



# The DAS Digest

Spring 2022

## Georgia SHIP team wins Commissioner's Outstanding Team Award

Congratulations to the Georgia SHIP team (formerly called GeorgiaCares)! They won the Commissioner's Staff Excellence Award for Outstanding Team during the 2021 awards ceremony. The Outstanding Team Award recognizes a team that embodies excellence in customer service, innovation and improvement, leadership, service to the Department and community, and commitment to diversity while working as a team.

The 11-member Georgia SHIP team, led by Christine Williams, pulled together to provide excellent customer service to approximately 5,000 of Georgia's Medicare beneficiaries.

The agency routinely hears from constituents who were so pleased with their experience that they felt compelled to write a note. The success of Georgia SHIP should come as no surprise, as they are led by one of the most supportive, methodical and data-oriented supervisors. Christine Williams has ensured that her staff have the training they need while always offering them unwavering support. Great job to the entire Georgia SHIP team for their hard work providing Medicare knowledge and solutions to Georgia's residents.



### Outstanding Team



**Christine Williams**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Jannaea Adams**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Nadine Dixon**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Lashonda Edwards**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Antoinette Gardner**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Mandel Jones**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Anna Moses**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Yasmeen Robins**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Jessica Shelton**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares



**Lisa Williams**  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Cares

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## APS Team collaborates with counterparts in Guam

Guam, like many other states/territories with an APS program, received Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act of 2021 funding and was looking for ways to improve its services to clients. Guam has an emergency receiving home program where they provide emergency shelter to clients who are in abusive situations and need to be relocated immediately. Guam APS wanted to expand the program and find a more efficient way to assist clients while connecting them with long-term resources. Georgia runs a Temporary Emergency Respite Fund (TERF) program, and thus, Georgia APS was connected to share about how the TERF program was developed, how it has expanded over the years and how it helps our clients.



The APS team met virtually with the team in Guam late in the evening on March 14, due to Guam being 14 hours ahead of Georgia, and discussed how Georgia's TERF program was developed and how we partner with different agencies to safely relocate clients.

The Guam APS team was pleased with the information presented and asked for a follow up meeting to ask more questions. Great job to the APS team who did an excellent job showcasing the work we are doing in Georgia.

Please join us on DHS social media pages in June as we observe Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. Follow our **Facebook**, **Twitter**, and **Instagram** page for more information and employee highlights.



# Georgia Mountains Region APS advocate saves client's life

APS staff never know what kind of situations they are walking into, but APS advocate Sara Aycock got the surprise of a lifetime recently. She went to check on a new referral only to find herself in a life-or-death situation.

Sara received a referral for a client that was hospitalized the day before. She went to the client's house and as she arrived, a man ran out of the house saying, "He needs Narcan!" and that the client had gotten into something he shouldn't have. Sara called 911, went into the house and found the client unresponsive. The 911 operator stayed on the phone with her, and she performed CPR on the client until EMS arrived to administer Narcan and transport him to the hospital. It took a long time, but they were able to bring him back to life.

Sara was in the right place at the right time and was able to save the man's life. As her supervisor Emily Shook said, "I'm so proud to have Sara on my team. Her gut instinct told her to jump in and give CPR to someone in need, and she put herself at risk going into a home not knowing what she would find. She remained calm and followed the instructions from 911. She is not only an asset to our team, but to the state of Georgia."

## APS teams celebrate Social Work Month

APS team members across the state celebrated Social Work Month in March with crafts, food and team-building activities.



The Northwest Georgia APS team took time to relax and enjoy time together.



## DAS and AAA staff observe Senior Hunger Awareness Day

On April 8, DAS employees and AAA staff around the state wore orange to show their support to end senior hunger in Georgia. Read more about Georgia's state plan to end senior hunger [here](#).



The Georgia Mountains West APS team decorated plates with words of inspiration.



# Staff Shoutouts

Shoutout to APS District D Advocate, **Theresa Mercer**, for working with law enforcement to help a senior who was being financially exploited. The senior's appointed power of attorney had financial authorization and was using the client's accounts to monetarily gift herself. Theresa partnered with law enforcement to ensure the senior would no longer be exploited. Great job, Theresa!

APS Supervisor **Sherry Thompson** participated with the Family Resource Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse in planting blue pinwheels to kick off Child Abuse Prevention Month in April. Multiple community agencies came together to bring attention to the cause and to honor the overall purpose of "Fostering Connections to Build Strong Families."



APS Supervisor Sherry Thompson participates in planting blue pinwheels to observe Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Kudos to **Jack Rivers**, who serves as the Data Analytics Team Lead in DAS's Program Integrity section. Over the past months, Jack has been particularly helpful with the NSI Assessment Report and assisting with a training for the network. Jack went above and beyond to make multiple edits to ensure the report functioned as desired, and he did so in a kind, patient manner. Jack continues to lend his expertise and is a true pleasure to work with. We are lucky to have him!



## Southern Georgia AAA recognized for farmers' market program

SGRC-AAA's Director Scott Courson recently announced that the AAA's Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) was awarded a First Place Platinum Certificate of Achievement for FFY 2021 for serving the highest number of SFMNP participants in Georgia.

The SGRC-AAA issued and redeemed 2,703 vouchers during the 2021 market season, and as a result, the program served triple the number of participants as the previous year. The upcoming SFMNP program began in May 2022 and will continue through September. Each person aged 60 and older who qualifies for the program will receive \$30 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables from a SFMNP-approved farmer. A special shoutout goes to the AAA staff who administered the program -- Shawn Taylor, Linda Gail and Simone Popham.

For more information on the SFMNP, please contact Shawn Taylor at 912-285-6097 or visit [fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmersmarket-nutrition-program-sfmnp](https://fns.usda.gov/sfmnp/senior-farmersmarket-nutrition-program-sfmnp).





## Legacy Link AAA staff and senior centers celebrate senior hunger awareness month

Several senior centers across the Legacy Link region as well as AAA staff observed Senior Hunger Awareness Month in April. They all proudly wore orange to show support to end senior hunger in Georgia. (above)

## Sowega Council on Aging Claris Companion Project makes difference in lives of seniors

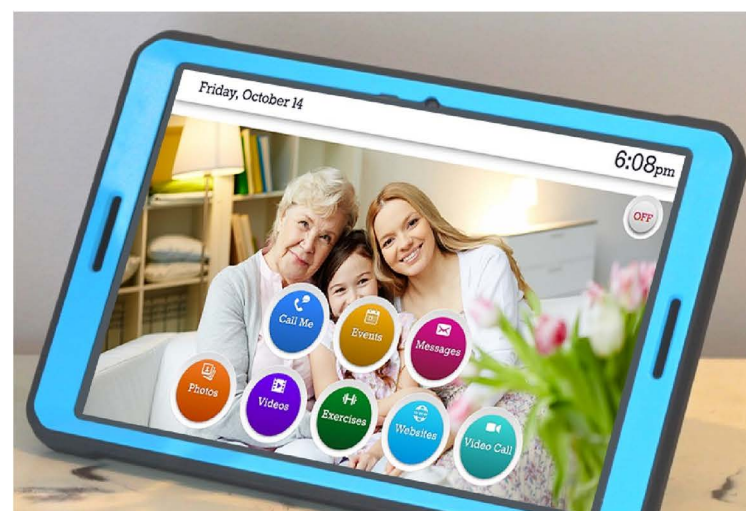
The Sowega Council on Aging is proud of the results from utilizing the Claris Companion Project. The Claris Companion was founded in 2012 to provide seniors, family and care providers a platform to deliver high quality care at home. The goal of the project is to ensure that seniors are socially engaged and able to receive telehealth and remote rehabilitation easily.

25 seniors in Southwest Georgia had the opportunity to utilize the tablets to access wellness and evidence-based programs, at no cost to them, since June 2021. During the last month (April 5, 2022- May 4, 2022), 22 of the clients were active for a total of

1,970 interactions. They initiated 1,848 activities and had access to 1,069 websites and apps on their devices. The clients were able to stray away from boredom by playing 303 different games during the one-month period. Data shows that all 22 of the users completed exercise classes during the month.

Many of the users learned new skills and increased their creativity since receiving their device. Seniors who use the devices have been said to feel less isolated and more engaged. There has been an increase in physical activities, better health management and reduction in pain with many of the users. The Sowega Council on aging plans to distribute 37 additional tablets in June so that more seniors will continue living longer, living safer and living well from the comfort of their homes.

*"Using Claris Companion has helped me a lot since having a stroke. The games, classes, and activities keep my brain running well"* ~ **Ruth Wright**





# Final Aging State Plan Hearings taking place in June

Aging State Plan Hearings began in April and will run through June. The June dates and areas include:

## Three Rivers Area Agency on Aging

June 21, 2022 | 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

## Southwest Georgia Area Agency on Aging

June 30, 2022 | 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

**Living Longer,  
Living Safely,  
Living Well**

**A Conversation on Aging  
Services in Georgia**

Register  
Now!



## Congratulations!

### April milestone anniversaries

DAS honors the milestone anniversaries of our long-time employees. This April, DAS celebrated anniversaries for 11 employees. Thank you for your many years of service to help Georgia's seniors and disabled adults live healthier and stronger lives.

**Tracey Williams** – 26 years  
**Marian Dowling** – 25 years  
**Melissa Brown** – 21 years  
**Carlos Matthews** – 21 years  
**Tonya Felder** – 13 years  
**Shawonda Wright** – 12 years  
**Derrell Bullock** – 10 years  
**Dwan Grooms** – 8 years  
**Kristin McKinney** – 8 years  
**Albert McKenzie** – 5 years  
**Mary Wright** – 5 years

### New hires join DAS

This Spring, DAS onboarded many new employees, featured below. We are excited to have them on our team as we continue to support Georgia's aging population.

**Chansenette Amison**  
**Erica Finney**  
**Wilku Mackey**  
**Kimberly Patterson**  
**Regina Trotman**  
**Lindsay Jones**

**India Morgan**  
**Alexis Brooklins**  
**Joan Blair**  
**Comelia Miller**  
**Melinda Lightfoot**  
**Rebecca Dasher**  
**Lakisha Felton**

**Naja-Michaelyn Cannick**  
**Jessica Wilson**  
**Tamikia Jones**  
**Larry Salter**  
**Christina Mays**  
**Valerie Williams**  
**Jules Francois**

**Schenika McWhorter**  
**Talmedge Fuqua**  
**Marcia Samuels-Levy**  
**Nadine Talbot**  
**Derraine JeanPierre**  
**Brittany Jackson**

### May milestone anniversaries

DAS honors the milestone anniversaries of our long-time employees. This May, DAS celebrated anniversaries for 13 employees. Thank you for your many years of service to help Georgia's seniors and disabled adults live healthier and stronger lives.

**Alice Murgatroyd** – 29 years  
**Andre'a Glasper** – 21 years  
**Cathy Bahadur** – 20 years  
**Elizabeth Faulk** – 20 years  
**Theresa Mercer** – 19 years  
**Amber Allen** – 18 years  
**Sheri Bragg-Senters** – 18 years  
**Amber Holloway** – 17 years  
**Teresa Goins** – 16 years  
**Gloria Hunter** – 12 years  
**Michelle Green** – 8 years  
**Tracy Jordan** – 5 years  
**Tiffany Rose** – 5 years



# Upcoming Webinars

## At-Risk Adult Crime Tactics Certification Course webinar

July 13 and 14 | 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

An At-Risk Adult Crime Tactics Specialist is a professional trained in recognizing and responding to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. An Adult Crime Tactics (ACT) Certified Specialist is knowledgeable in identifying at-risk adult abuse, understands the different types of abuse, the role of adult protective services and how to identify available resources. The ACT training is not open to the general public. Applicants must be first responders or in a field of work that requires mandated reporting of vulnerable adult abuse. Register for this training [here](#).

## Facility At-Risk Adult Crime Training (FACT) class

July 13 and 14 | 8:30 a.m.–3 p.m.

July 21 | 10–11:30 a.m.

August 11 | 10–11:30 a.m.e

The Facility At-Risk Adult Crime Training (FACT) class is reserved for hospital social workers, case managers, discharge planners, care coordinators and home health providers that respond to the abuse, neglect and exploitation of at-risk adults. Register for this training [here](#).

## Honor a centenarian in your community

Do you know someone who will be 100 years of age or older this year? Share their story with [kaylan.storey@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:kaylan.storey@dhs.ga.gov), so we can highlight them on our social media pages.

**Click here** to request a DHS Centenarian Recognition Certificate. Please submit requests 45 days in advance of the honoree's birthday.

## DAS Digest Newsletter story ideas

Do you have a story idea for the newsletter?

Want to give a shout-out for your coworker?

Send your ideas to Kaylan Storey at [kaylan.storey@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:kaylan.storey@dhs.ga.gov).