



# ADVOCATES

*Protecting Children. Empowering Youth. Uplifting Families.*

## Building a circle of protection around every child

Emma entered foster care during middle school, carrying questions about safety, belonging, and what would happen next. During that uncertain time, her first interactions with Advocates centered on ensuring her voice was heard and her experiences were treated with care.

At a Children's Advocacy Center, Emma participated in a forensic interview in a setting designed to reduce fear and protect her dignity. The process was careful and compassionate, focused not only on gathering information, but on protecting her from additional harm.

Soon after, a CASA volunteer became a steady presence in Emma's life. While agencies made decisions about placement and permanency, Emma had someone focused solely on her best interests. Her advocate showed up consistently, listened without judgment, and ensured her needs were never lost.

During her time in care, Emma lived at Flowering Branch Children's Shelter, now Newman House, where she found structure and encouragement that allowed her to focus on being a teenager rather than surviving instability.

After leaving care, Emma lived independently for a time before realizing that independence without support can become isolation. Through Youth Independent Housing, she secured an apartment in her own name and began building lasting stability.

During Child Abuse Prevention Month, Emma's story reminds us that prevention is the presence of advocacy, stability, and support at every stage. **You can be part of this story. To support children like Emma visit [advochild.org](https://advochild.org)**





RACE LOCATION:  
315 ETOWAH DRIVE  
CARTERSVILLE, GA

05.16.26



Chick-fil&

BIG PEACH  
RUNNING CO.

# PINWHEEL PURSUIT

CARTERSVILLE HALF MARATHON + 5K

Hosted by Wire2Wire Running

EVENT SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE! *Scan Below*

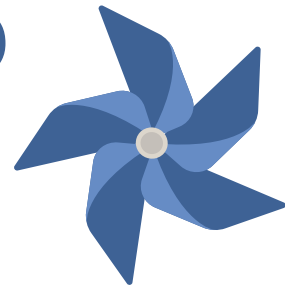
Proceeds help to protect children, empower youth, and uplift families in Northwest Georgia.

Register Online



# THE WORK BEHIND

## *The Pinwheels*

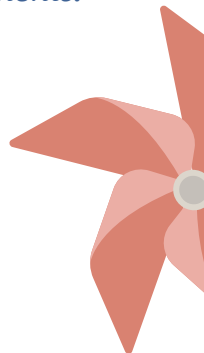
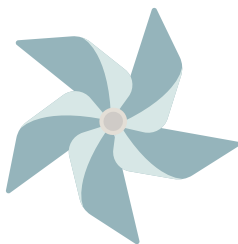
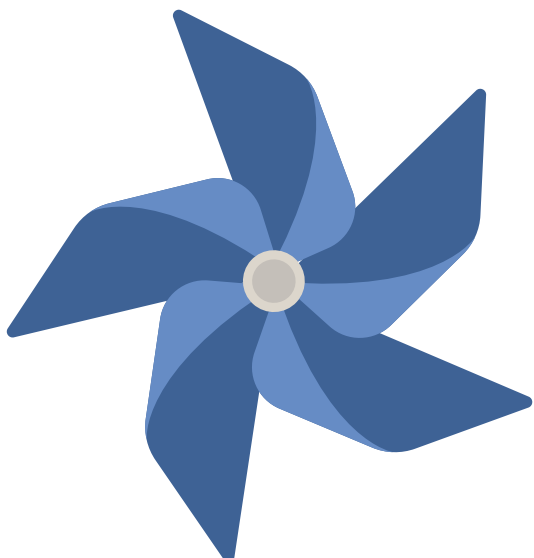


In April, pinwheels appear across our communities as a visible reminder of Child Abuse Prevention Month. They represent something serious and ongoing. Too many children are still living with abuse or neglect, often without anyone realizing what they are facing. This month invites all of us to slow down, and take action through prevention.



Each year in the United States, more than three million reports of child abuse are made, involving over six million children, and an estimated one in seven children will experience abuse or neglect in a single year (according to the Child Welfare Information Gateway). These numbers are difficult to take in, but they matter because each one reflects a child's lived experience and the moment when support was needed.

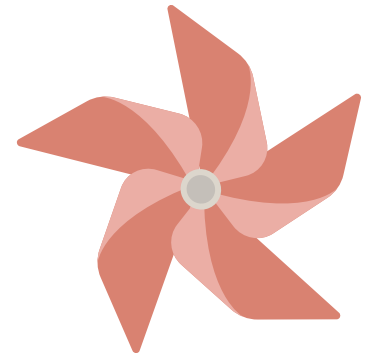
*At Advocates for Children, our work is centered on meeting children and families in those moments.*



For children who have experienced abuse, the Children's Advocacy Center provides a safe, child-focused environment where they can share what happened to them in a way that is handled with care and respect. Over the past year, that work has included 382 forensic interviews conducted through our Children's Advocacy Center, ensuring children are heard in a safe and appropriate setting. CASA volunteers were matched with 224 children, providing consistent advocacy during a time of uncertainty. Through our Youth Accountability Program, 102 youth were diverted from the juvenile court system and given the chance to make a different choice.

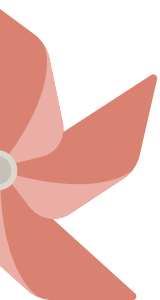
These are meaningful moments of intervention, and they are part of a much larger, ongoing effort to support children and strengthen families.

This work does not end when April does. It continues every day in the lives we walk alongside and the children we refuse to overlook. Our community plays a role in that story. This month is a chance to step in, stand with us, and be part of protecting children, empowering youth, and uplifting families.



*Act this month.*  
**Change a child's future.**

**Scan to purchase a virtual pinwheel.**



# Celebrating a year of *Impact*

On March 12, Advocates for Children stakeholders, partners, and friends gathered at the Komatsu Corporate Training Center to celebrate a year of impact.

Board Chair Glen Meritt welcomed guests and recognized board leadership transitions. Over the past year, the organization expanded its reach, opening Newman House and relocating the Family Resource Center to Marietta, increasing access to critical services. In 2025 alone, more than 21,000 children, youth, and families were served.

A highlight of the meeting was honoring Volunteers and Partners of the Year across programs, recognizing those who make this work possible.

President and CEO Rachel Castillo reflected on the heart of the mission, emphasizing that supporting children and families is not just work, but a shared calling. Looking ahead, Advocates will expand in 2026 to include integrated mental health services, strengthening care for those served.

The meeting closed with a blessing from Pastor John Lampley, followed by a shared meal. Special thanks to Komatsu, Texas Roadhouse, Nothing Bundt Cakes, and Danielle Webb for supporting the event.



## Volunteer + Partner Recognition

One of the most meaningful moments of our Annual Meeting is the opportunity to recognize those who walk alongside us in this work. This year, we were proud to honor the following Volunteers and Partners of the Year:

**Children's Advocacy Center**  
Alexandra Weber

**CASA of Northwest Georgia**  
Max and Cheryl Parrott

**Youth Accountability**  
Melissa Hulseley, Dr. LaToia Carter, and Michelle Jenkins

**Newman House**  
Michelle Harris

**Youth Independent Housing**  
Calvin and Tammy Evans, Augsburg Investments

**Rainbows**  
Claudia Adam

**Family Resource Center**  
Johnson Ferry Baptist Church Ministry Leaders

**In-Home Parenting**  
Rhonda Smith-Benjamin

**Development Volunteer of the Year**  
Ginger Tyra

**Corporate Partner of the Year**  
Chick-fil-A Supply

## CORPORATE PARTNER *Spotlight*

Chick-fil-A Supply continues to show up as a committed partner in our work, supporting children and families through both investment and hands-on engagement. That commitment has deepened with Scott Sangrey joining the Board of Trustees this year, bringing leadership that strengthens our mission and expands our impact across the region.



SAVE  
*the*  
DATE

graze<sup>®</sup>   
& raise '26

November 7, 2026  
Cartersville Country Club

Interested in sponsoring this event: Contact [Meagan@advochild.org](mailto:Meagan@advochild.org)



**Advocates**  
*for Children*

[www.advochild.org](http://www.advochild.org)

827 Joe Frank Harris Pkwy  
P.O. Box 446  
Cartersville, GA 30120

