

# ADVOCATES

SUMMER 2024 | [WWW.ADVOCCHILD.ORG](http://WWW.ADVOCCHILD.ORG)

## Newman House construction will radically change lives

Few causes are as significant as preventing and decreasing trauma in a young life. Child abuse, minors living in homelessness, runaway youth and young adults aging out of foster care who are immediately unsheltered are growing issues and Advocates is committed to addressing them.

Advocates stands out as the sole agency in northwest Georgia providing dedicated housing for youth but must address the urgent and escalating issue of rural youth homelessness.

Advocates' exciting upcoming project, Newman House, is poised to address this concern comprehensively. Serving as a drop-in center for runaway and homeless youth ages 14-24, the facility will also provide emergency housing for children ages 6-17 and long-term housing for young adults ages 14-24 experiencing homelessness. Many of these teens and young adults are enduring tremendous hardships.

Construction began in May with the goal of opening Newman House to children and families in early 2025. The facility is named for Nancy Newman, co-founder, and her husband John to honor their original vision of housing children at Flowering Branch Children's Shelter more than 40 years ago. Their meaningful legacy will provide efficiency apartments with kitchenettes, bathrooms, shared living areas, a computer lab, a laundry room, a game room and more.



Advocates for Children President and CEO Rachel Castillo (left) leads a symbolic groundbreaking ceremony at the January Annual Meeting. Rob Hankinson (Capital Campaign Co-Chair), Vicky Newman Durham, Nancy Newman, Glenn Jordan (Capital Campaign Co-Chair) and Board Chair Patrick Nelson.



Nancy Newman poses beside the beautiful rendering of the future Newman House coming in 2025.

To learn more about becoming part of this second priority of the capital campaign, visit [advochild.org/buildfamiliesprotectchildren](http://advochild.org/buildfamiliesprotectchildren)

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## Program Spotlight:

# RISE Youth Housing

The Advocates for Children RISE Program is devoted to serving youth experiencing homelessness with little to no income. Most often coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, many have fled challenging family situations or aged out of the foster care system (about 20% of youth in foster care become homeless the moment they turn 18).

Rural youth homelessness is particularly hidden, a fact well documented in most of the 11-county area served by Advocates for Children. Only 23% of rural youth are housed in shelters (versus 50% of youth in larger communities). In northwest Georgia, these “invisible teens” have limited access to support services and often go unnoticed without completing their education or gaining valuable life skills for adulthood.

To compound the problem, unhoused youth are vulnerable to substance abuse, sex trafficking and early pregnancy. In fact, many of our youth clients have already become parents themselves, a responsibility they are unprepared for on so many levels. This year, the population we now serve is forecasted to increase to 80 young adults ages 18-24, their 80 young children and 20 unaccompanied runaway or foster youth ages 6-17.

“The term RISE comes from Resilience, Independence, Success and Empowerment,” according to RISE Director Kate Tettamant. “This term represents our hope that these young adults will gain the Resilience to quickly recover from hard circumstances, the Independence to care for themselves without future assistance, the Success to accomplish their goals and the Empowerment to feel confident in taking control of their futures.”



## Ellie's Story

When Ellie\* (name changed) reached out to Advocates' RISE Youth Housing Program, she was experiencing the dark trauma of her mom's death and the lack of local family support. She was in high school, attending classes and working while trying to continue living alone in her mother's home.

Her determination and perseverance allowed her to enter the Advocates housing program and obtain an apartment paid for by RISE. After finding stable housing, she graduated on time with honors and applied to multiple colleges in the area. While participating in RISE, Ellie maintained employment and worked hard toward obtaining scholarships for secondary education. She was accepted to Kennesaw State University and achieved her goal of being accepted to the CARES program that provides year-round housing for students in need.

When she exited the RISE program, she received six months of continued case management and shared her amazing successes. She is passing all of her classes, living in on-campus housing, joining the school's barbell team and running for senator of the college for construction and agriculture. Ellie has a bright future and is deeply grateful to the Advocates' RISE program for allowing her to achieve the ambitious goals she set for herself. Her life is transformed.



### KEY RISE SERVICES:

- *Assisting youth in finding permanent housing*
- *Providing temporary rental assistance*
- *Transportation assistance*
- *Childcare assistance*
- *Assisting in obtaining and enhancing life skills (customized for each client) including budgeting, maintaining an organized household, time management, scheduling and goal setting*



Catherine Davis, RISE Program Manager; Kendall Lewis, RISE Case Manager; Pam Lewis, RISE Housing Search & Placement Case Manager; Kimberly Barry, RISE Case Manager; Amanda Valdez, RISE Case Manager



# Sponsorships enhance programming support



## VALUABLE CORPORATE PARTNERSHIP FORMS WITH ENTERPRISE

Enterprise Holdings (Enterprise Rental Car), a valued corporate partner for Advocates, has been a financial donor for two years. In addition, Enterprise has donated volunteer time. Fifteen Atlanta regional leaders hosted their business meeting at Advocates and then volunteered at Flowering Branch Children's Center.

## School bus stop triggers devotion to help others

The ways people get connected to Advocates is always interesting, but for Kayla Ledford of Edward Jones in North Cobb, the story is also gripping.



"While riding the school bus in Bartow County, we stopped at Flowering Branch Children's Shelter. I was surprised at age 13 because I had no idea what my schoolmates were going through," Ledford said, remembering her formative middle school years. "I suddenly realized everyone's home life is different and sometimes challenging."

Now a branch manager in Acworth, she was one of the first to step forward with her company to support THRIVE Family Resource Center, the newest Advocates program. The Edward Jones group hosted diaper drives and collected baby items on their corporate Day of Caring.

She connected to three other company offices and they sent volunteers to THRIVE to organize inventory and sort clothing donations. They have asked for the Advocates' wish list for another supply drive and requested support from their corporate office.

Representing her company, Ledford is also serving on the Fall Benefit Committee and coordinating the silent auction. Advocates is grateful to her and Edward Jones for their compassionate concern for children in need.

## Crosspoint City Church volunteers serve in a big way

"We want to bless people to bless people," said Clay Willis, community engagement pastor at Crosspoint City Church.

Extensive landscaping, sorting clothes for Thrive Family Resource Center and donating 40 large storage tubs were part of an April 27 day of service.

"Advocates supports children and families," Willis said, "and our churches are very involved in those areas. For instance, we have 12 foster families."

The landscaping effort required two truckloads of rocks to create a riverbed for both beauty and drainage on the new Advocates campus. A tractor was required to pull up stumps and the area needed to be graded. This significant gift was made possible by a family at Crosspoint who brought the rocks and tractor from their 50-acre property.





Advocates  
for Children

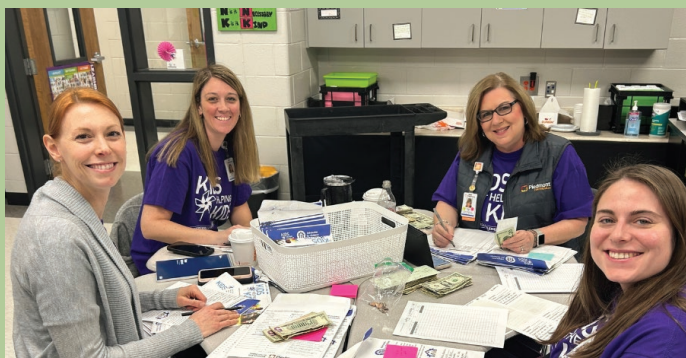
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## EVENTS SUPPORT FUNDRAISING AND FRIEND-RAISING



### Kids Helping Kids

The Honor Society for 4th and 5th graders at Cartersville Elementary is committed to helping others, thanks to teachers who emphasize service. Their Kids Helping Kids project encourages the honor students to raise money for Advocates, taking a vital fundraising role with the support of corporate sponsor Piedmont Hospital. The students raised \$18,000 to benefit the many programs protecting and advocating for children.



### Longest-standing corporate partner hosts clay shoot

The Gerda Cartersville Steel Mill may be part of a larger corporation, but the local mill is deeply committed to community support. In fact, Gerda hosts an annual clay shoot (pictured) as well as a golf tournament for employees and vendors and donates the proceeds to Advocates for Children. Gerda has demonstrated a strong commitment to keeping children safe by hosting two annual charity events with Advocates for Children.



### Child Abuse Prevention Month highlights April

Sponsored by Harbin Clinic, a month of activities and heightened awareness helped Advocates share the dynamic work being done to protect children, advocate for those at risk and strengthen families. Blue pinwheel gardens at Harbin, Advocates, the Courthouse and other locations reminded the community of the importance of being active in the lives of those who need help most.



### Board engagement workshop

The Advocates board recently sponsored a financial planning and giving workshop. In a move to expand diversity in giving, Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church Pastor John Lampley and Glenn Merritt of Merritt Financial- Raymond James worked together to plan the event. Both men share a love and passion for Advocates for Children and encourage others to invest in the nonprofit's strong programming.