

THE FY17 ANNUAL REPORT:  
A YEAR OF REAPING WHAT WE HAVE SOWN...



**GEORGIA<sup>TM</sup>  
APPLESEED**

*Center for Law & Justice*

**INVESTMENT** IN PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS

**ENRICHMENT** OF RELATIONSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

**EMPOWERMENT & OPPORTUNITY**  
FOR MARGINALIZED GROUPS

December 2017



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Fiscal Year 2017 was a year of great achievement and great change. In one instance, the great achievement WAS the great change: Georgia Appleseed finally achieved its 10-year project goal when, on January 1, 2017, it launched the new, independent Georgia Heirs Property Law Center (GHPLC).

The creation, incubation and launch of this new state-wide resource was inspired by what Georgia Appleseed learned from its 2006 Katrina project: “heirs property” rendered many Hurricane Katrina evacuees ineligible for FEMA Road Home assistance, which explained why so many evacuees were still in Atlanta more than one year after the storm.

Not wanting this fate for Georgians in what then seemed to be an unprecedented disaster, Georgia Appleseed set out to find a solution. Between 2008 and January 1, 2017, Georgia Appleseed engaged in [research, collaboration, and experimentation](#), with the ultimate goal being to create Georgia’s first independent law center dedicated to serving the individual legal needs of low and moderate-income owners of heirs property.

After years of “just enough” restricted funding to keep the project viable, we finally got our “lucky” break when two major funders effectively joined forces to invest the money needed to transform our dream into reality. This infusion of funding allowed Georgia Appleseed to make a critical hire: Skipper StipeMaas as the first GHPLC Director. Over the next 18 months of incubation (FY16 and early FY17), Skipper’s GHPLC team grew to five – the critical staff needed for a successful launch.

Though Georgia Appleseed showed a net deficit for FY16, we knew the investment would pay off for Georgia. We were also confident that Georgia Appleseed would return to a net surplus in FY17 . . . and we were right! Not only does Georgia Appleseed’s FY17 audit show a significant surplus, but Georgia now has its first independent law center dedicated to ending poverty through land ownership.

FY17 brought other important staff and program changes. First, we celebrated the retirement of our first Director of Projects, Rob Rhodes, and welcomed his successor, Allison Rutland Soulen. Then, we celebrated the next career step for Director of Community Engagement Teddy Reese as he entered private practice in Columbus, and we embraced new program opportunities in Savannah and Augusta.

Spoiler Alert: FY18 will see significant leadership change, too. Upon my retirement, effective January 1, 2018, C. Talley Wells will become Georgia Appleseed’s new Executive Director. Talley has the talent, experience and leadership to take Georgia Appleseed to the next level – I could not be more pleased!

Thank you for your financial and pro bono support that transforms Georgia Appleseed’s vision into increased justice for Georgians throughout our state. We are able to do what we do because of you.

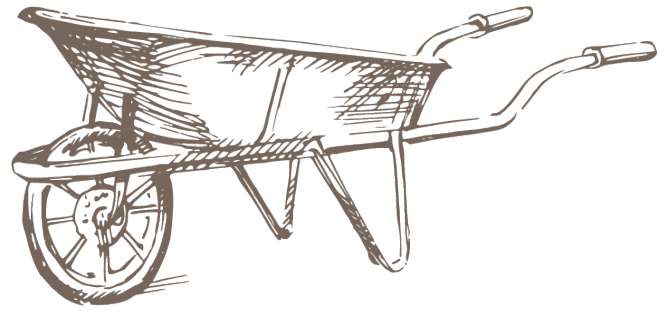
With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Hill".

Sharon Hill  
Executive Director

## **CONTINUING TO SOW JUSTICE: Dismantling the School-to-Prison Pipeline**

For a dramatic understanding of our work in this area, see the original, short film, “His Story”, produced for Georgia Appleseed at <http://bit.ly/GAAHisStory>.



### **Keeping Kids in Class Toolkit**

With a generous, anonymous grant, and with support of long-time funders, our Toolkit was updated with the most recent information on school discipline. New in FY17 was Out of School Suspension (OSS) rates by student disability.

### **Georgia Education Climate Coalition (GECC) – Going “All In”...**

GA Appleseed staffers Teddy Reese and Rob Rhodes joined forces with local members of the Dougherty County Steering/Executive Committee of the “All In!” Campaign at the July 30 school year kick-off event for the Dougherty County School System (Albany, GA) and prepared for the “All In” public awareness campaign in Muscogee County. The “All In” campaign promotes positive school climate throughout the community. Several local community leaders are actively engaged with Georgia Appleseed to broaden community impact.

### **Student Code of Conduct Review**

Georgia Appleseed’s work contributed to the unanimous approval of the new Student Code of Conduct for Athens/Clarke County public schools in May 2017. This new code supports the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework, an effective and systemic strategy for dismantling the School to Prison Pipeline.

### **Juvenile Code Assessment Project: Justice for our Children & Youth**

Three years after the unanimous passage of the new Georgia Juvenile Code (eff. date 1/1/14), lead pro bono firms Kilpatrick Townsend and Nelson Mullins interviewed more than 200 stakeholders in FY17, which will lead to data analysis and an official report release in FY18.

### **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**

With project support from Georgia Appleseed, Bibb County Schools have achieved 100% implementation of PBIS! Muscogee County schools continued implementation of PBIS, with early data showing positive trends. For more about Georgia Appleseed’s work in Columbus, go to <http://bit.ly/GAAColumbus>.



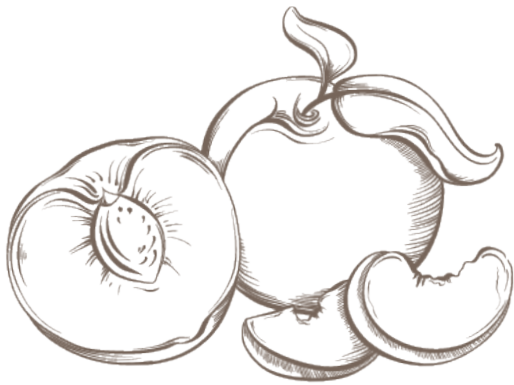
## REAPING WISDOM & TURNING IT INTO ACTION:

### New Rule for Fairness in Student Tribunals

The 2016 General Assembly enacted a law requiring the State Board of Education to adopt a rule establishing

- qualifications for hearing officers or tribunal panel members who preside at disciplinary hearings, and
- establishing minimum standards for initial and continuing training for such individuals.

The Georgia Appleseed Young Professionals Council's Tribunal team worked with Director of Projects Rob Rhodes on a Guidance Document with preliminary content suggestions to Georgia Department of Education. A number of Georgia Appleseed's recommended changes to the proposed rule were embraced by GA DOE leaders, with the final rule approved on July 15, 2016. Georgia Appleseed's Guidance Document was also approved by the School Board of Education at the July 15 meeting.



### Forensic Patients

Presented in partnership with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) and Atlanta Legal Aid Society, a CLE on Community Services & Procedures for people found Incompetent to Stand Trial-Nonrestorable (IST-N) was offered and attended by a broad range of community professionals such as attorneys, LMSWs, LCSWs and Certified Peer Specialists.

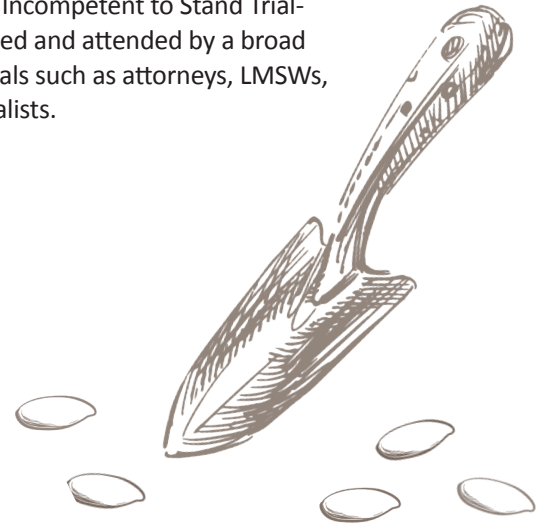
## SOWING THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE: Mutual Respect between Community Members and Officers of the Law

Following the successful January 2016 release of Georgia Appleseed's Race, Law Enforcement & The Law Report, a focus on data and training were among the recommendations that were pursued the most rigorously. Georgia Appleseed's Rob Rhodes met with state and local law enforcement leadership to move forward on both state and local level policies. Community engagement continued. We were especially impressed when a high school student used Georgia Appleseed's community meeting guide to host a community wide Race/Law forum in Lawrenceville in January 2016.

During the Georgia General Assembly 2017 session, legislators approved an increase in the budget to hire a curriculum specialist at the P.O.S.T. council. The curriculum specialist will focus on updating and modernizing the P.O.S.T. mandated curriculum in Georgia for certified law enforcement officers. Funding this position was consistent with Georgia Appleseed's recommendations.

### The Next Generation of Leadership

Georgia Appleseed's Young Professionals Council, lead by an active executive committee, had a strong FY17 with increased programmatic focus on its Student Tribunal work. As well, they hosted a Fall Friendraiser and the most successful Spellbound for Justice (SCRABBLE®) fundraiser to date, with 19 teams participating, more than 100 in attendance and grossing more than \$10,000 for the organization.



# REAPING JUSTICE:

## Incubation & Official Launch of the Georgia Heirs Property Law Center (GHPLC)

After several years of planning, Georgia Appleseed achieved its long-term project goal of creating Georgia's first independent law center dedicated to representing low and moderate income owners of heirs property. Incorporated in 2015, and thereafter incubated at Georgia Appleseed, the new GHPLC, under the leadership of Center Director Skipper StipeMaas, was launched as an independent center on January 1, 2017. GHPLC's mission is to increase generational wealth, social justice, and community stability by securing and preserving property rights of low and moderate income Georgians. Its website is [www.gaheirsproperty.org](http://www.gaheirsproperty.org).

## FY17 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

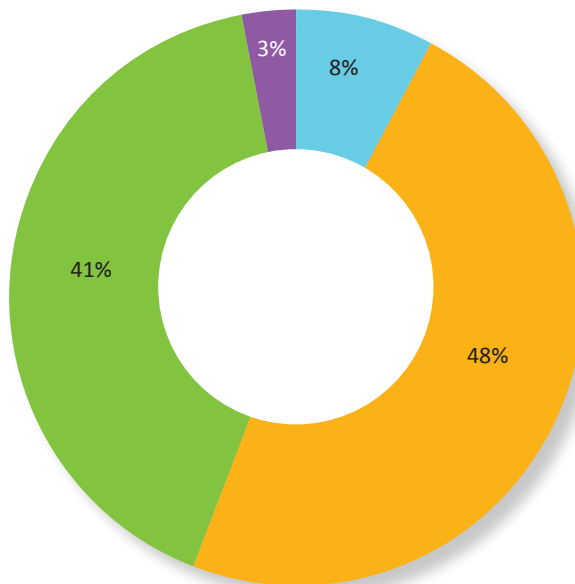
July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

### Revenues & Support

Contributions and Grants	\$1,023,175
Contributed Services	\$867,888
Contributed Facilities	\$60,450
Fundraising and special events	\$171,890

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**Total Revenues and Support**      **\$2,123,403**



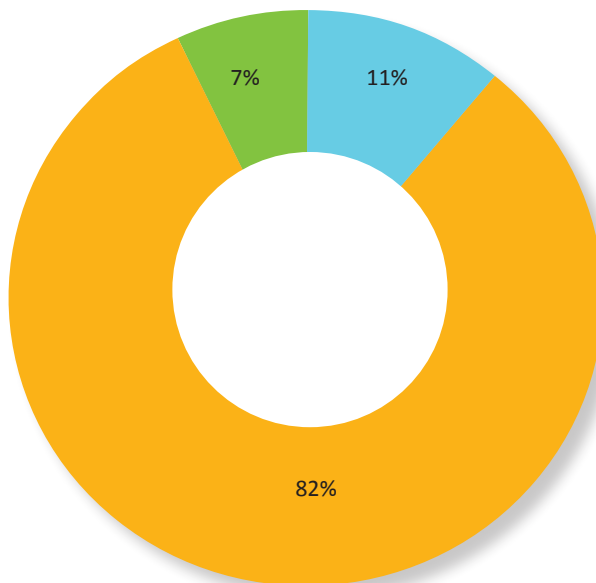
### Expenses

Program	\$1,633,334
General and Administrative	\$146,509
Fundraising	\$216,127

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**Total Expenses**      **\$1,995,970**

**Increased Total Net Assets**      **\$127,433**



Above financials are from Georgia Appleseed's FY17 Audited Statements.



**1,879**  
**PRO BONO HOURS**

## FY17 Board of Directors (as of 6/30/2017)

Georgia Appleseed is grateful & proud of the commitment from its board of directors. The organization has 100% Board Giving.

John H. Fleming  
Board Chair  
Eversheds-Sutherland



David Sneed  
Immediate Past Board Chair  
Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation

Taylor Daly  
Board Vice-Chair  
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

Paula Frederick  
Board Secretary  
State Bar of Georgia

Virginia Adams  
Board Treasurer  
EY

Alison Ballard  
Young Professionals Council President  
Taylor English Duma

Mary Benton  
Alston & Bird

Matthew Bozzelli  
Southern Company

Scott Casey  
UPS

Alex Clay  
Smith Gambrell & Russell

Elizabeth (Beth) Chadwick  
Consultant

Charles (Chuck) C. Clay  
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough

The Honorable Victoria Darrisaw  
State Court of Dougherty County

Bob Edwards  
Troutman Sanders

Harold Franklin  
King & Spalding

Bob Gallagher  
PwC

Brian Gordon  
DLA Piper

Wade Herring  
Hunter Maclean

Sharon N. Hill  
Executive Director, Georgia Appleseed

Jessica McKinney  
GE Energy

The Honorable Herbert E. Phipps  
Court of Appeals of Georgia (ret.)

Diane Prucino  
Kilpatrick Townsend Stockton

Randi Schnell  
Bondurant Mixson & Elmore

Neil Shorthouse  
LeaderComm

## FY17 Staff: Georgia Appleseed

Sharon N. Hill, JD, MBA  
Executive Director

Linda Hall Pitts  
Finance Manager

Abigail Gross  
Director of Development

Tremaine Reese, JD, MPA  
Director of Community Engagement

Rob Rhodes, JD  
Director of Projects

Alissa Scherb  
Development Coordinator

Kermit "Kirby" Thomas  
Community Engagement Assistant

Patsy White  
Program Manager

## FY17 Staff: Georgia Heirs Property Law Center, A Project of Georgia Appleseed

[GHPLC launched independently 1/1/2017]

Joann Johnson, JD  
Legal Programs Director

Claude Davis, JD  
Staff Attorney

Veronica McClendon, JD  
Rural Staff Attorney

Delene W. Porter  
Chief Operating Officer

Skipper StipeMaas, JD  
Executive Director



**FY17 Special Staff Note:** We celebrated Director of Projects Rob Rhodes' retirement at the end of FY17. Rob had joined GA Appleseed after more than thirty years with Holland & Knight and then spent another decade with us sowing the seeds of justice throughout Georgia. We congratulate Rob on his retirement (this time he tells us retirement will "stick") and wish him all the best. We also welcomed Allison Rutland Soulen as Rob's successor (effective 7/1/2017).

[Left to Right: Allison Rutland Soulen, Linda Hall-Pitts, Rob Rhodes, Abigail Gross, Tremaine Reese, Patsy White, Kirby Thomas, Alissa Scherb, Sharon Hill]



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