

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS: COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION GRANT

In 2023, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) awarded statewide grantees funding to support the creation of programming focused on improving outcomes for youth between the ages of 0 and 8. As a grantee, the Athens Area Community Foundation, in partnership with the Athens Wellbeing Project and the Clarke County Mentor Program, was awarded funding to pursue a trauma-informed mentoring program pilot.

Designed to connect 1st and 2nd grade students in Athens-Clarke County to trauma-informed mentors, the pilot trained a cohort of UGA undergraduate psychology students in the Community Resiliency Model, a wellness-based approach to overcoming adversity based in the science of the nervous system. Trained UGA mentors are paired with local elementary school students for one-on-one mentoring sessions using the CRM skills learned in the pilot. Over the course of the grant cycle, this initiative aims to provide local students and their families access to easy-to-use and age-appropriate resiliency skills that can be practiced at home or at school as an emotional and behavioral management tool.

This initiative comes alongside the Resilient Northeast Georgia grant program to expand access to resources and trainings.

GRANT PARTNERS

- Athens Area Community Foundation
- Athens Wellbeing Project
- Clarke County Mentor Program
- University of Georgia Psychology Department
- Clarke County School District

MENTEE COHORT

The 44-member cohort of 1st and 2nd graders involved represents a sample of the elementary schools in Athens-Clarke County, based on referrals from school counselors to the program.

MENTOR COHORT

The paired mentor cohort is comprised of 41 current UGA undergraduate psychology students and 3 community mentors who have been matched by the Clarke County Mentor Program.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Improve student behavioral outcomes
- Provide wrap-around access to resiliency skills
- Build the capacity of the Clarke County Mentor Program to serve more students over time

WHAT IS FUNDED:



Mentor Matching

Matching and support services for all mentors in the cohort once paired with their mentee.



CRM Training

Training for mentors, community, teachers and school staff, and parents/caregivers.



Training Capacity

Train-the-trainer support for school staff and early care workforce.



Mentoring Access

Support for Clarke County Mentor Program to expand its capacity.

BRINGING IN

\$125K

TO SUPPORT TRAUMA-
INFORMED MENTORING

TRAINING

400

COMMUNITY
MEMBERS IN CRM

SPANNING

18

MONTHS OF
PROGRAMMING

CLARKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

PROGRESS TO DATE

Mentors Trained and Matched

The cohort of undergraduate UGA Psychology students have been trained to become CRM guides and have been matched with 1st and 2nd grade students.

Additional Mentees Identified

The Clarke County Mentor Program was able to expand their post-pandemic pool of 1st and 2nd grade students from around the district.

Trauma-Informed Mentoring Time

The mentor-mentee pairings have had several months of meetings since the initial CRM workshop occurred this year.

INSPIRED ACTIONS: WHAT COMES NEXT?

As more mentors, community members, school staff, and parents/caregivers undergo CRM trainings, the grant partners will be able to evaluate the efficacy of the model in this setting, gaining valuable insight into the practicality of expanding the pilot into other counties through the Resilient Northeast Georgia grant in future years. It is our hope that the data leads to continued use and expansion of the Community Resiliency Model in our region and beyond.



What is the COMMUNITY RESILIENCY MODEL?



The Community Resiliency Model (CRM) is a set of six wellness skills used to regulate the nervous system back to baseline functioning levels in times of stress or trauma. These skills allow users to become more aware of the sensations associated with particular stress responses, then teaches techniques to help reduce symptoms of dysregulation.