

# STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY

## Volunteer Services Database, 2024

Wisdom Keepers adopted the United Way volunteer portal as a tracking software. This project links nonprofit volunteer needs with available volunteers. Wisdom Keepers have grown the database, expanding the opportunities for fruitful connections between area nonprofits and volunteers.

## Affordable Housing Growth, 2023

Beginning in 2019, Wisdom Keepers began studying the issue of affordable housing, leading to the preparation of an extensive state of housing report for Hall County. These findings were presented around the county to elected officials and business leaders, as well as private citizens, to educate them on the impact of not having a sufficient supply of affordable housing for our citizens, the importance of increasing that supply, and ways this might be achieved. In 2022, they joined their efforts with the United Way of Hall County's One Hall Financial Stability Committee, where community members gather to create solutions that support adequate, affordable, and available housing for those 250% of the federal poverty guidelines (\$52,400 for a family of four) and below.

## Age-Friendly Community, 2022

The City of Gainesville adopted a Resolution to seek designation as a member of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly States and Communities and the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in April 2021. These communities focus on eight domains of livability: housing; transportation; Outdoor Spaces and Building; Communication and Information; Civic Participation and Engagement; Health Services and Community Supports; Respect and Social Inclusion; and Social Participation.

Gainesville's Age-Friendly Community Coalition is led by the City of Gainesville in partnership with the University of North Georgia's Institute for Healthy Aging, the Gainesville-Hall County Community Service Center, and Legacy Link. The coalition is developing age-friendly policies, programs, and services for older adults in our community in coordination with local government goals and initiatives.

## History Comes Alive in Flowery Branch, 2022

A good story deserves to be told. After completing construction of their new City Hall Flowery Branch officials seized the opportunity to share the city's rich history with visitors of all ages through a graphic art display in the building lobby. A Wisdom Keeper enthusiastic about history lead the research into local historical records and resources, including those at the Northeast Georgia History Center, to develop a display of the hidden gems of Flowery Branch's history.



## Brenau University Art Galleries, 2014

Until 1986, Brenau University had no permanent art gallery space. Under the vision and leadership of President Dr. John S. Burd, Brenau University built their art collection through donations and now has four exhibition spaces on campus and over 7,000 pieces of fine art and textiles, including drawings, paintings, and sculptures by world-renowned artists. Recognizing the value of sharing their collection with the greater community, Brenau University Galleries asked Wisdom Keepers to develop a docent, or guide, program to showcase their collection and provide support for community engagement. Today, trained docents provide free tours to the community and offer support at Gallery exhibitions and special events. <https://galleries.brenau.edu/volunteer/>



## Building Adult Life Skills, 2014

The Salvation Army's Center of Hope in Gainesville recognized that many of the people seeking shelter with them, and in the surrounding community, needed other help to get on their feet and stay there. Much of that assistance was needed in building life skills, such as basic financial management, job search skills, and improving interpersonal relationships. *Wisdom Keepers* developed curriculum for two eight-week courses on Financial Development and Professional Development for the Center of Hope. These day and evening courses offered shelter and area residents a chance to learn valuable skills to support them on their path toward success. When the Center of Hope's volunteer instructor left, they had to discontinue classes but saved the curriculum for future use.

## Academic Fieldwork & Coordination Support, 2013

Students at Brenau University's School of Occupational Therapy benefit from participating in fieldwork experience as part of their learning program. Growth in the program presented challenges for Academic Fieldwork Coordinators (AFC) to ensure the availability of fieldwork sites for students, continue effective visit monitoring with higher volumes, and maintain quality relationships among the training sites, the practicing students, and the University staff. Developing and implementing a site visit questionnaire, *Wisdom Keepers* gathered the information needed to help the AFCs prepare an action plan to meet their goals.