



2015-2016  
Annual Report



**youthSpark** is an innovator in transforming the lives of youth at risk for exploitation and abuse, and a thought-leader in reducing child exploitation and sex trafficking rates in Georgia and across the country. We were founded in 2000 as an independent nonprofit organization when juvenile court judges, elected officials, and concerned friends in Atlanta envisioned an independent nonprofit organization with a concentrated focus on vulnerable children and families affected by the Fulton County Juvenile Court—representing the largest concentration of at-risk youth and families in the Southeastern United States. Today, we fully embrace our position within the juvenile court system because it enables us to partner with child welfare specialists, judges, and diverse Atlanta-area service providers to help meet critical needs among metro Atlanta’s abused and vulnerable youth.

#### **Our Mission**



To advocate for youth who are in need of legal and adult protection in abusive and exploitative situations

#### **Our Vision**



To create a world in which no child is a product that can be bought, sold, or abused

#### **Our Work**

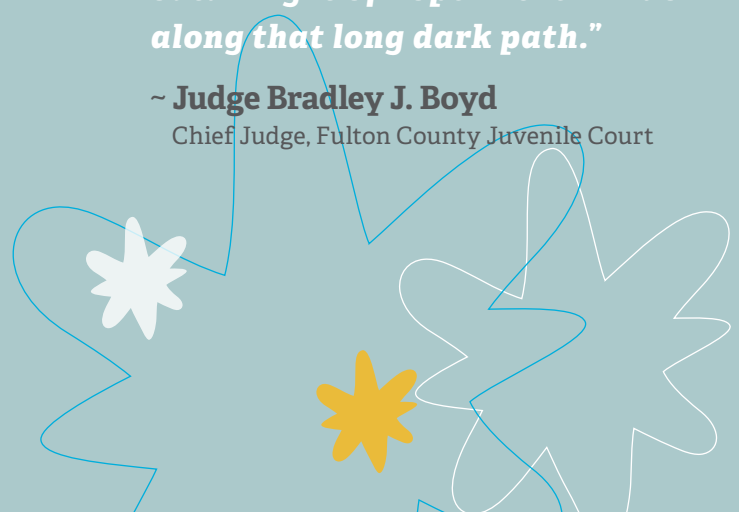


- Direct Services for At-Risk Youth
- Ending Child Sex Trafficking Through Demand Reduction
- Policy Advocacy to Protect Youth
- Court Advocacy to Improve Outcomes

“ **The commercial sexual exploitation of children is simply a form of modern slavery. youthSpark is a link in the Underground Railway. A way out. A light of hope in the window along that long dark path.**”

~ **Judge Bradley J. Boyd**

Chief Judge, Fulton County Juvenile Court



# Direct Services for At-Risk Youth

youthSpark's new **Youth Services Center**—housed within the Fulton County Juvenile Court, but owned and operated independently by youthSpark and under construction now—will bridge many of the 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 any barriers to accessing their treatment (i.e., assistance with insurance enrollment forms, co-pays, and transportation). Opportunities to enroll in non-traditional educational programs, like specific job training, GED preparedness classes, and assistance associated with testing fees, will also be offered to all clients. We will also be able to provide other unique opportunities, including access to music lessons and art classes, to empower youth and cultivate their talents.

Our **youthSpark Voices** program focuses on ending child sex trafficking in Atlanta by providing early intervention services for exploited, abused, and at-risk girls BEFORE they are victimized. Working with girls, ages 12-17, who come from low-income households our key objectives are to increase their school attendance, decrease running away, and build important skills that put the girls on a positive track of personal growth and self-sufficiency. Girls are referred to the program by probation officers in the Fulton County Juvenile Court and benefit from our extensive case management, assessments, referrals for resources, and weekly group educational sessions. **youthSpark Voices** was designed to increase the girl's ability to function independently, avoid vulnerabilities leading to trafficking, and build relationships with positive adult role models.

“**All victims need our help and whether they turn 18 today or tomorrow, there should be a continuum in place to ensure help is available. Partnering with youthSpark helps us do just that.**”

~ **Melba Robinson**  
Director  
The Salvation Army, HavenATL



## MAKING AN IMPACT

- Served 136 youth and families across all programs
- Served 37 girls in the Voices program
- Exceeded goal for our Voices girls to decrease running away and/or make a connection prior to running away (target, 75%; outcome, 95%) and to increase their school attendance/decrease truancy (target, 75%; outcome, 95%)
- Identified 50+ community partners to collaborate with youthSpark to provide services to our youth
- Customized and launched a secure, cloud-based client management service (CMS) for storing and analyzing outcome data
- Developed an evidence-based “model of service” for the Center, making sure we are meeting clients where they are and providing a holistic approach
- Established Center protocols, procedures, and assessment tools
- Solidified plans for a Health Connection Week and a Mobile Health Kiosk in order to 1) bring health care system access to a wide range of at-risk youth in the Court, and 2) screen a vast number of at-risk youth for evidence of sexual exploitation trauma
- Retained an experienced consultant to provide technical assistance in designing protocols and procedures for the Center
- Worked with a designer to determine specific elements of the Center, and purchased most of the Center's furniture
- Organized a multi-disciplinary team of County and City government officials to finalize construction plans and solidify the permitting process. Construction is now underway and will be completed in October 2016!



“ We value our partnership with youthSpark and their ability to provide expert testimony during our cases. Educating jurors on this subject is critical to the successful prosecution of human traffickers, and we couldn't protect our community from these predators without the help of youthSpark.”

~ Dalia Racine

Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney  
D.A.T.E. Watch Unit (DeKalb Anti-Trafficking and Exploitation)  
DeKalb County District Attorney's Office

# Ending Child Sex Trafficking Through **Demand Reduction**

The primary driver for youth sex trafficking is demand—the buyers. No buyers, no demand; with no demand, there would be no business of trafficking. Therefore reducing demand for youth sex trafficking is a critical goal to reducing victimization rates of youth sex trafficking.

In order to reduce and eliminate youth sex trafficking, consequences for buyers must be increased. Deterring buyers and would-be buyers through both social and legal strategies combine to reduce demand at the macro-level. youthSpark works with and trains law enforcement and prosecutors to shift efforts towards increasing the legal costs of trafficking and exploiting. This means enhancing legal penalties and increasing buyer arrest rates; and recognizing that transactional sex is not victimless because it is a form of exploitation that harms youth, families, and local communities.



## MAKING AN IMPACT

- We developed and launched **DemandTracker.org** to deter individuals from engaging in harmful and illegal sex purchasing behaviors. Family, friends, and employers can check if a phone number has contacted one of our decoy prostitution ads for a young person. The website is designed to not only deter prospective buyers, but also change how the community thinks about sex trafficking.

## Policy Advocacy to **Protect Youth**

Policy advocacy is one of youthSpark's core strengths. We have a strong track record of helping to shape and advocate for passage of strategic legislation that reduces the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Georgia. We believe that advocacy coalitions and partnerships are not only effective, but critically important for protecting our youth.

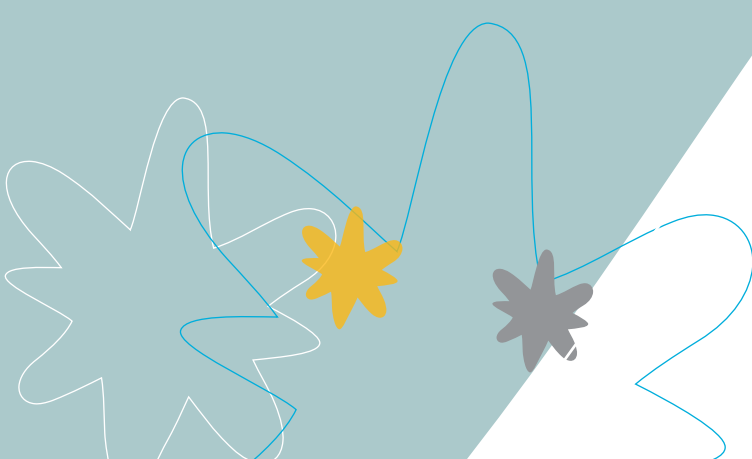


## MAKING AN IMPACT

- We are founding members of the Anti-Trafficking Council, Georgia's first comprehensive partnership of agencies that serve or advocate on behalf of human trafficking victims.
- We are active supporters of SafeHarborYES, a ballot initiative to provide care and services for the victims of child sex trafficking in Georgia.

“**Our collaboration with youthSpark is about making a difference for LGBTQ youth in Atlanta and we have already made tremendous strides in training and community collaboration. We continue to seek out gaps in service delivery to be more effective.**”

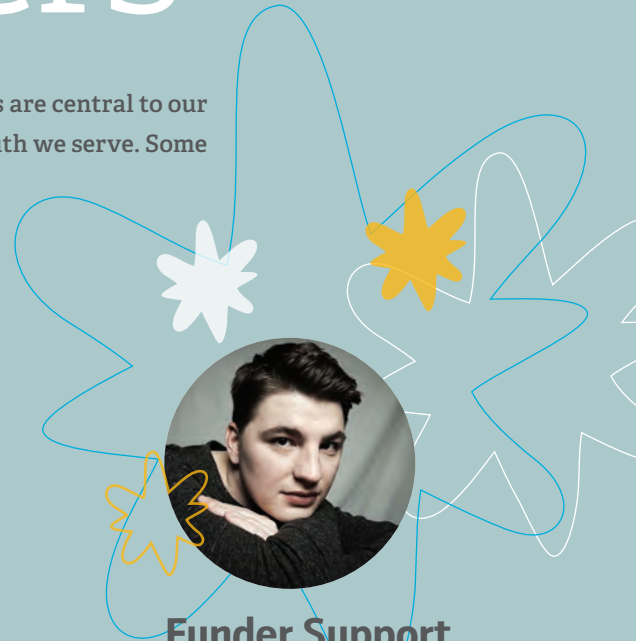
~ **Emily Brown**  
Georgia Equality  
Atlanta Coalition for LGBTQ Youth



# Our Partners

Business, government, nonprofit, philanthropic, and community partners are central to our success and help us achieve a greater impact in the lives of the at-risk youth we serve. Some of our policy and service provider collaborative partners include:

4Sarah	The Junior League of Atlanta
CHRIS Kids	Night Light International
Covenant House Atlanta	Out of Darkness
Demand Abolition	Richmont University
Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA)	Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery for the Americas
Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network (GAIN)	Salvation Army
Georgia Cares	Street Grace
Georgia Center for Child Advocacy	Tapetri
Grady Teen Health Clinic	United Way of Greater Atlanta
Interfaith Children's Movement	Voices for Georgia's Children
International Human Trafficking Institute	Wellspring Living
JoyUs Beginnings	YWCA of Greater Atlanta



## Funder Support

What we do is not possible without the support of many individuals, organizations and foundations.

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

#### **50,000+**

Anonymous (2)  
Harold M. Anderson  
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council  
Robert and Polly Dunn Foundation  
Junior League of Atlanta  
Ware Foundation

#### **\$10,000 – \$49,999**

Taylor Anderson  
Mary Allen Lindsey Brannan Foundation  
Demand Abolition  
Fulton DeKalb Hospital Authority  
Home Depot Community Network  
Imlay Foundation  
Florence C. and Harry L. English Memorial Fund of the SunTrust Trusteed Foundations  
United Way of Metro Atlanta

#### **\$2,500 – \$9,999**

The Antinori Foundation  
Atlanta Foundation  
Dana Bentata  
Henry Bond  
Stephanie Bond  
George Brown Trust Fund  
Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta  
Karlise Yvette Grier  
Hand Up Atlanta  
Sharon L. Hill  
Scott Hudgens Family Foundation  
Zenda Jones  
Cassandra Johnson  
Anita and Phillip Leopold  
MAXIMUS Foundation  
Catherine Payne  
Jennifer Pendergast  
Barbara Rose  
Nzinga Shaw  
State Street Global Advisors  
Tita Stewart  
Alex Trouteaud  
Michael Tyre  
Daniel Webster  
Doug K. Weston

#### **\$500 – \$2,499**

Lang Adler  
Tramell Alexander  
Atlanta Hawks  
Babush Neiman Kornman & Johnson  
Keith & Jule Barringer  
Sarah Batts  
Jennifer Bennecke  
Kelly Basler  
Catholic Foundation of North Georgia  
Central Presbyterian Church  
Gus Cueto  
Enid Draluck  
Yume Herod  
Federal Home Loan Bank  
David Geist  
Honorable Edward Goodman  
Goodman McGuffey Lindsey & Johnson, LLP

Leslie Irvine  
Barbara Kaines  
Edward Lindsey  
Tywanda Lord  
Katherine McCullough  
Paradies Lagarde  
Barbara Rose  
Jennifer Rose  
Andrea Smith  
Giselle Swann  
Leandrew Tabb  
Richard Towes  
Honorable Renata D. Turner  
Barbara Vazquez  
Tonya Watson  
Molly Webb  
Patty Webb  
Janet A. Wiggins  
Christopher Wilbanks  
Melody Wilson

#### **Up to \$499**

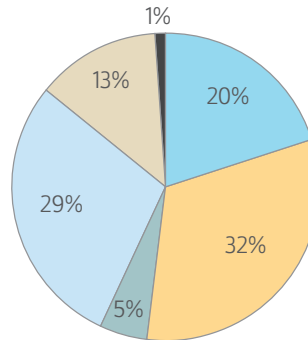
Thank you to everyone who made a gift! Every dollar makes a difference and your gift is important to us.

# Financial Stewardship

Fiscal responsibility is a top priority. youthSpark is a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization funded by support from individual donations, private and corporate foundations, government grants, and fundraising events. We believe in maintaining integrity and openness in our financial practices and being wise and good stewards of the contributions and support that we receive. We strive to use our funds in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible, especially as we focus on expanding our work.

## Financial Overview

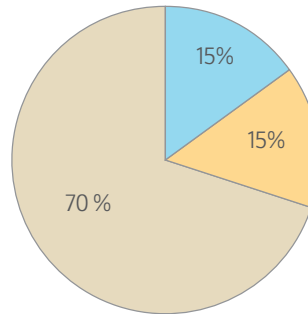
Year Ending June 30, 2016



### Income

Total = \$431,343

● Government Grants.....	\$85,304
● Foundation and Corporate Gifts.....	\$139,350
● Civic Organizations.....	\$3,884
● Individual Donations.....	\$123,446
● Fundraising Events.....	\$57,838
● Other.....	\$1,521



### Expenses

Total = \$367,464

● Administration.....	\$58,122
● Fundraising.....	\$54,730
● Program Services.....	\$254,612

## Capital Campaign Update

In the early fall of 2015, we kicked off our first-ever capital campaign, "Building Brighter Futures," to support the creation of our new Youth Services Center. The campaign goal of \$700,000 would help support the start-up costs to create the Center, in addition to operating funds for a portion of the first three years. Since then, we have been thrilled to welcome some amazing partners and are delighted to share that we not only met, but exceeded our \$700,000 capital campaign goal with over \$720,000 raised.



## Connecting the Dots

Detectives from the DeKalb Police Department encountered a young girl at a local hotel one night. The officers were well-trained and treated the victim with care, but they wanted to be sure to leave no stone unturned so they reached out to the youth services team at youthSpark. The child's mother was distraught to learn of her daughter's whereabouts, and feared for her safety. Because of our work in the court system, we were able to connect the officers to the appropriate juvenile court staff, and within 24 hours DeKalb Police Department's entire special victims unit was in court to support this young victim, as was the Division of Family and Children Services. When we work together, we can ensure that no child falls through the cracks, and that all victims are connected with the critical help they need.

## Be Ready When They Are

"Kela" had been working with youthSpark for six months before she finally gained the courage to speak out against her exploiter. She listened to other girls who spoke openly about their past experiences, but she still questioned if she, too, was a victim. It all happened when we took Kela and some of our girls to a local horse ranch for equine therapy. The instructor discussed how the girls had to take control of their horses, just as they have the internal power in life to take control of their futures. At first Kela was anxious and afraid, but she pushed herself to take control of the horse. She suddenly felt courageous, and spoke softly to the horse that "it's okay." After the first ride, Kela let her guard down and spoke to our clinician about how afraid she was of her pimp. She recalled the times he had beaten her, and how she didn't want that to happen to any more girls. The other girls rallied around her and told her how proud they were of her. Kela left the visit and insisted we call our friends at the Atlanta Police Department to bring him to justice. Today Kela talks about the other girls she had been with, and how if they could come to youthSpark, it could save their lives, too.



395 Pryor Street, Suite 2117  
Atlanta, Georgia 30312