

Mental Health for Tomorrow's Leaders: *Nate's Journey*

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Alumni Spotlight: Carol Z.



I grew up in a rather neglectful and abusive household, so I've been struggling with anxiety my entire life. Severe depression, starting at age 17, sent me to the hospital multiple times.

Coming here, I was expecting something very cold and locked in. But Skyland Trail turned out to be completely different. The facilities at Skyland Trail are beautiful, and we have the most amazing support system here. Not only with the clients but also with the supportive staff.

It made me feel not as lonely as I was before. I have also achieved, finally, peace of mind through comprehensive psychiatric testing with my diagnoses. And residential treatment provided me a safe space to really start adjusting to medications.

Being at Skyland Trail – from residential treatment to the transitional living program – has allowed me to connect to the world around me, and also connect to the world within myself and gain a better understanding of both.

*Without financial aid, I really would not be where I am today.
Thank you so much for everything that you have done.*



– Carol Z., adult program graduate and financial aid recipient



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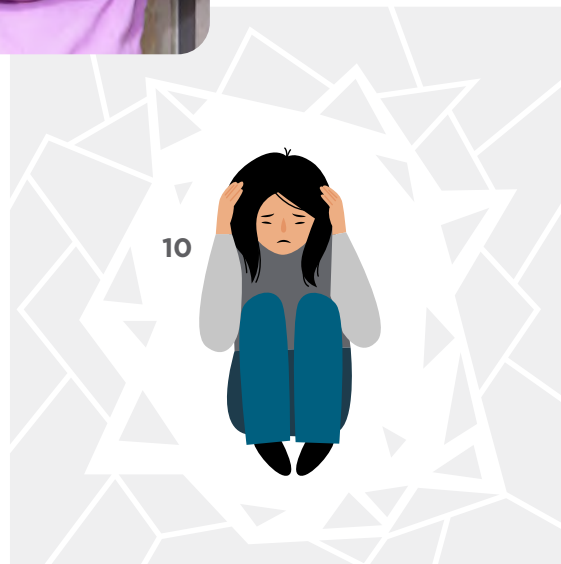
Skyland Trail 5K Run/Walk

Leadership 20

Meet our volunteer leaders



Each of our clients has a unique journey. This publication tells their stories and ours in aiding them along their way.



Located in Atlanta, Skyland Trail is a nationally recognized nonprofit mental health treatment organization serving adults ages 18 and older and adolescents ages 14 to 17 with a primary psychiatric diagnosis. Through our residential and day treatment programs, we help our clients grow, recover, and reclaim their lives. skylandtrail.org



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Guiding the way

American Residential
Treatment Association

ARTA
American Residential
Treatment Association



Journeys magazine shares stories of hope, recovery, and restored futures. We are so proud to be able to share these stories. And we are so grateful to each individual in the Skyland Trail community who helps make these journeys possible.

In this issue, we learn how Georgia Tech graduate student Nate learned skills and insight to manage his mental health challenges. After discovering a path to wellness for himself at Skyland Trail, he forged a partnership to help other students adopt strategies for healthier futures as well.

In two other stories, we meet Jessica and Cynthia, both moms who, despite being willing to do whatever was needed, didn't know how to help their daughters who continued to struggle... until they found Skyland Trail. While their daughters worked toward resilience and independence in our adolescent and adult programs, both moms learned new ways to provide love and support while giving their daughters space to build strength and grow.

And we explore the impact of trauma on mental health and the evidence-based programming Skyland Trail provides to help patients heal.

All of these stories and updates from the frontlines are made possible, in part, by charitable giving from the community. Stories are never about just one person. These journeys are made possible by all of us, working together to change lives. Thank you for being a part of our stories and our healing community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth".

Beth Finnerty, President & CEO



Improving Mental Health for Future Engineering Leaders

The A. James & Alice B. Clark Foundation partners with leading engineering institutions – including Georgia Tech – to provide scholarships to engineering students who exhibit strong academic and leadership potential. Clark Scholars at Georgia Tech participate in programming to help them build skills in collaborative problem-solving, leadership, and community engagement. In 2022, Nate Tenorio, a Skyland Trail graduate and Georgia Tech Clark Scholar, developed a proposal to include mental health education led by Skyland Trail in the Clark Scholars Program curriculum. Building on the success of the initial series with Nate and his cohort, the collaboration is continuing with 2023 Clark Scholars.

Read more about Nate and the Clark Scholars collaboration on page 4.

Alumni Program Coordinator Featured in NAMI Book

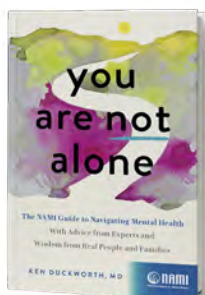
This fall, Skyland Trail partnered with NAMI to host a discussion about the book, *You Are Not Alone*. The book, authored by NAMI Chief Medical Officer Ken Duckworth, MD, includes personal stories of individuals living with mental health disorders. Skyland Trail alumni program coordinator Tera Carter, CPS, WHMC, shares her story in the book. At the September event,

Tera participated in a panel discussion with Dr.

Duckworth and other individuals featured in the book.



Tera Carter, CPS, WHMC



Celebrating Recovery Month Through Service

In September, adult and adolescent clinical staff assembled 2,000 Narcan/Naloxone rescue kits for a service project to kick off Recovery Month in partnership with Georgia Overdose Prevention.

Adult Alumni Program App Launched

The Skyland Trail adult alumni program recently launched an app to help alumni stay connected and engage in our calendar of alumni activities – from social outings, to peer support, to mental health skill booster sessions. The alumni program is made possible by charitable donations from the community.



Supporting the Mental Health Professional Pipeline

The Skyland Trail internship program engages dozens of students each year, including graduate students completing master's programs in social work or clinical counseling, recreational therapy students, and art and horticultural therapy trainees. Three to four medical students from Emory University School of Medicine complete a rotation in psychiatry at Skyland Trail each year. A new partnership with Emory University School of Medicine in 2023 brings psychiatric fellows to Skyland Trail to train with Skyland Trail psychiatrists. Finally, partnerships with our Research and Outcomes Department provide on-the-job learning opportunities for Emory Rollins School of Public Health Earn and Learn (REAL) students and Oglethorpe University undergraduate psychology student interns.



Fall 2023 Clinical Interns

National Garden Bureau Grant

Thanks to online voting from the Skyland Trail community, our horticultural therapy program received a \$1,000 Therapeutic Garden Grant from the National Garden Bureau.



Nate's Story: A Journey of Self-Discovery and Renewal

In the realm of mental health, the journey from hopelessness to healing often is marked by personal revelations, self-discovery, and embracing newfound skills. Nate Tenorio is a Ph.D. candidate in mechanical engineering at Georgia Tech who graduated from the Skyland Trail adult program in 2022.

In 2018, Nate was selected as a Clark Scholar and enrolled in the undergraduate engineering program at Georgia Tech. As a Clark Scholar, he became part of a national scholarship and leadership development program designed to help build a pipeline of future engineers.

Nate was ultra-focused on his academic goals and plans for the future. Having experienced anxiety for many years, Nate began suffering from crippling panic attacks. The attacks, and fear of the next one, began to affect his ability to participate in school, hobbies, or social relationships. He recognized that he needed help beyond what he was likely to find on his college campus.

After learning about Skyland Trail from a family friend, he admitted to the adult day treatment program.

A Supportive Community

Skyland Trail became his route to transformation, offering a supportive community of professional experts and peers.

"It felt good to be a part of a community of people struggling with issues that were similar to my own," says Nate. "There seems to be a general attitude on Skyland's campus that most active participants want to feel better, and I believe that this is a product of the comfortable environment and friendly professionals."

A More Accurate Diagnosis

With the help of his treatment team, Nate realized that his struggle extended beyond his intense anxiety, and he gradually unearthed the profound impact of a depression diagnosis.

"At first, I believed my struggle to be vested purely in my most crippling condition: intense anxiety," says Nate. "As my panic disorder symptoms improved, my medication became stable, and I learned some basic anxiety management skills, I had the revelation that my mindset was heavily impacted by depression."

Recognizing the impact of depression helped Nate view some of his challenges in a new light. And over time, he was able to open himself up to new strategies for dealing with them.

Discovering His Voice

Enrolled in the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) program at Skyland, Nate found solace within his core group, where a consistent group of his peers in treatment shared and processed challenges with support from Skyland Trail experts. Narrating his story became a landmark moment.

“My experience at Skyland Trail presented me with a variety of challenging emotions and revelations to process which allowed me to better understand myself and regain control over my life.”

“On top of overcoming my instinct to keep things bottled up, I found that the process of exploring my past and trying to form a narrative gave me insight into moments that had a significant impact on creating negative core beliefs,” says Nate. “I also found that understanding the breadth of my experiences helped me conclude that my life had meaning beyond my work performance and academic performance.”

A Toolbox of Skills

Nate also gained a toolbox of skills to help him manage his anxiety and depression. “Through my time at Skyland, I learned skills that helped me manage my tolerance for anxious symptoms and that helped me manage negative thoughts that played into the more challenging parts of both diagnoses,” he says.

A new understanding of mindfulness and self-care added tools to Nate’s new toolbox.

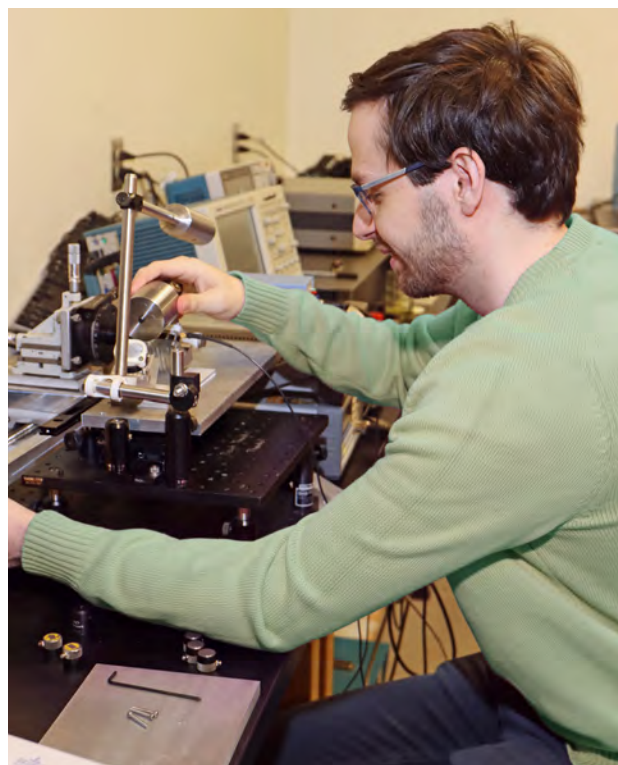
“Skyland’s holistic approach gave me a head start on good habits of things I can do every day to help improve the baseline of how I feel,” says Nate. “Mindfulness is thrown out as a buzzword so often that I never really took what being mindful means to heart. I find that emphasizing mindfulness has improved my ability to work and perform my hobbies well.”

“And self-care is a game of balance to me,” continues Nate. “I find that it is helpful to such an extent that I sometimes have to be mindful that I need to put my head down and attend to tasks that I may be procrastinating.”

A Student Mental Health Knowledge Gap

After three months in the day treatment program, Nate returned to Georgia Tech. After applying his new skills and perspectives to his own college experience, Nate began to reflect on the experiences of others. He had a heightened awareness of the mental health challenges faced by college-aged individuals and the many barriers to seeking and accessing care.

While Nate recognizes that these challenges are multifaceted, he believes a knowledge gap may contribute to students not seeking care, even when mental health services are available on campus. Many young adults have only seen mental health care portrayed in the media as acute hospital care – which can seem scary – as opposed to voluntary treatment programs like Skyland Trail that can feel more like a college campus.



Nate conducting
research in his lab
at Georgia Tech

"I'm a bit biased, but I believe that the biggest roadblocks are knowledge-based," Nate says. His perspective reveals a need for increased awareness about the spectrum of mental health care options available as well as the importance of recognizing when to seek professional help.

"Knowledge that not every mental health issue can be addressed with grit and distraction is critical," says Nate. "I used to rely on being buried in work to feel well. The stress of coursework was a welcome distraction from the stress my mental health had imposed on me."

Engineering a Solution: Sharing Skyland Trail Expertise with Students

Nate took concrete steps to address that knowledge gap for his peers in the Georgia Tech Clark Scholars Program. Nate developed a proposal to include mental health education led by Skyland Trail in the Clark Scholars Program curriculum. Skyland Trail experts provided group education sessions focused on a range of topics, including identity and insight, grief and loss, self-esteem, and more. These sessions, designed to provide foundational knowledge and encourage open dialogue, fostered an environment where participants felt safe discussing their mental health experiences.

"The feedback we received from students was incredibly positive. Many participants noted a reduction in stigma around mental health conversations, and some even sought out mental health services after the sessions," Nate observes.

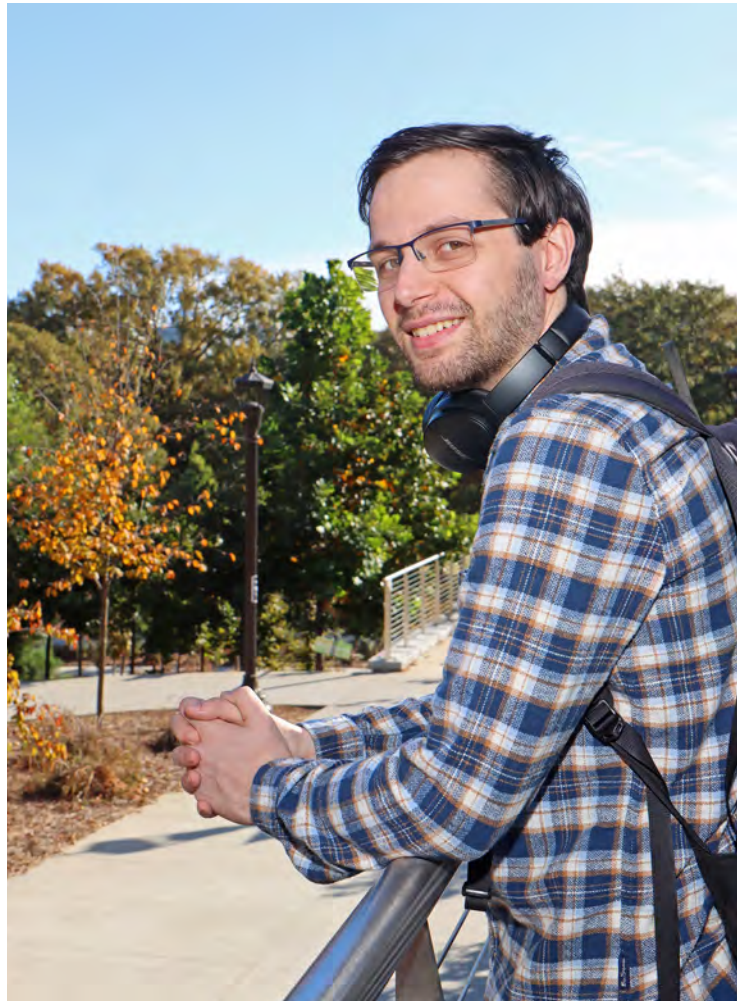
Building on the success of the initial series with Nate and his cohort, the collaboration is continuing with 2023 Clark Scholars.

A Healthy Path Forward

Today, Nate is pursuing a Ph.D. in mechanical engineering. He is conducting research in ultrasonic nondestructive evaluation for the prediction of remaining life for in-service mechanisms that are exposed to extreme loading conditions.

While he continues to employ the skills he learned at Skyland Trail to stay well, he recognizes the ongoing challenges of building community, especially in the world of transient college students. "I still have room for improvement with putting myself in social situations and with meeting new people," says Nate.

When he completes his Ph.D. program, Nate envisions a future working with university students, applying his engineering skills to improve feedback and course evaluation methodologies to promote mental wellness. His story stands as a testament to the transformative power of mental health care, emphasizing the importance of self-discovery, community support, and the pursuit of a meaningful life beyond the confines of stigma.



Advice for Peers

Nate's advice to others grappling with mental health challenges is straightforward: reach out and be screened. He advocates for voicing concerns to professionals who can provide a starting point for the journey towards wellness.

"It never hurts to call and be screened. You owe it to yourself to voice your concerns to a professional who can, at the very least, give you a place to start. Getting off the starting block is what's most important." ■

"Knowledge that not every mental health issue can be addressed with grit and distraction is critical."

Skyland Trail Adolescent Program :

A Family Story of Hope

Jessica and daughter, Atlas, graduate of Skyland Trail Adolescent Program

ATLAS - Adolescent Program graduate

MY ANXIETY HAS KIND OF ALWAYS BEEN THERE. And then things started to ramp up around early high school. I had lost people close to me, and I had several traumatic experiences. I faced a lot of bullying, and, even with unconditional love from my family, I felt an overall lack of support.

My baseline anxiety was no longer just 7 out of 10; it was an 11. I started developing other issues like depression, outbursts of anger, and urges to self-harm. Despite therapy and treatment, I really struggled to find any healthy way of coping and had resigned myself to suffering.

After several stays in acute facilities, I was at a point of crisis. And so when my mom found Skyland Trail, I was ready and willing.

Unlike the acute facilities, which had felt traumatizing to me, Skyland Trail was a supportive environment, which really made all the difference. At first I had some struggles, especially with my social anxiety. But when my anxiety intensified and felt impossible to cope with, I had the support I needed from my treatment team to learn how to help myself.

Later in treatment, I was able to manage a life crisis on my own. It was everything! I felt immense pride in myself. And then I started having hope that, "Hey, I can do this, I've got this. I know the skills and I can actually use them. And maybe I have a shot at life."



"Skyland Trail undoubtedly changed my life. It may not have saved my life that second, but it saved my life long-term." -Atlas

Since I completed treatment, everything's changed, really. I think that me coming into my identity has allowed me to support my mental health in many ways. I don't get nearly as angry. I no longer get crippled with fear. I have the ability to notice it right when it's starting and process it then and there so that it doesn't hurt me later.

Prior to Skyland, I often experienced conflict with my family. I think we were afraid of hurting each other and didn't know how to communicate. And now, without that fear, I have a more consistent – and true – relationship with my family.

I recently graduated high school and started university. It feels so good. There were countless points in my life where I didn't think I was going to make it. And so I fully believe this next chapter of my life is only going to keep getting better. I want to continue my work with different volunteer organizations and my major of political science to hopefully help underserved communities.

Skyland Trail undoubtedly changed my life. It may not have saved my life that second, but it saved my life long-term.

- Atlas

“I really don’t know that – without Skyland – I don’t know that my child would be alive today... and thriving.” –Jessica

JESSICA - Adolescent Program parent

WHEN ATLAS WAS ABOUT 9, we started noticing severe anxiety and panic attacks. Atlas was throwing up every day at school and asking to go home. After an evaluation, she was diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder, and we began seeking treatment. But Atlas continued to struggle. In seventh grade, Atlas told me she was feeling urges to self-harm, and in eighth grade, she had her first suicide attempt.

At 15, Atlas was having outbursts regularly, and the whole family was walking on eggshells. We were all in panic mode, and it was just very chaotic. And watching Atlas suffer and go through these experiences was the most painful experience in my life.

I did a lot of internet research, and I found Skyland Trail. There’s a night and day difference between Skyland and any other facility. I really don’t know that – without Skyland – I don’t know that my child would be alive today...and thriving.

I think my biggest takeaway was that I was part of the problem. As a mom who identifies completely as a mom and wants to be perfect and do everything right, that was really hard for me. I had to change the way I was parenting and communicating with Atlas, because Atlas was different from my other two children. But the growth that I learned from that experience altered our relationship and changed our lives and Atlas’s future.

I want Atlas to be happy. That’s it. That’s my ultimate goal. I hope that, as she transitions to college, Atlas will continue to be self-aware and will continue to use the skills that she’s learned in Skyland to be successful and happy.

I am truly thankful from the bottom of my heart. I feel like Skyland Trail gave me my child back.

– Jessica

The Skyland Trail adolescent program treats teens ages 14 to 17.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Fairies in the Garden

This October, Skyland Trail partnered with Woodlands Garden in Decatur for the 11th annual Fairies in the Garden. Adult and adolescent clients of Skyland Trail and Hillside Atlanta, another nonprofit mental health treatment organization, created “fairy homes” from natural materials. The fairy homes were placed throughout the eight-acre forest for guests to discover.

“This annual event is a great opportunity for clients to showcase their creativity and explore art and nature as tools for staying healthy.”

– Shelley Danser, CTRS,
Adjunctive Therapies Director

Learn More About: Trauma

Research shows that trauma – particularly childhood trauma – increases risk for developing many mental illnesses. Trauma experienced at any age can influence or worsen all mental health disorders, not just PTSD.

Trauma and Mental Health

Diagnostic criteria for trauma-related disorders include not just people who directly experience violence or injury, but also people who witness traumatic events, people with a close relative or family member who experienced trauma, and people who are repeatedly exposed to the details of traumatic events in the course of professional duties.

All Skyland Trail patients are assessed for trauma at admission. Many of Skyland Trail adult and adolescent patients have a history of trauma.

Trauma-Informed Psychiatric Care

The model of care practiced at the Skyland Trail adult and adolescent treatment programs is “trauma-informed.” By helping trauma survivors first address symptoms of depression, anxiety, or borderline personality disorder, trauma-informed psychiatric treatment allows patients to develop insight and adopt healthy coping skills to handle difficult emotions before beginning the challenging work of processing their specific trauma. Often, specialized trauma processing therapy is done with an outpatient therapist after residential treatment.

Addressing the Impact of Trauma

However, after developing appropriate coping skills and insight, some Skyland Trail patients engage in additional layers of specialized programming to begin addressing the impact of their trauma while in treatment at Skyland Trail.

Adult Programs: Cognitive Processing Therapy

In 2022, Skyland Trail introduced Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT) for adult patients with a co-occurring PTSD diagnosis who have “stuck points” following a traumatic event and are struggling to make progress in treatment due to related symptoms.



EDUCATION IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR MISSION

Skyland Trail offers mental health education for professionals, families, and the community. Check out videos of a few of the educational events we hosted in 2023.

Adult patients assigned to CPT groups participate in two CPT groups weekly in addition to their ongoing individual and group work on CBT or DBT skills. Patients are not required to describe their trauma explicitly but are instead asked to explore the ways their traumatic experiences have impacted their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions and have created barriers to pursuing the life they want to live. Working with our CPT-trained clinicians, patients learn skills to challenge unhealthy patterns and build new skills to help them move forward.

Adolescent Programs: Prolonged Exposure Therapy

Teens with a history of trauma admitting to our adolescent residential treatment program may be referred by our psychiatrist to participate in individual prolonged exposure therapy (PE) as part of their treatment.

Prolonged exposure therapy may be particularly helpful for clients who have trauma-related symptoms that prevent them from fully engaging in foundational CBT or DBT therapeutic work.

The goal of PE is to reduce the power of the memory of the traumatic event over time. With less potency, the memory becomes less disruptive, and the patient is better able to engage more fully in treatment to address other psychiatric symptoms and improve coping and interpersonal skills.

In 2023, the Skyland Trail adolescent clinical team received training in prolonged exposure therapy through the Prolonged Exposure Consultant Training Program at Emory University School of Medicine. Skyland Trail currently has three certified PE therapists and one certified PE consultant in house, with three additional therapists working toward certification in PE. ■



Intersection of Mental Health & Addiction

As part of Mental Health Month in May, Skyland Trail hosted the 12th annual Dorothy C. Fuqua Lecture Series. The lecture, which was hosted in partnership with the Addiction Alliance of Georgia, explored the intersection of addiction and mental health disorders through personal stories and an expert panel discussion. The event featured a conversation with David and Nic Sheff, the father and son whose story inspired the movie, "Beautiful Boy."



The Future of Psychedelics: Problems and Promises

Learn more about how psychedelics may be used in the treatment of mental health disorders. The webinar was presented by Skyland Trail National Advisory Board Chair, Charles Nemeroff, MD, PhD, Dell Medical School, The University of Texas at Austin.



Teen Social Media

Presented by family therapists from our adolescent treatment team, this webinar provides strategies to help families and treatment providers reduce the negative impact of social media and technology use on teens.



Older Adults and Life Transitions

Presented by multidisciplinary experts from our adult treatment team, learn how Skyland Trail tailors treatment to meet the needs of older adults who may be struggling with symptoms related to life transitions like changes in employment, empty nesting, or loss of loved ones or important relationships.

Visit skylandtrail.org/workshops to see upcoming professional education opportunities.

A Grateful Family Story :

Handling the Rain

As a Grateful Family member, Cynthia gives back to Skyland Trail by participating in events like the Skyland Trail 5K Run/Walk and Benefits of Laughter. Cynthia shares her family story here.

How would you describe your daughter before treatment?

As a young child through middle school, I described her as quietly confident, one who stood very firmly in her own beliefs and values, and one who was not interested in following the crowd. She had – and still has – a wonderful sense of humor that runs the spectrum from goofy to gritty and back again. She was a talented student and did well in school; she was involved in numerous activities and interests.

High school brought panic attacks, debilitating anxiety, and bouts of depression. I immediately went to work looking for a therapist to help her. After several failed matches with therapists, we found one she agreed to work with, but symptoms persisted. We then sought help from a psychiatrist and tried various medications combined with her therapy program, again, with disappointingly little improvement.

Once she went away to college, her mental health continued to deteriorate. She regularly missed classes and rarely left her dorm room. Despite connecting with Student Services and on-campus counseling, nothing helped.

I am a problem solver at work, and I'm pretty resourceful. Yet, no matter what I threw at it, this problem beat me. I had been diagnosed with depression in my 30s. Still, my experience was very different from what I saw my daughter living through – I was able to get relief through a combination of therapy and

medication – but nothing seemed to work for her. The slightest challenge or hiccup in her day would send her to bed or into a panic. On my best days, I feared that she would be unable to live independently and face the inherent challenges of life. My worst days were plagued with the horrible fear that she would succumb to hopelessness and leave us forever.

How did Skyland Trail compare to other treatment providers?

My daughter finished her Skyland Trail program about a year ago. There is no comparison between past experiences and her care at Skyland Trail. Skyland's evidence-based programming worked for my daughter when nothing else did. It was tough work for her, but she wanted it and put her whole heart into it. She thrived at Skyland because she was understood there. The professional team understood what she needed, and empathetic peers surrounded her. Skyland Trail saved her life.

How would you describe your daughter today?

The more she learned about herself and how her brain works at Skyland Trail, the more she assumed responsibility for her well-being and made decisions based on that newfound knowledge and self-awareness.

Today, she wakes up early to start her day, which includes exercise, work, and time with healthy friends. She lives independently with other young women and maintains friendships from Skyland Trail. She has the necessary tools to manage depressed or anxious feelings when they arise.

She is setting and working towards goals for her future, but the most significant



Cynthia B.

change I see is that she is present and happy. While every day is not sunny, I am confident in her ability to handle the rain. And, more importantly, so is she. I could not be more proud.

How did treatment improve your family dynamics?

I am a recovering fixer. I've learned to step aside and give my brave and beautiful daughter space to be responsible for her emotional and mental well-being. The best I can do at this phase of her life is take care of myself and be ready with my support if she asks for it. Our time together is more relaxed; I no longer feel like an emotional tidal wave is preparing to crash on us each time we visit. We continue working on improved communication, including setting and maintaining healthy boundaries while loving and respecting one another. Our family dynamics will continue to evolve as we as individuals do. The goal is to keep the doors and dialogue open.

What are your hopes for her future?

It's pretty simple. I hope her future is full of whatever people, places, and things create her version of a meaningful, contented life.

Leading by Example: Tom Johnson

Tom Johnson was recognized by the Association of Fundraising Professionals as the 2023 Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year. Skyland Trail joins the Association in celebrating Tom's contributions to the community. Tom Johnson, and his wife, Edwina, have provided incredible support and leadership to Skyland Trail through decades of volunteer service.

Dorothy Fuqua, a Skyland Trail founding leader, introduced Tom to Skyland Trail in 2002 when he, along with J.B. Fuqua, agreed to be honorary co-chairs of Benefits of Laughter.

In 2011, Tom and Edwina joined Rex and Duvall Fuqua to provide support to create the Dorothy C. Fuqua Lecture Series. Skyland Trail has hosted 12 lectures as part of the series, each exploring a different aspect of mental health.

In 2018, Tom served with Rex Fuqua and Rand Glenn Hagen as one of three tri-chairs for the capital campaign that raised more than \$22 million to construct the J. Rex Fuqua Campus and launch our adolescent treatment program.



Tom continues to serve on the Skyland Trail Adolescent Advisory Council, and he and Edwina are an important fixture of our annual fundraising event, Benefits of Laughter.

Tom Johnson and Beth Finnerty

"Tom is a charismatic, passionate fundraiser and advocate who leads by example. He has truly been a change-maker in our city in helping to reduce the stigma of mental illness and addiction and increase access to care."

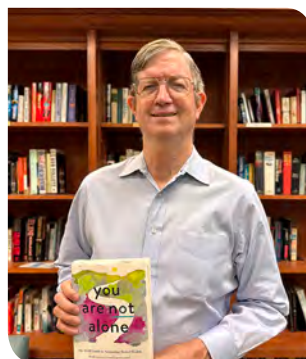
– Beth Finnerty

Volunteer Spotlight: Thom S

"I enjoy volunteering for Skyland Trail's library because it gives me an opportunity to continue to give back after Skyland Trail has been a vital help in my recovery both when I was a client and now ongoing through the Alumni program."

I appreciate the chance to practice skills I learned from a library science graduate program, especially with cataloging the collection and improving the catalog. My favorite activity as librarian is presenting a 'Book of the Month' at the weekly client and staff Community Meeting. And I always enjoy learning more and more about mental health."

Thom has been volunteering in the Pedro Garcia Library at Skyland Trail since 2010.



Thom S.

Meeting the Needs of Future Generations

Individuals who support Skyland Trail through a planned giving commitment become members of The Cypress Society. These legacy gifts ensure that Skyland Trail continues to meet the needs of future generations through state-of-the-art facilities and leading-edge treatment programs.



Contact: Katie Dozier,
kdozier@skylandtrail.org, 678-500-3889

"Our experience with Skyland Trail has made us acutely aware of how broad the need is for quality mental health care. Mental health is an important issue now, and we believe it will only become more critical in the future. Skyland Trail is already a leader in both the treatment of mental illnesses and the education and awareness of mental health issues. While annual support is important, we believe legacy gifts will help ensure Skyland's preeminence."

Although mental health awareness is certainly better than it was a decade ago, mental illness still has a stigma unlike other illnesses. Our hope is that quality organizations like Skyland Trail will continue to make inroads and facilitate conversations so that mental illness is viewed in the same light as diseases such as cancer and diabetes."

– Mary and Tom Watson



Mary and Tom Watson

How you can help: Events

Each year, Skyland Trail hosts several unique fundraising events. Each event offers a fun and distinct experience and an opportunity to support recovery for individuals with mental illness. We are honored by your participation and especially grateful to our volunteers and sponsors.

Associates Spring Luncheon 2023

The 2023 Associates Spring Luncheon was held at the Piedmont Driving Club on March 17. More than 350 guests attended the 16th annual Associates Spring Luncheon, which raised more than \$117,000. Keynote speaker Doreen Dodgen-Magee, Psy.D., described the impact of social media on children and teens and offered tips for parents. Quinten, a Skyland Trail adult program graduate, also shared his story of treatment and recovery.

Scottie Schoen,
2023 Associates President
Ruth Wellborn,
2023 Associates Vice President



IMAGES: 1 Beth Finnerty, Quentin Stanley, Scottie Schoen; 2 Allison Peavy, Cathy Shaifer, Jennifer Hall, Jessica Brally, Mebane Pruitt; 3 Carrie Faletti, Natalie Blalock, Jennifer Pino; 4 Christina McDonald, Mnuoma Iromuaneya, Maria Bariagan-Santana, Shelly Nweke (back row), Sonali Govindaluri, Camille Hanner (back row), Vanessa Stephens, Mikala Bush, Alisha Spiers; 5 Beth Park, Kim Marks, Laura Pearce; 6 Dr. Doreen Dodgen-Magee **Photos:** Kim Link

Skyland Trailblazers Event Series 2023

Skyland Trailblazers is a networking group for younger community leaders. Trailblazers events in 2023 raised more than \$25,000. Trailblazers 2023 events included a Self-Care Sunday for caregivers and kids at The Peach Pit, a Spring social at Intown Golf Club, and a Trailblazers night at an Atlanta Braves game.

Chair: Julia Gray Kimball

Vice-Chair: Christie Farmer



IMAGES: 1 The Keen Family at the Skyland Trailblazers night at the Atlanta Braves; 2 Bo & Julia Gray Kimball, Christie & Hank Farmer

Third-Party Events

Individuals and organizations can host events or activities to raise funds for mental health treatment at Skyland Trail. From fun runs, to bake sales, to golf tournaments, we're grateful to receive proceeds from third-party events.

This fall we were thrilled to receive \$69,000 from the Living Out Loud Celebrity Golf Tournament hosted by SagerStrong Foundation.

And our adolescent program received more than \$80,000 through the Atlanta Charity Clays event thanks to 2023 event chairs, Suzanne Sullivan and Duncan Gibbs.



IMAGES: 1 Ben Hunter, MD, FAPA, Skyland Trail Interim Chief Medical Officer at Skyland Trail, Terri Grunduski, Executive Director of SagerStrong Foundation; Stacy Sager, President & CEO of SagerStrong Foundation, Beth Finnerty, Skyland Trail President & CEO; Sharmila Prabhu, Skyland Trail Board of Directors; 2 2023 Atlanta Charity Clays chairs Suzanne Sullivan and Duncan Gibbs

Benefits of Laughter 2023

On October 19, Skyland Trail hosted the 26th annual Benefits of Laughter, which raised over \$1.3 million, surpassing the previous record of \$1.28 million raised through the event in 2022. Over 600 guests at The St. Regis Atlanta learned about the Skyland Trail adult dual diagnosis treatment program through a video highlighting the personal story of Brian R., a recent adult graduate. Comedian Pat McGann provided entertainment and laughs.



Event Chairs:
Nan Easterlin & Anne Marino

Patron Chairs:
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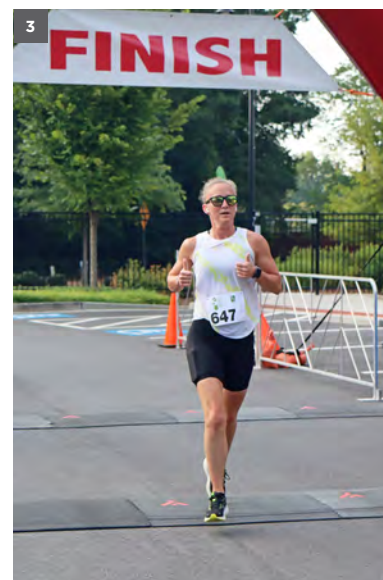
Corporate Chair:
Mike Marino

IMAGES: 1 Nan Easterlin, Anne Marino, Mark Tipton, Beth Finnerty; 2 Berny & Anne Gray; 3 Larry & Lillian Connolly; 4 Pat McGann; 5 Ned & Andrea Montag, Marty Flanagan; 6 Patty Reid, Betsy Akers, Sam & Vivian DuBose; 7 David Scott, Qaadirah Abdur-Rahim, Chanel Frazier, Shayan Hussain, Julie Hussain, Shaina Horrell, Angie Damachi; 8 Maurice & Tricia Rosenbaum; 9 Mark West, Tim Rollins, Nevin Kreisler; 10 Jim Howard, Duvall & Rex Fuqua **Photos:** Dan Lax and Jack Parada



Skyland Trail 5K Run/Walk 2023

The second annual Skyland Trail 5K Run/Walk was held on September 9. Nearly 400 individuals gathered at the J. Rex Fuqua Campus for adolescents to show their support for mental health treatment, including former clients and families, students, and corporate teams. The event raised more than \$56,000 for Skyland Trail.





IMAGES: 1 Skyland Trail 5K Run/Walk participants; 2 Chamblee Charter High School student, Nancy Gup, Sarah Combs; 3 Sarah Roberson; 4 Kevin Tran, Nathaniel Tran, Kristen Leynes; 5 Skyland Trail 5K Participants; 6 Julie Dudkowsky, Piper Coffey, Ty & Julie Smith, Cynthia Odom; 7 Jackie Martin, Raquel Person, Kathleen Rast **Photos:** Kim Link

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“Skyland Trail is fortunate to have so many dedicated and talented volunteer leaders across our boards and advisory boards. They help us build meaningful connections with the communities we serve. And they help us raise awareness and support for our mission.” –Mark Tipton, Board Chair

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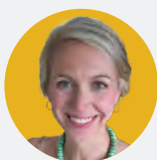
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❖ New members in 2023



● **New Board members:** David Moody, Fred Sturgis ● **New Advisory Board members:** Jared Abramson, Todd Croom, Joe Hewes, Julia Hill, Brian Keen, Nancy Patterson.

Thanks to our corporate event sponsors!

Support of Skyland Trail through event sponsorship helps our clients grow, recover, and reclaim their lives. We are pleased to recognize corporate sponsors of our 2023 events including Benefits of Laughter, the Associates Spring Luncheon, and the Skyland Trail 5K Run/Walk. Thanks also to the many individual donors, volunteers, and participants who contributed to our mission through 2023 events.

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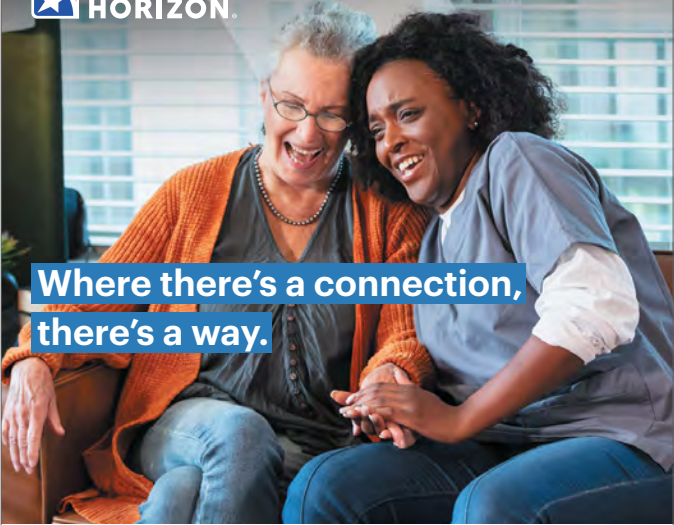
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