



2022-2023

annual report

MorningStar  
children & family services





## VISION

Brighter futures for all Georgia children

## MISSION

Morningstar is a sanctuary where transformative teaching and healing affirms our children through real relationships

## VALUES

### We look toward the stars...

believing that we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

### We shine like the stars...

reflecting the goodness and light that is in all of us.

### We reach for the stars...

knowing our best effort makes a difference, every day.

### We guide like the stars...

mentoring those in our care through positive words and actions.

### We connect like the stars...

linking together to create a community of hope and encouragement for all.

# Our Leadership Team

## Senior Leadership

**Beth VanDerbeck**  
CEO

**Brian Bean**  
COO

**Katrina Chisholm**  
Director of  
Community Counseling

**LaToya Scott**  
Director of  
Residential Services

**Elizabeth Stephenson**  
Autism Program  
Coordinator

**Josh Rustin**  
Workforce Development  
Coordinator

## Board of Directors

Rick Shelnutt: Chair  
Bryce Bunting Vice-Chair  
Jim Davis: Treasurer  
Kate Sabbe: Secretary  
Cherise Cartwright  
Judy Dodd  
Nick Doster  
Zachary B. Harris  
Cornell Harvey  
Don Hogan  
Jerry House  
Michael Scherneck  
Susan Watts  
Karen Wayes



# Home is Always Open

Dear Morningstar Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, we review with gratitude the challenges and achievements of the children and our organization. We recognize it is the collaborative efforts of many - children, staff, and community - which creates change. With this in mind, our new gym mural (pictured on the cover) displays bold shapes and colors, with many arms "reaching for the stars", a reminder that it takes all of us, each boldly doing our part, to create home and healing for Georgia's children.



Over the last year, changes in child welfare, an increasing demand for mental health services, and the continuation of a struggling labor market each required a response from our Board and staff, as well as support from our partners and donors, to keep us moving forward. With each challenge, we pivoted as needed, taking action that demonstrated sensitivity to the children and families we serve and positioning us for continued growth.

The accomplishments worthy of celebration are many. Most notably, we deepened our residential program to support requests from the state to provide care for foster boys with more significant and complex needs. Without us, these children truly had nowhere to go. Additionally, we hired a Workforce Coordinator to give even greater emphasis to helping the boys learn the value of work and how to become good future employees. Finally, photos of continued facility improvements made across our campus are shared here, including the completed renovation of Bradley Cottage.



We know there will be more challenges to face and work to be done in the year ahead. We are confident, together, we can continue to make a difference in the lives of children, providing a safe and nurturing home, education, healthcare, and emotional support, all while helping them build the skills they need to succeed in life.

Thank you for continuing to reach high with us.   
-Beth VanDerbeck, Chief Executive Officer



# Morningstar Child and Family Services

## Community Services



### Counseling

Morningstar's **Community Counseling Clinics** are located in Brunswick and Perry, Georgia. Each clinic provides support and hope to children and families through comprehensive child and adolescent mental health assessments, treatment planning, crisis intervention, therapy services, and medication management.

## Residential Services



### Autism

The **Autism and Complex Care Program** provides specialized services to support foster children with special mental and physical challenges. Cottage staff and ABA therapists work to assist children in learning basic life skills to aid them in living successfully as they return home or to a foster home.



### Workforce Development

The **Workforce Development Program** provides support to youth with jobs skills training and experience, on and off campus. We believe a high school degree and successful work experience will set these youth up for a successful future as they move to home or an independent living program for young adults.

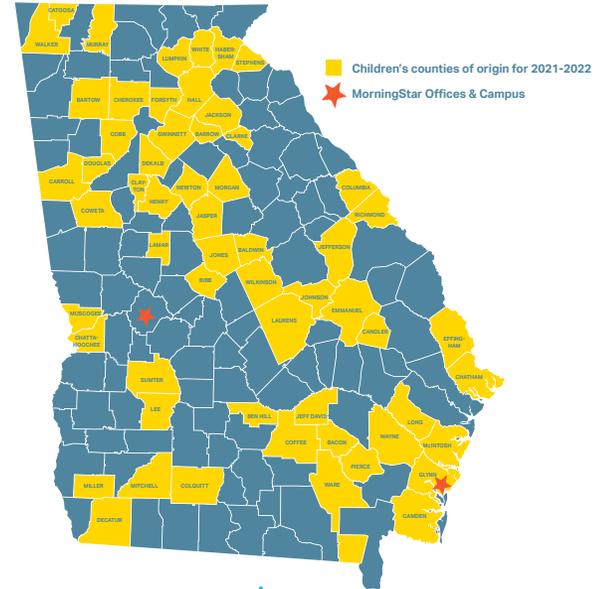
# Children Served

Morningstar's **Residential Services Program** provides home to Georgia's foster children, ages 12 – 21, who have come into care due to abuse, severe neglect, or abandonment. We are the only group home in the state solely serving youth with developmental delays (IQ 40-80). Each child receives services that address their physical, psychological, social, educational, and spiritual needs.



## map of service

Morningstar accepts referrals from all Georgia counties



MorningStar  
children & family services  
connecting kids with brighter days



# Community Support and Engagement

## Oak Grove Island Couples Golf Tournament



The Oak Grove Island Couples Golf Association held its 16th annual golf tournament and silent auction in September at the Heritage Oaks Golf Course in support of Morningstar Children's Home.

## 100 Women Who Care

Morningstar was honored to be chosen by 100 Women Who Care as 2022's first quarter recipient.



## On the Road to Success!

As a community, you came together and helped us raise needed funds to purchase two new buses to help the residents get to school, medical appointments, and field trips. Thank you!



## Ashley Furniture

A good night's sleep makes days brighter. Many thanks to Sommer Ferguson and Jonathan Jones from our local Ashley Furniture! They, along with their parent company 1915 South, provided amazing new mattresses and pillows to meet our cottage needs.



## Gym Mural



Funds from St. Simons Presbyterian allowed us to collaborate with a local artist to get this beautiful mural up in our gym. It creates a colorful backdrop for basketball games, talent shows, and staff Christmas parties. Thank you!

# dinner under the stars

It was wonderful being back on campus for Dinner Under the Stars! Many thanks to Drew Thompson, former Boys Estate residents, and our sponsors and guests for such an impactful evening.



## Thank you, 2021 Event Sponsors!

★★★★★ **Title Sponsor** ★★★★★

Georgia Peach World

★★★★★ **Premier Sponsors** ★★★★★

- Art & Lindee Lucas
- Jack & Kathleen Thornton

★★★ **Prominent Sponsors** ★★★

- Georgia Power
- h2o Creative Group
- Halyards
- Jim & Trina Davis
- Premier Restoration Services
- Southeast Georgia Health System
- Turner & Associates

★★ **Significant Sponsors** ★★

- Advanced Valve & Instrument
- Becky Livingston
- Darien Telephone Company
- Elegant Island Living
- Gope Management/CB Yadav
- Kathy & Mike Scherneck
- Killian Law Firm
- Light of Hope Learning Center
- Lindsay Stewart Photography
- Northside Baptist Church
- Rusty & Linda Sewell
- Schell & Hogan, LLC
- Suncoast
- Susan Watts & Leo Pieri
- The A/C Guys
- The Wessel Family
- V-Inc

★ **Patron Sponsors** ★

- Brown, Readdick, Bumgartner, Carter, Strickland, & Watkins, LLC
- Carol & Ben Slade
- First Coast Benefit Solutions, Inc.
- Francis Dyal Family Law
- James Kleen
- Judy & Kenny Dodd
- Lewis & Nancy Glenn
- Lisa & Ellis Johnson
- Maddox Events
- Millie Wilcox
- MST
- Yates Astro

SAVE THE DATE for  
Dinner Under the Stars  
Oct. 21, 2023!

## Thank you, 2022 Event Sponsors!

★★★★★ **Presenting Sponsor** ★★★★★

Space Craft

★★★★★ **Connecting Sponsor** ★★★★★

GolfClub Realty

★★★★★ **Premier Sponsors** ★★★★★

- Church at Wieuca
- DeLeon Peacock
- Georgia Peach World
- Jack & Kathleen Thornton

★★★★ **Prominent Sponsors** ★★★★

- Al Brown Company
- Beachview Event Rentals
- Georgia Power
- Hank & Julie Rowland
- Homestar Financial
- Jack & Brenda Kilgore
- Lindsay Stewart Photography
- Premier Restoration Services
- Southeast Georgia Health System
- The VanDerbeck Group
- Tom & Linda Heagy
- Transform Your Interiors
- Turner & Associates Insurance
- Webster Tile and Bath

★★★ **Significant Sponsors** ★★★

- Advance Valve & Instrument
- Bruce & Kay Miles
- CB Yadav
- h2o Creative Group
- International Auto Processing
- Jack Kilgore
- Jan & Josue Castillo
- Jim & Trina Davis
- Joseph & Christine O'Brien
- Mike & Kathy Scherneck
- Northside Baptist Church
- Overhead Door Company of Brunswick
- Silver Bluff Brewing Company
- Suncoast Paper & Chemical
- Synovous Bank

★ **Patron Sponsors** ★

- Beckham Insurance Group
- C-OKAY & Associates Accounting and Tax Services
- Carter Land Services
- Flexer Industries
- James & Joy Riley
- Judy & Kenny Dodd
- Killian Law Firm LLC
- Lisa & Ellis Johnson
- Maddox Events
- One Way Auto Rentals
- Sue and Jerry House

# Bradley Cottage

The Bradley Cottage project was completed in early 2023 and the boys love the more modern, renovated space. Special thanks to the Stuart and Eulene Murray Foundation, specifically Hank and Julie Rowland, who supported our mission with a challenge grant, providing an opportunity for all of us to partner together to improve the living space for our residents. We thank each donor who gave so generously to help us raise the challenge funds, allowing us to move forward quickly to begin and complete this wonderful work. Finally, we thank Susan Watts, founder of SpaceCraft and a member of our Board, for providing the creative vision and oversight of the renovation, assuring the cottage is a safe, beautiful, and peaceful place for the boys to live. Together, we restored a cottage which will serve Georgia's children for years to come.





# Living Lent

In 2021, the inaugural Lent devotional series was launched, touching hundreds of people with daily devotional emails, and raising \$30,000 to support the needs of the children. In 2022 and 2023, pastors from across Georgia joined us by providing the devotional words of reflection, which were shared by email and in booklets to a growing group of individuals and churches throughout the state, with over \$50,000 of generous gifts received each year. Special thanks to Becky Livingston for providing the vision and leadership to what has become a meaningful annual faith journey for many, as well as an impactful support avenue to Morningstar.



During Lent, the Stations of the Cross, an art walk toward Easter, was set up just outside the campus gate. Artwork by Jen Norton, a contemporary artist and award-winning painter, were combined with devotions by Reverend Stephanie Smith, Statesboro, to provide individuals and groups an opportunity for thought and prayer.

A Day of Service was coordinated each year within Lent weeks for individuals and groups to give their time to serve on the Morningstar campus. Thanks to Judy Dodd and Pat Parsons for providing coordination of the projects and the 50-100 volunteers who arrived for the annual campus workday.





# Strategic Plan 2020-2022

Our New Strategic Focus is **Them**: **They** are the reason we exist. **They** are children in need. **They** are families facing unimaginable challenges. **They** are daughters, sons, mothers, fathers. **They** are our clients. **They** are our employees. **They** are volunteers. **They** are partner organizations. **They** are donors. **They** are our leaders. **They** are the communities we serve. **They** are people with needs. Each one of **them**. Our strategy is to understand **them**. To help **them**. To educate **them**. To meet **their** needs. Because only by focusing first on **them** will Morningstar grow and thrive.



# Financial Overview and Funding Initiatives



Georgia's child welfare system reimburses less than the cost of care for each resident. Community contributions, essential to the ongoing work of Morningstar, make up the difference in the cost of caring for those we serve.



## The Morningstar Children's Endowment Fund

In 2020, through a designated philanthropic investment, this fund was established with Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation. The designated fund supports the mission of Morningstar Children and Family Services to provide residential and community counseling services to children, youth, and their families. When you make a gift to the fund, you are making an investment in the future of the children we serve. For more information, contact Communities of Coastal Georgia Foundation at 912-268-2561.

connecting  
kids  
with brighter  
days

The logo features the text 'connecting kids with brighter days' in a playful, rounded font. 'connecting' is written vertically in green. 'kids' is in blue, 'with' is in yellow, 'brighter' is in orange, and 'days' is in a lighter orange. Two decorative starburst graphics, one yellow and one blue, are positioned on either side of the text.

## WAYS TO GIVE TO MORNINGSTAR



**CHECK**

P.O. Box 370, Brunswick, GA 31521



**WEBSITE**

[MorningstarCFS.Org/Donate](http://MorningstarCFS.Org/Donate)