



# LETTER FROM THE *Executive Director*



Dear Friends,

I am an advocate through and through! My commitment to advocacy is not just my job; it is a part of my soul. It fuels my daily motivation and purpose, propelling me to be here, available, and focused on providing the highest level of support for sexual assault survivors. Our entire team is committed to providing survivors with all their options, to support their decisions, and to offer a hand to hold throughout their healing journey.

Rolling up my sleeves and getting involved on behalf of our survivors is what gets me out of bed in the morning. I first started with Rape Response in 2017 as a Contract Educator before becoming a Campus Advocate and then Advocacy Director. Throughout my time here I have witnessed the unwavering strength of survivors and the incredible work our organization does.

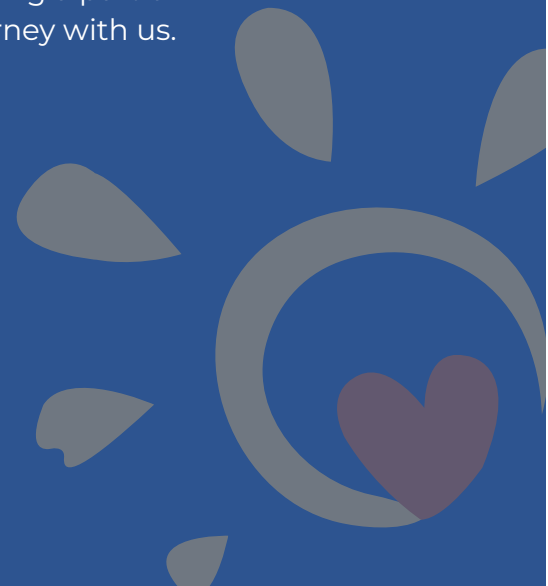
Assuming the role of Executive Director in the fall of 2022 was an honor and a privilege and the culmination of my journey walking alongside survivors for these many years. I stand on the shoulders of the leadership that has guided Rape Response since 1988 and both the organization's strong foundation and my own personal journey have created a base from which we will be able to undertake even more transformational change on behalf of survivors in the years to come.

Adding our SANE program (please see page 4) as a core service in early 2023 was a natural progression in Rape Response's service offerings. For me personally, it was a critical way that our organization could further support sexual assault survivors in their journey to healing. This annual report is a reflection of our collective commitment to making a difference.

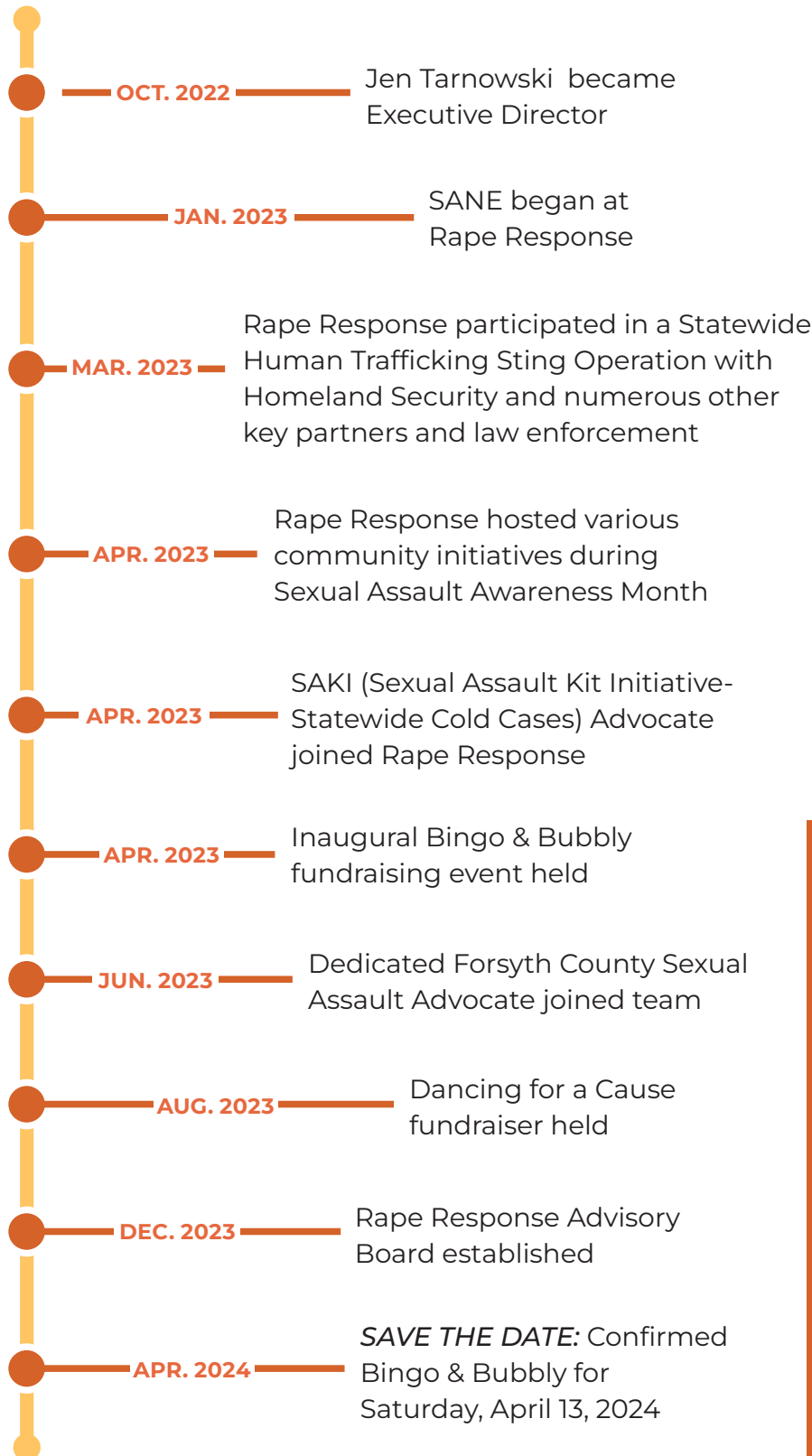
As we look to the future, I am filled with hope and determination. I am so grateful for the ongoing support of our staff, board of directors, volunteers, community partners, and faithful donors. Together, we can do even more to create a world where survivors are heard, respected, and empowered.

Thank you for your continued support and for being a part of this important journey with us.

**Jen Tarnowski**  
Executive Director



# RAPE RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS



**829** survivors served through crisis support, advocacy, counseling, and SANE exams

**13,644** services provided

**35** volunteers contributed 7,026 volunteer hours

**11,500+** individuals educated through our prevention education program

## THE NEED IS GREAT...

- According to the CDC, over half of women and almost 1 in 3 men have experienced sexual violence in their lifetimes.
- According to the CDC, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 26 men have experienced an attempted or completed rape.
- Rape remains the most underreported crime; 63% of sexual assaults are not reported to the police. (U.S. Department of Justice)



# SANE PROGRAM LAUNCHED AT RAPE RESPONSE IN JANUARY 2023

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) are highly trained professionals uniquely qualified to address the medical and evidentiary needs of individuals affected by sexual violence. Historically, hospital emergency departments across the country provided these services, but rising healthcare costs and administrative challenges prompted a shift in the

SANE service delivery model. Georgia boasts a large network of community-based sexual assault centers that offer advocacy and forensic medical services under one roof. This model of care offers a uniquely holistic and victim-centered approach. Rape Response, led by Executive Director Jen Tarnowski, collaborated with Janie Steckenrider, BSN,

## SANE Program Facts

- Two full-time employees:
  - Janie Steckenrider, BSN, RN, SANE-A, GFN-C | Program Director
  - Emily Britt, BSN, RN, SANE-A | Program Coordinator
- Seven contract forensic nurses (SANEs)
- SANE services are offered 24/7/365.
- Collaboration with over twenty law enforcement agencies, four judicial circuits, two large hospital systems, and various universities.
- The Rape Response SANE Program is the designated medical forensic provider listed in Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) Protocol for each judicial circuit served.
- Quarterly SART meetings and multi-disciplinary team (MDT) case reviews hosted by the program.
- Expert witness testimony and legal consultation provided by nursing staff.
- Active involvement in educating community partners about forensic medical programs/services.

## 2023 SANE Program Achievements

- Both full-time clinical staff members hold the SANE-A certification, placing them among the 42 nurses in Georgia with this qualification.
- The program was selected by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to conduct SANE examinations for a Human Trafficking sting operation in Atlanta.
- Inaugural “Bingo and Bubbly” fundraiser in April 2023 raised \$25,000 for the SANE Program.
- Emily Britt and Jen Tarnowski attended a Human Trafficking Conference hosted by “Futures without Violence” to explore collaboration in combating human trafficking in North Georgia.
- Medical staff identified strangulation examinations as a critical community need and collaborated with law enforcement and prosecution to provide these services.



RN, SANE-A, GFN-C, to establish the Rape Response Forensic Medical Program.

In its first year, the Rape Response SANE Program has assisted over 65 patients from eleven counties. We prioritize our six county service area, but never turn away anyone needing an exam. The program focuses on patient care, conducting exams in a warm, welcoming environment that contrasts with the typical hospital

setting. SANEs collect detailed medical and assault histories, perform thorough physical assessments, and utilize state-of-the-art forensic equipment for optimal evidence collection. Patients receive free STI prophylaxis and emergency contraceptives, along with education and additional resources based on individual needs.

# MISSION

Rape Response 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.

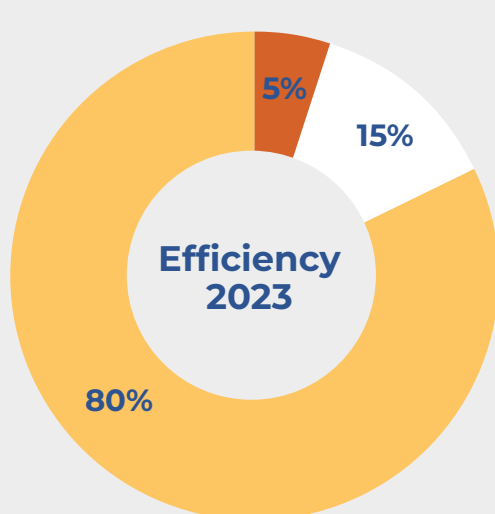
# SERVICES

We are the dedicated Sexual Assault Center for Dawson, Forsyth, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin and White counties.

Services we provide:

- 24-hour Crisis Line
- Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) Exams & medical aftercare
- Crisis intervention
- Individual counseling & support groups
- Criminal justice and judicial accompaniment and support
- “Let’s Talk®” prevention education program in middle and high schools
- Volunteer program
- Community awareness and trainings

# FINANCIALS



- Program Services
- Administration
- Fundraising

Operating Services	FY2023	FY2022
Program Services	\$850,959	\$641,347
Administration	\$157,526	\$104,407
Fundraising	\$53,957	\$39,336
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,062,442</b>	<b>\$785,090</b>
.....		
<b>End of Year Net Assets</b>	<b>\$677,192</b>	<b>\$514,956</b>

# RAPE RESPONSE TEAM

## Staff

**Jen Tarnowski**  
*Executive Director*

**Janie Steckenrider**  
*SANE Director*

**Erica Autry Henderson**  
*Therapy Program Director*

**Elizabeth Swan**  
*Advocacy Manager*

**Chris Gailey**  
*Accounting Manager*

**Chris Pearce**  
*Grants Manager*

**Sommer Floyd**  
*Education Coordinator*

**Emily Britt**  
*SANE Coordinator*

**Lily Sheppard**  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

**Sarah Marin**  
*Campus Advocate*

**Madison Roberts**  
*Forsyth County Advocate*

**Leigh Wiles**  
*Statewide SAKI Advocate*

**Kalia Jordan**  
*Advocate*

**Erica Slaughter**  
*Advocate*

**Miriam Murphy-Gary**  
*Therapist*

**Katherine Mitchell**  
*Therapist*

**Blue**  
*In-house Therapy Dog*

**Many dedicated  
volunteers, educators,  
and crisis call responders**

## Board Members

**Natasha Alvarado**

**Kris Brown**

**Sally Walden-Crowe**

**Faye Crupi**

**Melissa King**

**Ashton Lewis**

**Laura Major**

**Amy Marsh**

**Sean McCusker**

**Alyson Paul**

**Jeremy Perry**

**Kelley Robertson**

**Leigh Stallings-Wood**

**Bri Terry**

**Jeremy Weiner**

## Advisory Board Members

*New in 2023*

**Jimmy Faulkner**

**Jane Hemmer**

**Shannon Hughes**

**Abit Massey**



# PROGRAM AREAS

## CRISIS SUPPORT/ADVOCACY

Rape Response's comprehensive crisis services are the cornerstone of our agency. Our 24/7 crisis hotline ensures personal and immediate interaction during a victim's time of need. Trained advocates offer nonjudgmental support, information, and referrals. Advocates are available around the clock, providing answers, emotional support, and arranging medical aftercare including pregnancy, STD testing, and treatment. We also offer in-person crisis intervention, support through legal processes, and counseling and have a dedicated Campus Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator who serves eleven college/university campuses in our area. Additionally, the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) dedicated advocate for the state of Georgia, who handles victim advocacy for cold-case investigations, is part of the Rape Response team.

Some of our advocates provide services to specialty groups and/or specific areas including our Campus Advocate and Forsyth County Advocate. We utilize numerous dedicated volunteers and crisis call responders to provide added support on our crisis line and during forensic exams after hours and on the weekends.

## TRAUMA THERAPY

Recognizing the severe and long-term mental health impact of sexual assault on survivors, Rape Response offers

trauma-focused counseling and survivor support groups to help address these effects. Our survivor support groups provide a safe space for survivors to learn more about trauma and healing, and to connect with and support one another as they move forward.

This year our therapy program expanded therapy modalities to meet the needs of survivors by offering Eye-Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy. In April 2023, "Blue" completed a canine training alongside our Therapy Director. "Blue" is a kind and gentle Great Dane and officially joined our team as our therapy dog. Blue has been a tremendous asset to survivors. We continue to identify the needs of survivors and plan a variety of educational and support groups to meet those needs. We have added two full-time counselors in 2024 to meet the increasing demand for trauma-focused therapy.

## EDUCATION

Rape Response is dedicated to raising awareness and educating our communities about sexual assault. We seek to prevent the initial occurrence of sexual assault by promoting and providing education on healthy relationships. Our Let's Talk© education program fulfills the requirements under both Georgia's SB 401 (Erin's Law) and HB 287, which requires public schools to implement a child sexual abuse prevention program. Rape Response



offers its copyrighted Let's Talk© education program to middle and high school youth within five county school systems. We also partner with outside agencies such as the Juvenile Justice System and the Regional Youth Detention Center to provide programming to at-risk youth. Our team also presents at several youth safety events including Dawson County's Teen Maze and Safe Teens Seminar as well as Hall County's Teen Summit. This year, Rape Response's education team has grown to 9 contract educators, due to the overwhelming need after providing education to over 11,500 students last year. Our Education and Outreach Coordinator officially became a member of Georgia's Rape Prevention Education Advisory Board, to guide best practices for state-wide prevention efforts.

### **COMMUNITY AWARENESS**

Community awareness continues to be a priority within our service area. Our hope is by expanding our outreach, we will be able to reach more sexual assault survivors and their loved ones. Some of these focus areas include those at greater risk for experiencing sexual violence including the homeless community and those who have experienced Human Trafficking.

### **SANE NEW IN JANUARY 2023**

Providing forensic medical exams and aftercare to victims of sexual assault (see page 4) is an essential component of our work to create a healthier, safer, and more just community for all. Our SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner)

program was launched in January 2023 to provide forensic medical exams to victims of sexual assault outside of a hospital setting. We are the only entity in our service area currently offering this essential service which has improved access to forensic medical exams, facilitated wrap-around services, streamlined the SANE process for law enforcement, and expanded expert witness availability for the judicial system.

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT KIT INITIATIVE (SAKI) ADVOCATE**

*JOINED RAPE RESPONSE IN MAY 2023*

Rape Response houses Leigh Wiles, the only statewide Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) Advocate in the state of Georgia. Funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative creates a coordinated community response that ensures just resolution to sexual assault cases resulting from evidence found in kits that were never submitted to a crime laboratory. The initiative helps connect victims to an advocate, Leigh, and all the critical services she provides, while also assisting jurisdictions in implementing practices that bring perpetrators to justice to prevent future assaults. Rape Response has received funding for 2024 that will allow counseling for these survivors.

# DONOR WALL

## GRANTS

Criminal Justice Coordinating Council/State

Junior League of Gainesville-Hall County

Sexual Assault Services Program (SASP)

The Nathan-Schrage Fund at the North Georgia Community Foundation

The Tom and Leanne Johnston Charitable Fund at the North Georgia Community Foundation

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

## UNITED WAY

Dawson, Forsyth, Greater Atlanta, Habersham, Hall & White County

## CHURCHES

First Presbyterian Church

Grace Episcopal Church

Oasis Sunday School Class

Trinity UMC Clermont

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Gainesville, Habersham, Hall, Lumpkin & White (5% Fines)

Hall County Government

## BUSINESS & COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Amazon

Atomspeed

Bell-Forsyth District Attorney's Office

Benevity Fund

Cleveland Diesel Service, Inc.

Electronic Sales Co.

Eve Blackwood Art

Every.org

Forum Communications

Georgia Power

Give Lively Foundation

Instrumentl

Kroger

McDonalds Northeast Georgia

McGarity's Business Products

Network for Good-Facebook Donations

Northeast Georgia Medical Center

Northside Hospital

Red Robin

Rotary Int Club of Dahlonega Inc.

Turner, Wood & Smith Insurance

Silicon Laboratory

## INDIVIDUALS

Natasha Alvarado

Anonymous

Peggy Anderson

Frank & Carol Ann Armstrong

Wendy Atkinson

Barbara Batog

Deonna Belcher

Chris & Christy Bivins

Darin & Laurie Boozer

Don & Abby Brewer

Ellen Corinne Briggs

Kris Brown

Nancy Carvell

Laren Chandler

Christina Clark

Dawn Clay

Miles & Sharon Coker

Susan Cole

Lucinda Corless

James & Faye Crupi

Tina DeWaart

Wayne & Mimi Dill

Tian Ding

Cathy Drerup

Paula Duncan

Lois Ehlers

Dr. or Mrs. Slade H. Exley Jr.

Jimmy Faulkner

Joseph Fisher

Karen Frost

Martha Fritchley

Elsa Ann Gaines

Randy & Jennifer Garrett

Mary Catherine George

Wendy Glasbrenner

Cassandra Gorham

Jennifer Gorell

Krissy Gravel

Estate of Lynnea Halberg

William Hankison

John Haynes

Scott & Kristi Harding

John & Jane Hemmer

David & Shannon Hughes

Glenda Ivey

Carol Jackson

Cheryl Jones

Melissa King

Carly Kopydlowski

Amanda Lammers

Denise Leeson

Ashton Lewis

Janet Lovell

Teina Lowvorn

Laura Major

Robin Marx

# DONOR WALL *CONTINUED...*

Karen McClure  
Sean McCusker  
Alanna McKenzie  
Anne Mistretta  
Jennifer & Ron Meeks  
Ann Morris  
Dawn Mumpower  
Pete & Martha Nesbitt  
Beth Nix  
Brenda Parson  
Alyson Paul  
Jule Paruolo  
Penny Penn  
Jeremy Perry  
Wilson Pierce  
Vickie Pruitt  
Ellen Rapiet  
Elizabeth Ready  
Kelly Robertson  
Jennifer Robson  
Kittie Ross  
Randy & Marcia Samples  
Reneigh Satterfield  
Ronny & Shonda Satterfield  
Sherry Seal  
Pamela Segars  
Rosemary Shaffer  
LaDon Shaw  
Marta Shelton  
Julie A. Skaggs  
Kendal Smith  
David & Laura Stephens  
Emily Sullens  
Dr. John Sundstrom  
Jennifer Tarnowski  
Joan Taylor  
Arlene Teare

Bri Terry  
Charles & Pamela Treadwell  
Clayton Triggs  
Deborah Ulam  
Elisabeth Vaughan  
Michael Vosseller  
Sally Walden-Crowe  
Sally Wise  
Leigh Stallings-Wood  
Jeremy Weiner  
Sara White  
Teryl Worster  
Angela Zubar

## HONORARIUMS

Deonna Belcher  
*In honor of granddaughter*  
Abby & Don Brewer  
*In honor of Jeanne Coates*  
Miles and Sharon Coker  
*In honor of Jeanne*  
Joseph Fisher  
*In honor of Shanonn  
Thompson for Mother's Day*  
Kittie Ross  
*In honor of Jeanne Coates*

## MEMORIALS

Frank & Carol Ann Armstrong  
*Memory of Laurie Spiess*  
Abby & Don Brewer  
*Memory of Laurie Spiess*  
Randy & Marcia Samples  
*Memory of Laurie Spiess*  
Dr. John Sundstrom  
*Memory of Laurie Spiess*

Charles and Pamela Treadwell  
*Memory of Laurie Spiess*

## GIFTS IN KIND

2 dog  
Abby Saccomanno  
BGW Dental Group  
Canopy and The Roots  
Crown and Bear  
Dr. Jeanne Simone  
Drew and Janie Steckenrider  
Faye Crupi  
Grit & Grace Hot Yoga  
Kendra Scott  
Leigh Stallings -Wood  
Local Pup  
Mary George  
Matthews Printing  
Mountain Laurel  
Creek Inn & Spa  
NoFo Brew Co  
Sally Walden- Crowe  
Skyterra  
Tap IT  
Tesnatee River Winery  
and Meadery  
The Crystal Plate  
The Pig & The Poppy  
(Amy Sullivan)  
The Spa on Green Street  
Thomas Chocolates  
Top Golf  
Total Wine and More  
UNG Police Department  
Well Made Dahlenega

# JOIN THE FUN DRAISING EVENTS!

## BINGO & BUBBLY

Our inaugural "Bingo & Bubbly" event was held on April 15th, 2023. Over 180 supporters gathered at the Gainesville Civic Center for a fabulous brunch, games of bingo, mimosas, auction baskets, and amazing prizes. We also successfully raised \$25,000 toward the launch of our brand new Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner program. We are so grateful for all who participated in this event!



**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**April 13, 2024**

## DANCING FOR A CAUSE

On August 26th, the red carpet was once again rolled out for our celebrity and professional dancers along with over 500 guests for the 7th annual Dancing for a Cause event held this year at the Ramsey Conference Center. Rape Response received \$81,018, from the money raised during the event.



**SAVE THE DATE:**  
**August 24, 2024**

**DONATE: [raperesponse.com/donate](https://raperesponse.com/donate)**



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770-503-7273 | [raperesponse.com](https://raperesponse.com)