy for utilizing a Medical Chaperone (as best practices for trauma-informed care) to help protect and enhance the patient's comfort, safety, security, and dignity during a **sensitive** exam or procedure.
- **Loop It Up Savannah** worked with **CCSNPC** to help build the necessary relationships to bring MSC training into the 21st Century schools that Loop It Up works with.

**CGIC** is actively engaged with multiple organizations within Savannah/Chatham including:

- Serving as a member of City of Savannah Mayor Johnson's REAL (Racial, Equity and Leadership) Taskforce and key stakeholder providing planning and data for the taskforce.
- The Interagency Oversight Group of **The Front Porch**, serving as Vice-Chair, and working to establish and continue strong connections with policy-makers of organizations who co-fund and support the initiative,
- The Regional Community Collaborative (mental and behavioral health providers), led by **Gateway**, who have worked to bring awareness and investments in mental and behavioral health in Chatham County,
- **Healthy Savannah**, a coalition who aims to foster a Culture of Health to Savannah/Chatham County,
- Served on **The Deep Center Action Policy Team** who have developed a policy brief identifying policies that, when enacted, would make Savannah a safe and supportive place for working-class young people, youth of color, and other marginalized young people and their families. Link to the policy brief <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1laeM2BZ64DPPH0pbn3PW30qE7NrziCAG/view>
- Serving as a Steering Committee Member of the newly established Juvenile Court HOPE Court, addressing children and youth who are victims of human trafficking.
- Working with the Savannah Police Department - Behavioral Health Unit and SCCPSS to establish the "Handle with Care" program and adapt it to the current virtual environment.

**Gateway's** Advocacy and Policy accomplishments include:

- As a direct result of one of the Teenish interviews, a youth was asked to serve on the City of Savannah's Racism Task force being led by the current Mayor Van Johnson.
- Following the TEENISH interview with the School Board Member, the school system began surveying students for input on school reopening and operation during the COVID virtual learning phases.
- The TEENISH youth participated in a focused discussion with Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council's team on bringing a dental clinic to the area and developing marketing opportunities to increase the oral wellness of Chatham County residents.



## Research

**SEE APPENDIX I** - Root Cause Analysis Summary Report: Suicide Rates in Savannah-Chatham County, Effingham County, and Bryan County

## Training

**CCSNPC provided the following training opportunities:**

Prevent Suicide Today (PST) is a community-based program working to prevent suicide by raising awareness about suicide and providing skills-based evidence-based suicide intervention and resiliency-building trainings. Through both suicide prevention/intervention training (midstream prevention) and resiliency-building training (upstream prevention), PST fights against suicide using comprehensive public health approach aligning with the national best practices for community-based suicide prevention. The most innovative thing that we accomplished during the grant period using grant funds includes development and implementation of the upstream suicide prevention approach that uses Mindful-Self Compassion (MSC) evidence-based programming for building resilience and enhancing emotional wellbeing. This has not been previously accomplished by any known organization locally, nationally and/or internationally. Our need-driven original idea to integrate the MSC program into the community-based suicide-prevention in Chatham County has gained much recognition and momentum in less than 12 months, outgrowing the boundaries of our community and becoming a statewide resource.

With our PST and MSC program, we use a public health approach for the primary prevention of suicide promoting and building resilience at a population-level. To ensure equity and access to the PST and MSC resources for a wide range of professionals and community members we have developed a menu of diverse training options, to include:

- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST): 2-day evidence-based workshop in suicide first aid.
- SuicideTALK: 60-90-minute evidence-informed training in suicide-awareness.
- SafeTALK: 3.5-hour evidence-based training in suicide alertness.
- Mindful Self Compassion: 90-Minute Session (MSC90)
- Mindful Self Compassion: 1-Day Workshop (MSC1D)
- Mindful Self Compassion: 5-Day Course (MSC5D)
- Mindful Self Compassion: 8-Week Course (MSC8W)
- Self-Compassion Training for Healthcare Communities (SCHC)
- Self-Compassion for First Responders (SCFR)
- Self-Compassion-Focused Yoga (SCFY)
- Mindfulness Meditation: 15-30-Minute Meditation Session
- Trauma-Sensitive Interactions: 60-Minute Session (TSI)
- Safety & Resilience School Training (combination of MSC, suicide intervention and postvention).



Qualitative data related to the program allows us to measure and illustrate the impact achieved. During the grant period, we completed more workshops and trained more participants than we had originally anticipated, to include:

- 34 SuicideTALK workshops, 1,462 participants (school teachers, students, church groups, technical college employees, community members).
- 5,000 SCCPSS employees trained in Safety & Resilience web-based training developed in partnership with and for SCCPSS to meet organizational, professional and personal needs of the school employees.
- 13 ASIST workshops (9 in Chatham County, 1 in Barrow County, 1 in White County, 1 in Spalding County, and 1 in Cherokee County), 213 participants (school counselors, teachers, behavioral health providers and Gateway CSB staff from Bryan, Camden, Chatham, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, and McIntosh counties, community members).
- 68 MSC90 sessions, 2293 participants (school teachers, students and at-high risk youth, DFCS and Chatham County Juvenile Court employees, behavioral health providers and consumers, nonprofit workers, community members etc.). Additionally, 5,000 SCCPSS teachers and staff received a mandatory Safety & Resilience training which is a combination of the MSC90 and suicide prevention trainings.
- 9 MSC1D workshops, 108 participants. Hosting organizations include Chatham County DFCS, Rape Crisis Center, United Way of Coastal Empire, Charles Ellis Montessori Academy, White Bluff Presbyterian Church, National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI) as well as online workshops offered to diverse community members.
- 4 MSC8W courses, 65 participants. Hosting organizations include St. Mary's Community Center, Savannah State University, Gateway Community Service Board, and Front Porch Improv Community Theatre.
- 92 Mindful Self-Compassion Yoga classes, 617 participants from Lakeside Crisis Stabilization Program for children and youth, Park Place Outreach, Transitional Living Program for at-risk youth, and St. Joseph's/Candler Children's Camps (daycare camps for kids of the hospital workers during the COVID-19).
- 43 meditation sessions, 587 participants from Gateway Community Service Board, Front Porch Multi-Agency Resource Center for Youth and Families, and community members.

**Gateway Behavioral Health provided the following training opportunities:**

- The Teenish youth have begun participating in training on topics of interest to them. Most recently they were provided with a presentation on the adultification of black females. The team has also begun integrating soft-skills topics related to obtaining and keeping employment from the Georgia Best curriculum to allow for continued growth and opportunities for our participants.



**Loop It Up provided the following training opportunities:**

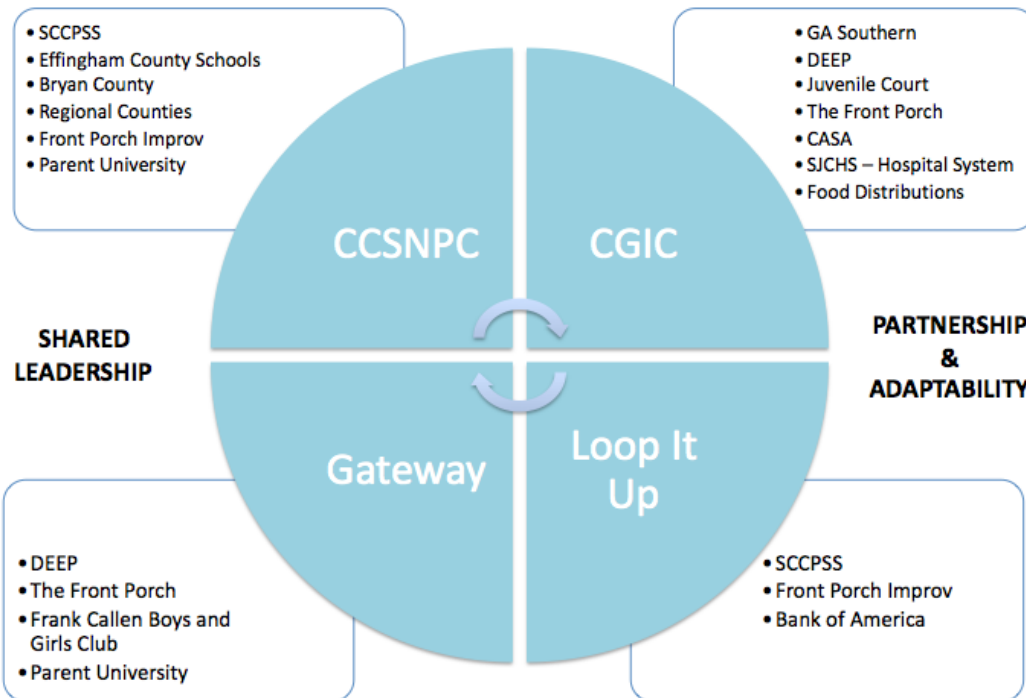
- In January of 2020, Amanda Meyer (Mindfulness Zone Program Coordinator) began leading Monthly Mindfulness Practice training with all staff at Juliette Low Elementary School. We worked with 84 teachers and school staff members at Juliette Low for three separate training sessions. Starting in December, Loop It Up will continue to implement these training sessions virtually at Juliette Low. This is now part of our *Mindfulness Zone* program, and these training sessions will be offered to school staff at each school that hosts the program.
- Loop It Up currently provides training for teachers, social workers and other caregivers who are implementing our *Mindfulness Zone at Home* curriculum. Loop it Up will have completed 8 training sessions with (approximately 24 people) by the end of the 2020 calendar year.

**Other efforts that do not fall into the categories listed above? (optional)**

The creation of the **Loop It Up** *Mindfulness Zone @ Home* kits is very labor intensive and they have been leaning greatly on volunteers and partners to get all of the materials preparation and packing done. This has led to increased community awareness and conversations about Mindfulness. In response to community interest in the program and the practices, Loop It Up will be making their video material available to the public online as well as hosting Mindfulness practice training that volunteers and other interested community members can join virtually.

**Innovative Partnerships**

We have built and sustained partnerships through our various coalitions: CGIC, Regional Community Collaborative and Planning Council. Second, we have built trust and a sense of “Shared Leadership” where we are all equally responsible for the outcome and have bridged relationships between the primary leadership and additional partners. Lastly, we have practiced adaptability within our coalitions and beyond to meet the needs of the community.



## Opportunities and Future Goals

- *What are the goals of your specific efforts that were outlined in the Description sections above?*

communication within the family system, but also provide parents with a sense of connectedness to resources and training.

**Loop It Up** - Further develop our Mindfulness Zone at Home program and curriculum, so that there will be a complete unit available to our students and community each month. Planning to develop a Mindfulness Zone and Mindfulness Zone @ Home program for Early Learners (2-5 years) and expand the number of schools and partners where our program is offered virtually, not that we have had this year to devote to developing our curriculum and materials. When the program is expanded to new sites, we will offer the curriculum, the materials needed to participate, training for teachers, staff, parents, advocates. All of this will likely be happening virtually, which we expect will enable us to reach more people than we would have otherwise. **CCSNPC** aims to continue building MSC program capacity as well as developing and implementing additional programs and training to be included under the umbrella of community “Safety and Resilience” programs. In 2021, we intend to expand the training menu with workshops on trauma-sensitive/informed practices, stress-management and wellness.





- Our goal is to continue growing the MSC program, developing new MSC trainers, and building a community of practitioners. If funded, we would support at least 2 additional MSC teachers in 2021, and continue creating free, accessible, and useful tools and content for learning and practicing mindfulness and self-compassion reaching the counties outlined in the grant.

**CGIC** - Discern assets and gaps that exist in the Savannah/Chatham community regarding the prevention of ACEs and Trauma Responsive resources then build in on-going efforts to sustain Resilient GA/Coastal Region.

**Gateway** - Our overarching goal is to create skills and understanding within the families in our community as well as service providers on how to prevent ACES and provide a trauma informed response. Doing this will equip families through training and coaching with insight into their children's behaviors and how to respond in an effective manner.

- *What are the future partnerships you want to create or nourish, and on what projects/initiatives?*

**CCSNPC** - Our future focus is on strengthening our partnerships with the school districts in Chatham and Effingham counties, working on developing and implementing wellness programs for teachers and staff. We want to continue nourishing our partnership with the Front Porch Improv comedy group to implement the Trauma Drama program for youth and young adults in 2021.

**CGIC** - Develop regional partnerships to build capacity in areas with few resources.

**Gateway** - Future partnerships we want to create is with organizations from other counties so they may benefit from our work and resources. This will be accomplished by helping other organizations to create a Teen podcast. Also working with neighboring Parent University Programs to replicate what we are offering to Parent University in Chatham. We will continue to nourish our relationships with local schools through this work and create the ability within these programs to learn and utilize from the expertise of our Child Psychiatrists.

- *How are you expanding and improving your evaluation metrics?*

**CCSNPC** - We track participant registration and through pre-/post-workshop evaluation we collect both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure continuous improvement of the MSC program and illustrate the impact (individuals' change in knowledge and skills). If available, in 2021, we would like to utilize Georgia Southern graduate practicum students to complete the MSC program evaluation based on collected data.

**CGIC** - We have engaged GA Southern University, Department of Education and School of Public Health to advise us moving forward and plan to hold an evaluation workshop for partners in 2021.



**Gateway** - We will work with families to see what their interest is in ACES prevention through a focus group where they will tell us what is most helpful. This will provide us with a baseline of where to focus our approach.

**Loop it Up** - Designing and implementing a pre and post-Mindfulness Zone/ Mindfulness Zone @ Home Survey for youth and adult program participants. We are looking forward to this metric providing insight into program effectiveness which will be different and more nuanced than the data which is currently available to us concerning student behavior from the schools.

- ***How do you want to further diversify your coalition and ensure that your coalition's efforts and those partnered with your coalition are effective, inclusive, and affirming to all?***

**CCSNPC** - To ensure equity and access to the MSC resources for a wide range of professionals and community members we have developed a menu of diverse MSC training options, from 60-minute workshops to 8-week courses. Also, unlike many highly-priced MSC classes offered in other parts of the U.S. and around the world, our workshops and materials are free to all participants wishing to learn and benefit from this program. Additionally, we are being intentional working with organizations serving low-wealth individuals and families to include Chatham County DFCS, Parent University and Park Place Outreach.

**CGIC** - We are and will continue to work with Savannah Mayor Johnson's Racial Equity and Leadership (REAL) taskforce to integrate recommendations into our work and to bring awareness of RG's work into REAL.

**Gateway** - Collaboration is one of the greatest strengths we have in our community. We want to utilize existing community partners through CGIC and the Chatham County Regional Community Collaborative to enhance the work of our providers and community agencies. Reaching out through our Apex Program to McIntosh and Effingham Counties to assist with creating a Teenish Podcast and working with other Parent University's will lead to greater diversity and spreading our learning and resources.

## Spotlight

**GATEWAY** - This real life story is a good example of how our organization makes an impact on an individual and community levels.

Jessica Matthewson is the Youth to Adult Program Manager (YTA) at Gateway Community Service Board (CSB). In December 2019, Jessica expressed her desire to participate in the MSC 8-week program and joined the next available course in January 2020. While Jessica wanted to learn the skills that she thought would be helpful to her professionally, she admitted that being



5-months pregnant with a toddler at home and having a depressive disorder diagnosis, she really needed some tools to help her cope with the emotional challenges of everyday life.

Soon after completing the MSC8W in February 2020, Jessica, along with the rest of the world, had to face new difficulties at work and home caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Inspired by the MSC program and equipped with the mindfulness and meditation skills, Jessica began offering meditation sessions via Zoom to her colleagues at Gateway CSB and Front Porch Multi-Agency Resource Center for Youth and Families to help them find the calm in the midst of the pandemic. From March to July 2020, Jessica facilitated 43 meditation sessions for 587 participants.

After returning from her maternity leave in September 2020, Jessica completed a silent meditation retreat as a prerequisite for the MSC Teacher Training. Jessica is currently enrolled and taking the teacher training classes, and is scheduled to complete the MSC TT in December 2020.

Additionally, Jessica teaches mindfulness and self-compassion classes weekly at the Lakeside Crisis Stabilization Center for children and youth with mental and behavioral health disorders. The students love her classes where they learn how to be kinder and more compassionate to themselves and others.

Finally, Jessica's new beautiful baby daughter is blessed to have a Mommy who will be teaching her self-compassion by example - by being compassionate and kind to herself as a parent, as a woman, and as a human being.

**CCSNPC** - Through the pre-/post-workshop evaluation forms, we collect both quantitative and qualitative data to ensure continuous improvement of the MSC program and illustrate the impact. For instance, in the pre-workshop forms, participants indicated various reason for attending the MSC class, including:

- To learn more about mindfulness and meditation,
- To acquire tools and strategies that help coping with stress and practicing self-care,
- To gain practical skills for helping their clients and loved ones, etc.

Regardless of the intentions that bring people to our MSC workshops, it appears that many seem to benefit both personally and professionally from the knowledge and skills acquired. For example, MSC1D participants indicated that the following aspects of the workshop were most helpful to them:

- "Learning how to be mindful of my feelings and actively listening to others."
- "Meditation experiences."
- "The presentation about core values."
- "Literature and resources."



“Reminding myself that saying no is self compassionate and positive.”

Other participant testimonies include:

“I will watch this over and over until it fully sinks into my soul. It was so well done! Kudos to all the presenters! I have never been part of a workshop that touched my whole being. Helping myself will allow me to better help others. I will use verbiage from these activities during my tai chi classes when we do diaphragmatic breathing exercises. Thank you so much!” (MSC5D)

“I have recently discussed these topics with a personal therapist, and a family member who is a therapist. This session was validation on these topics, and gave me the wording to be able to discuss with students as well as those that I train with Crisis Prevention.” (MSC90)

“Thank you! Thank you! Thank you...great lessons, reminders and practice tools to help me and others stay grounded and create space for self-care to help guard against burnout and lack of purpose. Very well done. Love all the content and practical resources.” (MSC1D)

*Photos from Events and Workshops:*

- [MSC1D at Chatham County DFCS](#)
- [Front Porch Improv Show for Children and Families](#)
- [MSC Session at Chatham County DFCS](#)
- [MSC 8-week Class Graduates \(Savannah State University\)](#)

**LOOP IT UP** - We experience our greatest success when we witness students using Mindfulness skills and practices on their own to help them solve problems, process challenging situations and to take ownership of opportunities to recognize and control what they can within the overwhelming experience of being a child in 2020! Here’s a story of one of our students, who is in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Imani is a regular participant in our Mindfulness Zone Program. A few months into the program, we noticed that she was using various mindfulness techniques herself, and also suggesting them to other students when she saw they were struggling. One time, she almost fell down the stairs at school and started getting worked up, she said “hold on a minute. I think I can be ok. I just need to take a mindful minute.” And she gave herself a few minutes to sit down by herself in a quiet space, using some of the breathing techniques that our program teaches. Another time, another student came into the classroom very worked up, crashing into things and making lots of noise. Imani went over to him and suggested that he have a seat and do some mindful coloring or a puzzle. Many of the children who are selected by their school to participate in this program are natural leaders. It is wonderful to see them taking these powerful tools and skills on as their own, and sharing them with peers.

## Inspired Action

**Prevent Suicide Today and Mindful Self-Compassion Program Content:**



- Prevent Suicide Today September 2020 Newsletter: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/PST-Newsletter-September-2020.pdf>
- YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfKMdIfLKd52EA72NbL65xw/featured>
- Free Webinars: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/msc-webinars/>
- Radio Recordings: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/msc-on-the-radio/>
- Earned Media for MSC: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/msc-in-the-media/>
- Earned Media and Impact for PST: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/prevent-suicide-today-our-impact/>

Annual Chatham County Mental Health Symposium, September 2020:

- Calendar of Events: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/annual-chatham-county-mental-health-symposium-2020/>
- Symposium Resources: <https://www.chathamsafetynet.org/annual-chatham-county-mental-health-symposium-2020-2/>

## Income and Expenses/Financials

*SEE APPENDIX II*

### Other Donors/Funding Sources (optional, if applies to your coalition)

\$10,000+

Annual Organization(s) Campaign Efforts

Grants: Behavioral Health Unit - BJA and State of Hope Grant

\$5,000-9,999

\$2,500-4,999

Sapelo Foundation

\$1,000-2,499

Bank of America and SCCPSS

\$500-999

\$250-499

\$50-249

Foundation Donors

Corporate Donors