



# The DAS Digest

January 2022

## FSIU Section remains busy and continues work to teach signs of elder exploitation

On Dec. 7, 2021, Forensic Special Initiatives Unit (FSIU) team members completed the GBI's At-Risk Adult Specialists annual training at the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Forsyth. The training covered how to investigate financial crimes against vulnerable adults and certified the GBI special agents to be able to conduct Department of Community Health Healthcare Facility Regulation surveys of unlicensed personal care homes.

Crimes Against Disabled Adults and Elderly Task Force (CADE) members are collaborating with the Georgia Public Safety Training Center to expand the current financial training class for law enforcement offered by FSIU. Elder financial exploitation has always been a part of the agenda. However, FSIU is revamping its curriculum to include new trends in exploitation to include crypto-currency scams, money mule scams and new tools for investigators. For information on FSIU training classes and dates, please visit [the FSIU webpage](#).



Left to right; David Blake, Shawonda Wright and Will Johnson with the Prosecuting Attorneys Council of Georgia, and not in view, the photographer, FSIU Section Manager Anna Thomas.

## Workshops that address falls prevention, disease management, and other topics free through June 2022

More than 80 aging services partners are offering short-term (6-10 weeklong) evidence-based practice

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(EBP) workshops that address falls prevention, disease management, aging preparedness and caregiver burden. A few AAAs have resumed offering some of these programs in-person, but many continue to offer virtual programming, with some even providing devices like laptops and tablets with internet to ensure greater access to these programs.

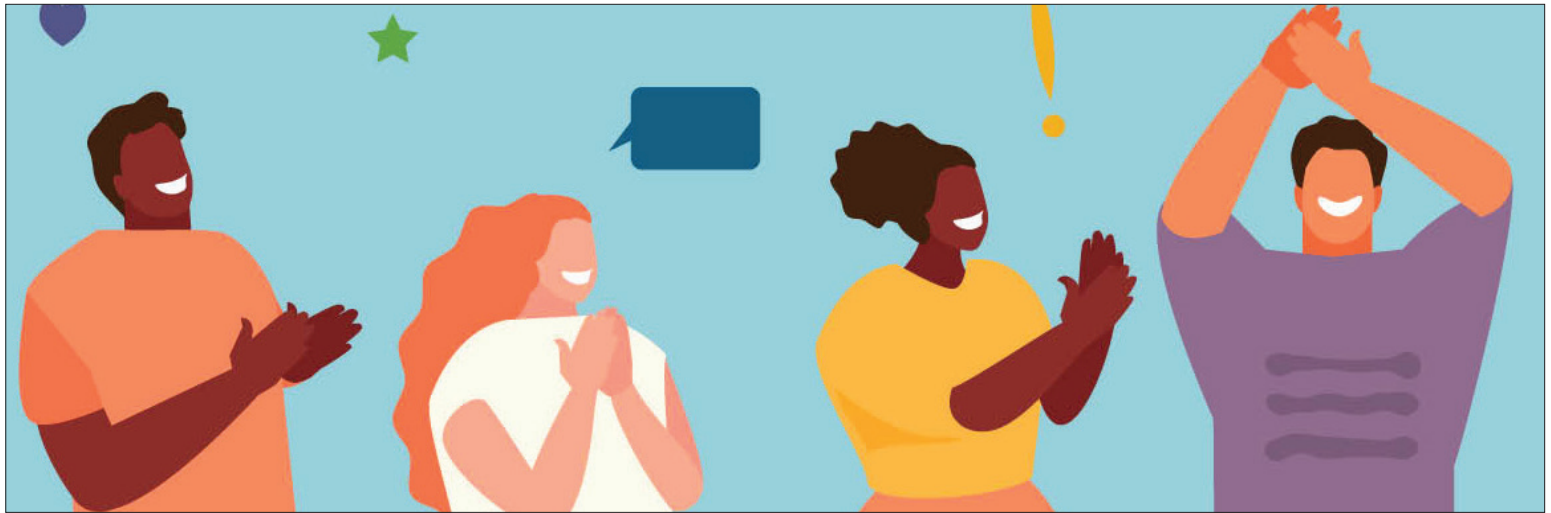
As a partner of Emory University's Health Resources & Services Administration – Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program grant, 30 Falls Prevention workshops (Matter of Balance, Tai Chi for Arthritis and Bingocize) are scheduled and are open to any Georgian at risk for falling at no cost through June 2022! Other programs include Chronic Disease Self-Management, Diabetes Empowerment, Chronic Pain Self-Management, Better Choices Better Health and Powerful Tools for Caregivers. Your friends, family and clients can register for these programs by reviewing the "Upcoming Events" listed on the statewide EBP website: [www.georgiahealthmatters.org](http://www.georgiahealthmatters.org).

Please reach out to Megan Stadnisky by email at [megan.stadnisky@dhs.ga.gov](mailto:megan.stadnisky@dhs.ga.gov) for more information about evidence-based programs or to connect you with your local AAA Wellness Coordinator!



Georgia  
HealthMatters

# Staff Shoutouts



**Sunita Davis**, a report writer in DAS' Program Integrity section, is the consummate team player who never gets rattled and can always be counted on to volunteer her assistance – whenever the need arises. She has developed many reports for DAS staff and provided them with exceptional customer service, always with a smile on her face, no matter how complex the report or how many modifications to the report are requested. She is extremely patient and provides staff as much time as they need to thoroughly review her finished products. Thank you for what you do to improve data analytics for the aging network, Sunita!

Huge shout out to the **District A - Northeast Region APS Office** for having no overdue cases for year 2021! They have managed this milestone while assisting other units and being understaffed. The unit includes supervisor **Allison Owens**, and case managers **Stacie Green, Tracy Gaddis, Brandon Callaway, Lindsey Powell** and **Chiquita Parks**. Thank you to the team for their great work!



**The District A - Northeast Region APS Office is a small, but mighty team. Thank you to all APS staff for your hard work during 2021!**

APS District A - Georgia Mountains West team supervisor Lisa Sewell would like to highlight case manager **Heidi**

**Cole** from the Georgia Mountains East Region. Heidi is currently working on a case involving a client who is an alcoholic. APS has received four referrals on this client in the past. While he was being evicted, Heidi talked with him about going to rehab to address his alcoholism. The client admitted that he has an alcohol problem and agreed to go with Heidi to the hospital to be admitted for treatment. Great job helping this client on his road to recovery, Heidi!

**District C – Three Rivers APS team** Supervisor Carlos Matthews would like to give a shoutout to his team, especially **Michael Allison** and **Kisha Farris**. Matthews, Allison and Farris were the only APS region staff members holding down everything and ensuring clients were looked after for three months until new APS staff were hired.

District A – Northwest South APS team supervisor Sherry Thompson spotlighted **December Bell** for her work on an ongoing case that lasted over a year. She received numerous complaints from the community stating that the client didn't need to live alone. The client was unwilling to consider leaving her home, mainly because of her strong attachment to her beloved dog.

The case presented that it might end in a DHS guardianship case, but Bell was able to gain the trust of the client and the community. Bell was able to locate a family who agreed to assume care and guardianship of the client's dog. Subsequently, the client agreed to go to an assisted living facility and is thriving in that environment. She visits her beloved dog frequently.

The case was able to close with a positive outcome for all involved. Kudos to December Bell for her patience and perseverance in assisting this vulnerable adult and helping her live safely and live well.

# Program Highlight



## How DAS sections serve Georgians: 60 seconds with Access to Services

Meet the Access to Services Team at DAS...

The Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) is a one stop shop or “no wrong door” entry point staffed with trained counselors who provide unbiased, reliable information and counseling for older adults, people with disabilities, caregivers, veterans and families with all levels of income.

Most services for older adults and individuals with disabilities are provided through the statewide network of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). If you are seeking assistance for an individual or family in need, you may contact the ADRC at 866-552-4464.

The Elderly Legal Assistance Program (ELAP) is a statewide network of attorneys and paralegals who provide free legal assistance to persons aged 60 and older. Older Georgians can get help on a range of legal issues, including common elder law matters like health care and long-term care; housing; protection or recovery from abuse, neglect and

exploitation; public benefits and income security; and estate planning. ELAP also provides community education and advice for self-advocates. To get help with a legal problem, call 1-866-552-4464 and select Option 2 for the ADRC or Option 7 for the Senior Legal Hotline. Visit the “Publications” page of the Division of Aging Services (DAS) website at <https://aging.georgia.gov/about-us/publications> to read legal educational materials on topics like advance directives and adult guardianship.

GeorgiaCares is the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP). This program helps people with Medicare understand their enrollment options, health and drug plan choices and screens for financial assistance programs.

Certified Medicare counselors provide phone counseling to help those with Medicare and those new to Medicare. Counselors are available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 1-866-552-4464 (Option 4). For more information, visit <https://mygeorgiacares.org>.

Money Follows the Person and Nursing Home Transitions is a federally funded program and Nursing Home Transitions is funded by the state. The Money Follows the Person and Nursing Home Transition programs assist individuals who reside in long-term in-patient facilities with relocating back into a community setting of their choosing, when desired. In addition to relocating, both programs assist seniors and those with disabilities with necessary items to be successful in the community (i.e., home modification, dietary needs and assistive technology).

For more information about your options to stay in your home and community, visit <https://www.georgiaadrc.com> or call 1-866-552-4464.

**GeorgiaCares**  
Local help for people with Medicare



# Anniversaries & New Hires



## DAS celebrates January milestone anniversaries with staff

DAS honors the milestone anniversaries of our long-time employees. This January, DAS celebrated anniversaries for 20 employees. Thank you for your many **years of service** to help Georgia's seniors and disabled adults live healthier and stronger lives.

**Cecelia Walker** – 30

**Gwendolyn Hendrix** – 27

**Michele Williams** – 27

**Eric Ryan** – 24

**Louella Demps** – 23

**Cynthia Martin** – 23

**Stacie Green** – 19

**Amy Washuta** – 18

**Wontina Lawrence** – 15

**Karen Langston** – 14

**Anastasia Smith** – 12

**Yvette Petty** – 11

**Liang-Lin Chao** – 10

**Roxanne Dearro** – 8

**Selecia Belle** – 7

**Miranda Brill** – 7

**Nicole Moore** – 7

**Menta Knight** – 5

**Sakina Mack** – 5

**Karen Rohrbach** – 5

## Several new hires joined DAS as part of an integral team

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

**Titonia Phillip**

**Landra Williams**

**Kendra Brown**

**Trent Warren**

**Melissa Holland-Godfrey**

**Nikia Whindleton**

**Wendy Towns**

**Nikaela Frederick**

**Babs Hall**

**Mark Fellows**

# Area Agencies on Aging

## Senior Centers in Southern Georgia AAA region celebrate Christmas



Seniors at the Cook County Senior Center in Sparks, Ga receiving a box of farm fresh vegetables during the center's Christmas celebration.



The Pierce County Senior Center's Santa-4-Seniors Project gifted presents to the center's seniors. Also, at the Bacon County Senior Center, seniors enjoyed holiday games, deserts and carols. Great job to the senior centers for getting their community's seniors in the holiday spirit.

## Jenkins County Senior Center in CSRA AAA region partners with nursing center to celebrate Christmas with residents

The Jenkins County Senior

Center got in the Christmas spirit by partnering with Pruitt Bethany Nursing Center in hopes of making the holiday season a little more special for their residents. The senior center clients loomed approximately 145 hats and scarves. The hats and scarves, along with socks, slippers, snacks and personal items, were donated to the residents of the nursing center.



The senior center clients were very proud of the hats and scarves they loomed and donated to the nursing center residents.

## Heart of Georgia AAA senior centers got in the holiday spirit

Appling County Senior Center clients and staff decorated for Christmas in December.



Appling County Senior Center clients and staff decorated for the holidays.

Candler County Senior Center and the Emanuel County Senior Center also decorated for and celebrated Christmas.



A Candler County Senior Center client was happy to show off her holiday sweater.



Santa made a stop to visit seniors before returning to the North Pole.



Senior center clients happily joined together to celebrate the holidays.

Clients from Montgomery County Senior Center participated in the local holiday parade and rode on a float.



Clients represented the Montgomery County Senior Center with their holiday theme float.

The Wilcox County Senior Center provided Christmas breakfast for the county's seniors. The center is still closed, so the clients picked up their meal from a local drive-thru.



Seniors appreciated the Christmas meal they received from the senior center.



Senior center employees and volunteers prepared meals for the seniors in their community.



Clients were grateful for the Christmas meal drive-thru event.

These senior centers did a wonderful job helping their senior clients celebrate the holiday season during a difficult pandemic.

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# Area Agencies on Aging

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## Legacy Link AAA and senior centers hosted holiday activities

Two senior centers in the Legacy Link AAA region hosted several fun activities for their clients this past holiday season. The Habersham County Senior Center and White County Senior Center hosted a Christmas meal and visit with Santa, gave away holiday bags, played holiday games and hosted tacky sweater contests.

The Habersham Bazaar Christmas Market took place at the senior center. Vendors offering crafts and local goods set up at the senior center, and some of the proceeds from the market went toward future activities at the senior center.

The Habersham County Senior Center also hosted their Christmas Outreach Project. The senior center accepts donations from the community like candy, socks, lotion and other hygiene products, and the seniors at the center created gift bags. Each year, they pick a local nursing home or assisted living facility to deliver the gift bags to. This year, gifts were provided for the residents at Habersham Retreat, and the group got to deliver the bags to the residents and sing Christmas carols with them.



**Clients at the White County Senior Center enjoyed their tacky sweater contest.**

The Legacy Link AAA team also gave back to their community by creating 1,000 holiday food bags! The food bags were delivered to clients all over Legacy Link's 13 county region.



**Legacy Link AAA created an assembly line and prepared 1,000 holiday food bags for their clients. Awesome job!**

## Senior centers and adult day centers in Northwest Georgia AAA region celebrate the holidays in style

The Northwest Georgia AAA is also proud of the Local 3 News feature on the Chickamauga Active Living Center. The Center, along with the Chattanooga Area Food Bank, provide nutritious meals to meet the dietary needs of people over the age of 60 in their rural area. Many of these seniors are not able to leave their homes and stand in line at the grocery store, so the Center provides meals through a drive-thru service along with home meal delivery. [Check out the feature on senior hunger in the Northwest Georgia region.](#)

## Northeast Georgia AAA Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA) thrives during pandemic

At Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA), the COVID-19 pandemic has stretched and challenged us in ways we never imagined. Similarly, it brought new opportunities to re-imagine the future of service delivery, particularly for ACCA's Center for Active Living (CAL) program. The "new normal" offered a chance to revitalize our program in a way that gives our members even greater independence and choice.

Our refresh began with the Center itself, from new flooring and paint to brightly colored furniture set within ACCA's historic train station building. Starting in early 2022, we will be expanding our menu options. With the addition of a new coffee bar and grab-and-go breakfast, lunch and snack items, members will be able to drop in for a class and purchase a sandwich or enjoy a leisurely lunch or cup of coffee in the Café with friends. We have even refreshed our coffee, thanks to our new partnership with local coffee roaster, 1000 Faces Coffee.

The past two years brought innovation as well. Thanks to virtual platforms like Zoom, we stayed connected with members during the pandemic with virtual trips and socials. Our doors are now open, but we continue to offer a hybrid format for some educational seminars and fitness classes. Participants can choose to join from home or in person. Likewise, we continue to foster in-person connections through our new dining options and by merging our CAL and CAL+ programs into one, with a diverse calendar of activities and events accessible to all.

In many ways, the Center for Active Living has a new face, and we are facing forward with renewed excitement, hope and purpose. At ACCA, we are especially grateful to serve our seniors during this challenging time.