

# Community Services ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Cherokee  
County

1831  
GEORGIA

Bryan Reynolds  
COMMUNITY SERVICES  
AGENCY DIRECTOR



# Director's Welcome

## COMMUNITY SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2020

In October 2019, Cherokee County re-established the Community Services Agency. I am honored to be the person chosen to lead this agency. With more than 20 years in public recreation and parks, I firmly believe that this team can make our community a better place to live, work, and play when we focus on service.

On behalf of our team, I'm pleased to present our first annual report highlighting the calendar year 2020. This report includes details from our Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS), Cherokee Recreation & Parks, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Recycling Center, and Senior Services.

Of course, 2020 was a challenging year for everyone. Like so many other organizations, we faced unexpected challenges because of the public health crisis and the resulting economic impacts. However, each department met those challenges head-on, with tremendous resolve, energy, and creativity.

We adjusted programs and services through each team member's outstanding efforts, implemented safety protocols, thought outside the box, and went above and beyond to continue meeting our missions and serving our community. While it was a demanding year, it was also a year full of successes.

As we move forward in 2021, we aim to fulfill Cherokee County's vision as metro Atlanta's best place to live, work, and play. We look to build a strong community through excellent services that will continue to meet the needs of our people and our environment.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Bryan".

**Bryan Reynolds, Community Services Agency Director**

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884 Univeter Road  
Canton, Georgia 30114  
770-345-6238 | CherokeeGA.com



# Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS)

## ROLE / MISSION STATEMENT:

The Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS) mission is to provide excellence in all areas of service that we provide to the citizens of Cherokee County. We value and support our clients and our fellow employees and strive to exceed expectations in a safe, courteous, timely, and efficient manner.

CATS is a service of the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners utilizing Cherokee County, State of Georgia, and Federal Transportation Administration funding. CATS works with the Department of Human Services to provide service for the Cherokee County Senior Center and Empower Cherokee clients.

CATS provides service throughout all of Cherokee County with our Demand Response service and Canton Fixed Route. The types of rides we provide are to education, medical, employment, and shopping facilities. CATS has been providing service since 2007.

## KEY STAFF MEMBERS:

### Office Staff

- Greg Powell, *Director of Transportation*
- Amanda Evans, *Mobility Coordinator*
- Kristy Johnson, *Office Manager*
- Donna Camp, *Dispatcher*

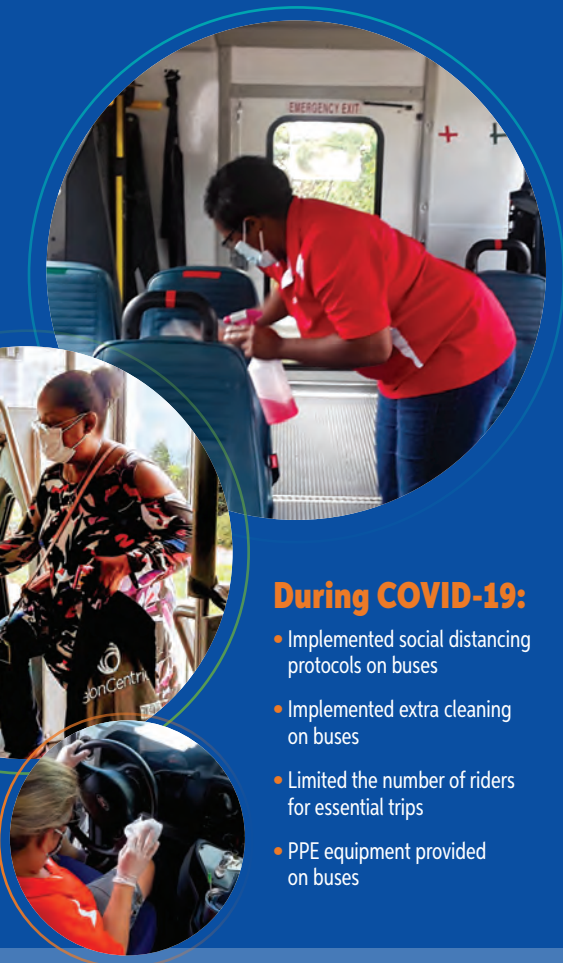
### Drivers Staff

- Billy Adams
- Don Baker
- Dennis Brown
- Rhonda Cornette
- Stephan Goosman
- Sonia Green
- Rebecca Hampton
- Leslie Karabinos
- Sherry McBride
- Brian Milne
- Kathy Palmer
- Carrie Schmitt
- Jeff Shapiro
- Jim Sullivan
- Missy Wofford

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Passed FTA Triennial Review
- Completed an all-day driver's training to gain knowledge and strengthen departmental communications
- Improved bus signage for better communication with passengers
- Partnered with Moovit and Google Maps to provide Fixed Route schedule apps
- Hosted the second annual Community Transportation Association of America's Regional Passenger Assistance, Safety, and Sensitivity certification class





### During COVID-19:

- Implemented social distancing protocols on buses
- Implemented extra cleaning on buses
- Limited the number of riders for essential trips
- PPE equipment provided on buses

## COMMUNITY SERVICES



**177**

ACCIDENT-FREE DAYS

THE AVERAGE HOMEOWNER PAID

**\$5.88**

IN PROPERTY TAXES FOR TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS AND CAPITAL

**14,224**

DEMAND RESPONSE TRIPS

**12,287**

FIXED ROUTE TRIPS

**21,466**

EMPOWER CHEROKEE & SENIOR SERVICE TRIPS

**952**

MEALS ON WHEELS DELIVERIES

*uniquely*  
**EXCEPTIONAL**  
CHEROKEE COUNTY, GA



DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

**Greg Powell**

Cherokee Area Transportation System (CATS) is committed to serving Cherokee County with diverse, accessible, and efficient public transportation. Our staff works diligently to schedule trips for medical, employment, education, and personal needs. CATS maintains 20 vehicles that serve all riders from ages 16 to 99.

Despite setbacks from COVID-19, the CATS team has worked hard to keep the buses running throughout the pandemic without interruption. In addition, safety procedures have been established to keep our riders and drivers safe.

Funding for services comes from Cherokee County, the Department of Human Services, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Federal Transportation Administration. We continue to work to meet the growing needs of our community through planning and capital projects.



# Recycling Center

## ROLE / MISSION STATEMENT:

The Cherokee County Recycling Center promotes responsible environmentalism through waste management practices, pollution prevention, and education that results in protection and improvement of our precious natural resources — land, water, and air.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- The recycling center has grown and served the community without interruption despite changes and shutdowns due to the ongoing international pandemic.
- The Hobgood location has begun accepting aluminum cans—a much-needed and appreciated service.
- Paint recycling and mattress disposal services are now available at an affordable rate.
- Positive customer service continues to be a primary focus of our team.
- The recycling center is embarking on a beautification project to improve the overall appearance and function of the facility.



# COMMUNITY SERVICES

**40,198**

VEHICLES DROPPED OFF  
RECYCLABLE MATERIALS

**442**

MATTRESSES ACCEPTED = \$5,248 IN PROFIT  
(AFTER HAUL FEES)

**158**

PEOPLE SERVED PER DAY (AVERAGE)

**14,543**

POUNDS OF ALUMINUM CANS  
PROCESSED = \$4,362 IN PROFIT  
(THIS IS MORE THAN  
DOUBLE LAST YEAR)

**16,862**

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS  
PERFORMED BY PROBATIONERS

**\$25,640**

BLALOCK EXPENDITURES

**10,648**

BAGS OF TRASH COLLECTED

**\$66,891**

BLALOCK REVENUE

**141.22**

TONS OF SCRAP METAL PROCESSED

**\$31,715**

HOBGOOD EXPENDITURES

**157**

GALLONS OF PAINT ACCEPTED

**\$78,000**

HOBGOOD REVENUE

**\$785** PROFIT

**\$7** SPENT

FOR LITTER TO PROCESS

THE REST OF THE LITTER  
HAS BEEN DONATED

**1**

NEW FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE

*uniquely*  
**EXCEPTIONAL**  
CHEROKEE COUNTY, GA



RECYCLING MANAGER

**Troy Brazie**

Although 2020 brought a global pandemic, the Recycling Center continued to grow and serve the community with minimal interruption. Accomplishments include an increase in revenue by nearly 15 percent, an expansion to accept paint and mattresses at affordable rates, and we now take aluminum cans at the Hobgood location.

Adding a full-time employee allows us to take on additional challenges and introduce more services, including a beautification project for the facility to improve the overall customer experience.

Cherokee County also launched an effort to re-establish the Keep Cherokee Beautiful program. Led by a group of volunteers, this not-for-profit organization will partner with the County to benefit our community through litter reduction, greater civic involvement, area beautification and education, and awareness of recycling opportunities.



# Senior Services

## ROLE / MISSION STATEMENT:

Cherokee County Senior Services is committed to serving as a community focal point for the delivery and coordination of comprehensive social, nutritional, assistance, and informational services to improve the quality of life of older adults and their families.

## HIGHLIGHTS:

### Partnership with Volunteer Aging Council

The Volunteer Aging Council (VAC), although separate from Senior Services, is instrumental in helping Cherokee County Senior Services provide for clients year-round. We are honored to partner with the VAC and join them in celebrating their recent 20th anniversary.

The Last Stop program, one of the VAC's instrumental programs, helps seniors with past due utility bills, rent assistance, prescription payments, hotel stays for the homeless, and emergency gift cards for food. In 2020, the Last Stop program aided 51 seniors at a total cost of \$22,547.

The Client Need List program provides home repairs, fans, heaters, air-conditioning window units, yard clean-up, pest control, and many other requests. Over the year, this VAC program helped 17 seniors at a total cost of \$23,358.

During 2020, the VAC collected \$44,928 in fundraising and grants—a drop in revenue from years past. However, the 2020 annual golf tournament fundraiser garnered the most money since its inception in 2015.

## KEY STAFF MEMBERS:

Deanna Gail, *Resource Coordinator*

Dianne Voss, *Budget Coordinator*

Alice Micham, *Meals on Wheels Coordinator*

Stacy Jones, *Homemaker Coordinator*

Tiffany Hendrix, *Canton Activity Coordinator*

Julie Arthur, *Ball Ground Activity Coordinator*

Melaine Holmes, *Program Manager*





**The VAC is very appreciative to all of its partners and grantees:**

NORTHSIDE HOSPITAL

SAFE PARENT FUND

KSU FOUNDATION

WOODSTOCK UNITED METHODIST

GEORGIA PSI MASTER CHAPTER

BACK TO LIFE MEDICAL GROUP

KAREN KNIGHT

COBB EMC

GEORGIA POWER

PILGRIM'S

NELSON ELDER LAW

CYBERGATE

CREDIT UNION OF GEORGIA

JASON T. DICKERSON FAMILY FOUNDATION

SEVERAL GOLF SPONSORS



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CHEROKEE COUNTY, GA

DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES

**Tim A. Morris**

Creativity and a steadfast dedication to keeping our seniors well served and safe have helped our staff rise above the tremendous challenges over the past year. Through innovative thinking, partnerships, and some incredibly dedicated employees and volunteers, we've successfully put aside how we've always done things and pivoted to ensure our senior services clients get what they need despite a pandemic.

The Senior Services staff coordinates case management, home-delivered meals, senior centers and volunteers, homemaker services, information and assistance, active adult, resource, budget, and support. In all my years in Senior Services, I have never been so proud of a group of individuals.





**Cherokee**  
**County**  
*Senior Services*  
www.cherokeeseniors.com

Family First and Cares Act Funds  
**\$274,000+**



**1,880+**

CASE MANAGEMENT  
SERVICE HOURS

**298**

CASE MANAGEMENT  
CLIENTS

**200+**

INFORMATIONAL  
PHONE CALLS  
PER MONTH

**2,700+**

FUN LUNCHES  
DELIVERED

**500+**

BAGS OF FOOD  
DONATED BY  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS

**3,835**

HOURS OF SERVICE  
FOR HOMEMAKER SERVICES

**MEALS ON WHEELS**

**41,186**

MEALS SERVED

**180**

SENIORS BENEFITED

**2,400**

VOLUNTEER HOURS

**29**

VOLUNTEERS

**8,400+**

MEALS SERVED  
FROM 2 SENIOR CENTERS

**140**

HOMEMAKER CLIENTS

**12**

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS



**Cherokee**  
**County**  
*Senior Services*



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Block Grant Program

## ROLE / MISSION STATEMENT:

The Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) mission is to invest in Cherokee County people and services. The department strives to develop a viable community where all families and individuals may have their basic needs met, enjoy safe, decent, and affordable housing, live in a suitable environment, and be afforded the chance to expand economic opportunities.

**HIGHLIGHTS:** Projects undertaken in 2020 with regular grant funds:

**\$1,060,414**  
RECEIVED AND DISTRIBUTED

## HISTORY CHEROKEE

Cherokee County Historical Society

Acquired and renovated new space for the **Historical Society and Museum**



## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Acquired a large parcel of land to subdivide and construct three affordable homes for individuals and families through their Build Program



**38**  
BOYS  
ENJOYED

### GOSHEN VALLEY BOYS RANCH

Completed construction on the Wellness Center (“The Well”), a center for physical, therapeutic, and educational wellness for boys in foster care



### CHILDREN’S HAVEN

Constructed a new playground and basketball court for children in foster care and those who participate in the Supervised Visitation Program

The CDBG maximizes funds by funding existing **affordable housing programs, anti-poverty programs, human services, and Cherokee County infrastructure development.** The CDBG ensures that all required steps comply with federal eligibility and other program requirements.

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
BLOCK GRANT MANAGER  
**Laura Calfee**

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides grant funding for community development needs. In normal years, CDBG benefits Cherokee County citizens through partnerships with non-profit organizations, including seniors, veterans, and disabled persons. The program also helps children in foster care, after-school and summer programming, and abused and neglected children. However, 2020 brought different circumstances. The CDBG program became a conduit to distributes CARES Act funds to assist with food insecurities, provide mobility to a local community clinic, and bolster economic development through small business grants.

The CDBG program is an essential tool for helping local governments tackle serious challenges facing communities. CDBG works to ensure decent, affordable housing, provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses.



### ANNA CRAWFORD CHILDREN'S CENTER

Funding for the emergency replacement of a heating and air unit at the facility

**22**  
RIDERS



### MUST MINISTRIES

Purchased 2 passenger vans

### PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

- Reading Program
- Transportation Services
- Workforce Readiness Program
- Summer Camp
- Summer Programs
- Youth Development Programs
- After School Programs
- Post High School Preparation



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF AMERICA



**556**  
PEOPLE  
SERVED



### BETHESDA COMMUNITY CLINIC

New mobile medical unit and specialist appointment coordination

**FUNDED BY**  
**CARES**  
**Act**



**207**  
 SENIORS BENEFITTED  
 FROM IMPROVED  
 CAPACITY TO SUPPLY  
 HOME-DELIVERED  
 MEALS

**CHEROKEE COUNTY SENIOR SERVICES**  
 Expanded the senior center

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
**BLOCK GRANT**

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program allows communities flexibility to address a wide range of unique developmental needs. It is one of the longest, continuously running programs at HUD. Cherokee County's CDBG program uses funds provided by HUD to assist on a local level through CDBG grants.

**STATS:**  
 Community Development Block Grant Funding  
 (in conjunction with the CARES Act)

**\$1.69+**  
 Million  
 Total Awarded

**\$736,185**  
 April 2020

**\$963,616**  
 September 2020

**CARES Act:**

- Cherokee Office of Economic Development — offer a small business relief program for businesses who employ low-to-moderate income workers. The small business assistance program will be continued in 2021 with additional funding from the CARES Act.
  - Nineteen small businesses who have suffered economic injury due to the pandemic stand to receive grants to help them retain low-to-moderate income employees
  - More will receive grants in 2021
- Bethesda Community Clinic — supplemental funding from the CARES Act to acquire a mobile medical unit to provide services to the underserved populations in the County. The mobile unit will offer much-needed healthcare services to persons without access to adequate transportation.
  - The unit was placed into service in October 2020
- MUST Ministries, Inc. and Heritage Presbyterian Church – grants to fund emergency food pantries
  - 508 individuals were assisted with emergency food supplies

# Recreation and Parks

## ROLE / MISSION STATEMENT:

To make life better in Cherokee County by preserving our parks and facilities while creating more active and healthier communities through recreation.

## Our Leadership Team is Nationally Certified.

Each member of the Recreation and Parks leadership team, along with other key employees of the department, has completed the rigorous study and exam needed to attain the designation of a Certified Parks and Recreation Professional. The National Recreation and Parks Association coordinates this prestigious certification process.

## KEY STAFF MEMBERS:

- Jay Worley, *Director*
- Shawn Schumacher, *Athletics Division Director*
- Kim Whatley, *Aquatics Division Director*
- Jordan Wood, *Parks Division Director*
- Frankie Sanders, *Recreation Division Director*
- Andrea Johnson, *Business Manager*
- Tony Stargel, *Parks Manager*
- Stephen Shrout, *Parks Manager*





## Southwest Cherokee Parks and Trail Plan:

In May 2018, the Cherokee County Board of Commissioners adopted the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks, Green Space, and Trails Master Plan. One of the priorities identified in that plan was the need to expand parks and recreation services in Southwest Cherokee County — an area generally south of Kellogg Creek Road, along the Highway 92 corridor near Clark Creek and Oak Grove elementary schools.

The county currently owns three parcels in this area. This SW Cherokee Parks & Trails Plan is studying these parcels along with a system of linear trails to connect parks to schools, neighborhoods, and employment centers, as well as other trail systems throughout the county.

The planning process began in August 2020 and will continue through early 2021. The process includes assessing and analyzing previous planning efforts, potential park sites, and trail routes. It has multiple public comment opportunities such as virtual and in-person meetings, online surveys and activities, and stakeholder interviews.

The final plan will include concept designs for three potential parks and trail routes, along with cost estimates and phasing recommendations. **These plans will be presented to the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Advisory Board and Board of Commissioners for their consideration in Spring of 2021.**



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RECREATION & PARKS DIRECTOR  
**Jay M. Worley, CPRP, CYSA**

In one of the most challenging years in decades, our staff has worked hard to provide a model parks system for all citizens and visitors of Cherokee County to be proud of and enjoy. We remained committed to maintaining our parks and facilities in a clean and safe manner; to preserve and protect our natural resources, looking at our unique blend of community, and providing the highest quality recreational opportunities for citizens of every age and ability.

Due to the global pandemic, Recreation and Parks have become an even more fundamental part of our daily lives and will be essential to our communities coming together to heal. We must ensure continued access to these cherished spaces and programs in the coming months and years ahead.

As we continue to forge ahead with a vision for the future, we will remain steadfast in serving our citizens today with the knowledge that we gained from our past.

## New Logo and Website:

The year 2020 was filled with marketing and technology advancements. The department launched a new website ([www.playcherokeega.org](http://www.playcherokeega.org)) that included a better navigation system, easy registration steps, and friendly colors. The website capitalizes on the newly adapted tagline #playcherokee, which has successfully increased social media exposure.

▶ **The Play Cherokee print brochure received a facelift inside and out with new formatting, better paper quality, and a bi-annual print schedule.** ◀

A new logo was released in April. The previous logo served the Agency well for 25 years, so it was essential to keep some legacy intact when rolling out the new look. A local designer helped to find the perfect blend of past and future.

The new signature specimen tree and swing grab the eye while rolling hills and river lends a subtle reminder of the past—the vibrant blue and green color palette polish the symbolic outdoor look.



**NEW LOGO**  
**NEW WEBSITE**  
**NEW CATALOG**



*LB Ahrens Recreation Center Rendering*

In partnership with the local **Youth Athletic Associations**, Cherokee County utilized **7 parks** to host a total of 44 athletics events in 2020. One such event was the annual Classic Youth Softball tournament, recently renamed in honor of the late **CYS League Director Sammy Long**.

## The National Alliance for Youth Sports

has recognized Cherokee Recreation and Parks as an elite “Better Sports for Kids Quality Program Provider.” This honor is the benchmark for outstanding organizations for having met several high standards for administering youth sports.



# RECREATION & PARKS

## EVENTS

### **15TH ANNIVERSARY** of Cherokee Recreation and Parks Fishing Camp

AND ALSO WON THE GEORGIA RECREATION  
AND PARKS ASSOCIATION  
**OUTSTANDING PROGRAM AWARD**

**2,000+**  
**ATTENDEES**

15TH ANNUAL **TOUCH A TRUCK**

### The Great Pumpkin Fest **4,000+** **ATTENDEES**

**RECORD BREAKING** ATTENDANCE AND  
VENDOR PARTICIPATION

## AQUATIC CENTER

CHEROKEE COUNTY AQUATIC  
CENTER HELD **ONLINE ZOOM DRYLAND  
TRAINING CLASSES FOR OUR SWIM TEAM**

HOSTED **THE FIRST MULTI-TEAM MEET** IN THE  
STATE AFTER COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS WERE LIFTED

**TRAINING OVER 500**  
**LIFEGUARDS**  
THIS SUMMER (**RECORD BREAKING**)

## ATHLETICS

**626+**

**PARTICIPANTS**  
AT 44 CLINICS

YOUTH BASKETBALL & SOFTBALL

### **Cherokee Youth Softball**

**RECORD-BREAKING** PARTICIPATION AND  
HIGHEST NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS EVER

### **Cherokee Youth Lacrosse**

**LARGEST** FALL PARTICIPATION SINCE 2016

### **Adult Basketball & Slow-Pitch Softball**

**INCREASED** PARTICIPATION

## OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS

**ADVISORY BOARD CHAIRMAN JASON NELMS**  
WAS HONORED BY GEORGIA RECREATION  
& PARKS ASSOCIATION AS THE  
**STATE VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

**TR PROGRAM VOLUNTEER – DELAINE CAGLE**  
WAS HONORED BY GEORGIA RECREATION  
& PARKS ASSOCIATION AS THE **PROGRAMMER'S  
NETWORK VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

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CHEROKEE COUNTY, GA



## CHEROKEE RECREATION AND PARKS Awarded Grant

Pilgrim's awarded Cherokee Recreation and Parks with a \$250,000 grant to renovate the county's most aged park—Kenney Askew Park. Initially built in the early 1970s, Kenny Askew Park expanded in 2015 with the Richard "Hunkey" Mauldin Sports Complex that included five championship-lit baseball/softball diamonds. The park also serves as home to the Malon D. Mimms Boys and Girls Club.

In conjunction with matching funds from Cherokee County, the Pilgrim's grant will provide the means to add a modular skate park, playground, large pavilion, walking track, permanent pickleball courts, additional parking, and improvements to existing t-ball equipment and landscaping.



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