



Program Report

Summer 2016



A New Center to Serve Exploited and At-Risk Youth

Atlanta's exploited, abused, and at-risk youth are fortunate to be living in a city that has so many individuals, community leaders, and organizations working to make a difference in their lives and put them on a positive path. Sadly, though, even with the best intentions and dedication, some of our most vulnerable and victimized youth are slipping through the cracks in getting the life-changing services they so desperately need. For example:

- * Fulton County Juvenile Court, the largest in the Southeast and located in the heart of Atlanta, dealt with 6,738 at-risk children and youth in 2014, with most cases involving Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) youth between the ages of 12-16.
- * Over 1,100 youth have been identified as child sex trafficking victims in Georgia, with more discovered each year as identification protocols are improved and implemented.
- * New research by Georgia State University, Emory University, youthSpark, and others documents 3,374 homeless and runaway youth in greater Atlanta.
- * Eighty-two percent of LGBTQ youth had problems during the previous year with bullying about their sexual orientation, and 64% felt unsafe at school (Georgia Equality).

A variety of reasons contribute to what these youth face in connecting them to the services they need, including (1) the need to connect service providers together that, unfortunately, often work in isolation from one another, (2) the need for early intervention to play a bigger role in the system of care (instead of waiting for victimization to worsen), (3) the need to remove logistical barriers (i.e., making transportation available to youth who need to get to their service providers), and (4) the need to learn more about identifying and serving at-risk boys, especially in regard to child sex trafficking.

youthSpark's new *Youth Services Center*—housed within the Fulton County Juvenile Court, but owned and operated independently by youthSpark—will bridge many of the extreme gaps that still exist in Atlanta's capacity to connect exploited, abused, and at-risk youth with life-changing services. Youth will be connected, for example, to mental health/trauma counselors to meet their individual needs and also provided assistance to overcome barriers to accessing their treatment (e.g., insurance enrollment, transportation, etc.). Opportunities to enroll in non-traditional educational programs, like job training, GED classes, and assistance with testing fees, will also be offered to clients. With the help of volunteers, we will be able to provide other unique opportunities, including music lessons and art classes, to empower youth and cultivate their talents.

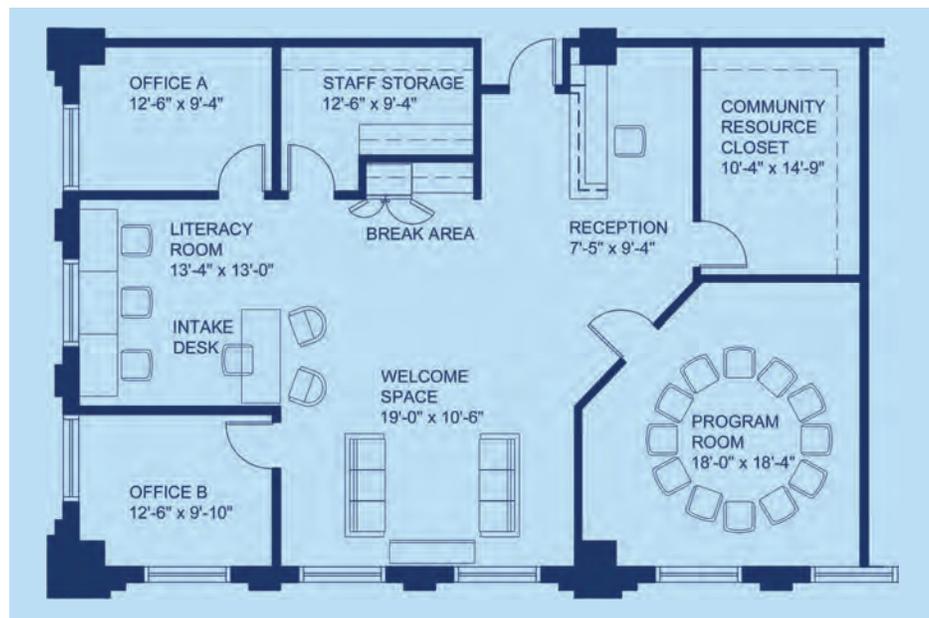
The overall objectives for the *Youth Services Center* include:

- * Screening for current and unresolved prior

exposure to abuse and exploitation

- * Providing case-managing advocates who mentor and oversee services for the Center's youth
- * Creating service referrals to trained, credentialed partners who are positioned to address individual and family vulnerabilities
- * Providing funding to cover gaps and shortfalls in connecting youth with needed services

As we move into the early summer, progress on our Center is moving along at an exciting pace. We have already begun work with experts to provide technical expertise in building key operational components of the Center; work with designers to help us create a comforting and visually stunning space; and have nearly completed work with Fulton County officials to finalize construction plans and permitting. The Center is scheduled to launch by fall 2016!



Upcoming Events

Vote "YES" on the upcoming Safe Harbor ballot measure in November, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to create dedicated funding for child sex trafficking victims. Pledge your support today at www.safeharboryes.com



youthSpark will hold its sixth annual "Back-to-School Celebration" in late July for the youth that we serve. If you would like to donate school supplies, please contact Tiffany Hylton at 404-612-4628 or tiffany@youth-spark.org. Donations will be accepted through July 15.

youthSpark Kicks Off Its "Building Brighter Futures" Capital Campaign

In the early fall of 2015, we kicked off the silent phase of our first-ever capital campaign, "Building Brighter Futures," to support the creation of our new *Youth Services Center*. Since then, we have been thrilled to welcome some amazing partners and to share the excellent news on the progress our campaign. As of May 2016, we have raised over \$600,000 of our \$700,000 campaign goal!

The "Building Brighter Futures" goal of \$700,000 will help support start-up costs to create the Center, in addition to operating funds for a portion of the first three years.

- Year 1 Start-up and Operations: Raise the initial start-up expenses of \$100,000, plus \$300,000 of the initial operating budget (\$400,000 total)
- Year 2 Operations: Raise two-thirds of the second year's operating budget (\$200,000 total)
- Year 3 Operations: Raise one-third of the third year's operating budget (\$100,000 total)

We are grateful to our donors who have already joined us in making our vision a reality: the Robert & Polly Dunn Foundation, Junior League of Atlanta, the Ware Foundation, an anonymous local foundation, Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority, The Imlay Foundation, along with other significant donations and individual gifts from all members of our Board of Directors.

We would love to have you join us in our "Building Brighter Futures" campaign to make a difference for exploited and at-risk boys and girls in Atlanta. Information is available on our website youthspark.org, and you can also send your donation directly to youthSpark at 395 Pryor Street, Suite 2117, Atlanta, Georgia 30312 (please make your check out to youthSpark with "Capital Campaign" in the memo line).

Goal: \$700,000

Current: \$600,000



Building Brighter Futures

Campaign



Call us at 404-612-4628

How Every Teen Can Help Change the World

An organization that has "youth" in its name wouldn't be doing its job if it didn't engage young people beyond those receiving help. youthSpark has been committed to training the leaders of the future through our Teen Ambassador Training program, where youth are taught the realities of trafficking from both the supply and demand sides, how to keep themselves and others safe (with an emphasis on cyber safety), and how to get involved and become an advocate.



We believe that every teen can help change the world and make a difference for those in need.

We are grateful to work with several youth-run groups, including the Atlanta International School Against Human Trafficking (AISAHT) student group, and North Atlanta High School's videography student group. Students involved in AISAHT conducted special fundraiser events for youthSpark and sponsored assemblies for fellow students to learn about this important issue. Students from North Atlanta High School worked with Reimagine Atlanta to create an innovative PSA video. In 2016, the youth, working with experts from youthSpark, decided to raise awareness about the lesser known aspects of human trafficking: the male victims and the buyers. See the finished product at youthspark.org/tellyourtruth-psa-on-trafficked-boys

"youthSpark has been committed to training the leaders of the future"

Strengthening Our Board to Meet our Mission

Since finalizing our new strategic plan in the fall of 2015, we have been hard at work meeting the goals of our plan, including increasing our organizational capacity to achieve our mission. A part of these efforts include strengthening our Board of Directors. We are excited to report that we have already met our Board development goals, and welcome our new Board members including:

- Taylor Anderson, Anderson Family of Companies
- Nancy Blank, Community Volunteer
- Dr. Sharon Hill, Georgia State University
- Cassandra Johnson, AIG
- Zenda Jones, OneSource Virtual
- Anita Leopold, Business Traveler Services
- Barbara Rose, New General Partnerships
- Nzinga Shaw, Atlanta Hawks
- Barbara Vazquez, Vazquez & Servi, P.C.
- Christopher Wilbanks, Robert & Polly Dunn Foundation
- Sara Yeglin, CNN International



youthSpark's New Senior Case Manager, Shafeeq Rashid

Prior to joining our organization, Shafeeq worked for a decade in education as an instructor teaching English to high school students in metropolitan Atlanta. His passion for working with teens led him to work with outreach, mentoring, and community-based programs. With a Graduate Degree in Sociology from Georgia State University, Shafeeq is now the new Senior Case Manager for youthSpark. His primary responsibilities are to build relationships with other agencies that deal with outreach for homelessness, HIV, and youth crime prevention; and to oversee case management within the *Youth Services Center*. Through his work, he will learn best practices from agencies already entrenched in the work and develop relationships that can work together to build infrastructure and branch out to meet the specific needs of a wider range of at-risk youth.



Shafeeq's Passion: *"I love kids. Kids make me feel good about the world... looking at their hope and innocence. I use any excuse to work with kids."*

Shaking Things Up at the Inaugural "Movers and Shakers" Fundraising Event

Q: What do you get when you put together an amazing fundraising event with signature cocktails, live music, and a unique auction?

A: An amazing way to make a difference for at-risk boys and girls!

On the evening of Thursday, January 28, youthSpark held its inaugural *"Movers, Shakers, & Changemakers"* event, raising over \$60,000 to support the new *Youth Services Center* and kick off our *"Building Brighter Futures"* capital campaign. Over 150 guests enjoyed the musical duo, Unknown Lyric, as they sampled unique signature cocktails, appetizers, and desserts; and took in the beauty of The Wimbish House in midtown, which was graciously donated by the Atlanta Woman's Club.

After mingling, guests gathered to hear youthSpark's Executive Director, Dr. Alex Trou-teaud, talk about the new Center and the role it will take in making a difference for at-risk youth. Guests then were able to see a touching video about our early intervention approach to services for girls who are at high risk for ex-

ploitation, or who are not yet ready to disclose their victimization experiences.

At the event, youthSpark recognized Bobby Cagle, Director of the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services, for his work in standing up and protecting all youth in our state, particularly those who have been exploited.

Afterwards, guests participated in a one-of-a-kind auction event with the incredible Dean Crownover, local auctioneer, who engaged everyone in an exciting and fun "speed round" bidding event for youthSpark. In no time, guests met and exceeded our fundraising goals in what was described by many as the best auction-style event they had ever attended.



Many thanks to our sponsors and those who helped make our event successful:

- Amerigroup
- Taylor Anderson
- Atlanta Hawks
- Atlanta International School student volunteers
- Atlanta Woman's Club and their many wonderful volunteers
- Babush, Neiman, Kornman & Johnson, LLP
- Jennifer Bennecke, host committee
- ByteGraph Events, lighting and photography
- CORT Furniture
- Dean Crownover, My Benefit Auctioneer
- Enid Draluck, host committee
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta
- Geist Construction Services
- Glorious Events
- Grier Law Office
- Anita Leopold
- Hon. Edward Lindsey, host committee
- McKesson
- Paradies Lagarde
- Prima Atlanta
- Deborah Richardson, host committee
- Spin Style Agency
- Unknown Lyric, our event musicians
- United Way of Greater Atlanta

To be a part of our exciting 2017 event, please contact Catharine B. Kuchar at ckuchar@youth-spark.org to receive our sponsorship package.

Many Thanks to Those Who Make Our Work Possible

Our work to make a difference for at-risk youth is not possible without the incredible support of many individuals, organizations, and foundations. We are grateful to all of our supporters.

youthSpark's Recent Individual Gifts and Grants (2015/2016 fiscal year):

\$50,000+

Anonymous
Harold Anderson
Junior League of Atlanta
Robert and Polly Dunn Foundation
Ware Foundation

\$10,000 – \$49,999

Taylor Anderson
Demand Abolition
Fulton DeKalb Hospital Authority
Imlay Foundation

\$2,500 – \$9,999

George Brown Trust Fund
A Hand Up Atlanta
Dr. Sharon Hill
Cassandra Johnson
Catherine Payne
Dr. Alex Trou-teaud
Barbara Rose
Stephanie Bond
Dr. Jennifer Pendergast
Anita and Phillip Leopold
Dan Webster
Nzinga Shaw
Dana Bentata
Zenda Jones
Michael Tyre
Karlise Grier

\$500 – \$2,499

Lang Adler
Keith & Jule Barringer
Sarah Batts
Jennifer Bennecke
Kelly Basler
Central Presbyterian Church
Gus Cueto
Enid Draluck
David Geist
Goodman McGuffey
Lindsey & Johnson, LLP
Leslie Irvine
Hon. Edward Lindsey
Ty Lord
Katherine McCullough
Andrea Smith
Giselle Swann
Leandrew Tabb
Hon. Renata Turner
Barbara Vazquez
Tonya Watson
Molly Webb
Janet Wiggins

Up to \$499

Thank you to everyone who made a gift! Every dollar makes a difference and your gift is important to us.

YES, I WILL HELP

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Phone _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$500 Other \$ _____

My gift is: Monthly One Time

My company has a gift matching program: Yes No

Bill my: Discover MasterCard Visa AMEX

Card Number _____

Exp Date _____

CVV Code _____

Signature _____

Make checks payable to **"youthSpark"** and mail to:

youthSpark, Inc.
395 Pryor Street, SW, Suite 2117
Atlanta, GA 30312

★ Visit us at youth-spark.org ★

Creating Hope:

Making a Difference One Life at a Time

Leslie was referred to youthSpark because she was in a relationship with a twenty-something-year-old male. Like most girls entering our program, she really believed this man was her boyfriend and that he loved her. Unfortunately, she didn't have very many positive examples of healthy relationships as her mother, too, experienced sexual exploitation as a young girl. Leslie started attending weekly group sessions and learned how to keep herself safe and also how to focus on her future. She'd always wanted to be on the dance team at her school, but her mom could never afford the fees and her grades would not allow her to even try out. We were able to cover all fees for her to try out if she worked to improve her grades and attendance. She felt honored and inspired to work hard. She accomplished her goal and made it on the team on the first try! She has continued to soar and we continue to encourage her success. As a peer leader, she motivates new girls to get active and follow their dreams.

“empowering youth to believe in their future”

The cost of her dance team dues and camp = \$380

The cost of her feeling like she mattered and was worthy = PRICELESS

Transforming the lives of youth who are victims of exploitation is about more than just intervening during a crisis. It's about empowering youth to believe in their future and giving them opportunities to be engaged in activities that inspire them.

✦ Visit us at youth-spark.org ✦



395 Pryor Street, Suite 2117
Atlanta, Georgia 30312