

2024



Annual Report

Formerly known as:



RAPE RESPONSE INC.
support, education & advocacy

LETTER FROM THE Executive Director



Welcome to Bridging Hope's Annual Report!

This year marks an exciting transformation for our organization as we honor our origins while embracing a new identity. For over 36 years, we were known as Rape Response, a name that clearly conveyed our original mission: to support survivors of sexual violence with critical services. However, as our work has expanded to include a broader spectrum of services, it became clear that our name needed to reflect this evolution. We also wanted a name that was less triggering to survivors. With thoughtful consideration, we are proud to introduce our new name: Bridging Hope.

Bridging Hope symbolizes connection, transition, and healing — the core of what we strive to offer. Through trauma-focused counseling, advocacy, forensic medical exams, and prevention education, we are committed to empowering survivors and supporting our community. Our new name embodies our promise to foster a hopeful and supportive environment where survivors feel seen, heard, and respected.

Inside this annual report, you'll find inspiring stories and impactful highlights made possible by your support. From providing comprehensive care to survivors, to expanding preventive education efforts across our counties, Bridging Hope is moving forward with a vision that honors our past and looks ambitiously toward a future free from sexual violence. This rebrand is more than a name change; it's a renewed dedication to reach more people and to help each survivor navigate their journey with compassion and dignity.

Thank you for being an integral part of our growth and mission. Your belief in our work has helped us reach new heights and will continue to fuel our efforts in bridging hope and healing for all who need us. On behalf of our clients, team, and everyone at Bridging Hope, thank you for your unwavering support.

With gratitude,

Jen Tarnowski

Jen Tarnowski
Executive Director, Bridging Hope

Service Stats



Program Areas

CRISIS SUPPORT/ADVOCACY

In response to the growing demand for services within the Spanish-speaking community, two full-time bilingual advocates have joined our team. We seek to ensure that we can provide comprehensive, culturally competent assistance to Spanish-speaking survivors of sexual violence. This addition reflects our unwavering commitment to meeting the specific needs of each person we serve. Please see full story on page 6.

TRAUMA-INFORMED THERAPY

To effectively meet the growing need for trauma-focused therapy, we added two additional full-time therapists in FY24. We also continue to expand the availability of therapy modalities to better meet client needs. Our program offers a range of educational and support groups to resourcefully address trauma-focused therapy needs. Additionally, our kind and gentle therapy dog Blue has continued to serve as a tremendous asset to survivors.

EDUCATION

This year, our education program has seen an overwhelming increase in the number of students served, from 11,500 last year to over 13,000 this year. This expansion reflects the growing demand for prevention education services and the impact of our Let’s Talk© Healthy Relationships curriculum. We have recently received verbal confirmation that we will be able to offer our programs in Forsyth County Schools, which could significantly expand the reach of this program.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

This year our community outreach program targeted service to the unhoused population in our area offering essential support resources. In collaboration with other local non-profit organizations, we raised awareness at the Voices for Victims March of Resilience by providing two of our own staff as public speakers and walking in strength and solidarity for the survivors in our community.

FORENSIC MEDICAL

Our SANE program recently expanded its services to include non fatal strangulation assessments, recognizing the critical need to address this form of violence. This addition allows our trained nurses to provide more specialized care and evidence collection for survivors of strangulation, helping to support their healing and strengthen legal cases.

SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE (SAKI) SERVICES

We are proud to now offer tele-mental health services for survivors whose cold cases have been reactivated. This addition ensures that survivors have greater access to confidential, free, convenient, trauma-focused support, allowing them to receive the care they need regardless of their geographic location within Georgia.

VISION

Eliminate sexual violence.

MISSION

Bridging Hope serves as a system of support, education, and advocacy, providing services to the community and to survivors of sexual assault, ages 13 and older, while safeguarding the dignity of each person served.

SERVICES

We are the dedicated Sexual Assault Center for Dawson, Forsyth, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin and White counties. We provide a 24-hour crisis line; forensic medical exams; medical accompaniment & aftercare; crisis intervention; counseling & support groups; and criminal justice accompaniment to survivors aged 13 & older. In addition, we provide prevention education programs in local schools; and community awareness & trainings.



Some of the Bridging Hope team at Latino Fest in Gainesville, GA

GROWING BILINGUAL SERVICES: **Empowering Our Latino Community**

In recent months, our agency has made remarkable strides in offering bilingual services to our Spanish-speaking community, which faces unique vulnerabilities to sexual assault and trafficking. Our service area has emerged as a prominent location for Latino workers, many employed by the numerous local chicken plants and other employers. Unfortunately, the area's thriving job market has created a situation that can foster exploitation. For those who arrive hoping to build a better life, the trauma of sexual assault and abuse often remains hidden due to language barriers, fear of retaliation, and lack of awareness about available resources. At our agency, we recognized this pressing need and took action, aiming to bridge the gap in access to justice and healing for Spanish-speaking survivors.

Our bilingual advocacy program is the cornerstone of our work in this area, serving as a lifeline for survivors who previously had no clear path to safety. In the past we had to rely on impersonal language lines—remote interpretation services that, while helpful, cannot match the assurance and personal connection provided by in-person bilingual advocates. Language lines often leave survivors feeling isolated and disconnected, making it difficult to trust the

process or find comfort in the services. Seeing these challenges firsthand, we brought on two bilingual advocates this year to provide culturally sensitive support that resonates on a deep, personal level with survivors, many of whom have endured unimaginable trauma.

Since our program's inception, the word is getting out. As a result, the demand for bilingual services has surged. Advocates have reported seeing dozens of Spanish-speaking survivors in a short time revealing both the pressing need and the trust our agency has built within the community. However, meeting this demand has not been without challenges. Survivors often face additional barriers, such as limited literacy skills, technological access, and transportation issues, making it difficult to complete necessary paperwork or navigate unfamiliar systems. Our advocates have stepped in, providing hands-on assistance that goes beyond standard advocacy, allowing survivors to take those first essential steps toward justice and recovery.

Expanding bilingual services is essential to our broader mission of preventing trafficking and sexual violence. Our area's Latino community, particularly those working in labor-oriented or high-risk jobs, is at a greater risk for trafficking. Many are reluctant to speak-out due to fears of job loss, deportation, or distrust of authorities, which traffickers exploit to keep victims silent. Our advocates have spent countless hours building trust within this community, educating workers about their rights and letting them know that safe, confidential resources are available.

Despite our progress, we face a critical gap in services—counseling. Currently, survivors have the option of being referred to a bilingual contract therapist who often has a very long waiting list, or one of our English-speaking staff therapists. For survivors, being able to communicate in their first language with someone who understands their culture can be profoundly healing. Yet, the lack of a Spanish-speaking therapist limits our ability to provide full, trauma-informed care to this vulnerable community.

As we look to the future, we recognize that bilingual counseling is not just a need but a necessity. With adequate funding, we can bring a Spanish-speaking therapist onto our team, enabling survivors to receive counseling in their native language. This investment would ensure that all survivors, regardless of language, can fully engage in their recovery journey and find a path to healing. Together, we can create a more inclusive, compassionate Gainesville, where every survivor has the chance to heal and thrive.

“
For survivors, being able to communicate in their first language with someone who understands their culture can be profoundly healing.”

Our Team

STAFF MEMBERS



Jen Tarnowski
Executive Director

Erica Autry Henderson
Therapy Program Director

Janie Steckenrider
Forensic Nursing
Program Director

Chris Gailey
Accounting Manager

Chris Pearce
Grants Manager

Kalia Jordan
Advocacy Manager

Emily Britt
Forensic Nursing
Program Manager

Leigh Wiles
Statewide SAKI Advocate

Madison Roberts
Forsyth County Awareness
& Education Advocate

Allison Ahrens
Education Advocate

Abby Evans
Bilingual Advocate &
Volunteer Coordinator

Camila Colman
Bilingual Advocate

Erica Slaughter
Campus Advocate

Katherine Mitchell
Therapist

Miriam Murphy-Gary
Therapist

Mary Kellen Beck
Advocate

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Alyson Paul
President

Jeremy Weiner
Vice President

Leigh Stallings-Wood
Secretary

Jeremy Perry
Treasurer

Sean McCusker
Past President

Natasha Alvarado

Kris Brown

Kelley Robertson

Ashton Lewis

Faye Crupi

Bri Terry

Sally Walden-Crowe

Amy Marsh

Matthew Mahathey

Jessica Van

Cari Marcellino

Saige Jenkins



ADVISORY BOARD

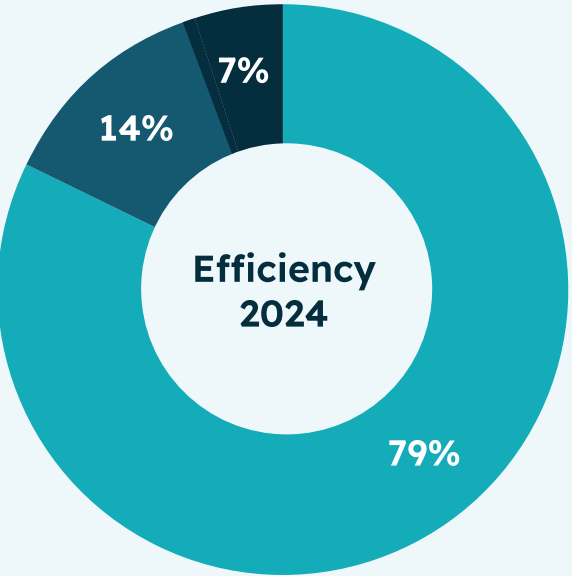
Gerald Couch

Jimmy Faulkner

Jane Hemmer

Shannon Hughs

Financials



	Program Services		
	Administration		
	Fundraising		
Operating Services	FY2024	FY2023	
Program Services	\$1,096,860	\$850,959	
Administration	\$192,566	\$157,526	
Fundraising	\$100,680	\$53,957	
Total Expenses	\$1,390,106	\$1,062,442	
End of Year Net Assets	\$628,719	\$677,192	

Donor Wall

GRANTS

Amicalola EMC	Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)	The Nathan-Schrage Fund at the North Georgia Community Foundation
Andrews Family Foundation	National Association of VOCA Assistance Administrators (NAVAA)	The Starlet Rhodes Jones Fund at the North Georgia Community Foundation
Clipper Petroleum Foundation	Jackson EMC Foundation	The Tom and Leanne Johnston Charitable Fund at the North Georgia Community Foundation
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Victims Compensation	Jim and Gloria Syfan Fund at the National Christian Foundation	United Way: Dawson, Forsyth, Greater Atlanta, Habersham, Hall & White County
Criminal Justice Coordinating Council/State	Olaf and Fox Gradin through BrightStar	Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)
Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, Inc.	North Gorgia Community Foundation	
Junior League of Gainesville-Hall County		

CHURCHES

First Presbyterian Church	Grace Episcopal Church
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LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Gainesville, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin & White (5% Fines)	Hall County Government
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BUSINESS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Atomspeed	CCAPSA, Inc.	Flowery Branch Lodge
Bell-Forsyth District Attorney	Contract Lumber, Inc.	Fuzzy Red Rope
Benevity Fund	Electronic Sales Co.	Give Lively Foundation

Donor Wall *CONTINUED*

Kroger	Rotary Int Club of Dahlonega Inc.	South State Bank
McDonalds Northeast Georgia	Rushton & Company	Specialty Orthopaedics PC
Northeast Georgia Medical Center	The Healing Arts Spa on Green Street	Stalling’s Mech/ Electrical Service LLC
North Georgia Tech Jeans for Justice event	Turner, Wood & Smith Insurance	UKOGF Foundation
Northside Hospital	Valdosta State University Foundation, Inc	Walmart
		Xtreme Clean Auto Spa 2

INDIVIDUALS

Natasha Alvarado	Ryan and Liz Cochen	Patricia Elliott
Peggy Anderson	Phil and Kathy Collins	Jimmy Faulkner
Debbie Ames	Kate Cook	Anthony and Rebekah Franklin
Jacob Autry	Lynn Couch	Karen Frost
Brenda Bahel	Sally Walden-Crowe	Chris Gailey
Caroline Baeumel	James & Faye Crupi	Dolores Gardner
Linda Bella	Jeffery R. Daniel	Randy & Jennifer Garrett
Darin & Laurie Boozer	Reese & Susan Daniel	Polly Geren
Ann Bryant	Christie Daruwalla	Elaine Gerke
John Breakfield	Lyla Daruwalla	Margaret Gibson
Ellen Corinne Briggs	John and Marina Delaney	Catherine Gille
Kris Brown	Tina DeWaart	Emilie Gille
Allison Cawood	Blair Diaz	Kristin Ghesquiere
Emily Cell	Drew and Shelly Echols	Bobbie Girardeau
Allison Clark	Lois Ehlers	Wendy Glasbrenner
Dawn Clay	Jay Eisner	

Donor Wall

CONTINUED

Paul Goldstein	Mary Helen McGruder	Laura Rives
Cassandra Gorham	Elizabeth McKenna	Denise Roberts
Marilyn Green	Karen McClure	Betsy Robertson
Abigail Guzman	Tara Lamkin	Kelly Robertson
Danita Hamilton	Ashton Lewis	Susan Rolader
Timothy Hayes	Stacy Millican	Cassidy Roland
Jane Hemmer	Anne Mistretta	Carole Routman
Sarah Henderson	Mark Meyers	Marion Rothchild
Mike & Robin Higley	Ann Morris	Haley Sands
Christine Hogan	Kerri Morrison	Reneigh Satterfield
David & Shannon Hughs	Bonnie Olentine	Susan Schwall
Deborah Humphreys	Charlotte Owens	Rosemary Shaffer
Glenda Ivey	Jeffey Palmatier	Ellen Sheridan
Adrienne Johnson	Sandra Patridge	Julie A. Skaggs
Linda Kadechuk	Alyson Paul	Janie Wolf-Smith
Susan Kennish	Sandra Patridge	Suzette Snell
Bria Kellar	Chris Pearce	Cindy Steckenrider
Tammy Keyes	Penny Penn	Drew and Janie Steckenrider
Melissa King	Jane Pignolet	Kelly Steely
Melissa Krudwig	Shirley Polk	CK Stephens
Alexi Leal	Patricia Powell	Laura Stephens
Sandra Lealos	Takita Pruitt	Leah Stewart
Kelly Lee	Vickie Pruitt	Doris Stockman
Jennifer Loggins	William Rambin	Julienne Sweeney
Carol Lumpkin	Judith Reece	Jen Tarnowski
Cindy Marushak	Kimberley Renner	Joanie Taylor

Donor Wall

CONTINUED

Arlene Teare	Janice Ward	Sara White
Bri Terry	Teri Warner	Sherry Wileman
Elizabeth Thompson	Sherry Wileman	Michael & Leigh Wiles
Becky Tomsu	Susan Willson	Merelise Wilson
Cassidy Turner	Merelise Wilson	Suzanne Willis
Wanda Vance	Virginia Winship	Diane Womack
Mary Vintimilla	Sally Wise	Teryl Worster
Michael Vosseller	Leigh Stallings-Wood	Rose Zawistowski
Mary Wall	Margot Weatherford	
Kay Walker	Jeremy Weiner	

HONORARIUMS

Jeanne Coates In honor of DFC dancers	Miles and Sharon Coker In honor of Jeanne Coates	James Harris & Company In honor of Gloria Syfan
Jen Tarnowski In honor of DFC dancers	Marissa Rosenbloom In honor of Gloria Syfan	Terri Strayhorn In honor of Wendy Glasbrenner

GIFTS IN KIND

Adventure Bags	Bill and Jeanne Coates	Drew and Janie Steckenrider
Al and Reneigh Satterfield	Bill Hallows	Elachee Nature Center
Alliance Theatre	Bourbon Brothers Remedy Distillery	Faye Crupi
Anesthesiology Associates	Callaway Golf	Georgia Aquarium
Atlanta Botanical Gardens	Center for Puppetry Arts	High Museum of Art
Atlanta History Center	Chick Fil A Gainesville	Jackie Wells
Bark Box	Chris Gailey	Kelley Robertson
BGW Dental		Kendra Scott Jewelry

Donor Wall

CONTINUED

- Longhorn Steakhouse

Mariott Hotel

Mark Lindow Wingman

Woodworks Handcrafted Charcuterie Board

NoFo Brewing Company

Northeast Georgia
- Plastic Surgery

Raiford Gallery

Susan Lagasse

Sally Walden-Crowe

Six Flags Over Georgia

Southen Baked Pie Company
- Spa on Green Street

Tito's Vodka

Top Golf

Well Made Dahlonaga

Xtreme Clean Auto Spa

Zoo Atlanta

How to Give

ONLINE GIVING

Supporting Bridging Hope is simple! Scan the QR code to the right or make your gift at raperesponse.com/donate.



MAIL-IN GIFT

We've included a Business Reply Envelope (BRE) with this report—just complete the form, enclose your gift, and drop it in the mail!

ANNUAL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

As Rape Response transitions to Bridging Hope, we are thrilled to announce the launch of our first-ever Annual Sponsorship Program. We invite you to join our Inaugural Class of Annual Sponsors—a visionary group whose support will forever be celebrated as the driving force behind this exciting new chapter for Bridging Hope.

Sponsorship levels come with exclusive benefits, including recognition on social media, our website, quarterly newsletters, and the Sponsor Board displayed at all community events. Many sponsorship tiers also feature a reserved table at our signature event, Bingo & Bubbly, taking place on the morning of May 3, 2025.

To learn more, please visit raperesponse.com/donate and click “Annual Sponsorship”. Together, we can ensure a bright future for Bridging Hope and the communities we serve.

Thank You Notes

Your support makes a profound difference in the lives of survivors. Each thank-you note in this photo represents a story of healing, resilience, and hope made possible by your generosity. Because of you, survivors find a safe space to rebuild, access life-changing resources, and feel the power of a community that truly cares. Your donations are more than just a gift—they are a lifeline. Thank you for standing with us to bring hope and healing to those who need it most.



Save the Date

BINGO & BUBBLY

Join us at the Gainesville Civic Center for a Kentucky Derby-themed morning of brunch, bingo, mimosas, auction baskets, and exciting prizes—all while dressed in your Derby best. Building on the success of our last two events, we look forward to making this year even more impactful! Mark your calendar and join us for a memorable day supporting Bridging Hope!

MAY 3, 2025



DANCING FOR A CAUSE

Save the Date for the 8th Annual Dancing for a Cause on August 23, 2025! We're rolling out the red carpet for our celebrity and professional dancers, along with over 500 guests. Last year, a record \$417,818 was raised for three incredible organizations, including Bridging Hope. This unprecedented generosity will help us continue our important work supporting survivors and empowering our community.

AUG. 23, 2025



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