

# FULFILLED

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Celebrating 20 Years of Service





# IT'S NOT LIKE A NORMAL SHELTER, IT'S A PROMISE.

The staff is serious about your well-being. I know I may not be able to call my parents, but I can always call my case manager. Today, I am living in my own apartment, working as an assistant Pre-K teacher, and preparing to pursue a degree in early childhood education administration. If it weren't for Covenant House Georgia, I don't know what I'd be doing now."

- Bridgette, former Covenant House Georgia resident



## A PROMISE OF SUPPORT

## THERE ARE HARSH REALITIES FOR THE 3,300 YOUTH LIVING ON

ATLANTA'S STREETS. More than 40 percent of youth experiencing homelessness were the victims of child abuse, and nearly half have been sexually exploited. An estimated 50 percent of youth aging out of the foster care system will be homeless within six months. A shockingly disproportionate amount of youth experiencing homelessness (40 percent) identify as LGBTQ+; many were forced to leave home after revealing their identities to their families.

Since its inception in 2000, Covenant House Georgia has served more than 19,000 youth who are experiencing homelessness, have run away, or are escaping trafficking, establishing itself as a critical resource in greater Atlanta's network of homeless services. Covenant House Georgia embraces the Housing First Model to combat homelessness based on the fundamental truth that safe housing is the first

What has often been missing in their lives is the promise of unconditional love and support of an adult. step toward stability for a person in crisis. Yet Covenant House Georgia offers more than a safe place to sleep at night. With access to a continuum of resources including medical care, behavioral healthcare, educational support, career readiness, employment services, and life skills classes youth at Covenant House Georgia begin to heal and regain a sense of optimism, hope, and purpose.

Even though they have suffered a lifetime of trauma that no one should have to endure, the youth at Covenant House Georgia aren't fundamentally different from others in their late teens and early twenties. What has often been missing in their lives is the **PROMISE** of unconditional love and support



of an adult to help guide them through their formative years. With the help of the caring and compassionate staff at Covenant House Georgia, youth experiencing homelessness, many of whom are also escaping trafficking, are inspired to look beyond their difficult pasts and to believe in the promise of their futures. , 3,300 youth living on Atlanta's streets



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50%

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# A PROMISE OF SERVICES



#### IMMEDIACY

Serve youth in crisis immediately and without questions

#### SANCTUARY

Provide a safe haven free from judgement

#### VALUE COMMUNICATION

Demonstrate and teach acceptance, honesty, and respect

#### STRUCTURE

Provide the stability youth need to build a positive future

#### CHOICE

Help youth believe in their ability to make life-changing decisions about who they can be in this world

- A 50 bed **Crisis Shelter** where youth can stabilize and work with a case manager to develop a plan for the future
- Workforce Development Services including resume building, interview prep, and job mentoring and certification programs led by corporate employment partners
- Education Assistance including tutoring, GED preparation, and assistance with the college application process
- **Behavioral Health Services** include individual and group treatment to help youth experiencing homelessness and escaping from trafficking heal from the wounds of their past
- A two year independent living program called **Rights of Passage**, to help youth learn to live independently
- A **Street Outreach Program** to connect with youth out on the streets and provide them with food, information and supplies
- A drop- in **Community Service Center** for youth living on the streets to access immediate needs such as food, clothes and a shower

THE YOUTH WHO FIND REFUGE AT COVENANT HOUSE GEORGIA SAY IT BEST: "THIS IS MORE THAN JUST A SHELTER...IT'S A HOME."



# **BY THE NUMBERS**

Covenant House Georgia served over 1,800 teens and young adults aged 16 to 24 in 2018— over half of our community's population of youth experiencing homelessness. Of the youth we serve, 100% have experienced significant trauma:

have been victims of human trafficking

have been sexually exploited; a youth new to the streets will be approached for sex within the first 72 hours

have been kicked out of their home because of their sexual orientation or gender identification

have spent time in foster care

have a serious behavioral health condition, such as PTSD, depression, and/or anxiety

identify as LGBTQ+

 $35^{\%}$ 

experienced abuse as a child

have experienced the criminal justice system

have experienced or witnessed violence



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THE YOUNG PEOPLE WE SERVE HAVE EXPERIENCED COMPLEX, COMPOUNDED TRAUMA THROUGHOUT THEIR LIVES;

this includes rejection by their families, exposure to violence and abuse, sexual exploitation, and countless other hardships. After 30 years of serving youth, I continue to admire their resiliency and ability to thrive and overcome major barriers. At Covenant House Georgia, we walk alongside youth during their journey, guiding them while helping them understand that their value and destiny are not determined by their past trauma. Sure enough, we help them build their lives and prepare for hopeful and promising futures.'

> - Dr. Alie Redd Executive Director Covenant House Georgia



## AT THE BEGINNING OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,

Tadae found himself experiencing homelessness when his place of employment was forced to close their doors due to the virus and he lost his only source of income.

On the streets of Atlanta, Tadae had no family to help him and nowhere to go. He spent days hiding in empty hotel lobbies and hotel rooms, subjected to the many dangers that young people experiencing homelessness face which was compounded by the public health pandemic. But he didn't give up. He came to Covenant House Georgia where he received hot meals, a warm bed, vocational and educational support programming, and a personalized case plan to help him meet his goals.

Today, Tadae is thriving and well on his way towards having the life that he's always dreamed of. He was featured in our first-ever Night of Covenant House Stars virtual gala, a star studded event that streamed nationwide, where he advocated on behalf of his peers. He also submitted an application to college while with us, laying the foundation he needs to study communications at university in the fall.



## IT'S DIFFICULT TO TELL THE STORY OF COVENANT HOUSE GEORGIA'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR WITHOUT TALKING ABOUT THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE LIVES OF SO MANY OF OUR YOUTH.

Our young people have already endured so much trauma by the time they come to Covenant House Georgia, but the COVID pandemic brought another layer of uncertainty for them. Life on the streets is unpredictable, making sheltering in place and self-isolation extremely difficult to do, if not impossible. Living on the fringes of society and without a stable home, they were unable to maintain regular handwashing, find access to effective face coverings, or do any of the things that our community was being urged to do to keep ourselves safe.

The pandemic was also difficult for those of our youth who had excelled in our programs and recently secured stable housing of their own. Many of those young people lost their jobs when businesses began to close their doors and others who had been depending on school housing found themselves experiencing homelessness all over again when colleges followed suit. Like any loving family would, Covenant House Georgia opened our doors to them, providing free access to three meals a day, shelter where they feel safe, medical supplies, healthcare, and devoted staff who deliver daily classes that aid our youth in employability, financial literacy, life skills, and more. Additionally, we worked with partners to host two free, on-site COVID-19 testing days so that all of our youth were able to know their status.

Covenant House Georgia's 20th Anniversary story is a story of our unwavering commitment to the young people who need us most, regardless of the challenges that we may face. It's also a story of the commitment of our many volunteers, donors, and supporters who responded to our needs immediately and donated home cooked meals, face coverings, essential supplies, and over \$700,000 in critical funds to ensure that our youth and staff weathered the storm.



## A PROMISED EXPANSION

In 2019 we launched a successful Capital Campaign which will fund critical renovations, improvements, and capacity-building efforts to enhance emergency and wrap-around services and housing resources for youth experiencing homelessness and escaping trafficking. Expansion efforts are to break ground in late 2020.





- Two additional men's emergency shelter rooms with six beds each, resulting in up to 144 more youth, housed each year (with an average stay of 90 days)
- Four private case management offices that protect client confidentiality (a considerable upgrade from the current cubicle spaces)
- Kitchen renovations to include new commercial grade equipment for meal preparation
- Replacement of the HVAC and ventilation systems
- Renovation of restrooms
- Reconfiguration of administrative offices and cubicles for better optimization and efficiency of space
- Additional security cameras and outdoor lighting
- 16 additional parking spaces and parking lot repairs
- Two nine-passenger vans for outreach and transportation services
- A paved walkway and secure gate for safer entrance/exit from the property for pedestrians

N THE COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER:

- An additional private behavioral health office (for a total of three)
- Renovation and modernization of the locker rooms, to include two showers (one of which will be ADA accessible), and increased privacy for dressing areas
- Expansion of the community laundry room to include two commercial grade washers and dryers
- Kitchen expansion to better facilitate meal preparation for youth accessing drop-in services
- Repair of the building's elevator
- A new generator



## IN THE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM

• Construction of a 20,200 square-foot, three floor, 30-unit apartment building on the Covenant House Georgia campus



#### TONY'S STORY

or as long as 21-year old Tony can remember, he wanted to follow in his mother's footsteps and become a police officer. Tony had a typical childhood until his mother's new boyfriend became abusive and his home life quickly turned chaotic. Tony soon found himself homeless just a few months after graduating high school. "One of the last things my mother gave me was the phone number to my biological father, a man I had only spoken to twice in my entire life." After a few nights on the street, Tony found the courage to reach out to his father and was surprised and relieved to be welcomed into his home.

After finding work as a security guard and a new place to live, it seemed Tony's dream of becoming a police officer was within reach. However, he soon realized his father's offer of help was highly conditional and, in Tony's words, "safety and love weren't part of the deal." Under threat of eviction, Tony left his father's house to move in with a female friend. Within the first couple of weeks, to his dismay, Tony discovered his new roommate was working as a prostitute out of their apartment. With various men from all walks of life coming in and out of his new home at all hours, Tony again felt unsafe but had nowhere else to go, and didn't earn enough money yet to rent his own apartment.



Tony slept on MARTA for three days and nights until he found a flyer for Covenant House Georgia on the train. "I knew this had to be a better option than staying where I was. I called right away and to my amazement, not only did someone answer on the first try, they said I could come in that evening!" Upon arrival, Tony was immediately embraced by the staff at Covenant House Georgia and offered a hot meal, a hot shower, toiletries, and new undergarments and Bombas socks. "For the first time in nearly a year, I began to feel safe enough to let my guard down" explains Tony.

After 90 days at the shelter, Tony transitioned into the Rights of Passage Program where he gained the skills he needed to prepare him to live independently. Soon thereafter he was accepted into the Delta Career Readiness Program, a four-month training program through which youth are paired with a Delta Air Lines employee mentor, learn valuable professional and soft skills, and explore future career paths within Delta Air Lines. After completing the program, Tony obtained a full-time job with Delta Air Lines as a security agent and found his own apartment with the help of Covenant House. "The Covenant House staff have become a family to me and I have found what I thought I would never experience again: safety, hope, and even love."

# "

### WE HAVE BEEN THRILLED WITH OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH COVENANT HOUSE GEORGIA;

they bring real credibility to their work with homeless youth. These are good kids, kids who just need a little guidance – something most of us likely received and took for granted in our late teens and early 20's. It is an honor for Delta Air Lines to help the youth at Covenant House create a pathway to selfsufficiency, and it's so rewarding for our employees to serve as mentors in the process."

- Tad Hutcheson, Vice President Community Engagement Delta Air Lines



# **CELEBRATING 20 YEARS**



### CELEBRATING 20 YEARS AS A CATALYST FOR CHANGE FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS AND ESCAPING TRAFFICKING.

The teens and young adults who find their way to our crisis shelter have endured unimaginable trauma in the form of abuse, exploitation, violence, and neglect, leaving them with a sense of powerlessness over their fate. Since our inception in the year 2000, Covenant House Georgia has been dedicated to helping these youth engage with supportive staff who guide them through the transformational process of taking control of their own lives. For 20 years now, Covenant House Georgia has done more than just provide shelter, we've made investments in young people's futures.

As we celebrate our 20th Anniversary of service, we reflect on our promise to the youth in our care while also taking important next steps to extend that continuum of care for Atlanta's homeless youth, and help ensure that they realize their fullest potential. From preparing to break ground on a special campus expansion project, to welcoming new corporate and community partners into the fold each day, Covenant House Georgia's work this year will further solidify the critical role we play in caring for our community's youth experiencing homelessness and escaping trafficking.

We invite you to join us as we look towards our next 20 years and beyond. Together, we can continue to build on the promise we made at our founding - to empower all youth to become self-sufficient and thriving young adults.

Chall

John Ridall Board & Campaign Chair

Drald

Dr. Alie Redd Executive Director

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## DR. ALIE REDD JOINED THE COVENANT HOUSE TEAM IN MARCH 2018 AND COMES WITH 28 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE FIELD OF SOCIAL WORK.

Most recently, Dr. Redd served as the Vice President of Placement Services at CHRIS 180, overseeing the organization's therapeutic group homes, street outreach, community housing, permanent supportive housing, transitional living programs, drop in center, and related supportive services. Before her time at CHRIS 180, Dr. Redd worked for

Lutheran Services of Georgia. She has served various populations as a direct service provider, clinician, clinical supervisor, advocate, advisor, administrator, and executive leader. Dr. Redd earned a BA in Psychology from the University of Memphis, an MSW and PhD in Social Work Policy Planning Administration and Social Science with a cognate in Public Administration from Clark Atlanta University. She has been continuously licensed as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker since 2000. Her areas of specialty include: social and child welfare policy; commercial sexual exploitation of children; secondary trauma of social workers; refugee and immigration; racial identity; youth homelessness; and military families.



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