



## Georgia Community Support and Solutions

1945 Cliff Valley Way, Suite 220

Atlanta, Georgia 30329

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# current SOLUTIONS

December 2007

## Supporting People In Their Community



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### Mission

To enrich the lives of people and their families by providing information, advocacy and support which creates choices to participate in the life of the community.

Georgia Community Support and Solutions is the leader in development and delivery of innovative services for people in the community.

### GCSS Values

#### Innovation

Creative responses to community needs

#### Integrity

We deliver what we promise

#### Respect

Honor people as individuals

#### Passion

For quality and excellence

#### Collaboration

Establishing relationships, building partnerships and fostering leadership

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

### Customer Service Questionnaire

**Your feedback makes a difference for the people we serve, their families and our organization. We would love to hear your feedback! Please call or email the answers to the following questions:**

- 1) What does GCSS do well?
- 2) What can GCSS do better?
- 3) What would you like to see GCSS do differently?
- 4) What would you like to see remain the same at GCSS?

When responding, please let us know if you are a GCSS consumer, family member, support coordinator or donor.

**Please submit your comments to the Director of Quality Assurance to (404) 634-4222, Ext. 233 or [quality@gacommunity.org](mailto:quality@gacommunity.org).**

### Call Us! 404.634.4222

Life@Home - Ext. 258

H.O.S.T. for Adults - Ext. 238

H.O.S.T. for Kids and Adolescents - Ext. 248

FamilyEASE - Ext. 367

Respite - Ext. 271

Beyond Behavior - Ext. 248

Synergy Services - Ext. 261

Quality Companion Care - Ext. 245

EmployABILITY - Ext. 277

Intake - Ext. 275

Donations, Marketing, Volunteers Ext. 370

Art and Food (Marietta) 678.560.3215

Marietta Enrichment Center 678.354.9144

Gwinnett Enrichment Center 770.921.7221

Our Place (Conyers) 678.413.2361

### GCSS Board of Directors

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### Life@Home Program Makes Strides

Nothing in life is guaranteed. But for people with developmental disabilities, their quality of life is much better once they receive the proper resources. Larry Rutherford is a prime example. Life hasn't always been easy for Larry. After his mother died in 2001, he joined the **Life@Home** residential services program. His behaviors previously made living on his own and holding a job impossible. However, with the help of the program, Larry has become stable. For the past five years, he has had stable employment, been in a committed relationship with his girlfriend and lived in an apartment with his roommate. Like many other consumers of the program, Larry's quality of life has improved.

The **Life@Home** program operates 14 homes and 13 apartments, including group homes, apartments with staff and independent living with supports. Consumers in the program have assistance up to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to help them become fully integrated and involved with their community. They receive help with tasks such as grocery shopping, budgeting their money, preparing dinners and attending social activities. The list of resources available for consumers in the program is comprehensive.

Help the **Life@Home** program provide a more meaningful and quality life for more people with developmental disabilities. To make a donation, go to [www.gacommunity.com](http://www.gacommunity.com) <http://www.gacommunity.com/>. You may also send a check made payable to GCSS to the following address: Georgia Community Support & Solutions, 1945 Cliff Valley Way, Suite 220, Atlanta, Georgia 30329.

### EmployABILITY At Its Best

Meet Kenny Cox, GCSS consumer in the **FamilyEASE** program. He's responsible, hardworking and according to co-worker Judy Wiggins, he's an absolute pleasure to be around.

As a veteran in the workforce, Kenny has been with Krystal Restaurant for 11 years and previously worked at Morrison's Cafeteria. "I take the CCT (Cobb Community Transit) to work and I love coming to work," said Kenny. Kenny's amiable personality and dedicated work ethic has brought recognition from Krystal Restaurant, ARC Cobb and Cobb Parks and Recreation.

"He's sunshine and he has a beautiful spirit. Kenny does a great job," said Judy. Kenny has worked with Wiggins since she started at the Canton Highway location in February. Judy is aware of Kenny's developmental disability and has taken a special liking to Kenny and helps him during the work day. "I treat Kenny the way I'd like to be treated," said Wiggins and the arrangement seems to be working well for everyone.



Judy Cox, Kenny's mother loves the fact that Kenny has a job and is learning to be more self-sufficient. "I think that working gives him more independence and a better quality of life when he can get out and meet the public," said Judy.

Kenny is an all-star and proves that having a developmental disability does not alter the ability to excel.

The EmployABILITY program of GCSS is a positive option for people with developmental disabilities to have supported employment and a great opportunity for employers and sponsors to support their communities. For more information about how you can participate or provide training and employment opportunities, please contact LaRue Hasty Griffin, Director of EmployABILITY, at 404-634-4222 ext. 277 or [larue.griffin@gacommunity.org](mailto:larue.griffin@gacommunity.org)

## Here We Grow Again

Since the inception of GCSS, major growth has been the inevitable. In only eight short years, GCSS has grown from a small operation focusing mainly on people with developmental disabilities to being the top agency in Georgia to provide creative options of service to over 10,000 local residents.

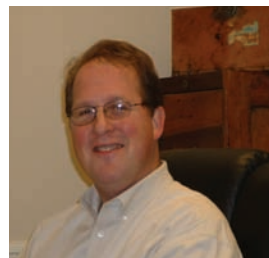
With so many Georgians in need and not enough resources to help them, it comes as no surprise that GCSS would expand to make room for **Synergy Services**, an extension of the Mental Health and Addictive Diseases department and **Quality Companion Care**, a program within Aging and Support services.

**Synergy Services** is the umbrella for **Adolescent Achievement Program (AAP)**, **SUCCEED**, **Individual and Group Counseling** and **Psychiatric Support**. Both **AAP** and **SUCCEED** are programs created to help reduce the recidivism rate among Georgia youth with substance abuse issues and those in the juvenile justice system. "We are so proud of Synergy Services and excited about what we are able to accomplish with the new components," said Zenobia Rainey, Associate Director of GCSS. "They recently received recognition for their work with the Newton County Juvenile Drug Court and received an award from the DeKalb County Juvenile Court Rebound Program."

## What Does It Cost?

Whitney Fuchs, CEO

Is it possible to place a price tag on what it costs to support a person in the community? After all, most families have been providing this support without pay and in many cases without relief for all of their family members' life. But when families need more support or a person goes into a residential setting, what should it cost to support a person with a disability?



As a nonprofit organization, GCSS can not create a profit. Any revenue we create goes into one of two areas: building our cash flow reserves and investing in new supports to people. If GCSS doesn't have these reserves, any delay in our reimbursement could cause us to run out of money. As good stewards of the resources entrusted to us, GCSS is laser focused on developing quality supports for people at the most affordable cost.

GCSS makes every attempt to create a competitive starting wage for our staff and depending on their experience and the needs of the person being supported, we may have to increase this amount. Add to this a 22% fringe benefit cost. For GCSS this includes for full time employees health, dental (and their dependents), life insurance, long and short term disability, GCSS's share of social security, unemployment taxes, workers compensation insurance, etc. Now add costs for supervision, administration, training, recruitment, paid time off (for the staff), transportation reimbursement, insurance and a small amount to return to our agency's reserve. When it comes down to adding all these costs, it runs around \$16-\$18 per hour depending on the person served. Of course this doesn't include those surprise expenses that sneak up.

In residential care the cost for any item that is not related to staff, such as food, clothing, rent, medicine, medical care and dental care (not covered by Medicaid), utilities, repairs, any recreational

**Individual and Group Counseling and Psychiatric Support** is available to participants in AAP and SUCCEED and others receiving support from GCSS.

In-home care has become a very popular service for not only the elderly, but anyone at risk of being placed in a nursing home or long-term care. GCSS recently introduced **Quality Companion Care** to enhance everyday life by providing top-notch services in the forms of companionship, homemaking and personal care in the client's own home.

"I would like to provide in-home care to the elderly to support them to achieve and maintain optimal health, live in a clean environment and maintain good hygiene in a loving and supportive manner," said Daisy Wise RN, Director of Nursing for GCSS.

For more information on GCSS's new ventures or previous ones, please call our front office.

### What is a Developmental Disability?

A developmental disability is a severe, chronic condition that can be attributed to autism spectrum disorder, fetal alcohol syndrome, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, hearing loss, motor disabilities, epilepsy, genetic and chromosomal disorders and visual impairments.

activities and vehicles must be covered by the person's income, which is usually the SSI amount of \$623 per month. For most of us, the cost of living in our community far exceeds this amount. Medicaid waiver funds cannot be used to pay for these expenses for the people GCSS supports and last year the difference between what it cost and what GCSS was reimbursed was over \$250,000.

GCSS wrestles with the difference between what it costs and what we receive on an ongoing basis. It is our values as an organization that will not allow us to settle for the quality of services that could be provided based only on this reimbursement. To make up this huge difference, GCSS fundraises and develops other resources to cover these expenses.

Any time a person with a disability is served in the community it requires more than just the support of an organization. There is an incredible need for partnership between the family, community and the organization to make it work. GCSS cannot make it work alone. It is only with your help and financial support that we can deliver the promise of community based supports to people. As we move forward in this year, GCSS will be calling on you to partner with us to support the people we care about. Please, make a difference and answer the call.

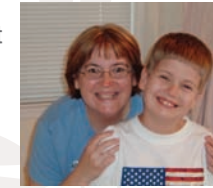
### Community Life Wish List

1. Magazine and newspaper subscriptions
2. Games
3. Art and craft Supplies
4. Toiletries
5. Electronics

## Leadership and Advocacy

Dear Families and Friends:

The summer has ended and a new year is beginning. This is the time that I reflect back on the past, look at the present and our dreams and hopes for the future. I often think about the future and wonder if the supports and services that Andrew needs will be available. If not, will we be able to create them and work with our community to make them available? Will there be employment, recreational opportunities, housing and transportation available? Will he live by himself or with a roommate?



It is never too early to start learning about what is available in your community. If you find that supports are not currently available, now is the time to start those conversations with your community leaders. Gather families together and invite your local legislators, board of commissioners and local business leaders and use this opportunity to educate them on the needs of your family members. See how everyone can work together to ensure that the needs of all your county citizens are being met and find out what is available to either improve on those services or create new services.

Starting conversations is the first step in helping to educate our leaders on the needs of our family members. Never underestimate the power of families mobilizing and working with their communities. As always I look forward to hearing from you.

Heidi Fernandez  
GCSS Parent and Advocate  
Advocacy@gacommunity.org  
404-634-4222 ext 550

## How Can You Help?

Are you having trouble deciding how to make your tax deductible, year-end gift? We have a few ideas for you:

1. Donate to the Annual Fund to support GCSS and its programs.
2. Support the Excitement Committee and their events such as the Thanksgiving Boxes, Holidays Around The World Party and Giving Tree for consumers in need, and the annual GCSS Barbecue.

If you are interested in making a donation, please call the Community Relations Department at Ext. 370 or e-mail [communityrelations@gacommunity.org](mailto:communityrelations@gacommunity.org).

\*Contributions are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law.



## What Do We Do?

Founded in 1999, Georgia Community Support and Solutions (GCSS), was created to provide community-based services and supports to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

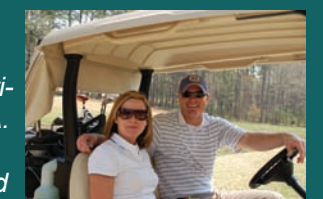
Since then, GCSS has broadened its mission and creative options of service to include not only individuals with Developmental Disabilities, but people with Mental Health and Addictive Diseases and those who are in need of Aging and Support Services.

Over the last several years, GCSS has built an outstanding reputation in Georgia for its innovative programs and willingness to take on challenging support situations for people in their communities. Currently, GCSS has over 300 employees who provide all levels of support in the community to people with a variety of needs including residential support, employment services, respite care, family support, in-home care and day programs.

To date, GCSS has provided support and service to over 10,000 Georgians.

## SAVE THE DATE!

We will host the **2008 GCSS Annual Golf Tournament on Friday, March 28, 2008 at Heritage Golf Club in Norcross, GA.**



Join us for a fun day of golf and networking to raise funds for the people we support.



Registration fee includes breakfast, lunch and a fabulous dinner courtesy of Carraba's Italian Grill in Dunwoody.

For more information please call Amy Smith at ext. 370 or email [Amy.Smith@gacommunity.org](mailto:Amy.Smith@gacommunity.org).

