

CARING COMMUNITIES: A SYSTEM OF CARE APPROACH GRANT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

In 2009, the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, through the City of Savannah, was awarded a grant from the Georgia Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOCF) to implement a prevention and early intervention program for students in kindergarten through 5th grade who are at-risk for out of school suspensions, or have already been suspended or expelled from the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). The initial grant award for the 2009-2010 grant year was \$325,000, with two additional years of funding with a cash match requirement. We are currently concluding Year-2 of the grant, and are making plans to pursue Year-3.

Agency Collaboration

Collaboration is achieved through governance in the System of Care Advisory Board, which includes the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority, State Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disability and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD), Department of Family and Children Services, Chatham County Juvenile Court, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, SCCPSS, Ash Tree Organization, City of Savannah, Savannah Impact Program (SIP), Gateway Community Service Board, Georgia Family Connection Partnership (GaFCP), Adult Probation Office, and Pardons and Paroles.

Offer Description/Justification

Funding from the GOCF grant addresses the Education strategy area to "Improve School Performance" specific to students in kindergarten through 5th grade and their families/caregivers. Students are targeted at two schools: East Broad Elementary School and Scott Alternative Learning Center. Improving School Performance is approached through a reduction in suspensions & expulsions, academic improvement, increased attendance, and a reduction in disciplinary referrals. During Year-1 of program implementation we proposed serving a total of 40 families, with 34 families actually being served, resulting in our achieving 85% of the goal for that year. Currently in Year-2 we are serving a total of 36 families. With numbers near the 100% mark, we expect to exceed our Year-2 goal by the end of December 2011. Over the course of the grant funding, a total of 120 children and 180 caregivers will be served.

The GOCF grant is currently in its Year-2 award, with the City of Savannah being the recipient. YFA, along with the Systems of Care Advisory Board, is working diligently to raise funds for program sustainability for Year-3. Thus far, the System of Care approach has shown its effectiveness in meeting the performance indicators as evaluated by Emstar Research, Inc, which serves as our local evaluation and data collection team.