

GRACE Commission Meeting Minutes
Georgians for Refuge, Action, Compassion, and Education Commission
March 20th, 2024 from 10:00AM to 11:30AM
Signia by Hilton Atlanta Georgia World Congress Center

Present Commission Members:

First Lady Marty A. Kemp
Attorney General Chris Carr
Chris Hosey, Director, Georgia Bureau of Investigation
Jay Neal, Executive Director, Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
Candice Broce, Commissioner, Department of Human Services, and Director, Division of Family and Community Services
Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Commissioner, Department of Juvenile Justice
Ryan Buchanan, United States Attorney of North Georgia, Northern District of Georgia
Nina Hickson, Chief Legal Officer, City of Atlanta
Dave McCleary, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, EndHTNow
Christian Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, Wellspring Living
Susan Norris, Founder and Executive Director, Rescuing Hope
Katie Kirkpatrick, President and Chief Executive Officer, Metro Atlanta Chamber
Allison Ausband, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer Experience Officer, Delta Air Lines
Sam Hill, Legislative Affairs Manager, Georgia Power

Proceedings:

· *Meeting called to order at 10:15 a.m. by First Lady Marty Kemp*

· **GBI Report provided by Director Chris Hosey:**

- HEAT Unit Personnel to date (Unit Formed 2020)
 - o 7 Agents, 2 Supervisors
 - o 6 GBI Special Agents have collateral duties as Task Force Officers with Homeland Security Investigations and collaborate with their human trafficking section
- HEAT Unit Stats FY 23' and 24' to date
 - o FY23:
 - Total Human Trafficking cases – 91
 - Total arrests – 21
 - Total indictments – 8
 - o FY24 (July 1, 2023 – March 18, 2024)
 - Total Human Trafficking cases – 109
 - Total arrests – 39
 - Total indictments – 6
- HEAT Unit Proactive Collaborations FY 24'
 - o September 29, 2023: Demand reduction and recovery operation in middle Georgia yielded 10 arrests and 9 positive contacts to offer services/advocacy to suspected human trafficking victims.
 - Stakeholders/Collaborators: Perry Police Department; Houston County Sheriff's Office; Houston County DA's Office; MCCD; CJCC victim advocate

- January 24 and 25, 2024: Demand reduction and recovery operation in southeast Georgia yielded 17 arrests and 10 positive contacts to offer services/advocacy to suspected human trafficking victims.
 - Stakeholders/Collaborators: Richmond Hill Police Department; Bryan County Sheriff's Office; HSI; MCCD; CJCC HT victim advocate
- February 23, 2024: Search warrant in a metro Atlanta high-rise apartment yielded 1 arrest and 1 positive contact to offer services/advocacy to known human trafficking victim.
 - Stakeholders/Collaborators: Perry Police Department; Houston County Sheriff's Office; Houston County DA's Office; Atlanta Police Department; GBI Gang Task Force; HSI; CJCC victim advocate
- February 26, 2024: Execution of search warrant at Illicit Massage Business in northwest Georgia (Investigation ongoing). Three positive contacts to offer services/advocacy with suspected human trafficking victims.
 - Stakeholders/Collaborators: Rome Police Department; Rome Floyd Metro Drug Task Force; HSI; CJCC victim advocate
- March 6, 2024: Execution of search warrant at Illicit Massage Business in northwest Georgia yielded one arrest and two positive contacts to offer services/advocacy to suspected human trafficking victims.
 - Stakeholders/Collaborators: Bartow County Sheriff's Office; Cartersville Police Department; HSI; CJCC victim advocate.
- *(Additional but related)* February 18, 2024: a Human Trafficking Awareness community wide event was held at the Thomaston First Baptist Church in Thomaston Ga. The event was hosted by the First Baptist Church of Thomaston and sponsored by the GBI, Upson County Sheriff's Office and Thomaston Police Department. Agents from the GBI's HEAT Unit and Child Exploitation Unit spoke on human trafficking and the dangers of the internet with our youth. Parents and youth were in attendance along with local law enforcement to include SRO's and educators from the community. There were over 130 in attendance.

· Office of the Attorney General Report provided by Attorney General Chris Carr and Senior Assistant Attorney General Hannah Palmquist:

- In 2023 alone, Attorney General Carr's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit:
 - Secured nearly 30 new convictions;
 - Led and assisted 81 case investigations; and
 - Rescued and assisted 129 victims.
- The Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit has maintained a 100 percent conviction rate overall, while also achieving historical success. This includes the first-of-its-kind indictment charging an individual in Clayton County who is alleged to have trafficked an adult female with a developmental disability.
- Attorney General Carr's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit continues to work closely with his Gang Prosecution Unit. Last year, these two teams partnered to indict nine individuals and convict four others. Both Units are currently engaged in the joint prosecution of human trafficking and gang cases in Cherokee, Clayton, Dougherty, and Gwinnett counties.
- Last year, Attorney General Carr expanded the efforts of his Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit to identify and go after illicit massage businesses in the state. The "Illicit Massage Business Project" officially launched on Sep. 1, 2023. To date, Attorney General Carr's Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit has conducted 42 investigations into potential illicit massage businesses. The Unit has elected to proceed with efforts to close 30 of those locations by notifying landlords and working with them to address illicit activity. These efforts have resulted in the closure of 12 illicit massage businesses in

Cherokee and Cobb counties. Most of these landlords have taken significant steps toward evicting their tenants, and the Unit anticipates more closures as those legal processes are completed.

· **CJCC Human Trafficking Task Force Report provided by Executive Director Jay Neal:**

- **Work Group 1 – *Community Awareness and Education*:** Work Group 1 released the 2024 Human Trafficking Training Compendium. The purpose of this compendium is to connect professionals and individuals in the community to available human trafficking prevention and awareness training that is specific to their industry and/or needs. This list is not exhaustive, and though the Work Group does not endorse a particular program, each program has been reviewed and is considered high quality and accessible to the public. The training compendium is available on CJCC’s website.
- **Work Group 3 – *Deterring Traffickers and Buyers*:** To address reducing demand for commercial sex, Work Group 3 is looking to focus on the development of demand reduction approaches such as pre-arrest diversion program in Georgia. This initiative involves collaborating with Georgia-based anti-violence organizations and non-Georgia organizations that have successfully implemented pre-arrest diversion programs focused on sex trafficking and sex work.
- **Work Group 4 – *Keeping At Risk Youth Safe*:** Work Group 4 has developed a human trafficking peer-to-peer education curriculum for youth. While originally conceptualized for youth in foster care, our potential audience has expanded to other at-risk youth populations. The curriculum is centered around giving youth information and tools to identify and define what human trafficking is and how to seek help if they or someone they know is at risk. The Work Group has also developed a one pager to share with organizations who may be interested in receiving the training as well as a pocket guide for youth to take away from the presentation of the modules.
- **Work Group 5 – *Apprehending, Investigating, and Prosecuting*:** Work Group 5 is currently developing the Human Trafficking Response Guide that will provide professionals in the field (law enforcement, first responders, prosecutors, medical professionals, and victim service providers) the knowledge and guidance on how to respond to human trafficking cases appropriately and effectively in our state. The Work Group has been working on this comprehensive guide for the last two years and anticipates finalizing by mid-year.
- **Work Group 7 – *Survivors Supported and Protected*:** Work Group 7 is partnering with Brenau University to conduct a formal research study on survivor perspectives on anti-trafficking awareness approaches and marketing materials. In this process, graduate students at Brenau conducted a full literature review and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct a qualitative research study. In 2023, the Work Group members contributed to developing the research questions and semi-structured interview protocol that is currently being used with survivors who choose to participate. With the insights gained, we hope to offer suggestions and influence the way other service providers, advocates, legislatures, etc. market services without inflicting further harm on the survivors.

· **Grace’s Place Report provided by Commissioner of Department of Human Services Candice Broce:**

- Currently, there are thirteen foster children at Grace’s Place — all female and one transgender child. The majority were missing and recently recovered by law enforcement except for one child, who proactively contacted us to give their location.
- Law enforcement recoveries often depend on information obtained by DFCS staff to find missing foster youth, including the children’s case managers, supervisors, the state office’s new Special

Victims Unit, and the State Office's Missing Children Unit – to safely locate them and transport them to a safer placement, such as Grace's Place.

- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and the Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CACGA) are key players in joint efforts to find missing children, including but not limited to foster youth, in our state. All children at Grace's Place are "confirmed CSEC," which stands for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

• **New GRACE Commission Member Introductions provided by the following:**

- Ryan Buchanan, U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Georgia
- Nina Hickson, Chief Legal Officer, City of Atlanta
- Sam Hill, Legislative Affairs Manager, Georgia Power
- Christian Murphy, Executive Director, Wellspring Living

• **Additional Updates provided by the following:**

- Shawanda Reynolds-Cobb, Commissioner, Department of Juvenile Justice
 - o DJJ numbers from July 2023- February 2024 are as follows:
 - Level 1 Referral – 56
 - Level 2 At-Risk/Not Identified – 5
 - *The young person was identified as at risk, but not a CSEC victim.*
 - Level 3 Confirmed/Identified – 47
 - *The young person was confirmed to be an identified CSEC victim.*

• **Follow-Up from the Meeting:**

- Please see the below attached documents regarding the following:
 - o Parent Resource One-Pager for individuals interested in sharing resources with parents of children and youth who are suspected CSEC victims
 - Provided by CJCC and Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia CSEC Response Team and their network of Child Advocacy Centers
 - o 2023 Data One-Pager that recaps youth served by the Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia CSEC Response Team and their network of Child Advocacy Centers
 - Provided by Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia CSEC Response Team and their network of Child Advocacy Centers

• *Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.*

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS OF COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN & YOUTH



Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia (CACGA)
in Collaboration with the
Georgia Center for Child Advocacy (GCCA)



Navigating trauma is difficult, especially when that trauma involves the exploitation of a loved one. If your child or youth has experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation, you do not have to navigate it alone. The Children's Advocacy Centers of Georgia and the Georgia Center for Child Advocacy are here to support you with an array of services and resources.

OUR SUPPORT

Comprehensive Assessments

Safety Planning

Education on Commercial
Sexual Exploitation



Information and Referrals

Advocacy

A Compassionate Space to
Learn and Share

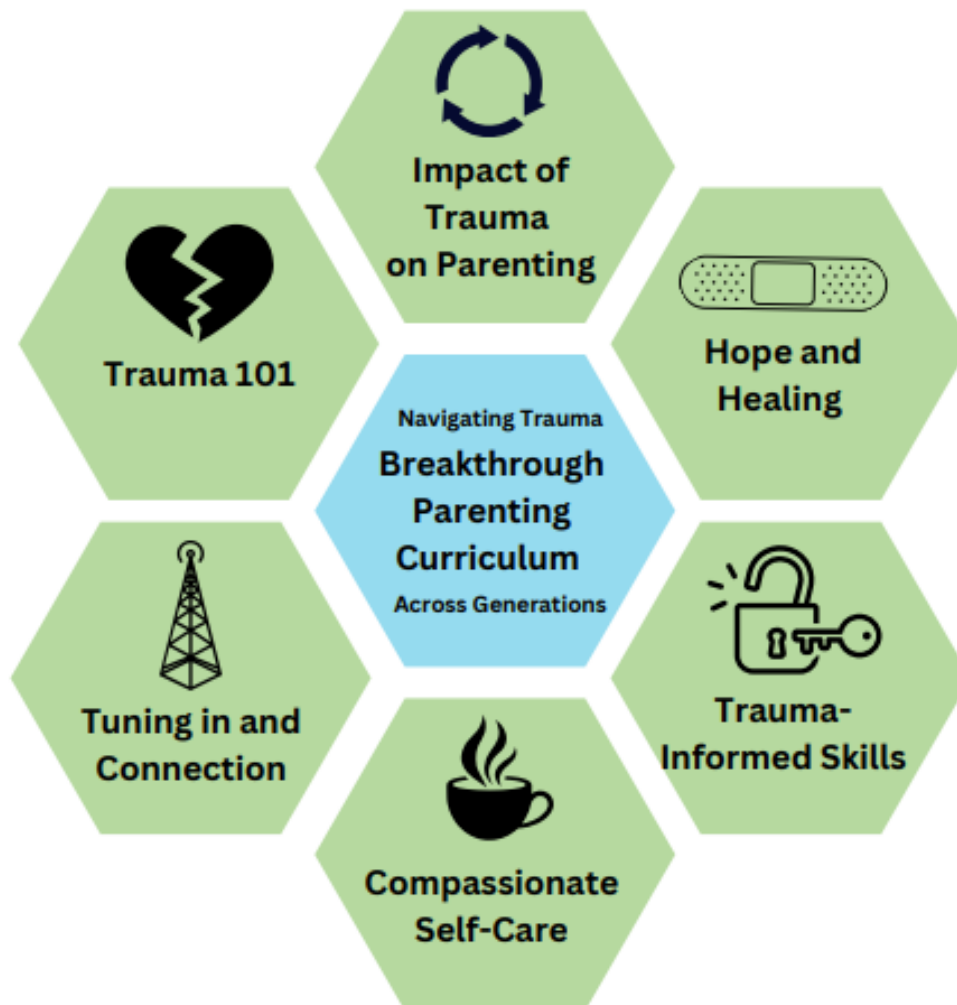
Access to the 10 Week Breakthrough
Parenting Curriculum for Parents

HOW TO GET STARTED

- 1 Make a Referral by visiting <https://www.cacga.org/referral-form/> or calling 1-866-363-4842, Option 2
- 2 A Team Member will reach out to gather additional information about your child/youth.
- 3 A CSEC Assessment will be completed for your child/youth if one has not been completed.
- 4 You will be enrolled in an upcoming Breakthrough Parenting Curriculum cohort.

WHAT IS THE BREAKTHROUGH PARENTING CURRICULUM?

The Breakthrough Parenting Curriculum: Navigating Trauma Across Generations is a 10-module course specifically designed to support parents and caregivers who have been (or are at risk of being) involved with the child welfare system. It provides information for parents about the impact of trauma on themselves and their children, while offering skills, strategies and a community for understanding, healing, hope, and growth.



For additional information or to make a direct referral, please email KelseyL@Gacfca.org.



CSEC RESPONSE TEAM 2023

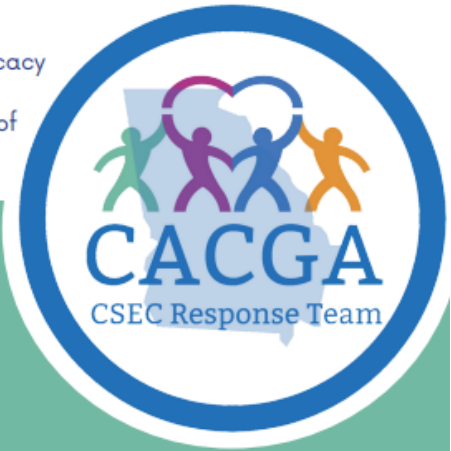
A PROGRAM OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF GEORGIA

The CSEC Response Team served 749 youth in 2023*. 443 youth received a comprehensive CSEC assessment in 2023.



The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Response Team provides direct services for victims of CSEC in the form of assessment, intensive case management, and advocacy; and facilitates training and outreach to help build infrastructure and community capacity. We leverage our network of 48 child advocacy centers and their MDT Partners to lessen the potential of commercially sexually exploited youth falling through the cracks and lessen the potential for duplication of services among child abuse/trafficking service providers.

*This does not suggest that all 749 youth were confirmed as CSEC victims. However, it does indicate children at risk for CSEC.



In 2023, the CSEC Response Team provided:



537 UNITS OF SERVICE TO ENSURE SAFE HOUSING AND PLACEMENT



8,944 UNITS OF SERVICE INVOLVING INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION WITH PARTNER AGENCIES



14,184 UNITS OF SERVICE TO ENSURE ONGOING SAFETY AND WELLBEING

15,075 SERVICES WERE PROVIDED TO SUSPECTED VICTIMS OF CSEC ACROSS GEORGIA

Our mission is to serve as the central point of contact for victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) and the agencies that support them, for a more coordinated and effective system response to commercial sexual exploitation.



154

Hotline Calls



547

Web Referrals



244

MDT Case Coordinations



204

Forensic Interviews



749

Youth Served

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS



Our team provided CSEC-focused training to approximately 3,000 direct service providers and community members.



Six allied professionals were trained as facilitators for the evidence-informed intervention curricula, Ending the Game.





Our team received over 400 hours of continuous education related to CSEC.



Twenty-three youth participated in the Ending the Game curricula.

This project was supported by subgrant No. U23-8-002 awarded by the state administering office for the TANF Grant Program. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the state of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

Find out more at www.cacga.org | 1-866-END-HTGA |  

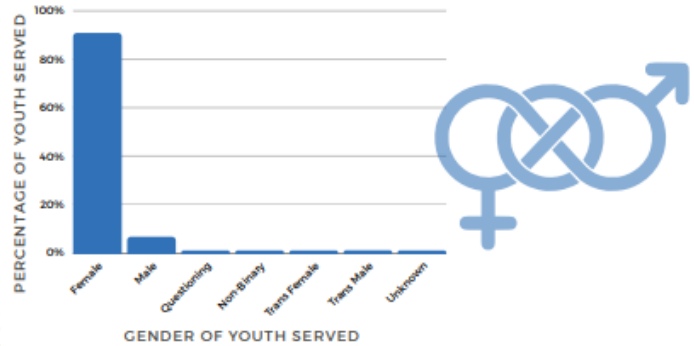
CSEC RESPONSE TEAM 2023

A PROGRAM OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTERS OF GEORGIA

AGES OF YOUTH SERVED



GENDERS OF YOUTH SERVED



14 IS THE AVERAGE AGE OF YOUTH WE HAVE SERVED

STUDIES SUGGEST THAT BETWEEN **31% & 71%** OF YOUTH IMPACTED BY CSEC ARE MALE

HOWEVER, CSEC INVOLVING MALES IS UNDERREPORTED



WHEN WE VIEW THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ARE AT RISK OR CONFIRMED FOR CSEC PER COUNTY POPULATION, STATISTICS IN RURAL REGIONS ARE COMPARABLE TO METRO ATLANTA STATISTICS.

CSEC IS NOT AN ATLANTA ISSUE. IT IS A STATE OF GEORGIA ISSUE.

TOP **5** COUNTIES WITH THE HIGHEST REFERRAL RATES

- 1 FULTON
- 2 RICHMOND
- 3 GWINNETT
- 4 DEKALB
- 5 COBB