



## Georgia's First Lady Leading the Fight Against Trafficking

*Interviewed by Jansen Head, OCA Deputy Director*

**First Lady Marty Kemp** is leading the fight against human trafficking in Georgia and does not hesitate to speak for those who are still trapped in such an evil industry. In creating the Georgians for Refuge, Action, Compassion, and Education (GRACE) Commission, Mrs. Kemp is turning conversations into actions – and she has been Georgia's First Lady for only a little over a year. I recently had the honor to meet with her and learn how she quickly became a strong and distinguished advocate on this issue:

**Before Governor Kemp was sworn into office, what did you know or hear about human trafficking in general?**

"Honestly, I didn't know anything about human trafficking. I didn't hear or see anything about it until last year on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. That day, Brian, the girls, and I were at a press conference at the Atlantic Station where we kicked off National Human Trafficking Awareness Month. The Super Bowl at the Mercedes-Benz Stadium was about a month away, so the issue of child sex trafficking was gaining more attention in Georgia. At the press conference, there were 72 school buses that represented the 3,600 children taken into trafficking in Georgia each year. It was shocking. I am a visual learner and that was such a powerful message to me. I've never seen anything like that before. I wanted to know more about trafficking so I reached out to several experts who are now on the GRACE Commission and we hit the ground running. That was just a prime example of the saying, 'Once you learn something, then go out and do something about it.' So far, the GRACE Commission has had three successful meetings, amplified the voices of

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*OCA Deputy Director Jansen Head with First Lady Marty Kemp at the Governor's Mansion.*

## >>>> YOUTH VOICE <<<<

The unedited voices of young people who have been in foster care



*By Gio Carranza  
President, Georgia  
EmpowerMENT Policy  
Council*

**"Nothing About us Without us!"** This motto rings loud and clear across all of Empowerment's programs as it does our Policy Council.

My name is Edgar Giovanni Carranza and I am Georgia EmpowerMENT's Policy Council's President. I have had my own experiences of being in and out of foster care throughout my childhood and teenage years. At age 26, as a Latino Interior Designer, I am incredibly proud of our council members and the collective experiences that allow us to push forward in the fight to aid our brothers and sisters while simultaneously pursuing our own passions and endeavors. We are diverse in ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, ages and identities. Most importantly we all have had experiences in having been in foster care whether currently or formerly. As a

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## What Type of Therapy Speaks to You?

**People respond to therapy** in their own way. Some people respond well to talk therapy and others may benefit from additional types of therapy. Like a number of programs serving Georgia's children in foster care, Hillside offers a variety of therapy opportunities in addition to talk therapy. Amongst these are animal-assisted therapy and horticulture therapy. OCA Director Rachel Davidson recently had an opportunity to observe an animal-assisted therapy session and tour the facilities used for horticulture therapy.



Leia is Hillside's therapy dog. She sat patiently through a conversation about dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) and also got to enjoy a lot of love from residents during a mindfulness activity designed to help them feel grounded. This activity led into a discussion about how to work through situations where they might feel frustrated. Leia was an excellent (and adorable!) assistant!

Horticulture therapy is focused on gardening and the outdoors and is accompanied by therapeutic discussions. Hillside has multiple gardens and a greenhouse throughout their property which allows youth to grow some of the food and herbs that they are then able to eat! Other horticulture therapy activities include making bird seed ornaments, observing the different birds that come to feed from the orna-

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## Youth (and Adult) Advocates at Work

**Youth advocates** are an integral part to effecting improvements to the child welfare system. Pictured are a sampling of how some spent their time advocating this month. Thank you for your efforts and thank you to those who take the time to listen and support these youth advocates!



Cara Cole Heerde at CASA  
Day at the Capitol with  
Justice Nahmias and OCA  
Director Rachel Davidson



Leslie McClain with Governor Kemp and OCA  
Director Rachel Davidson



Leslie McClain with Supreme  
Court Justice David Nahmias  
and Justice Charlie Bethel



Youth and adult advocates at  
MAAC Day at the Capitol



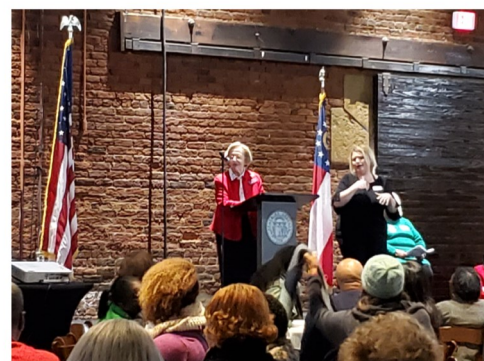


## Mental Health Day at the Georgia Capitol

*By Jansen Head, OCA Deputy Director*

**Georgia's Behavioral Health Services Coalition** joined with behavioral health peers and allies at the Georgia Freight Depot and the State Capitol for the annual gathering of Mental Health Day on February 7th. Over 1,000 attendees gathered to hear from Georgia's mental health peers and leaders and to learn about the opportunities and challenges facing the behavioral health community in 2020.

State Representative Sharon Cooper spoke about mental health and her experience with this issue within her family. She explained that this issue touches all of us – that state legislators are like anyone else in the room: they are not “special” but rather, like any one of us, they “grow up with trials and tribulations.” She further explained that as state legislators, they bring their own experiences to the work they do at the capitol, noting her experience as a nurse. “Whether you see us in the press or not....we are there for you. We are out there talking to our colleagues about mental illness. You're not alone. There are those of us who think of you daily. You and your needs are our primary focus as we work at the Capitol,” she said.



State Senator Jen Jordan emphasized the importance of having advocates on mental health issues. “The budget is a real challenge this year unfortunately, but you do have advocates fighting for you under the gold dome every day.” Senator Jordan encouraged us to “understand the power of story telling and the power of showing up”. She explained, “Before I came here, I never called my senator and representative because I thought they were busy and didn't have time to hear what I had to say. Then, I got there and realized how important it is to have advocates down here. I know it can be intimidating...pulling people from the ropes and talking to people. But just being there, showing up, and talking to people makes the difference. It's about speaking the truth and about who you are. Please keep coming. This is going to be a fight this year.”

During the gathering at the Georgia Railroad Freight Depot, several artists shared their talents on display to show and express how art has helped them overcome their personal challenges. One of the artists, Keith Walker, shared his story about how art has helped him with recovery and healing. He shared the name of his Facebook page named “Artistic Visuals by Keith” where he shares photos of artwork with some that are available for purchase. Pictured to the right is Keith Walker and some of the artwork he shared at the Georgia Freight Depot.





## Robust Family Time Strengthens Relationships, Promotes Well-Being, and Expedites Reunification

The federal Children's Bureau released guidance earlier this month pertaining to "Family Time and Visitation for Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Care". Meaningful family time occurs when the parent and family participates in normal parenting activities in normal settings.

The guidance states in part, "The parent-child relationship is critical to the well-being of children and parents, except in the most egregious of situations where it would be harmful to the child. Ensuring that meaningful family time is a central component of every case plan for children in out-of-home care is a critical strategy for strengthening the parent-child relationship and promoting family well-being." The guidance further provides recommendations for those playing an essential role in protecting and strengthening the integrity of the parent-child relationship.

Additionally, the guidance highlights Georgia's comprehensive Family Time Practice Guide, which can be found [here](#). Click [here](#) to read the full guidance. Do you have ideas on how Georgia can support more consistent quality family time? Share them with us: [jhead@oca.ga.gov](mailto:jhead@oca.ga.gov).

### THERAPY, CONT'D...



*One of the gardens where each cottage is responsible for their own section.*

ments, rock-painting, creating fairy doors and habitats, painting with "nature's paint-brushes", creating flower arrangements and terrariums, raising butterflies, growing flowers for birds and bees, creating mandalas and pine cone labyrinths, relaxing in



*Healthy foods to enjoy!*



*For the fairy garden—a poignant representation from a child's point of view recognizing that there is always light in the darkness and darkness in the light.*

### Make Your Own Bird Seed Ornaments!

- 3/4 cup flour
- 1 packet gelatin
- 1/2 cup water
- 3 tablespoons corn syrup
- Cayenne pepper
- 4 cups birdseed
- 1/4 cup raisins

Put into cookie cutter on parchment paper. Make a hole with a stick or straw. Let dry about 30 mins. And remove cookie cutters. Continue to dry 24 hours to harden. Then place twine through the hole and hang on a tree.



a hammock in the garden, and outings to the Atlanta Botanical Garden. Children also seem to enjoy looking for worms in the compost bins!

Benefits of these therapies include reducing anxiety, providing intellectual stimulation, supporting emotional health, and building physical and social skills. Learn more about Hillside's animal-assisted therapy [here](#) and horticulture therapy [here](#).



*Fun and functional additions to the garden.*



*A child's reminder that things will get better: "Beyond this door is a better life."*



## Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention

**Dating violence is a pattern of behaviors** used by one partner to maintain power and control over another partner in an intimate relationship. According to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, one in three teens in the United States is a victim of physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal abuse from a partner. While teen dating violence can happen to anyone, the majority of the violence affects young women between the ages of 16 and 24.

Many abusive partners may seem absolutely perfect in the early stages of a relationship. Those with abusive partners struggle to understand why their partners, who were once incredibly kind and loving, now treat them in hurtful and abusive ways. It can be confusing because the abuse isn't constant. Most partners are not abusive all the time, so it makes sense to think they could go back to being that "kind and loving" person and stay there. In most of these relationships, when a partner acts nice, it is really just that: an act. Possessive and controlling behaviors do not always appear overnight. Rather, these behaviors emerge and intensify as the relationship continues to grow. Domestic violence does not look the same in every relationship because every relationship is different. However, one thing most abusive relationships have in common is that the abusive partner does many different kinds of things to have more power and control over their partner. Click [here](#) to learn more about dating violence.

### Warning Signs of Dating Violence

- ⇒ Tells you that you can never do anything right
- ⇒ Shows extreme jealousy of your friends and time spent away
- ⇒ Keeps you or discourages you from seeing friends or family members
- ⇒ Insults, demeans or shames you with put-downs
- ⇒ Looks at you or acts in ways that scare you
- ⇒ Controls who you see, where you go, or what you do
- ⇒ Prevents you from making your own decisions
- ⇒ Prevents you from working or attending school
- ⇒ Destroys your property or threatens to hurt or kill your pets
- ⇒ Intimidates you with guns, knives or other weapons
- ⇒ Pressures you to have sex when you don't want to or do things sexually you're not comfortable with
- ⇒ Pressures you to use drugs or alcohol

#TDVAM2020

**LOVE IS  
HEALTHY**

Love doesn't hurt,  
control, or  
mistreat you.

 loveisrespect.org

#1 Thing





## Receiving HOPE Center Now Open to Serve Trafficking Victims

As of February 27, 2020, Georgia's first residential intake center for trafficking victims is accepting referrals. The Receiving Hope Center, run by Wellspring Living, is available to provide short term care for children ages 12-17 who have been identified as trafficking victims.

This center will house these children from across the state for up to 90 days while providing medical care, academic support, therapeutic and stabilization services. This facility will be able to serve up to 20 children at a time.

For more information, including how to make a referral, click [here](#). To read more about the ribbon cutting ceremony, click [here](#) and [here](#).



Governor Kemp, First Lady Marty Kemp, and Wellspring Living Director Mary Frances Bowley cut the ceremonial ribbon. Photo credit: Marietta Daily Journal

Your relationship  
status does not  
make consent  
automatic.

**NATIONAL  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
HOTLINE**  
1-800-799-SAFE

**NATIONAL  
HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING  
HOTLINE**

CONTACT THE NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

Do you **want to get out of the life?**  
Are you being **forced to work** against your will?  
Or **threatened or tricked** by your boss?  
Do you know someone who may be?



**CALL**  
1-888-373-7888



**TEXT**  
"BeFree" (233733)



**LIVE CHAT**  
HumanTraffickingHotline.org

✓ Get help.  
✓ Report a tip.  
✓ Find services.  
✓ Learn about your options.

Abusive partners  
frequently use  
technology to  
monitor and  
control those  
they abuse.

**NATIONAL  
DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE  
HOTLINE**  
1-800-799-SAFE



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In celebration of Black History Month, we reflect on and honor the accomplishments of several leaders and activists who made way to secure the rights and freedoms we enjoy in our state and throughout the nation:

**"The time is  
always right to do  
what is right."**

- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

**"Just because you  
can't see anything  
doesn't mean you  
should shut your  
eyes."**

- RAY CHARLES

**"Education is the  
most important  
thing you can do.  
We will always  
need educators."**

- MARY FRANCES EARLY

**"You must never  
be fearful about  
what you are  
doing when it's  
right."**

- ROSA PARKS

**"Every great dream  
begins with a dreamer.  
Always remember you  
have within you the  
strength, the patience,  
and the passion to  
reach for the stars to  
change the world."**

- HARRIET TUBMAN

**"I ask only that  
justice which every  
American citizen  
has the right to ask  
and which  
Congress has the  
power to grant."**

- HENRY O. FLIPPER

**"I've always  
believed that I  
could do whatever  
I set my mind to  
do."**

-ALICE COACHMAN

**"A life is not  
important except  
in the impact it  
has on other  
lives."**

- JACKIE ROBINSON

**"Darkness cannot  
drive out  
darkness; only  
light can do that.  
Hate cannot drive  
out hate; only love  
can do that."**

- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



## Former Governor Nathan Deal Receives Standing Ovation at Dedication of New Judicial Building

*By Jansen Head, OCA Deputy Director*

**Former Governor Nathan Deal** is well-known for the criminal justice reforms he advocated for and implemented during his eight years as governor. On February 11th, the new judicial building was dedicated as the Nathan Deal Judicial Center. Deal's two terms in office were highlighted by several preventive efforts to cut back on crime instead of bringing harsher penalties, including a number of accountability courts. "This building, hopefully, will be regarded as a

symbol that Georgia is a state that believes in part of its motto being 'justice,'" he said. "This is a facility in which the people of this state, and their legal representatives will come seeking justice."

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas said the new judicial building in Atlanta is a "majestic" building that pays homage to both the rule of law and the criminal justice reforms enacted by former Governor Nathan Deal. "It is my sincere and profound hope that it will become a true and bold symbol of liberty and equality for future generations," he said. "As magnificent as this building is now, what is done within its walls in the years to come will ultimately define it and us." He further said that the building's beauty "is only exceeded by its necessity and its importance."



Governor Brian Kemp said that naming the new judicial building after former Governor Deal was a testament to the changes Georgia has made to its legal system. "His work fundamentally changed the way we view nonviolent offenders, winning support from both sides of the aisle, and it set a standard across our country," he said. "His dedication to the redemption and rehabilitation of state prison inmates reaffirms the value that we place on second chances in our state."

The Nathan Deal Judicial Center is located at 330 Capitol Avenue SE, Atlanta, Georgia 30334. The new judicial center is the first state building in the history of Georgia that is devoted entirely to the judiciary. Currently, the new building houses the Supreme Court of Georgia as well as the Court of Appeals. (Photo credits to Bryan Horn with the Office of the Governor).



*Former Governor Nathan Deal, Georgia Supreme Court Chief Justice Harold Melton, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, and Governor Brian Kemp in the Nathan Deal Judicial Center.*





## **VOICE, CONT'D...**

collective group of brilliant individuals who are at different stages of "normal" life we come together to bring about the consequences of being in care while navigating societal norms like career searching, pursuing higher education and ultimately finding our own definition of happiness and stability.

Our Policy Council has gone into this decade and new year with 2020 clarity in what it is we want to achieve. We have everything from informative sessions on how exactly bills and laws are formed, to voting events that highlight the importance of selecting individuals that represent your needs and aspirations, as well as panels and conferences that speak on vulnerable experiences that shed light on how we can aim to improve collectively as a system of change.

Moving into the second half of my twenties I recognize that foster care and immigration have played a big role in not just my life but in many youth that look like me. In bringing my own experiences to the table I represent me, my younger brother and the thousands of Latino youth who are underrepresented even in the world of Foster Care. I am proud to lead this council into ringing louder than ever before because as we all know the fight is not over until all our youth have a sense of normalcy and are properly aided based on individual circumstance.

And through it all we stay grounded in knowing that although we speak as individuals, and selectively share our own stories, every time one of us speaks on an experience and memory, it resonates with each and every one of us. Because we know. We know how foster care has shaped us to be resilient and strong. We are diligent and we are capable. We are caring and we are passionate. But ultimately we are like the Japanese craft of Kintsugi, mending the broken pieces of our soul and life story with gold.

Edgar Giovani Carranza, Age 26  
Georgia EmpowerMENT Policy Council President  
Guatemalan Interior Designer in Atlanta

## **Congratulations to the newest Child Welfare Law Specialists in Georgia!**

- ★ Nazish Ahmed, JD, CWLS – Flint Circuit Public Defender's Office, McDonough GA
- ★ Tara-Anne Canada, JD, CWLS – Gwinnett County Juvenile Court, Lawrenceville, GA
- ★ Rhiannon Olliff, JD, CWLS – DeKalb County Child Advocacy Center, Decatur, GA



For more information on the Child Welfare Law Specialist certification and to apply, click [here](#).

## **Have You Completed Georgia's Human Trafficking Awareness Training?**

In January 2020, First Lady Mary Kemp and the GRACE Commission, in partnership with the Georgia Department of Administrative Services, launched Human Trafficking Awareness Training for state employees and the general public. The training is free and available [here](#). The online training course provides an understanding of how human trafficking affects Georgia and how each of us can be part of the solution to help eliminate human trafficking in our communities. Georgia believes in the power of knowledge and is committed to the ideal that an informed public is its best asset — awareness is Georgia's strongest tool!

The learning objectives for this awareness training are to:

- ✓ Provide an overview of what human trafficking is, including the various forms
- ✓ Provide examples of the groups involved in human trafficking
- ✓ Provide guidance on key indicators of human trafficking
- ✓ Highlight the various ways for reporting human trafficking

Training guides, a certificate template, videos and files with the training content are available [here](#) to include with your agency training program. Complete your training today and share the knowledge with your community!



## **FIRST LADY, CONT'D...**

trafficking victims, and recently rolled out training on trafficking awareness in collaboration with the Department of Administrative Services.”

### **Why did you feel that the fight against human trafficking needs to be a priority for the state?**

As I learned more about the issue, I knew we needed to do more as a state. We need to talk about it more and stand up and fight for those trapped in the shadows. No more hiding or brushing the subject aside.

### **What are some challenges you have faced in your fight against human trafficking?**

“As I travel throughout the state, I still meet people who aren’t aware of the issue. They’ll say something like, “Trafficking? That doesn’t happen here. That’s a problem in Atlanta, the airports, and other big cities but not here.” And I don’t hesitate to explain

to them that human trafficking – whether they see it or not – is happening in every area of the state. Human trafficking may be a silent, hidden issue but advocates – like you and me – don’t have to be. We’re going to be very clear, vocal, and transparent in fighting against this evil industry, holding perpetrators accountable, and supporting our survivors and at-risk communities. This is a fight for life and dignity. It’s the right thing to do. Each and every one of us can do something about this – we just need to educate ourselves and our communities on what to look for and to report something if we see something. That alone can save someone’s life. You can help right now by taking our training about trafficking awareness so that you know what it could look like in your community and know how to report it.”

### **When you think about the voices you have heard from survivors of trafficking, is there a person or an experi-**

### **ence that often reminds you why raising awareness is important?**

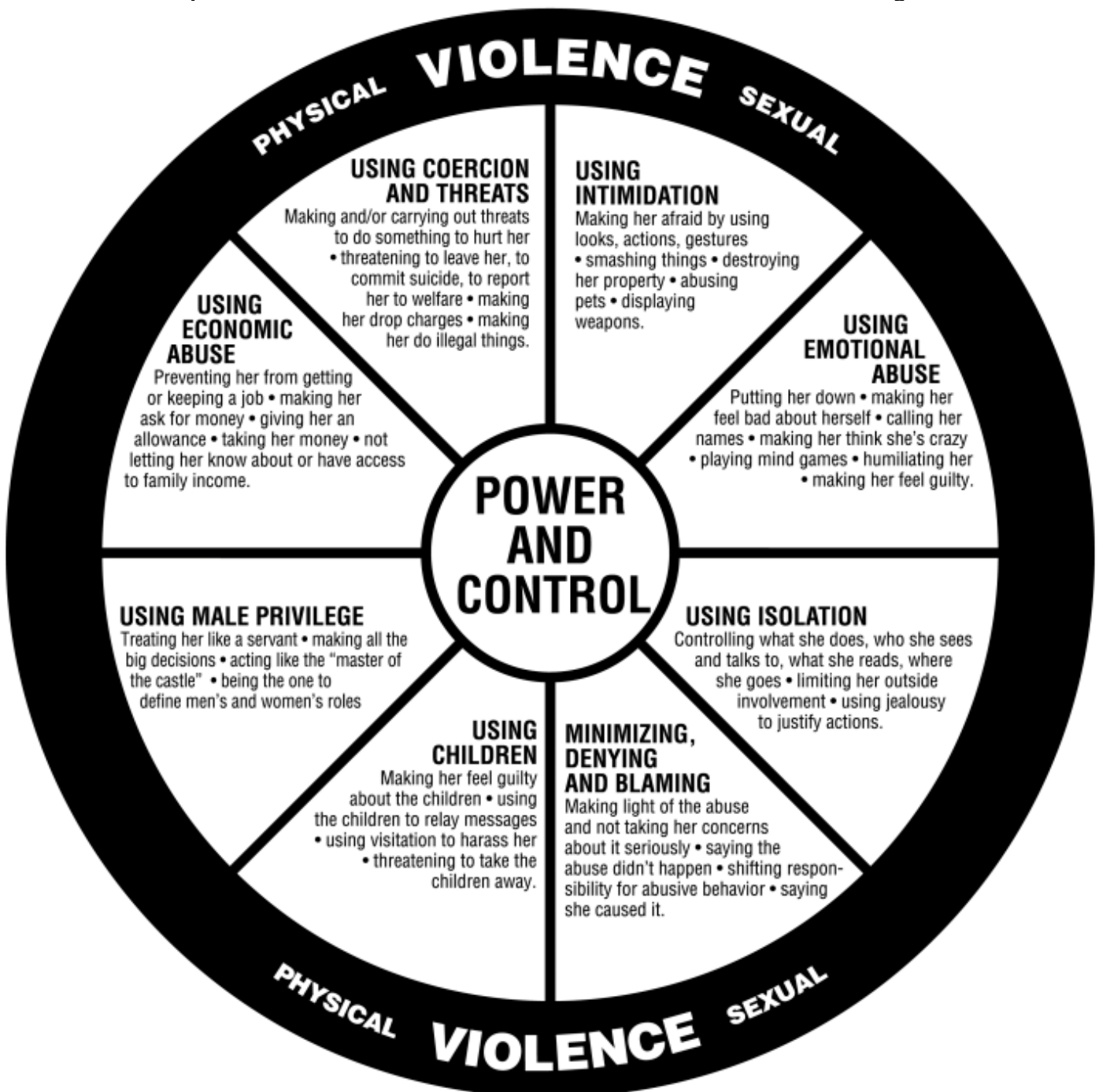
“I think of a person who thinks there’s no other life for them. It’s hard to see just one face for it because trafficking can and has happened to so many people who are simply just human beings who need love and want to feel that they matter. I also think about that day, January 2, 2019, when I saw those school buses representing the number of children trafficked in Georgia each year. It’s shocking every time I think about it. I remember listening to a survivor of trafficking at that press conference. She asked the audience to imagine a young girl being snatched from the front yard and no one around her having any idea of what is happening. Then she said that she was four years old when she was kidnapped from her front yard and sold into sex trafficking. I was shocked. I invited her to meet with me and oth-

See [FIRST LADY](#), Page 12

## **Upcoming Events:**



- ✓ **Saturdays in March:** NAMI GA Family-to-Family course, Athens & Monroe. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **March 12:** Georgia’s Anti-Sex Trafficking Lobbying Day. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **March 22-25:** National Conference on Juvenile Justice in Pittsburgh. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **March 25-29:** Child Welfare League of America Conference and 100th Anniversary. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **April 25:** Teen Dating Violence Summit in Thomson, GA. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **May 7:** Children’s Mental Health Day at the Georgia Freight Depot. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **June 25-26:** Annual Georgia System of Care Academy at the Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort in Stone Mountain. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **August 24-26:** National Child Welfare Law Conference at the Baltimore Waterfront Marriott. Early registration is now open through April. More info [here](#).
- ✓ **September 16-18:** Georgia Afterschool & Youth Development Conference in Athens. Registration opens on March 2nd. More info [here](#).



Anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion or gender can be a victim – or perpetrator – of domestic violence. It can happen to people who are married, living together or who are dating. It affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels. It includes behaviors that physically harm, arouse fear, prevent a partner from doing what they wish or force them to behave in ways they do not want. It includes the use of physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse and economic deprivation. More info [here](#).





## **FIRST LADY, CONT'D...**

ers at the Governor's Mansion to talk about what could have been done to help her and what we can do now for those who are at risk or are in trafficking now. She's a strong advocate. Survivors are key to ending trafficking in our state."

**From what you have seen and learned so far, what has been most shocking to you about human trafficking?**

"The fact that human trafficking has happened and can happen in every area of the state. We have 159 counties. We need more boots on the ground. We need more people educated on this issue in all areas of the state. Human trafficking is still happening. The average age of a child being trafficked is about 14 to 15 years old. And regardless of age, some children are being trafficked by their parents. It's all shocking and heartbreaking."

**In our experience, a lot of children involved with the child welfare sys-**

**tem are very vulnerable and experience more changes in their lives than we could ever imagine in a lifetime (i.e. schools, community, home environment, friends, family, etc.). With that, kids in care are more at risk of the dangers of trafficking. How can we better inform our youngest Georgians to protect themselves from getting pulled or manipulated into trafficking?**

"We need to educate them on the dangers of human trafficking and what to watch out for. We shouldn't wait to react. We can be proactive and educate them now. We need to be sure to listen to our survivors and help them to heal. We also need to show more love. Love can change everything. And we all need it. I remember a little girl telling me that the reason why she fell victim to sex trafficking was because her trafficker called her beautiful. She told me that no one had ever told her that before. That's why I tell my family and friends that I love them every chance I get. You just never know what they are thinking or are going

through. You never know when will be the last time you see them. I feel like the world needs to show more love because we certainly need it."

**You have been traveling all over the state, meeting with several people and organizations, and continuing to learn about trafficking in Georgia. All of that can be mentally and physically exhausting - How are you able to maintain the will and strength to keep fighting?**

"Pray. I mean, I do. I pray that I am given the strength to keep fighting for them - the survivors and those who are at risk of being trafficked. And I know that I will keep fighting. I am determined to do this and I am not slowing down in this fight. To make a difference and help just one person - that is everything to me. One victim of trafficking is one too many. I've been challenging other states to get on board and encouraging other first ladies throughout the nation to join me in this fight. Individually, we can climb over mountains. But together, we can move them."

*Georgia Office of the Child Advocate*  
**Rachel Davidson, Director**  
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Atlanta, GA 30334

*For general inquiries, assistance, or to file a complaint, contact us by phone at (404) 656-4200 or on our website at <https://oca.georgia.gov/webform/request-oca-assistance-or-investigation>*

*To submit a photo/article for the newsletter, contact Deputy Director Jansen Head at [jhead@oca.ga.gov](mailto:jhead@oca.ga.gov).*

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