

# GATEWAY



2014 Annual Report



## A Message from the 2015 Board President:

In 2014, the issue of domestic violence catapulted its way into mainstream media. A tragic circumstance in the NFL brought discussion and exposure to an issue rarely addressed in the public arena.

In Hall County, we are privileged to have Gateway Domestic Violence Center as a resource for women and children facing abuse. Founded more than 32 years ago, Gateway has provided a voice for survivors in our community for years.

I am honored to serve as the 2015 Board President for Gateway. I am proud that the staff and board of directors are constantly innovating and finding ways to better serve the families utilizing our services. In 2014, we implemented a new Early Learning Program in response to a community-wide effort led by United Way of Hall County to address the importance of early childhood education for children ages birth to five. We continued the focus on financial self-sufficiency as families in our new transitional housing program prepare to live independently. Additionally, we had a

group of Masters of Business Administration (MBA) students from the Mike Cottrell College of Business at the University of North Georgia analyze the efficiencies of the Gateway Thrift Stores which provide operational funding and resources for our families. We also hosted our 10th annual Domestic Violence Breakfast and Briefing and recognized the Domestic Violence Officer of the Year.

As we look forward to another year, I am confident in the team at Gateway and assure you we are doing our due diligence to address the evolving needs of families experiencing domestic violence. As we continue to plant seeds of hope in our community, we ask again for your continued support.

Abundantly thankful,

Rachel Greene Ayers, LCSW

## Meaningful Support

**Providing support to victims of domestic violence is at the heart of Gateway's mission.** No matter the circumstance or situation, Gateway's staff and volunteers seek to help women and children find strength, safety and self-worth.

As a part of a roadmap to safety and freedom from domestic abuse, Gateway offers support groups and classes to help women cope with past experiences and learn new skills to help lead a healthy, independent and successful life. Programs include "Women Seeking Change" groups, life skills classes, art therapy, and parenting support. All classes are offered in both English and Spanish.

"Our number one goal is to let women and children know that it is not their fault," says Rosemary Stefanoff, Spanish Services Coordinator and support group leader at Gateway. "We do this through education about domestic violence and offering services to women to help them find safety and rebuild self-esteem. The key to this is listening—without judgment—and giving them the support they've been missing in other relationships."

Gateway's life skills classes include topics from budgeting to meal planning to parenting to job interview techniques. In some situations, life skills extend to learning how to drive a car or change a flat tire.

*"Our support groups change lives," continues Stefanoff. "Many of the families who attend sessions will leave our program with a strong sense of self-sufficiency and self-worth and the ability to recognize red-flags of unhealthy relationships. Support can mean different things to different people, but at the end of the day, we're really just empowering women to live the life they've always deserved."*

Art therapy classes help women find an outlet to cope with stress and anxiety that have resulted from domestic abuse. Stefanoff, who

### SUP-PORT (V.)

- 1:** advocate; to argue in favor of; uphold or defend as valid or right; to aid the cause, policy, or interests of
- 2:** to bear the weight of, especially from below; keep from falling, sinking or slipping
- 3:** to keep from falling in value; to provide a basis for the existence or subsistence of
- 4:** to provide for or maintain by supplying with money or necessities
- 5:** to hold up or serve as a foundation or prop
- 6:** to keep from fainting, yielding or losing courage
- 7:** to keep something going or help someone to keep going

also teaches art classes at Gateway, explains that art therapy tends to bring comfort to women and children. It can help raise self-esteem and combat sleeplessness due to post-traumatic fears. It also allows survivors of domestic abuse to express themselves without having to tell their stories out loud and relive traumatic experiences.

Children are also offered support groups that can help build self-worth and teach the kids what healthy relationships look like.

Gateway's support groups help women and children in a range of situations. Because domestic violence is a delicate issue for victims to address, Gateway offers their support group services to women who are deciding what to do about an abusive relationship, those who are living in Gateway's housing, and to those who have ended their relationship and live in the community. This type of "advocacy beyond leaving" is something that Gateway works diligently to provide to those in need.

"We don't judge our clients," says Stefanoff. "We are here to help and provide information and assistance to women who are in an abusive relationship, or who are trying to leave. We recognize that it is a scary decision to leave a home, especially when most women have been fully dependent on their spouses for food, shelter and financial support."

# KEEPING OUR MISSION ALIVE

## LIFE-CHANGING OUTCOMES:

Of the women living in Gateway's shelter:

**98%** say they have strategies to enhance their safety when they leave

**96%** say they have increased knowledge of available community resources

Mothers who have children enrolled in Gateway's support groups have found strength for themselves and their families:

**97%** say they now have a plan to keep their child safe

**96%** say the child understands the changes in the family following the abuse are not the child's fault

**94%** say the effects of the trauma on the child have lessened since beginning support groups

At the end of 2014, Gateway sent out an appeal letter asking for support to help with organizational and operational needs. Thanks to the generous donations from the community, Gateway raised \$17,500 from this letter campaign. Your support helped tremendously during the last six weeks of the year and covered the costs of: groceries, shelter supplies, water, electricity, gas, and some shelter staffing.

While it doesn't sound gallant at first, this type of operational support is at the heart of Gateway's mission. Because of caring people like you, women are able to find a safe haven from abuse and gain the confidence and skills it takes to build a new life of independence.



# PARTIES



# PURPOSE

Friends of Gateway hosted Parties with Purpose in 2014 to raise funds for the organization.

### family

### splash bash

**HOSTS:**  
Susan Daniell  
Jenny and Jimbo Floyd  
Emily and Shane Gaddy  
Amy and Justin Green  
Kelly and Morgan Lee  
Alison Toller

### STOP, DROP

### & roll

**HOSTS:**  
Loveanne Addison  
Carolyn Bagwell  
Lynn Carter  
Elizabeth Carswell  
Mimi Collins  
Dana Miller  
Sandra Paris  
Hart Payne  
Dixie Truelove

### PROGRESSIVE

### Porch Party

**HOSTS:**  
Lydia and John Ferguson  
Gregg Hake  
Nancy and Frank Norton  
Jamie and Stephen Reynolds  
Walters Management  
Teryl Worster



### STAR

### BBQ AND BREW

**HOSTS:**  
Dawn & Jay Fulenwider  
Andy & Kris Steinmann  
Martha Hodge  
Dale & Kris Erwin



# TRANSFORMING OUR THRIFT STORES

Even as the economy crawls out of a recession, thrift stores are still thriving as a top spot for bargain hunters to catch a great deal. For Gateway, a thrift store bargain means much more. Over the past ten years, Gateway's thrift stores have raised thousands of dollars annually, supplied an inventory of clothing and home goods for Gateway's clients, and provided a public place for community outreach efforts.

"We have a lot going for us at our thrift stores. We have exceptional employees and very generous donors," says Gateway executive director Jessica Butler. "But, we are always looking for ways to improve our processes, better manage our inventory, and generate income for our operations."

In 2014, Gateway partnered with a team of University of North Georgia students in the Mike Cottrell College of Business MBA program to research and analyze the current thrift stores' operations and recommend a course of action to improve profitability. The team's efforts included staff interviews, closely following inventory processes from donation to sale, training with store management, review of financial data and engaging in the daily operation of the thrift stores. The research even extended as far as going on site visits at thrift store locations with successful "best practice" models and reviewing academic literature involving retail best practices.

## BEST SELLERS AT GATEWAY'S THRIFT STORES:

- 1: Women's Clothing
- 2: Children's Clothing

At the conclusion of the project, Gateway was presented with several options of store layout designs to maximize space and profitability at both their Park Hill and Dawsonville Highway thrift store locations and was given a projected layout for a new location in the future.

"A noted objective for our team was looking through financials and sales from the year before and analyzing what products were top sellers and how Gateway could maximize sales and selections of those top sellers," says Patrick Higingbotham, project participant and new Gateway board member. "That helped identify appropriate processes for inventory rotation, and how to efficiently use the space."

The results from the research project gave Gateway tremendous insight on how to more effectively run the stores and better help the families it serves. Gateway was given recommendations on pricing, inventory processes, interior design layouts, stock rotation, store hours and operations, volunteer and staff management and so much more. The report shed light on many opportunities that could help the thrift stores flourish.

"After conducting research and partnering with Gateway, we were surprised at just how effective a thrift store can be towards funding a charity," continues Higingbotham. "During the semester, my team and I were able to meet with families and organizations that directly benefited from Gateway's thrift stores and their overflow of inventory, and we were amazed at just how crucial the initiative is for the community. It felt good to be a part of something that makes such an immediate impact in our own neighborhood."

Donations are accepted at Gateway's thrift stores from 10 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday – Saturday. Tax receipts are provided to donors.



Volunteers from the Junior League of Gainesville-Hall County complete a "Done in a Day" project at the Gateway Thrift Store on Dawsonville Highway.

### GATEWAY THRIFT STORE LOCATIONS:

1080 Dawsonville Hwy. | Gainesville, GA 30501  
(Beside Play it Again Sports)

1642 Park Hill Dr. | Gainesville, GA 30501  
(Near Poor Richard's Restaurant)

## A SNAPSHOT OF 2014 SERVICES

In 2014, Gateway provided in-person services to **883** different individuals including:

### Shelter Services:

- **88** women & **111** children were sheltered for a total of **11,605** guest nights:
  - **4,956** guest nights in the emergency shelter
  - **6,421** guest nights in Gateway's transitional housing

### 24-hour Crisis Telephone Line:

- **2,019** crisis calls

### Support Groups:

- **119** women attended emotional support groups
- **111** women attended life skills training classes
- **105** women participated in art group

### Children's Program:

- **138** children & **26** teenagers participated in support groups

### Legal Advocacy Program assisted with:

- **111** Temporary Protective Orders
- **225** second & other hearings

### Community Outreach/Education Program

- Spoke to **36** groups with **1,978** individuals in attendance
- **251** presentations were made to **5,608** students in local schools

### Volunteers contributed:

- **3,414** hours to Gateway
- **1,297** hours to the thrift stores

# Gateway to Hope 2014



*Event committee (l to r): Jan Mundy, Mary Jetton, Sally Clark, Cheryl Forrester, Brenda Matthews, Jessica Butler, Lynn Carter and Mary Stanford. Not pictured above: Jenny Floyd, Dana Miller, and Kemie West.*



## Save the date for the 2015 Gateway to Hope!

# Gateway to Hope

Friday, April 24  
Chatahoochee Country Club

*An evening of food, friends & fun to benefit  
Gateway Domestic Violence Center  
\$75 per person*



For ticket and sponsorship information visit [www.gatewaydvcenter.org](http://www.gatewaydvcenter.org)



2015 Gateway Board of Directors

## 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Loveanne Addison  
 Rachel Greene Ayers  
 Larry Baldwin  
 Amy Boyd  
 Lynn Carter  
 Sally Clark  
 Susan J. Daniell  
 Katie B. Davis  
 Albert S. Dillon  
 Jenny Floyd  
 Cheryl Forrester  
 T. Loren Funk  
 Kristi Griffin  
 Patrick Higingbotham  
 Heather Casey Hollimon  
 Kathy Lamon  
 Jamila Leavell  
 Kelly Lee  
 Tami Lee  
 Brenda Matthews  
 Mary Meadows  
 Jan Mundy  
 Karen Owens  
 Andre Robertson  
 John Robertson  
 Mary Stanford  
 Carol J. Shirley  
 Anthony C. Shope  
 Vanessa Sykes  
 Susanne Stribling Turner  
 Kaylee Welch  
 Jennifer Westbrook  
 Keith Whitaker  
 Tiffany Whitmire

## 2015 ADVISORY BOARD

Lynda Askew  
 Emily Bagwell  
 Maria Calkins  
 Tina Carlson  
 Chris Cospier  
 Julia Cromartie  
 Lydia Ferguson  
 Kathy Gosselin  
 Sissy Lawson  
 Deborah Mack  
 Beth Nott  
 Kimberly Dobbs Scott  
 Renee Strickland



Gateway Employees

## GATEWAY EMPLOYEES

Maribel Barron, Legal Advocate  
 Cindy Bryant, Transitional  
 Housing Coordinator  
 Jessica Butler, Executive Director  
 Herminia Fonseca, Family Advocate  
 Kathy Green, Night and Weekend  
 House Manager

Shelby Kinsey, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Lanita Harris, Director of Legal  
 Advocacy  
 Rebeca Ruelas, Night and Weekend  
 House Manager  
 Phyllis Sheffield, Shelter Manager  
 Karen Staley, Administrative Assistant  
 Rosemary Stefanoff, Spanish Services  
 Coordinator  
 Blythe Turner, Family Advocate  
 Sonya Whetston, Night and Weekend  
 House Manager  
 Melissa Wiley, Client Services  
 Coordinator  
 Jen Wilson, Children's Program  
 Coordinator

## CONTRACTED EMPLOYEES & SUPPORT GROUP LEADERS

Bethany Bearden – Teen Occupational  
 Therapist  
 Dawn Columbo – Children's Art Groups  
 Jackie Denney – Bookkeeper  
 Emily Pressley-Pitts – Teen Counselor  
 Sara Propes – Women's Occupational  
 Therapist  
 Robin Underwood – Women's  
 Occupational Therapist

## THRIFT STORE EMPLOYEES

Jessica Armour  
 Miriam Gregory  
 Betty Jo Hatcher  
 Michelle Parks  
 Shelia Stephens  
 Cora Stewart  
 Gabriele Van Ord