

Resilient Gwinnett Summit



RESILIENT GWINNETT IN ACTION SUMMIT:

Stronger Together – Building Resilience Across Systems

Presented by  KAISER PERMANENTE®

26

March, 2026

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Welcome to the

Resilient Gwinnett in Action Summit



Dr. Shannon Hervey

Director of Community Health
Gwinnett Coalition

On behalf of Gwinnett Coalition, Resilient Gwinnett partners, and our presenting sponsor Kaiser Permanente, it is my honor to welcome you to the Resilient Gwinnett in Action Summit.

This gathering represents more than a convening, it is a collective commitment. A commitment to cultivating resilience, advancing mental and emotional well-being, preventing childhood adversity, and strengthening the systems that support children, families, and communities across Gwinnett County.

Today, you will hear from experts, practitioners, advocates, and individuals with lived experience who remind us that resilience is not built in isolation, it is built in relationships, in policies, in classrooms, in courtrooms, in healthcare settings, and in everyday acts of care. Whether you are an educator, healthcare professional, nonprofit leader, policymaker, faith leader, or community advocate, your presence here matters.

Our hope is that you leave today informed, inspired, and equipped—not only with knowledge, but with tangible strategies and renewed energy to turn awareness into action.

Thank you for the work you do each day to strengthen our community. Together, we are building a more resilient Gwinnett.

With gratitude,

Dr. Shannon Hervey

Summit Schedule

- **8:00 AM**
Check-in, Networking, Resource Fair, and Continental Breakfast
- **9:00 AM**
Opening Plenary
Renee Byrd-Lewis (CEO, Gwinnett Coalition)
Dr. Shannon Hervey (Director of Community Health, Gwinnett Coalition)
- **9:30 AM**
Keynote Address - Systemic Empathy as the Blueprint to Cultivate Resiliency
Dr. Stan Sonu, MD, MPH (Medical Director for Child Advocacy at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta)
- **10:15 AM**
Breakout Session 1
Youth Services Track
Growing Empathic Joy: Teaching Children to Share in Others' Happiness
Education Track
From Awareness to Action: Addressing Implicit Bias Within Trauma-Informed School Systems
Business Track
Regulate to Relate: Using Trauma-Informed Strategies to Lead During Turbulent Times!
- **11:15 AM**
Breakout Session 2
Youth Services Track
Beyond Sports: How Extracurricular Activities Build Youth Resilience and Mental Health
Education Track
When Enough is Too Much: Recognizing Stress, Setting Boundaries, and Strengthening Resilience
Business Track
The Resilient Workplace: A Leader's Guide to Building Trauma-Informed Systems
- **12:15 PM**
Lunch and Networking
- **2:00 PM**
Human Trafficking Presentation and Panel
Speakers: Lindsay Ferreira and Mairah Teli (Mosaic Georgia)
Presentation: Andrea Hipwell (WellSpring Living)
Moderated Panel: Tonika Dew-Evans, Faythe Kadona, Chief Cleophas Atwater, Patrick McDonough, and Chi'Kyla Coleman
- **3:30 PM**
Closing Plenary
- **4:30 PM**
Wine Reception & CEU Distribution

Keynote Speaker

Systemic Empathy as the Blueprint to Cultivate Resiliency

After obtaining his medical degree at the Medical College of Georgia and completing his residency in combined internal medicine and pediatrics at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, IL, Dr. Stan Sonu went on to complete a fellowship at the Cook County Preventive Medicine and Public Health Program. He also earned his Master of Public Health at Northwestern University.

In his role as Medical Director for Child Advocacy at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Dr. Sonu provides programmatic support for Strong4Life and the Atlanta Legal Aid and the Health-Law Partnership (HeLP)—a medical-legal collaborative between Children's and Georgia State University.

Dr. Sonu also serves as an Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics at the Emory University School of Medicine, where his expertise and research interests include prevention of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma-informed care education. In addition to supervising internal medicine residents in the Primary Care Center at Grady Memorial Hospital, Dr. Sonu provides direct care for children and adolescents at the Primary Care Center at Hughes Spalding hospital.

In his free time, you can find Dr. Sonu drinking good coffee, reading a book, enjoying engaging conversations and spending quality time with his wife, kids, family and friends.



Dr. Stan Sonu, MD, MPH
Medical Director,
Child Advocacy at Children's
Healthcare of Atlanta

Breakout Sessions

Breakout Session 1

Youth Services Track

Growing Empathic Joy: Teaching Children to Share in Others' Happiness

Presenter: Dr. Erin Tully, Ph.D. (Associate Professor, Georgia State University Department of Psychology)

Young children naturally feel happy when others are happy, but this positive empathy often fades as comparison and jealousy emerge. Empathy can support healthy social and academic growth, yet in some situations it can also increase vulnerability to psychological challenges.

This presentation offers practical ways to help children strengthen their empathy skills and sustain empathic happiness. It will:

1. Define positive empathy and related concepts.
 2. Share strategies for coaching healthy empathy.
 3. Teach a tool children can use to notice empathic happiness, take others' perspectives, and act with care and kindness.
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Education Track

From Awareness to Action: Addressing Implicit Bias Within Trauma-Informed School Systems

Presenter: Dr. Jillian Whatley, Ph.D. (CEO, Jillian Whatley and Associates)

Resilient school communities need more than trauma awareness—they require systems that examine how implicit bias shapes policies and decisions. This session explores how bias intersects with trauma-informed practices to support prevention, resilience, and equity. Participants will consider how unconscious beliefs influence discipline, student supports, and access to opportunity. Through examples, reflection, and practical strategies, attendees will learn to move from awareness to action by creating trauma-responsive, bias-aware, healing-centered school environments.

Business Track

Regulate to Relate: Using Trauma-Informed Strategies to Lead During Turbulent Times!

Presenters: Dr. David Kim, Ph.D., LPC (CEO, Research Institute for Counseling Education)

Dr. Daun Kwag, Ph.D., NCC (Assistant Professor, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Clinician,
Research Institute for Counseling Education)

This presentation introduces core definitions, examples, sociocultural contexts, and interventions related to trauma. Attendees will engage in reflection questions and exercises designed to build skills for trauma-informed self-care and community care.

Goals:

- Build a foundational understanding of trauma and its forms
- Recognize trauma responses as adaptive reactions to harmful or abnormal events
- Learn trauma-informed tools for self- and co-regulation
- Understand the basics of the neurobiology of trauma

Breakout Sessions

Breakout Session 2

Youth Services Track

Beyond Sports: How Extracurricular Activities Build Youth Resilience and Mental Health

Presenters: Dr. Leon Banks, Craig Hicks, Iris Perla Iglesias, and William Banks, UGA School of Social Work

Youth sports are often seen as recreation, yet they can be powerful resilience-building interventions when intentionally structured. This session explores how sport participation supports mental health through factors like mentorship, peer connection, identity development, emotional regulation, and self-efficacy. Participants will explore how coaching culture and program design can promote wellness or contribute to stress. Attendees will leave with practical strategies for creating psychologically safe, inclusive sport environments that strengthen youth resilience.

Education Track

When Enough is Too Much: Recognizing Stress, Setting Boundaries, and Strengthening Resilience

Presenter: Tonika Dew-Evans, LPC, NCC, CPCS, MS (All in Dew Time)

Many professionals are navigating increasing demands, emotional labor, and shifting expectations, often while pouring endlessly into others. This interactive session will help K-12 professionals and others recognize the signs of stress, identify personal and professional boundaries that protect well-being, and build practical resilience strategies for sustainable impact. Participants will leave with actionable tools to regulate stress, reset when "enough feels like too much," and cultivate habits that support both personal wellness and effectiveness.

Business Track

The Resilient Workplace: A Leader's Guide to Building Trauma-Informed Systems

Presenters: Astrid Prudent (Associate Project Director, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University)

Ursula Davis (Associate Project Director, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University)

Today's workforce is experiencing intense stress and rapid change. Leaders who understand how trauma and chronic stress shape performance and culture are better equipped to build resilient organizations. This interactive 45-minute session offers a practical framework for recognizing trauma-informed language, strengthening workplace practices, and embedding resilience into organizational systems.

- Define trauma and toxic stress in ways relevant to workplace performance
- Identify trauma-informed, resilience-centered language that supports psychological safety and accountability.

Presenters

● Dr. Erin Tully, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Georgia State University Department of Psychology



Erin Tully is a licensed psychologist and Associate Professor of Psychology at Georgia State University. She studies children's emotional development, focusing on empathy, prosocial behavior, emotion regulation, and parent-child relationships. Her recent work includes developing a parent-mediated program to support children's empathic happiness. Dr. Tully's research has been funded by the Brain & Behavior Research Foundation, the American Psychological Foundation, and the Mind & Life Institute. She also co-directs federally funded training programs that prepare future clinical psychologists to serve underserved children in Georgia.

● Dr. Jillian Whatley, Ph.D.

CEO, Jillian Whatley and Associates



Jillian Whatley, Ed.D. is a certified school psychologist, district-level leader, and executive coach with more than 15 years of experience advancing trauma-informed and equity-centered practices in schools. She currently serves as the School Psychologist Liaison for DeKalb County Public Schools and has held leadership roles in Clarke County and Atlanta Public Schools. Dr. Whatley is the founder of Jillian Whatley & Associates, partnering with organizations to address implicit bias, organizational trauma, leadership development, and resilience. She also coaches with Howard University's Urban Superintendency Academy, teaches at Georgia State University, and is the author of *Where Is My Teacher?*. Her work is grounded in community wellness, accountability, and healing.

● Dr. David Kim, Ph.D., LPC

CEO, Research Institute for Counseling Education



David Daesoo Kim, Ph.D. is a psychotherapist and adjunct faculty member in Mercer University School of Medicine's Marriage and Family Therapy program. He is the founder of the nonprofit PEACE and the owner/executive director of the Research Institute for Counseling & Education (RICE) in Atlanta. His clinical and teaching work focuses on Asian and Pacific Islander American mental health, identity development, acculturation, intimate partner violence, masculinity, and immigrant communities. Dr. Kim holds a Ph.D. in Counselor Education from Mercer University, an STM from Boston University, and an M.Div. from Emory University. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking with his partner, Nami, and is an enthusiastic—if self-described struggling—golfer.

● Dr. Daun Kwag, Ph.D., NCC

Assistant Professor, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, Clinician, Research Institute for Counseling Education



Daun Kwag, Ph.D. (she/her) is an assistant professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at Agnes Scott College and a professional counselor with the Research Institute for Counseling & Education (RICE). She also serves on the board of People's Empowerment through Advocacy, Counseling, and Education (PEACE). Dr. Kwag's clinical and scholarly work focuses on AANHPI wellness, migrant experiences, trauma and meaning-making, and anti-oppressive, culturally responsive practices in counseling and research. She earned her M.A. from Boston University and her B.A. in music and English from Emory University. In her free time, she enjoys performing with her string quartet, reading, and cooking.

Presenters

● **Dr. Leon Banks, Ph.D., LCSW**

Assistant Professor, University of Georgia School of Social Work



Leon Banks, Ph.D., LCSW is an Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia with more than 20 years of clinical experience serving marginalized communities. His research examines the intersection of social work and sports across micro, mezzo, and macro systems, as well as the experiences of non-custodial Black fathers and barriers to visitation. Dr. Banks holds a Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Georgia, an MSW from Savannah State University, and a B.S. in Psychology from Howard University. His work spans mental health, athlete wellbeing, and equitable access for diverse families.

● **Tonika Dew-Evans, LPC, NCC, CPCS, MS**

Owner, All In Dew Time



Tonika Dew Evans, MS, LPC, NCC, CPCS is a licensed professional counselor and the founder of All In Dew Time, LLC, where she provides counseling, consulting, and training focused on empowerment, resilience, and healthy relationships. With a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and extensive experience supporting individuals, couples, and organizations, Tonika blends clinical expertise with engaging workshops and keynote presentations. Her work centers on helping people thrive personally and professionally through insight, skill-building, and compassionate guidance. She lives in Ellenwood, GA, with her husband, Rev. Dr. Terrence Evans, and their three children.

● **Astrid Prudent**

Associate Project Director, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University



Astrid Prudent, MA is a workforce development leader with more than 15 years of experience in client-centered care, counseling, and systems-level program implementation. She serves as Associate Project Director at the Center of Excellence for Behavioral Health & Wellbeing, where she co-leads workforce initiatives, oversees program evaluation, and provides statewide technical assistance. A National Trainer in Mental Health First Aid and multiple evidence-based models, Astrid brings extensive experience supporting children, youth, and families with significant behavioral health needs. Her work focuses on strengthening behavioral health systems, advancing trauma-informed practices, and equipping professionals with practical, research-informed strategies to improve outcomes.

● **Ursula Davis**

Associate Project Director, Georgia Health Policy Center, Georgia State University



Ursula Davis, LPC is a program leader at the Georgia Health Policy Center's Center of Excellence for Children's Mental Health, where she has supported statewide school-based mental health initiatives since 2015. She serves as a technical advisor for the APEX project and co-leads Workforce Development, overseeing programs such as Georgia Mental Health Awareness, Youth at Risk for Psychosis, BJA Stop School Violence, and the Beck Initiative—home to Georgia's only certified trainers in Recovery-Oriented Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CT-R). A licensed professional counselor, Ursula also has experience providing individual and group therapy for adults and adolescents, bringing deep expertise in child welfare, mental health, training, and systems-level program management.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Human Trafficking Presentation



Speaker

Lindsay W. Ferreira
Executive Director-CEO, Mosaic Georgia

Lindsay W. Ferreira currently serves as the Executive Director-CEO of Mosaic Georgia, a nonprofit organization providing comprehensive forensic medical exams, advocacy, counseling, and legal services to victims of sexualized violence and child abuse. She began her work with Mosaic Georgia in 2011 as an advocate providing direct victim advocacy services and has advanced through leadership roles within the organization.

As Executive Director-CEO, Lindsay provides strategic and administrative oversight of all programs and operations. She also provides ongoing education related to advocacy and forensic interviewing for law enforcement, members of the justice system, community partners, and fellow advocates. During the pandemic, Lindsay played a key role in supporting Mosaic Georgia's growth by expanding the organization's legal department and enhancing its mental health and wellness services. Lindsay is active with the Gwinnett Child Fatality Review Committee and oversees Mosaic Georgia's roles in the Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Protocols in Gwinnett and Rockdale counties.

Lindsay earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia, and a Master's degree in Psychology with a concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis from Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama.



Speaker

Mairah Teli
Advocacy Manager and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEC) Advocate, Mosaic Georgia

Mairah Teli serves as the Advocacy Manager and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEC) Advocate at Mosaic Georgia, Gwinnett County's Children's Advocacy and Sexual Assault Center. Mairah received her bachelor's in English Education from the University of Georgia. After teaching in the Gwinnett County Public School system as a high school Language Arts teacher, she shifted her focus to social work and earned her Masters of Social Work from Arizona State University. Mairah worked within the nonprofit sector and has served in a variety of roles with a focus on victim services, trauma informed care, crisis intervention, and strengthening families. She is currently an LMSW and works with children and adolescents who have experienced human trafficking. Mairah is also an active member of the Georgia Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force.

Outside of her professional career, Mairah is passionate about community service and youth development. She has led a youth group mentorship program for adolescent girls for over a decade. She facilitates support groups and leads a range of trainings on child abuse prevention and mental health in her local community.



Presenter

Andrea Hipwell
Senior Director of Adult Services, Wellspring Living

Andrea Hipwell serves as Senior Director of Adult Services at Wellspring Living, where she has been a committed team member since 2009. A graduate of the Women's Residential Program, she brings a powerful survivor-leader perspective to her work and trains teams on trauma-informed care, boundaries, ethical storytelling, and stages of change. She holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice, is active on statewide task forces, and serves on the SafeHouse Certification Review Board. Andrea was also appointed by two Presidents to the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, serving from 2020-2024.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Human Trafficking

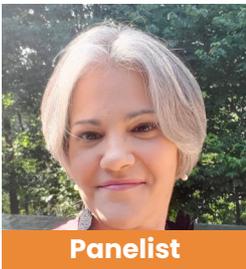
Panel Discussion



Moderator

Tonika Dew-Evans, LPC, NCC, CPCS, MS
All In Dew Time, Owner

Tonika Dew Evans, MS, LPC, NCC, CPCS is a licensed professional counselor and the founder of All In Dew Time, LLC, where she provides counseling, consulting, and training focused on empowerment, resilience, and healthy relationships. With a master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and extensive experience supporting individuals, couples, and organizations, Tonika blends clinical expertise with engaging workshops and keynote presentations. Her work centers on helping people thrive personally and professionally through insight, skill-building, and compassionate guidance. She lives in Ellenwood, GA, with her husband, Rev. Dr. Terrence Evans, and their three children.



Panelist

Faythe Kadona
Subject Matter Expert & Human Resources Manager, Street Grace

Faythe is a subject matter expert in human trafficking, addiction, and domestic violence, serving on survivor advisory councils for Street Grace and Atlas Free and contributing to key Georgia legislation supporting survivors. She has developed treatment curriculum, helped launch the first Survivor Mentor Program with H.O.P.E. Court, and continues to advise on policy efforts nationwide. Rooted in her faith, she is passionate about helping others find freedom.



Panelist

Chief Cleophas Atwater
Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office, Trafficking and Child Exploitation Unit

Chief Cleophas Atwater was appointed Chief of the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office in 2021 after a 24-year career with the Gwinnett County Police Department, where he served in multiple divisions, led high-profile investigative units, and commanded the county's first full-time SWAT team. A collaborative, community-focused leader, he has helped advance victim-centered investigative practices and supported the creation of the nationally recognized TRACE Unit, which combats human trafficking and child exploitation. Chief Atwater holds multiple P.O.S.T. certifications, has completed over 4,000 hours of specialized training, and is a two-time Officer of the Year and Distinguished Service Medal recipient.



Panelist

Patrick McDonough
Andersen, Tate and Carr Law Firm, Sex Trafficking Division

Patrick J. McDonough leads the sex trafficking division for Andersen, Tate and Carr. He has dedicated a large part of his life to giving back to the community, helping countless survivors with arrest records and improper charges. Before joining Andersen, Tate & Carr, Pat was a District Attorney in the state of Georgia — leading a multi-faceted team that created child advocacy centers to help victims of sexual abuse with a comprehensive approach that addressed both trauma recovery and legal representation. Over the past six years, we have recovered over 115 million dollars for survivors.



Panelist

Chi'Kyla Coleman, MPA
Program Director, Grace's Place

Chi'Kyla Coleman, MPA, is a seasoned Program Director with 16 years of experience in child welfare and behavioral health. She leads Devereux Gwinnett's Grace's Place program, advancing trauma-informed, youth-centered care and strategic program development. An award-winning leader with certifications in project management, research, victim assistance, and Lean Six Sigma, she holds degrees in Criminal Justice and Public Administration and is pursuing a Doctorate in Organizational Leadership. She is also an active member of Heaven's Harvest Ministries and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Incorporated.

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