

// 2018



GEORGIA
CENTER for OPPORTUNITY

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GEORGIA
CENTER for OPPORTUNITY

2018

ANNUAL REPORT





The Georgia Center for Opportunity (GCO) is independent, non-partisan, and solutions-focused. Our team is dedicated to creating opportunities for a quality education, fulfilling work, and a healthy family life for all Georgians. To achieve our mission, we research ways to help remove barriers to opportunity in each of these pathways, promote our solutions to policymakers and the public, and help effective and innovative social enterprises deliver results in their communities. Our ultimate goal is to see every Georgian who is willing to seize the opportunities presented to them living a life that can be characterized as truly flourishing.

NON SIBI, SED
ALIIS. “NOT
FOR SELF, BUT
FOR OTHERS.”
JAMES EDWARD
OGLETHORPE

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We came into 2018 anticipating that it would be our most impactful year yet—that 2018 would truly be what we’ve been calling “the year of opportunity.” And it definitely has been! I’ve been amazed and blessed by all the opportunities we’ve had to help more Georgians enjoy the blessings of quality education, meaningful work, and healthy relationships.

We helped to dramatically increase the size of one of our state’s key school choice measure, bringing real educational opportunity to thousands more students desperately in need of new options.

We launched city-based Hiring Well, Doing Good initiatives to help struggling people find work and discover what you and I know — that work is more than just a source of income; it can be a source of pride, purpose, and wellbeing as well!

We worked with state and federal leaders to promote welfare reforms that protect the vulnerable while at the same time encouraging those who are able to find jobs and, if they’re so inclined, to marry without penalty.

We expanded our Healthy Families Initiative to all of Gwinnett County and doubled the number of community partners, ensuring that relationship enrichment resources are readily available.

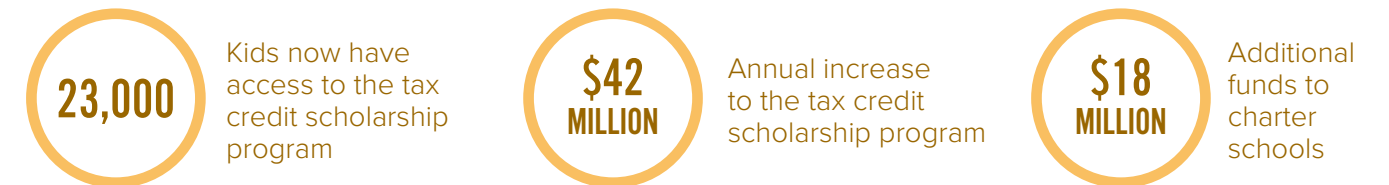
We stand on your shoulders. It’s really that simple. Your support is the reason we’re here and able to seize important opportunities to impact lives and our state for the better. We appreciate your financial partnership, your prayers, and your participation in our work.

In the pages of this report, we hope you will see and celebrate the tremendous strides that we’ve made over the past year. We intend to keep this momentum going in 2019—pressing onward toward greater impact and breaking down barriers that hinder people from developing and exercising their God-given gifts.

Randy Hicks
President & Chief Executive Officer

//WHAT WE DO

QUALITY EDUCATION



MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



A GROWING MOVEMENT



“EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY
TO ME, MORE
THAN ANYTHING,
MEANS A GREAT
EDUCATION.”
STEVE JOBS

// QUALITY EDUCATION



ADVOCATING FOR SETH TO LIVE UP TO HIS POTENTIAL

Like many kids his age, Seth is an active nine-year old who loves math, reading books (particularly the Harry Potter series), and music. He's also very energetic and excels at swimming and ice skating. But because he has autism spectrum disorder, Seth struggles to focus in a traditional classroom and acts out when he's not challenged or given opportunities for physical activity.

Sadly, because Seth was non-verbal from a young age, he started public school kindergarten with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and was placed in a self-contained classroom where he was given academic work well below his abilities. Frustrated by his lack of progress, Seth's parents got a Special Needs Scholarship and moved him into private school in first grade, where he was more academically challenged. Yet even here, Seth acted out and they knew that this setting didn't work either. So, Seth's parents decided to homeschool their son. His mother

now customizes Seth's academic environment and his school day follows a rhythm of physical activity and school work. For example, Seth might jump on the trampoline for five minutes followed by a focused math or language arts session. Today, Seth performs at his grade level—far beyond his performance in other educational settings.

The unique and burdensome expenses currently incurred by Seth's parents—music, speech and occupational therapy, curricula, and communication tutoring—would be covered under proposed legislation for Education Savings Accounts (ESA), which aim to improve our state's Special Needs Scholarship by removing eligibility barriers and making it more flexible and reflective of each student's specific needs. At the State Capitol, the Georgia Center for Opportunity is fighting to help Seth and others like him continue to excel with the help of ESAs and similar programs.

LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

House Bill 217: Georgia's largest school choice program expansion in a decade

House Bill 217 nearly doubles the size of Georgia's popular Tax Credit Scholarship Program beginning in 2019. Currently, the program is capped at \$58 million per year, but with the passage of this the new law the cap is raised to \$100 million.

Tax-credit scholarships are available to help students including those from low-income, working-class, and minority families attend high-quality private schools that better meet their academic needs. More than 13,000 students in Georgia are benefiting from these scholarships right now. Increasing the cap will allow thousands more students to find the educational environment that best meets their needs.

House Bill 787: Creating greater funding equity for public charter schools

House Bill 787 authorizes more funding for charter schools, bringing them into greater parity with funding for traditional public schools. Before the passage of this bill, students in traditional public schools received a greater financial investment in their education. Now, students from families who choose public charter schools will be penalized less. We hope that greater equity in funding will allow more high quality public charter schools to open or expand to serve students who need that option.

WHAT'S NEXT

Education Savings Accounts

We want Georgia to become the seventh state to pass Education Savings Accounts (ESAs), an innovative way for parents to pay for non-public educational options for their children. Education Savings Accounts allow parents to direct the money the state would have spent on their child to things like tuition, tutors, adaptive technology, therapy, and curriculum to truly customize an education that best meets the child's needs. While prior efforts to pass ESAs have fallen short, we plan to continue fighting as part of our Policy Solutions Initiative for the passage of this impactful legislation.



IMPACT AT A GLANCE



Passed two major bills expanding school choice in Georgia



GCO supporters sent over 800 emails to lawmakers during the 2018 legislative session

**“WE WERE CREATED
FOR MEANINGFUL
WORK, AND ONE OF
LIFE’S GREATEST
PLEASURES IS THE
SATISFACTION OF A
JOB WELL DONE.”
JOHN MAXWELL**

// MEANINGFUL WORK



**A FUTURE RESTORED
WITH THE HELP OF A
JOB: KIM’S STORY**

Having a felony charge can make it difficult to get a job, so after transitioning in-and-out of jobs in the Atlanta-metro area, Kim was grateful for a position with Tip Top Poultry which allowed her the opportunity to turn her life around.

Tip Top Poultry has become a leader in hiring the formerly incarcerated who have long been out of the workforce. They’ve had great success, which VP of People Services Phil Stroud attributes to the principle of restoring dignity through work.

Kim had no experience in the poultry business when she joined the team, but with a lot of patience and determination she’s mastered

each task she was given, becoming a top worker. In six years, she has achieved multiple promotions and met her husband, Terrence, a former inmate who benefited from Tip Top’s second chance program, too. Now happily married for five years, Kim and Terrence are both known as two of Tip Top’s best employees.

According to Kim, “You have to humble yourself coming here. If you want a job, this is a place you can come, you can work, save money, get back on your feet. It’s not going to be easy, it was a hard journey, but it can be done.”



IMPACT AT A GLANCE



Launched a new city-wide Hiring Well, Doing Good initiative in Columbus, Georgia



Partnered with think tanks in other states to help launch additional Hiring Well, Doing Good initiatives



Released five groundbreaking reports on welfare reform, gaining attention from the White House, members of Congress, and other top leaders

HIRING WELL, DOING GOOD

Laying the foundation for community-led employment in Georgia and beyond

After launching the first Hiring Well, Doing Good (HWDG) effort in GCO's own backyard of Southwest Gwinnett in 2017, the demand for community-driven employment solutions began to grow. While HWDG Southwest Gwinnett has continued to build momentum, the movement is spreading throughout the state and the Southeast. In 2018, we're celebrating the successful and quick-moving kickoff of HWDG Columbus, as well as new efforts in partnership with the Alabama Policy Institute and the Beacon Center of Tennessee.

WELFARE REFORM

A new approach to welfare reform garners state and national attention

As lawmakers in Washington, D.C., began turning their attention to Welfare Reform early in 2018, GCO President and CEO Randy Hicks weighed in, urging lawmakers to approach the issue with "common sense and compassion." It's the same approach GCO is advocating for as our team meets with leaders from the Gold Dome to the White House.

FOX NEWS MAY 6, 2018

"We believe that communities (not the state or federal government) should be the principal means of helping our neighbors escape poverty. That's why we work so hard at the local level to expand job training, provide apprenticeships and enlarge other workforce supporters. Although Washington can do much to improve welfare, the best solutions must come locally."

— Randy Hicks

“EDUCATING
THE MIND
WITHOUT
EDUCATING
THE HEART IS
NO EDUCATION
AT ALL.”
ARISTOTLE

// HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



XÓCHITL MUNILLA: STRONG FAMILIES FOR LIFE PARTICIPANT AND FACILITATOR

Xóchitl Munilla first heard about the Healthy Families Initiative (HFI) through Stonemill Church, one of HFI's community partners, and excitedly enrolled her family in the Strong Families for Life workshop. After engaging in this course together, Xóchitl said her family now works more in sync as a cohesive unit and can confidently resolve conflicts.

Seeing a dramatic difference in her own family, Xóchitl wanted to share these new-found tools with others, so she became a Strengthening Families facilitator. Taking this step allowed her the opportunity to work within the community and build confidence in other parents and kids as they interact with one another.

“I learned new things to put into practice as a parent, and began to recognize what I was doing wrong. We need more programs like this one, and I want to see HFI expand to reach more families.”

Through her involvement with HFI as both a participant and facilitator, she has been a strategic reason for the success of the program. It's through great teachers who are passionate about families and seeing them succeed that HFI excels.

HEALTHY FAMILIES INITIATIVE

For over two decades the Georgia Center for Opportunity has been working to remove barriers to healthy family formation. In the last three years, the Healthy Families Initiative (HFI) has partnered with 30 Gwinnett County businesses, nonprofit organizations and churches to collectively reduce the divorce rate and the number of out-of-wedlock births. Through this collaborative effort, HFI is offering free community workshops promoting healthy family dynamics, romantic relationships, as well as co-parenting relationships.

The county-wide initiative has also entered into its second year of a public campaign, challenging area residents to make a move towards healthier relationships by participating in the initiative's workshops and special events.

TEAMING UP WITH NATIONAL LEADERS IN FAMILY STUDIES

We have made it our mission at GCO to overcome barriers that threaten family formation and healthy relationships, so GCO has also continued its partnership with subject matter expert Dr. Brad Wilcox, a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Family Studies and Director of the National Marriage Project at the University of Virginia, to study local data and help design strategic solutions for creating stronger communities.

PARTNERING WITH KEY COMMUNITY LEADERS

Local businesses, nonprofits and churches are the cornerstone of a community, which is why HFI involves area businesses and organizations. These are the heroes who make this initiative possible. They believe in strong families and communities through positive programs and encouragement.

Adrienne White Therapy
Boys & Girls Club
Brenau University
Corners Outreach
Gwinnett Mentoring
Kingdom Now Ministries
Meadow Creek High School
Father's House
Peachtree Corners Presbyterian Church
Rainbow Village
SPARC

YMCA
Atlanta First Hispanic Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Planting Seeds of Inspiration
Good Samaritan Health Center
Grace Atlanta Bible Church
Yielded Ministries
The Lord's House Community Church
Changing Perceptions Therapy
Stonemill Atlanta Church
Norcross Health and Human Services

Pathway Partners
Norcross First United Methodist Church
St. Patrick's Catholic Church
Peachtree Corners & Norcross Pastors Association
Teen Center at Meadowcreek
Law Offices of Mark L. Wells, P.C.
Inspired Travel
Christ The King Lutheran

IMPACT AT A GLANCE



Partnered with 30 local businesses for the Healthy Families Initiative



Launched a comprehensive public relations campaign aimed at promoting healthy relationships



“THINGS DO
EXIST THAT
ARE WORTH
STANDING UP
FOR WITHOUT
COMPROMISE.”
DIETRICH
BONHOEFFER



MEET OLIVER AND JOANNE SALE:

Why do you give to Georgia Center for Opportunity?

We're very pleased with the way they operate, the leadership they have, and the basis on which they do what they do. We like that they're getting people back to work, supporting education, and working on legislation that matters. They're also an organization that gets results.

Where do you hope to see GCO in 5 years?

We hope they keep doing the good things they're doing. This includes continuing to meet cultural issues as they come up. The work they do has a positive impact that affects problems from racism to poverty. It would be really great to see GCO's poverty research become a reality and create opportunities for people nationwide.

What legacy do you hope to leave through your involvement with Georgia Center for Opportunity?

We would love to see our children and grandchildren look back and say I'm happy that our parents and grandparents supported the things that they did – they were meaningful in the real sense of the word and not just fluff. We tell them all the time, "Whatever we have, I'd rather spend with you than leave it to you." We think our giving will be a model to them and a way of loving God; it's a way of expressing our faith and our gratitude. Someday, we hope our giving will be an encouragement for them to do the same.

A retired businessman and Georgia Tech alum, Oliver met Joanne - a native Texan - after being introduced by mutual friends. Though they were both widowed at the time, they have been married for 19 years and call their marriage a "second blessing." Between the two of them, they have seven children, 19 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

While they are building quite a legacy for their family, they are also longtime supporters and members of GCO's Oglethorpe Legacy Society. We caught up with them to learn more about what drives their giving and continued support for programs that break barriers and build opportunities for Georgians.

Why do you give?

We feel blessed and feel the need and desire to give back. It's a delight because it's God's money, and we finally got that through our heads.

What is the focus of your philanthropy?

We give the bulk to ministries that share Christ and strengthen that within our country. Our giving tends to congregate around the family – we have 37 in our family so family's pretty big to us. We see the strength in our family when we gather versus friends who have fragmented families – it's a special blessing to have a healthy family.

// THANK YOU DONORS



IMPACT AT A GLANCE



5% increase in total number of donors in 2018 fiscal year



48% of donors increased their giving in 2018 fiscal year

THANK YOU FOR HELPING CREATE THRIVING COMMUNITIES, WHERE PEOPLE HAVE THE CHANCE TO FLOURISH.

Chairman's Circle (\$10,000+)

David and Donna Allman
Atlas Network
The Lynde & Harry Bradley Foundation
Bradley-Turner Foundation, Inc.
Steve and Kent Butler
Adolph Coors Foundation
John and Camie Fetz

Rick and Barb Gaby
Giulio and Suzette Gianturco
Google
Frank and Sally Hanna
Randy and Marilee Hatcher
Ken and Tina Manning
The Neighbor Company

Bryan and Sharon Owens
Roe Foundation
Oliver and Joanne Sale
Keith and Tamara Schneider
CKS Packaging
Jerry and Judy Kaye Thames
Walton Family Foundation

Breakthrough Society (\$1,000+)

Roy and Sandy Abernethy
Jaimie and Lynne Allen
Kevin and Angi Bemiss
Susan and Tim Bentsen
Dan Boone III
Kevin and Vernadette Broyles
Bob and C.J. Bruce
David and Kathy Carr
Doug and Jacqueline Cates
Eric and Laura Cochling
Rowland and Cindy Cocks
Erik and Sherri Daniels
Karin Douglas
John and Jan Featherston
Link and Carla Forester
Chris and Courtenay Gabriel

Georgia Transportation Alliance
Reid and Hope Hailey
Robert and Trena Hargreaves
Mark and Sherry Harrell
Tyler and Kathryn Harrison
Jo Hicks
Randy and Marilyn Hicks
Monte and Phyllis Johnson
Craig and Angie Jones
Jason and Natalie Jones
David and Jeni Knight
Craig A Lacey
Kevin and Becky Loechl
Bill and Lisa McGahan
Tom and Donna McMurry
Brian and Caroline McNeely

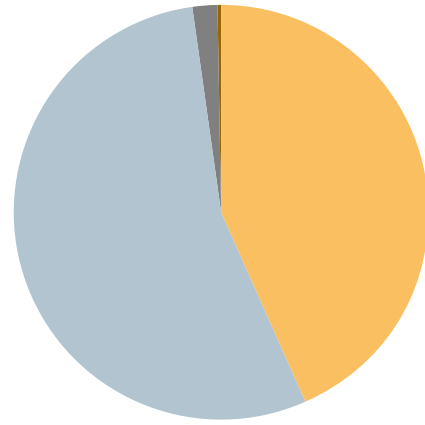
Hugh Murphy
National School Choice Week
Larry Niemann
Galen and Lynn Oelkers
Perimeter Church
Al and Toni Petrangeli
Alan and Betsy Ramsay
Bobby and Beth Reagan
Bill and Evelyn Rodgers
Otis and Sandy Scarborough
Doug and Nancy Silvis
Richard and Dee Dee Stephens
Tim and Maria Tassopoulos
Chip and Janet Vaughan
Michael and Holly Villa
Greg and Jan Winchester

Sustaining Member (\$100+)

American Philanthropic
Junious McLean Jr. and Joyce Auld
Hal and Gina Averett
Rick and Nancy Beggs
Donald and Kaye Berg
Lee and Laure Biel
Shari Bracy
Ed and Andrea Brannen
Carey and Sally Brown
Pete Canalichio
Steve and Rosalind Chapman
Bruce and Donna Cook
Henry Croci
George and Dawn Curry
Ben and Renae Davidson
Clint Day
Paul Deaton
Phil and Lynne Drake
Charles and Nancy Drummond
Bruce and Nancy Dutcher
Mike and Linda Ebert

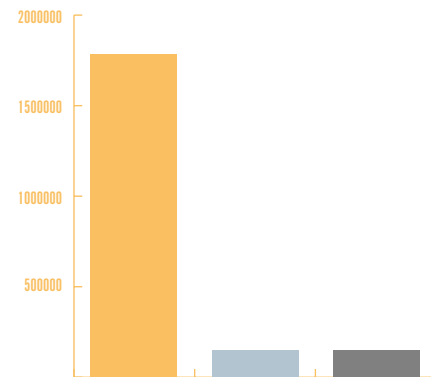
Richard and Linda Finch
Donna Folden
Elise Froistad
Gary Gibbs
The Greater Gwinnett Reentry Alliance
Carlos and Katherine Greene
Ben and Susan Harrell
Spencer Hughes
Lee and Melba Huntley
Robert and Loretta Isley
Dwayne and Alvilda Jones
Scott Jones
Mac and Barbara Kaiser
Burton and Gina Keller
Michael and Carole Kooi
Tom and Susan Larkin
Robin McGonigal
Shane and Kelly McGonigal
Bill and Mary McKenzie
Alan and Barbara McKnight
John and Patricia Meservey

Mike and Carol Morris
Will Morris
Audrey Mullen
Jose Perez
Ed and Heather Pierpont
David and Lauren Pusey
Stephen and Melany Raborn
Roger and Mary Kay Ream
Jeff and Teresa Richards
Michael and Diane Sabom
Neil Shorthouse and Patty Pflum
Paul and Shirley Simpson
Mary Lee Sims
George and Linda Southgate
Dawn Steele
Siu and Judy Tjoe
Josiah Vega
Joyce Whitted
Bill and Rochelle Willis
The Robert D. Fowler Family YMCA



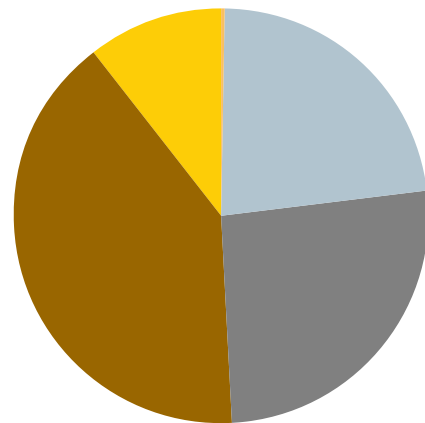
TOTAL REVENUE

●	Individuals	\$969,819
●	Foundations	\$1,202,671
●	Corporations	\$55,564
●	Other	\$3,285
	TOTAL REVENUE	\$2,231,339



TOTAL EXPENSES

●	Program	\$1,783,899
●	Administrative	\$153,455
●	Fundraising	\$155,642
	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,092,996



PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

●	Breakthrough Norcross	\$65,242
●	Education	\$396,072
●	Employment	\$445,922
●	Family Formation	\$697,192
●	Program General	\$179,471





DAD FACTOR: PRESENCE

June 9, 2018

HFI recognized dads in a special way this year with a father-focused breakfast. Guest speakers provided support for dads along with tips and strategies on healthy living, healthy relationships, entrepreneurship, mentorship, and much more.



ARTHUR BROOKS AND THE POWER OF STORYTELLING IN LEADERSHIP

May 23, 2018

The Georgia Center for Opportunity and Georgia Public Policy Foundation hosted a breakfast with Arthur Brooks, president of the American Enterprise Institute, who explained how we can all use the power of storytelling to become more unifying as leaders in our communities, families, and places of work.



HIRING WELL, DOING GOOD COLUMBUS

May 22, 2018

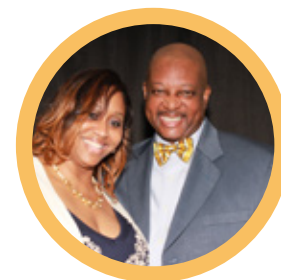
The Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce partnered with GCO to launch Hiring Well, Doing Good Columbus at the start of the summer. The luncheon was a collaboration of civic, business, and non-profit leaders for a discussion about the human need to be productive through work, and addressing the challenges of hiring the underemployed, plus the positive benefits of lives changed through the purpose and dignity found in meaningful work.



LOVE IS A CHOICE: I CHOOSE YOU

February 10, 2018

In an effort to emphasize the importance of strong marriages in the community, the Healthy Families Initiative hosted a romantic evening for married couples to renew their vows and their dedication to a healthy marriage relationship.



TWOGETHER FOREVER: YOU AND I

November 4, 2017

Romantic relationships need time invested into them, so the Healthy Families Initiative provided a date night for couples of all ages to enjoy time together having dinner, dancing, and playing couples' games.



PUBS, PEOPLE AND PURPOSE

September 14, 2017

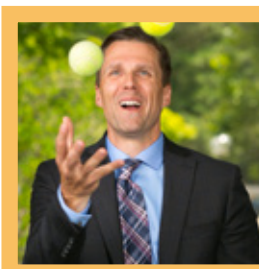
Last fall, GCO utilized the great space at Monday Night Brewing, to host an evening centered around work. Rodney Bullard, Vice President of Community Affairs for Chick-Fil-A, David Miller, Director of Princeton Faith & Work Initiative, and Randy Hicks, CEO of Georgia Center for Opportunity, led the discussion surrounding the higher meaning of work in hopes of starting further discussions about what it means for the average worker, executive, entrepreneur, and policymaker.



RANDY HICKS

President & Chief Executive Officer

"Sports has always been one of my very best outlets for staying healthy and maintaining balance in my life. I love it and need to do more of it!"



ERIC COCHLING

Executive Vice President and General Counsel

"Juggling's a metaphor for my life right now. At home, it's raising three kids who are always on the go. At work, it's helping to manage a rapidly-growing organization."



BUZZ BROCKWAY

Vice President of Public Policy

"When thrown correctly a boomerang returns to you. Through strategic research and planning I hope to see great returns for Georgia's citizens, too."



BILL RODGERS

Vice President of Workforce Solutions

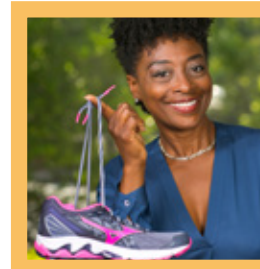
"There's no better feeling than rooting on your favorite team. At GCO, I get to support the Dawgs and be part of the winning roster making our state stronger! Go Dawgs!"



KRISTEN BARKER

Program Manager, Hiring Well, Doing Good Columbus

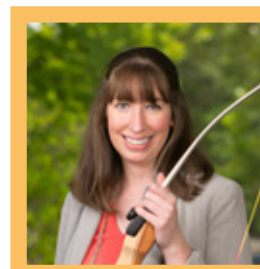
"I don't need things to fill my life. The truly meaningful memories are created from the work we do and relationships we build along the way."



KATHERINE GREENE

Healthy Families Initiative Program Manager

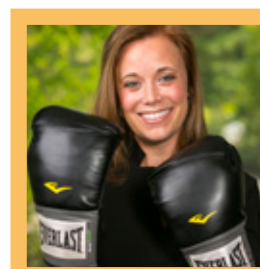
"Being a wife and mother, I am always on the run for my family. Now, I get the awesome privilege to put my 'soles to the pavement' to run for all families providing them with resources and skills to have healthy and strong families."



KATELYN KING

Director of Operations

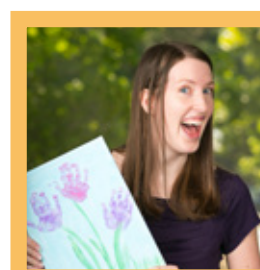
"As the Director of Operations, my goal is to enable GCO to successfully hit the target of our vision."



JAMIE LORD

Director of Government Affairs

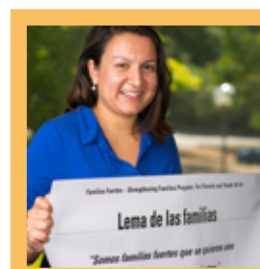
"I may be small, but I'm scrappy--which has served me well in my years fighting for opportunity at the state Capitol."



KELLY MCGONIGAL

Director of Development

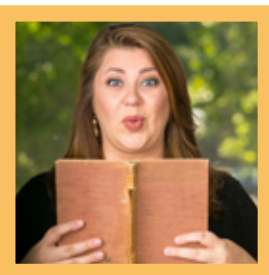
"My two sons bring so much joy to my life, and I'm grateful to be able to play a small role in creating a better future for them!"



LESLIE PREVEAUX

Healthy Families Initiative Outreach Coordinator

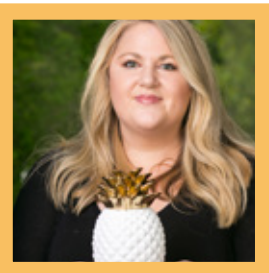
"One of the most fulfilling parts of my job is watching families stand up and recite that they love each other and have fun together. It blesses me to know I help bring lifelong skills that promote the healthy emotional growth of youth."



CHRISTY RIGGINS

Director of Communications

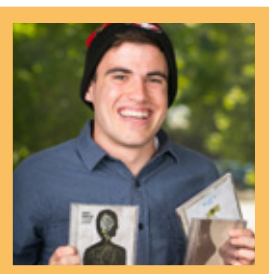
"I treasure my original copy of Booker T. Washington's 'Up From Slavery.' It's a good reminder of the power of hopeful and dedicated souls."



DAWN STEELE

Director of Breakthrough Programs

"I'm a George Washington buff, and there's a great story about how he used pineapples as a show of gracious hospitality. I like to surround myself with things that remind me of his leadership."



JOSIAH VEGA

Development Associate

"Music and sports have always been a part of my life and remain a constant source of motivation, joy, and relationship as I go about my life. Go 9ers and long live rock!"



JOYCE WHITTED

Director of Healthy Families Initiative

"My heart is at its fullest when I get the opportunity to enrich the lives of families and friends. Love on your family and let them love on you!"

Board of Directors:

Gerald Thames, Board Chairman

Director of the Thames Family Foundation

Randy Hicks, GCO CEO & President

Elder, Perimeter Church; Board of Directors, Corners Outreach

Shaunti Feldhahn

Social researcher, best-selling author, and popular speaker

Karin Douglas

Strategic Nonprofit Consultant

Tim Bentsen

Executive in Residence, J.M. Tull School of Accounting at Terry College of Business at University of Georgia

Former Managing Partner at KPMG

Tony Kitchens

Field Director, Prison Fellowship

Keith Schneider

President & CEO, GPSTrackit

