

EMPOWER YOUTH

HUB Career Fair, 2025

The Career Fair and Expo started as a Gainesville High School youth development project with a goal to have students apply for jobs and get an interview scheduled at the event. In 2024, more than 20 Hall County businesses participated with Wisdom Keepers on hand to assist students. The vendors took applications, scheduled interviews and hired on the spot. Over 200 students attended; over 300 applications were submitted, and 69 interviews were conducted at the event. Plans are to hold fairs each year.

Ferst Reader Tutors, 2024

Wisdom Keepers researched the possibility to establish a Ferst Readers Program for children in Hall County. Using a pilot program, they connected older students interested in a future career in education with young children in Day Care and Pre-K programs and had them read together using the Ferst Readers books and resources. The pilot highlighted the need to build support with school system management from the beginning of the project for future implementation by interested teachers and students.

Foster Children CASA Recruiting, 2020

More than 20,000 abused and neglected children in Georgia enter the foster system each year and while there, change foster homes on average every 75 days. Constant and sudden changes in their living situation works against the needs of these children for a stable and secure emotional foundation, which is essential to their successful growth.

Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) are specially trained to speak up for a foster child's right to have a safe, permanent home. Children with a CASA "voice" have a higher chance to find a safe and permanent home, are more likely to succeed in school, and can lower their chances of ending up back "in the system" by half. There are never enough CASAs for all the children.

Wisdom Keepers worked with the Hall-Dawson CASA Program to identify potential CASA volunteers and develop ways to successfully recruit more. The assessment identified and justified the need to hire a Volunteer Director position, which was approved by the Board and subsequently hired.

Juvenile Court Life Skills, 2022

Responding to a request from Hall County's Juvenile Probation Officer, Wisdom Keepers established a pilot three-day training program for juvenile offenders focused on building their life skills and knowledge. Speakers delivered well-aimed and well-received talks to the teens on handling their personal financial responsibilities, the risks of vaping, and hygiene. Field visits included Lanier Tech's vocational lab (a home run!), and a walking tour of Carroll Daniels' downtown projects combined with a "lunch and learn" with construction industry employees of similar backgrounds. Kings Hawaiian, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and a U.S. Army recruiter also provided information on possible work paths and inspiration on how to turn their lives around for a better future. The pilot has become a permanent program for the Juvenile Probation Office.

Sharing Life Experiences, 2013

Educators at Gainesville's Middle School recognized that sharing the wealth of Wisdom Keeper career experience could benefit their students. A small team of Wisdom Keepers conducted three days of classes for 420 students in the Career Discovery Class, delivering information about career planning and decision-making, careers in the health field, and ethics. Well-planned career exploration can have a host of long-term benefits for students, such as helping them carry an idea or interest into reality. The program also established future links for cooperation between Gainesville Middle School teachers and the career education efforts of Junior Achievement and the Foothills Area Health Education Center.

HUB Dress for Success, 2023

Working with Gainesville High School's HUB, a student success center for Hall County and Gainesville City families, Wisdom Keepers focused on supporting the students with special clothing collections. For those students who might lack resources to purchase evening clothing to attend their High School Prom dance, the team procured and organized dresses, suits and accessories. To support students walking or riding the bus to school, they collected rain ponchos, coats, hats and gloves. This project established a fruitful working relationship with the HUB to support student success.