

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



745 Survivors



15,690 Services Provided



13,450 Students Received
Prevention Education



2,889 College Students Reached



104 Forensic Medical Exams

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.

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.



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.

*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

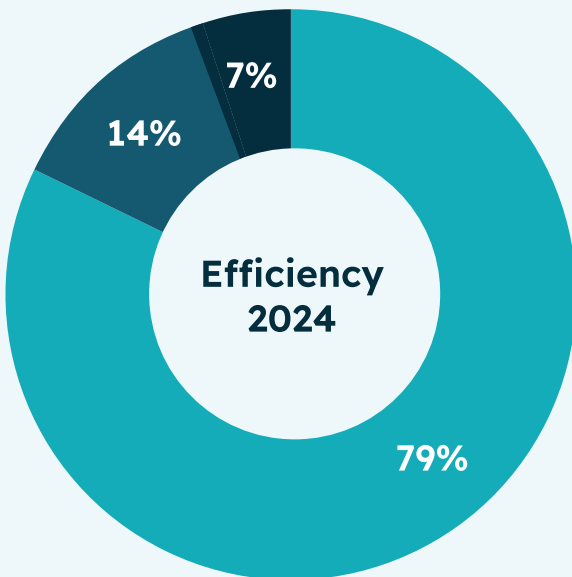
Gerald Couch

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

Andrews Family Foundation

Clipper Petroleum
Foundation

Criminal Justice
Coordinating Council
Victims Compensation

Criminal Justice Coordinating
Council/State

Frances Wood Wilson
Foundation, Inc.

Junior League of
Gainesville-Hall County

Sexual Assault Services
Program (SASP)

National Association
of VOCA Assistance
Administrators (NAVAA)

Jackson EMC Foundation

Jim and Gloria Syfan
Fund at the National
Christian Foundation

Olaf and Fox Gradin
through BrightStar

North Gorgia Community
Foundation

The Nathan-Schrage Fund
at the North Georgia
Community Foundation

The Starlet Rhodes Jones
Fund at the North Georgia
Community Foundation

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

United Way: Dawson,
Forsyth, Greater
Atlanta, Habersham,
Hall & White County

Victims of Crime Act (VOCA)

CHURCHES

First Presbyterian Church

Grace Episcopal Church

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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

Hall County Government

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

McDonalds Northeast
Georgia

Northeast Georgia
Medical Center

North Georgia Tech
Jeans for Justice event

Northside Hospital

Rotary Int Club of
Dahlonega Inc.

Rushton & Company

The Healing Arts Spa
on Green Street

Turner, Wood &
Smith Insurance

Valdosta State University
Foundation, Inc

South State Bank

Specialty Orthopaedics PC

Stalling's Mech/
Electrical Service LLC

UKOGF Foundation

Walmart

Xtreme Clean Auto Spa 2

INDIVIDUALS

Natasha Alvarado

Peggy Anderson

Debbie Ames

Jacob Autry

Brenda Bahel

Caroline Baeumel

Linda Bella

Darin & Laurie Boozer

Ann Bryant

John Breakfield

Ellen Corinne Briggs

Kris Brown

Allison Cawood

Emily Cell

Allison Clark

Dawn Clay

Ryan and Liz Cochen

Phil and Kathy Collins

Kate Cook

Lynn Couch

Sally Walden-Crowe

James & Faye Crupi

Jeffery R. Daniel

Reese & Susan Daniel

Christie Daruwalla

Lyla Daruwalla

John and Marina Delaney

Tina DeWaart

Blair Diaz

Drew and Shelly Echols

Lois Ehlers

Jay Eisner

Patricia Elliott

Jimmy Faulkner

Anthony and
Rebekah Franklin

Karen Frost

Chris Gailey

Dolores Gardner

Randy & Jennifer Garrett

Polly Geren

Elaine Gerke

Margaret Gibson

Catherine Gille

Emilie Gille

Kristin Ghesquiere

Bobbie Girardeau

Wendy Glasbrenner

Donor Wall

CONTINUED

Paul Goldstein

Cassandra Gorham

Marilyn Green

Abigail Guzman

Danita Hamilton

Timothy Hayes

Jane Hemmer

Sarah Henderson

Mike & Robin Higley

Christine Hogan

David & Shannon Hughs

Deborah Humphreys

Glenda Ivey

Adrienne Johnson

Linda Kadechuk

Susan Kennish

Bria Kellar

Tammy Keyes

Melissa King

Melissa Krudwig

Alexi Leal

Sandra Lealos

Kelly Lee

Jennifer Loggins

Carol Lumpkin

Cindy Marushak

Mary Helen McGruder

Elizabeth McKenna

Karen McClure

Tara Lamkin

Ashton Lewis

Stacy Millican

Anne Mistretta

Mark Meyers

Ann Morris

Kerri Morrison

Bonnie Olentine

Charlotte Owens

Jeffey Palmatier

Sandra Patridge

Alyson Paul

Sandra Patridge

Chris Pearce

Penny Penn

Jane Pignolet

Shirley Polk

Patricia Powell

Takita Pruitt

Vickie Pruitt

William Rambin

Judith Reece

Kimberley Renner

Laura Rives

Denise Roberts

Betsy Robertson

Kelly Robertson

Susan Rolader

Cassidy Roland

Carole Routman

Marion Rothchild

Haley Sands

Reneigh Satterfield

Susan Schwall

Rosemary Shaffer

Ellen Sheridan

Julie A. Skaggs

Janie Wolf-Smith

Suzette Snell

Cindy Steckenrider

Drew and Janie Steckenrider

Kelly Steely

CK Stephens

Laura Stephens

Leah Stewart

Doris Stockman

Julienne Sweeney

Jen Tarnowski

Joanie Taylor

Donor Wall CONTINUED

Arlene Teare

Bri Terry

Elizabeth Thompson

Becky Tomsu

Cassidy Turner

Wanda Vance

Mary Vintimilla

Michael Vosseller

Mary Wall

Kay Walker

Janice Ward

Teri Warner

Sherry Wileman

Susan Willson

Merelise Wilson

Virginia Winship

Sally Wise

Leigh Stallings-Wood

Margot Weatherford

Jeremy Weiner

Sara White

Sherry Wileman

Michael & Leigh Wiles

Merelise Wilson

Suzanne Willis

Diane Womack

Teryl Worster

Rose Zawistowski

HONORARIUMS

Jeanne Coates

In honor of DFC dancers

Jen Tarnowski

In honor of DFC dancers

Miles and Sharon Coker

In honor of Jeanne Coates

Marissa Rosenbloom

In honor of Gloria Syfan

James Harris & Company

In honor of Gloria Syfan

Terri Strayhorn

In honor of Wendy Glasbrenner

GIFTS IN KIND

Adventure Bags

Al and Reneigh Satterfield

Alliance Theatre

Anesthesiology Associates

Atlanta Botanical Gardens

Atlanta History Center

Bark Box

BGW Dental

Bill and Jeanne Coates

Bill Hallows

Bourbon Brothers
Remedy Distillery

Callaway Golf

Center for Puppetry Arts

Chick Fil A Gainesville

Chris Gailey

Drew and Janie Steckenrider

Elachee Nature Center

Faye Crupi

Georgia Aquarium

High Museum of Art

Jackie Wells

Kelley Robertson

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

Southern Baked Pie Company

Spa on Green Street

Tito's Vodka

Top Golf

Well Made Dahlonga

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.

You guys are the reason I'm here. If I didn't have your support, I would not have shown up to court.

"I cannot thank you enough for being here with me. You don't know how much this means to me and my children."
"Thank you so much for the US while we were there!"

--Court Accompaniment during trial

Doing EMDR has helped me feel like there has been a weight lifted from me.

I did not think I would come here to America, and someone would help me so much with everything. Thank you so much, God bless you.

--A French speaking survivor & refugee after receiving support when making a police report

Thank you so much for the help and compassionate care you gave us here.

--Client Follow-up

YOU DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CHANGED MY LIFE, AND SO MANY OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES.

--Client comment after Court Accompaniment

I think I'm getting better because I'm finally being believed.

If all were like you, I would not be suffering.

--Health Department Referral for non-English speaking survivor

I feel like this is the one place I can talk about my assault without judgment.

--Therapy Client

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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