



Sowing Seeds of Justice Throughout Georgia



Georgia Appleseed's Mission
is to increase justice
in Georgia
through law
and policy reform.

Georgia Appleseed seeks a Georgia where the voices of the poor, the children and the marginalized are heard and where injustices that no one should endure are resolved.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Georgia Appleseed's mission and vision inspire dedicated volunteers not only to work on important justice issues, but also to provide strong governance. This Annual Report covers a productive fiscal year that spans the chairmanship of Joe Loveland and Beth Tanis. Georgia Appleseed owes both, Joe and Beth, a great deal of thanks for the good work you will read about in this Annual Report.

Fiscal Year 2012 was remarkable, with important milestones reached and surpassed, but two major achievements stand out: one in the Heir Property Project and the other in the Effective Student Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class project.

Heir Property Project: In 2012, by unanimous vote in both the House and the Senate – proof positive of its bipartisan support – Georgia became the first state in the South, and the second in the nation, to pass the **Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act**. A center piece of Georgia Appleseed's Heir Property project in collaboration with its sister centers in Alabama, Louisiana, Texas and South Carolina, this new law will reduce involuntary loss of homes and farms among low and moderate income Georgians and will serve as the inspiration for passage in other states in the near future.

Effective Student Discipline Project: After years of diligent effort, Georgia Appleseed secured, in FY12, the development of a significant policy change at the state level that will require longer term suspensions be coded with a *specific reason* – “other” will no longer be accepted as a sole reason for “punishment by withholding education.” Without meaningful data, we cannot find meaningful solutions. Securing this new requirement for specificity is part of our overall goal of keeping kids in school and out of the juvenile courts.

FY12 ended on a strong footing, programmatically and financially, because of friends and supporters like you, and we look forward to what FY13 has in store.

Sharon Hill, Executive Director



Reviewing the twelve months covered in this Annual Report brings back great memories of new project starts, great partnerships and terrific support from so many volunteers.

I might be a little biased, but one project that is especially near to my heart is the “Children in Foster Care – Enhancing Educational Stability” project, a new project in FY12. Besides the obvious importance of this work, this project has special significance to me because it allows Georgia Appleseed to partner with another of my favorite nonprofits, Families First, and with several of my law partners and other co-workers at King & Spalding. I was just ending my term as Chair of the Families First Board and about to start serving as Chair of Georgia Appleseed when the idea formed to bring these two great nonprofits together on a project – one more than 120 years old, with extraordinary depth of experience in the needs of children in foster care, and the other approaching only its sixth birthday at the time, but with extraordinary access to some of the best and brightest volunteers, both in law and in other professions, who care deeply about ending the injustices that no one should have to endure.

That the two nonprofits agreed to work together was of no surprise and that the law firm lent some of its top talent to the project was also of no surprise. It is this kind of collaboration that is the hallmark of the work we do at Georgia Appleseed – bringing together lawyers and other top professionals to help change laws and policies that unfairly impact children, the poor and other large groups of marginalized people in our state. To read more about this project, and all the great work at Georgia Appleseed, please go to www.gaappleseed.org.

Thank you for your support that makes this work possible.

Beth Tanis, Board Chair

Effective Student Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class

Lead Pro Bono Partner:

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

In an effort to dismantle the school to prison pipeline, Georgia Appleseed researched and wrote its *Effective Student Discipline: Keeping Kids in Class* (“ESD”) report, which is designed to help legislators and other public policy makers understand the problems and identify solutions to maintain safe schools for all students, keep kids in class and out of juvenile court, and increase graduation rates.

In FY12:

- Secured significant state agency level policy change requiring specific reason for longer term suspensions (to reduce the over reliance on the “other” category).
- Presented Effective Student Discipline project findings to more than 1000 stakeholders statewide, including educators, school administrators, parents and public officials – to set the stage for local policy reform.
- Continued a beneficial relationship with GA DOE allowing access to the ninth year of statewide student discipline data.
- Made significant progress towards establishing a full-time field office in Columbus consistent with the Strategic Vision and with the support of local civic and community leaders.
- Secured major partnership with the Alpha Phi Alpha (national historically African-American fraternity with chapters in 20+ communities in Georgia) to disseminate the ESD and JUSTGA information.
- Secured three highly skilled volunteers to create an Effective Student Discipline web page for the GA Appleseed website in FY13.

“High school students arrested on campus are twice as likely not to graduate and four times less likely to graduate if they’ve appeared in court.”
– Judge Steven Teske, Clayton County Juvenile Court

“I found it valuable to hear the actual data, numbers, and facts ... this really focuses in on our surroundings and speaks to the needs that are in our area.”
– Parent Participant, Georgia Appleseed ESD presentation



Student Tribunal Project

Lead Pro Bono Partner: **Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP**

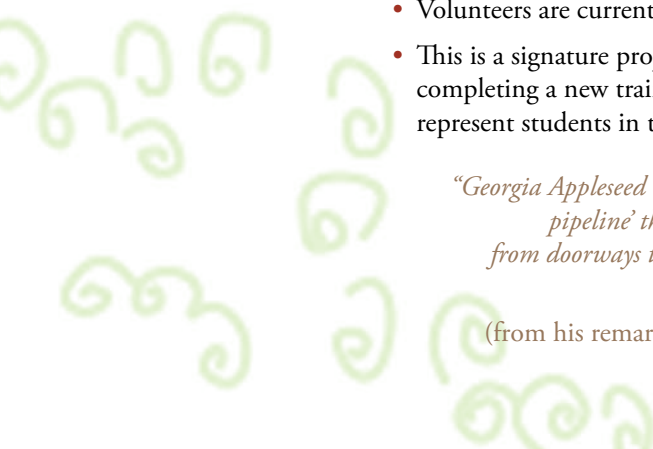
Under Georgia law, K-12 public school students faced with proposed out-of-school suspension of more than 10 days (or with expulsion) are entitled to dispute the proposed disciplinary action at an administrative hearing often referred to as a “tribunal.” Georgia Appleseed and its volunteers seek to ensure that students’ due process rights are being protected in public school disciplinary hearings.

In FY12:

- Under the leadership of Kilpatrick Townsend, completed extensive legal research and drafted an initial report presenting research findings.
- Volunteers are currently interviewing stakeholders in four representative GA counties.
- This is a signature project of Georgia Appleseed’s Young Professionals Council. The YPC is completing a new training manual to increase the number of pro bono lawyers trained to represent students in tribunals.

“Georgia Appleseed volunteers have helped shine a light on the ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ that, in far too many places, transforms our schools from doorways to opportunity into gateways to the correctional system.”

– Attorney General Eric Holder
(from his remarks at Georgia Appleseed’s 2012 Good Apple Awards)



Enhancing Education Stability for Foster Children

Lead Pro Bono Partner: King & Spalding LLP

Key Non-Profit Partner: Families First

Georgia Appleseed is working to build a better future for foster children through educational achievement.

In FY12:

- Under the leadership of King & Spalding, completed a review of federal and state law regarding the rights of “children in care” to educational stability and examined the current stability and support practices in Georgia.
- Georgia Appleseed established an expert Advisory Committee to bring additional perspectives and solidified a project partnership with Families First allowing for significant access to substantive and practical experience related to foster children.
- Facilitated stakeholders’ access to key legal research to increase information sharing that will help foster children.



“The Heirs Property Manual has been a godsend to my family.”

– Abraham Jones, Heir Property Owner

Heir Property Project

Lead Pro Bono Partner: DLA Piper

Signature Project of the Young Professionals Council

Because an end to poverty begins with property rights, Georgia Appleseed seeks to help primarily low-income families across Georgia gain secure tenure in their homes and farms.

In FY12:

- Achieved goal of passage of the *Uniform Partition of Heir Property Act* in Georgia in April 2012—the first state in the South and the second in the nation to pass this Act.
- Placed ten (10) heir property cases with Fair Market Value (“FMV”) totaling in excess of \$300,000 and will continue to monitor progress.
- Completion of the tax data base research in the Heir Property project in five counties: Chatham, Chattooga, Dougherty, Evans, and McIntosh and foundational research in 15 additional counties.
 - In 5 counties alone, this research found more than 1,600 heir property occupants and more than 5,200 acres of heir property valued in excess of \$58.6 million (FMV).
 - This research forms the basis for efforts to create an independent Heir Property legal clinic.

Life-Long Justice: Safe-Guarding Seniors

Lead Pro Bono Partner: Alston & Bird LLP

This project explores implementation issues arising out of a new state law that provides legal protections for older Georgians who have outlived their friends and family, have not executed a valid end-of life directive, and who become incompetent to give informed consent to health care providers.

In FY12:

- Completed detailed analysis of pertinent federal and state law and regulations.
- Convened an Advisory Committee of experts to review findings.
- Interviewed key stakeholders, including probate judges, to discuss implementation.



JUSTGeorgia: Building Justice and Safety for Children

**Key Nonprofit Partners: The Barton Child Law and Policy Center
of the Emory University School of Law & Voices for Georgia's Children**

Georgia Appleseed is a lead partner in JUSTGeorgia, a statewide juvenile justice coalition of community organizations and individuals created in 2006 to advocate for change to Georgia's juvenile code and the underlying social service systems to better serve Georgia's children and promote safer communities. JUSTGeorgia is working to secure comprehensive juvenile code reform in Georgia.

In FY12:

- In the 2012 Legislative Session, HB 641 (juvenile code reform legislation) received unanimous support from the House and Senate Judiciary Committees and the full House (172-0). JUSTGeorgia and its coalition members are working collaboratively with stakeholders and state leaders and remain optimistic as we look to the 2013 legislative session.

"The work that many of you are doing to bring attention to, and to call for, the systemic reforms that America's young people need to stay engaged, on track, in school – and out of our criminal justice system – has never been more important."

– Attorney General Eric Holder, April 17, 2012



Election Protection

**Key Nonprofit Partners: Lawyer's Committee
for Civil Rights Under Law and the Georgia Election
Protection Coalition**

Georgia Appleseed worked with key nonprofit partners to research and identify major recurring election problems that could interfere with the ability of eligible Georgia voters to cast a ballot during the November 2012 elections and offer suggested solutions to these problems.

In FY12:

- With pro bono assistance from lawyers at two top law firms, researched, drafted and released the *Resolving Recurring Election Administration Problems in Georgia* report which identified four major recurring election problems that interfered with the ability of eligible Georgia voters to cast a ballot in elections dating back to 2004.
- Set forth practical steps that can be implemented within Georgia's existing election law framework to help ensure all eligible Georgia citizens have the opportunity to cast a meaningful ballot and have that vote counted.

"GA Appleseed's pro bono volunteers did an outstanding job in wading through years of election data to help identify systemic obstacles that have prevented qualified voters from being able to vote or prevented their votes from being counted. Their work was invaluable in helping ensure the integrity of the electoral process."

– Harold E. Franklin, Jr., King & Spalding

*Seeking to do justice
through law and policy reform.*

ASSETS, LIABILITIES, & NET ASSETS**ASSETS**

Cash and cash equivalents	\$123,458
Contributions and grants receivable	\$48,288
Prepaid expenses	\$270
Total Assets	\$172,016

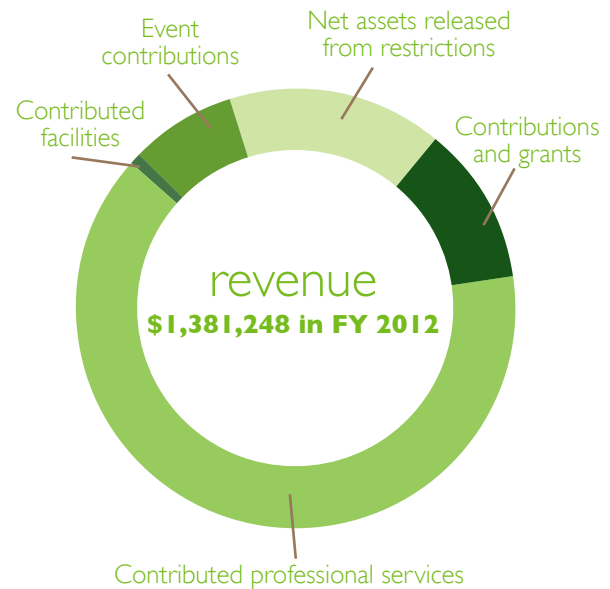
LIABILITIES

Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$328
Total Liabilities	\$328

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted	\$60,352
Temporarily restricted	\$111,336
Total Net Assets	\$171,688

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$172,016
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**SUPPORT, REVENUE, AND EXPENSES****SUPPORT AND REVENUE**

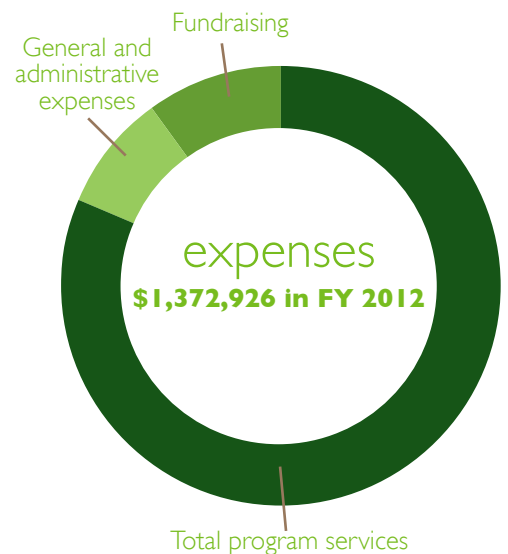
Contributions and Grants	\$419,691
Contributed professional services	\$844,865
Contributed facilities	\$12,378
Event contributions	\$104,314
Total Unrestricted Support and Revenue	\$1,381,248

EXPENSES

Total program services	\$1,120,765
General and administrative expenses	\$118,790
Fundraising	\$133,371
Total Expenses	\$1,372,926

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Change in total net assets	\$8,322
Net assets at beginning of year	\$163,366
Net Assets End of Year	\$171,688



The value of our FY12 pro bono hours is **\$844,865**.

The second highest level of pro bono support in Georgia Appleseed's history!

- We ended the year with net income of \$8,322.
- Ended the FY12 year with a surplus.
- Increased the percentage of allocation of revenues to program work to 82%.

(Note: Fiscal Year 2012 (FY12) ran from July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012. All numbers are from the Audited Financial Statements for the year ending June 30, 2012.)

Georgia Appleseed is so grateful for its generous supporters:

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that *others* do not.**



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