



Seeds of Justice

Sowing the Seeds of Justice throughout Georgia

Fall/Winter 2007

From Our Board Chairman

Welcome to our first issue of *Seeds of Justice*. Georgia Appleseed has been hard at work for almost two years now under the direction of former Fulton County Juvenile Court Associate Judge Sharon Hill, our Executive Director. Sharon is supported by a committed and diverse board of directors including lawyers, educators, bankers, public servants and business leaders from all over Georgia. Thousands of pro bono hours have already been contributed by legal and other professionals in our community to a wide variety of Georgia Appleseed projects dedicated to sowing seeds of justice. Law firms, foundations and other funders have made and continue to make a huge positive difference in Georgia Appleseed's success.



A. Stephens (Steve) Clay, Esq.

As you read through *Seeds of Justice*, you will learn about projects and programs that reflect Georgia Appleseed's determination to create or facilitate systemic and positive change in addressing serious problems in our State. Our goal is to identify problems that no one else effectively can address and to assemble teams from among Georgia Appleseed's supporters and from other public interest organizations that can address the causes of the problems, not merely the symptoms.

I believe you will find universal enthusiasm not only for Georgia Appleseed's direction and achievements, but also for the personal and professional satisfaction derived by the lawyers and staff participating in the projects.

A visit to www.GaAppleseed.org will illustrate the depth of our focus. We hope everything you learn about Georgia Appleseed will inspire you to support our work and share generously in planting seeds of justice.

Steve

A. Stephens Clay

Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice is an independent affiliate of the national Appleseed network of nonpartisan, nonprofit, public interest law centers.

Georgia Appleseed leverages the pro bono work of lawyers and other professionals to produce systemic solutions to difficult social justice problems.

Mission of Georgia Appleseed

To listen to the unheard voices of the poor, the children, the marginalized; to uncover and end the injustices that we would not endure ourselves; to win the battles for our constituency in the courts of public opinion or in the halls of justice that no one else is willing or able to fight.

In This Issue:

- JUSTGeorgia Project
- Parent Involvement Under *No Child Left Behind*
- Financial Access for Latino Immigrants
- Developmental Disabilities Handbooks
- Meet our Board
- Supporting Georgia Appleseed
- ...and more

JUSTGeorgia Launch Event Honor for Georgia Appleseed

Georgia Appleseed is the recipient of the Sapelo Foundation's first Smith W. Bagley Advocacy Grant Award. It shares this honor with its JUSTGeorgia founding partners, Voices for Georgia's Children and the Barton Child Law & Policy Clinic of Emory University. The award honors the distinguished work and inspiring leadership of long-time Sapelo Foundation Board Member Smith W. Bagley.



Georgia Appleseed Executive Director Sharon Hill accepting the Smith W. Bagley Award from Nicole Bagley

JUSTGeorgia: Building Justice and Safety for Children

The Juvenile Code in Georgia impacts virtually every facet of a child's life from birth until age 18.

Yet, in 2005, lawmakers considered it so out of date that the Georgia General Assembly passed a resolution calling for its complete overhaul.

Today, Georgia Appleseed is working to make a revised Juvenile Code a reality through its leadership role in JUSTGeorgia, a state-wide coalition:

- Advocating for the passage of a new Juvenile Code that reflects the scientific findings and best practices in the child development field; and
- Working to identify and change policies in underlying social service systems to better serve Georgia's children, prevent detention and promote safer communities.

JUSTGeorgia was conceived and funded by the Sapelo Foundation. Its founding partners are Georgia Appleseed, Voices for Georgia's Children, and the Barton Child Law and Policy Clinic of Emory University School of Law.

A model juvenile code re-write reflecting best practices is underway by the Young Lawyers Division of the Georgia State Bar. Input gathered from around the state by Georgia Appleseed will be used to transform the model code into legislation to be introduced during the 2009 Legislative session.



Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough team accepting apples of appreciation as the firm with the most completed interviews to date



Sapelo Foundation Trustee Bettianne Hart with Dr. Luther Smith, President of the Interfaith Children's Movement of Metro Atlanta, a JUSTGeorgia Coalition member, and Helen Butler, Executive Director of the Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda (L-R)

Georgia Appleseed JUSTGeorgia Volunteer Activity (through September 30, 2007)

- Total number of Georgia Appleseed volunteers: 268 lawyers and other professionals
- Number of Pro Bono hours: more than 3,800 hours
- Number of stakeholder interviews conducted: 210 individuals

JUSTGeorgia: Georgia Appleseed's Role

- **Report:** Georgia Appleseed is responsible for a comprehensive report to accompany the proposed legislation, summarizing strengths and weaknesses of the current Code and making practical and realistic recommendations to improve outcomes for youth.
- **Interviews:** The report will be based on hundreds of face-to-face interviews with stakeholders across Georgia, such as juvenile court judges, child advocates, public defenders, prosecutors, educators, child welfare experts, parents, children, and community members.
- **Pro Bono:** Over 260 legal professionals signed on as volunteers under Georgia Appleseed to conduct these stakeholder interviews in all ten of Georgia's judicial districts.
- **Town Hall Meetings:** Face-to-face input was gathered from community members who attended the ten public Town Hall meetings, one in each judicial district, hosted by Georgia Appleseed and facilitated by UGA's Fanning Institute.
- **Ongoing Survey:** Additional comments on the juvenile justice system are being gathered from the public via an online, confidential survey at www.fanning.uga.edu/surveys/just/content

This project is made possible through the generous funding of the Sapelo Foundation, the Georgia Bar Foundation, and The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, and is sponsored in part by a grant from the Knight Fund at the Community Foundation of the Chattahoochee Valley and the Knight Fund for Milledgeville of the Community Foundation of Central Georgia.

Harvesting Resources

Georgia Appleseed recruited **thirteen lead law firms** to conduct the stakeholder interviews and to compile a report of findings from each of Georgia's judicial districts and from statewide public policy makers.

Alston & Bird	Arnall Golden & Gregory
DLA Piper	Hunton & Williams
Jones Day	Kilpatrick Stockton
King & Spalding	McKenna Long & Aldridge
Morris Manning & Martin	Smith Gambrell & Russell
Sutherland Asbill & Brennan	Troutman Sanders
Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough	

"For an educator, this is not a juvenile justice bill. It is an education bill, because ... a strong and comprehensive juvenile justice law will assist teachers and schools with many of the non-academic issues that they currently deal with... we know that without changing the conditions by which our children come to school, we simply cannot continue to make the gains we want to make in student achievement."

– Brad Bryant, Georgia State Board of Education Member and JUSTGeorgia Volunteer

For the JUSTGeorgia project, log on to www.justga.org

• Join the Coalition

• Receive updates

• Arrange for a speaker

• Become a volunteer

Parent Involvement Initiative

The parent involvement provisions of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act were intended to help parents be informed partners in their children's success and empowered stakeholders on behalf of public schools. But that has not been the case. According to the national Appleseed landmark report, "It Takes a Parent: Transforming Education in the Wake of the No Child Left Behind Act," information intended to assist parents to become better "consumers" of public education is often confusing and underutilized.

- Georgia Appleseed's **Parent Involvement Initiative** is committed to working with educators, parents, policy makers and community leadership to make parent involvement an effective component in improving student achievement in Georgia.
- Strategies include parent involvement workshops, professional development and enhanced public awareness.

Promoting Parent Involvement: Workshops Underway

To help parents gain the skills and knowledge necessary to become effective partners with schools, Georgia Appleseed is offering workshops throughout Georgia for parents and for professionals working with parents, including leading educational organizations.

The workshops have two goals:

1. To increase understanding of the data parents receive under No Child Left Behind (NCLB);
2. To increase understanding of parents' rights and responsibilities under NCLB, such as access to Supplemental Educational Services, which provide free tutoring funded by NCLB

One such workshop took place recently in LaGrange, Georgia, co-sponsored by the United Way of West Georgia and Georgia Appleseed.

Parent involvement workshops are made possible through generous funding from Georgia Power Foundation ■ Bank of America Foundation ■ Wachovia Foundation

Experience the Parent Involvement Forum:

- **View** the web cast at www.GaAppleseed.org/parents
- **Read** the "Forum Notes" synopsis at www.GaAppleseed.org/parents

Knowledge Forum on "Parent Involvement Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)"

Earlier this fall, with national attention focused on Congressional reauthorization of the NCLB Act, **Georgia Appleseed** presented a timely forum entitled "Parent Involvement Under NCLB" featuring leading national and state authorities on parent involvement. The forum was taped at Georgia Public Broadcasting in Atlanta before an audience of educators, policy makers, public officials and concerned parents.

Two distinguished panels examined parents' critical role in student achievement and school success, and discussed ongoing and future efforts to maximize parent participation effectively under NCLB. Ed Darden, National Education Policy Director of national Appleseed, served as Moderator.



"Federal Reauthorization of NCLB and Focus on Parent Involvement" panelists Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), an original author of NCLB; Dr. Joyce Epstein, Johns Hopkins University parent involvement expert; and Former Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, Co-Chair of the Aspen Institute Commission on NCLB (L-R)



Brad Bryant, GA Board of Education, confers with "Parent Involvement Implementation in Georgia" panelists Laura Dobbs, Immediate Past President of Georgia PTA, and Dr. Diane Bradford, Deputy Superintendent, GA Dept of Education (L-R)

Introducing the Georgia Appleseed Education Advisory Council

Georgia Appleseed's volunteer Education Advisory Council meets monthly to offer expert guidance on education issues.

Chair:

Cathy Henson, *Faculty, Georgia State University College of Law; Former Chair, Georgia State Board of Education; Former President, Georgia PTA; Founder, Georgia School Council Institute*

Members:

Portia Shields, *President Emerita, Albany State University and Vice-Chair, Georgia Appleseed Board of Directors*

Rob Rhodes, *Holland & Knight LLP*

Laura Dobbs, *Board Member and Immediate Past President Georgia PTA; Board Member National PTA*

Ron Colarusso, *Dean, College of Education, Georgia State University (retired)*

Tom Roman, *Communities in Schools*

Terence Dicks, *Georgia Clients Council*

Kevin Diaz, *GSU student; graduate of Communities in Schools' Performance Learning Center*

Debbie Reeves, *Principal, Haynes Bridge Middle School, Fulton County School System*

Sharon Hill, *Executive Director, Georgia Appleseed*

Staff: Theresa Brower, *Georgia Appleseed Parent Involvement Project Manager*

Financial Access for Latino Immigrants

Public Safety

Stopping at the bank is a familiar activity for most. Within the Hispanic community, however, many don't use banks at all. This is often due to distrust of banking institutions in their country of origin or lack of familiarity with the U.S. banking system, and can lead to harsh and tragic consequences. In September, 2005, in Tift County, Georgia, six Hispanic men were murdered in home invasion robberies targeted at the cash known to be in the household.

Economic Security

Lack of access to mainstream financial systems often leaves immigrants susceptible to predatory and other high-cost financial services, such as fees at check-cashing stores. Unbanked immigrants are restricted in their ability to save, access credit, and build assets to buy a home, start a business, or go to school.

Financial Literacy = Public Safety + Economic Security

Georgia Appleseed is working collaboratively on several fronts to bring Latino immigrants into America's mainstream financial system to promote public safety and economic security.

- Georgia Appleseed collaborated with The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension and the Archway Partnership to create a new Family and Consumer Science Extension Agent position to provide bilingual financial education for Tift and Colquitt Counties.

- Drawing upon Appleseed's "Banking Immigrant Communities: A Toolkit for Bankers and Credit Unions", Georgia Appleseed held an education seminar in Tift County attended by immigrant groups, banking institutions, and local law enforcement.
- Georgia Appleseed is disseminating a series of **Spanish and English language financial literacy brochures** with assistance from community and public agencies, immigrant organizations, and faith groups. United Americas Bank, the first wholly owned Hispanic bank in Georgia, and UGA's College of Family and Consumer Sciences underwrote the printing of 100,000 brochures.

Highlighted materials are available to download at www.GaAppleseed.org/downloads

Generous support for this initiative was received from the Synovus Foundation, United Americas Bank, the University of Georgia, and the National Appleseed Collaborative Grant funded by Annie E. Casey, the Ford Foundation and Levi Strauss.

Immigrant Policy

- Thanks to the Carnegie Corporation, Georgia Appleseed has greater capacity to expand its work and staff on immigrant policy issues, especially around financial literacy, public education and community policing. In addition, Carnegie is funding a collaborative Appleseed communications campaign, currently under design, to promote positive dialogue to welcome immigrants into the fabric of civic life in Georgia.

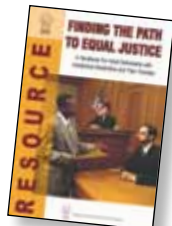
Justice for People with Developmental Disabilities Handbooks

In September, Georgia Appleseed released two landmark handbooks to aid legal representation for criminal defendants in Georgia who have intellectual disabilities.

Opening the Door: Justice for Adult Defendants with Mental Retardation (A Handbook for Attorneys Practicing in Georgia) is a practical guide for practitioners.

Finding the Path to Equal Justice; A Handbook for Adult Defendants with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families is an educational tool for defendants and their families.

Download the Handbooks at www.GaAppleseed.org/downloads



Generous support for this project was received from The Georgia Committee on Access and Fairness in the Courts, Administrative Office of the Courts; the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities; and the State ADA Coordinator's Office of the Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission.

Justice for People with Mental Illness in Georgia: A Report on Conversations with Leaders in the Field

Georgia Appleseed's first solo report, *Justice for People with Mental Illness in Georgia*, was prepared with the pro bono assistance of **King & Spalding** and released on June 26, 2007. Its impact was immediate. The lead pro bono attorney received the following message on July 2, 2007 from a parent of an adult child with mental illness:

"I am a parent of an adult child that has bipolar disorder and borderline personality disorder. For years my wife and I have voiced our concern with the lack of mental health care in Georgia and the rest of our country. We haven't given up, and we won't because of efforts like yours and your fellow attorneys at King and Spalding. I read through the report [Justice For People With Mental Illness] and applaud the findings. They are succinct and simply make a lot of sense. I will pass it along to members of NAMI [National Alliance on Mental Illness] . . . for them to refer to as they speak to influential leaders in our community."

To download the Report, log on to www.GaAppleseed.org/mentalillness

Serving for Justice: Sharon Hill, GA Appleseed Executive Director, serves on the Georgia Supreme Court's *Chief Justice-Led Task Force to Promote Criminal Justice/Mental Health Collaboration* and co-chairs the Task Force's Resources/Training Work Group.



APPLE BITS

We appreciate our funders who support the diverse work of Georgia Appleseed

FOUNDATIONS

Bank of America Foundation
(Parent Involvement
Workshops)
Carnegie Corporation
(Immigrant Policy)
Community Foundation for
Greater Atlanta (JUSTGeorgia)
Georgia Bar Foundation
(JUSTGeorgia)
Georgia Power Foundation
(Parent Involvement
Workshops)

Kellogg (Parent Involvement)
Knight Foundation
(JUSTGeorgia)
Mott Fund
(Parent Involvement)
Sapelo Foundation
(JUSTGeorgia)
Synovus Foundation
(Financial Access)
Wachovia Foundation
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United Americas Bank
(Financial Access)

UNIVERSITY

UGA (Financial Access)



Sharon Hill with U.S. Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), panelist at Georgia Appleseed's "Parent Involvement Under NCLB" Knowledge Forum



At the JUSTGeorgia launch event, Georgia Appleseed Board Chair Steve Clay and Board Member Cathy Manning greet Melissa Dorris, Deputy Director of Georgia's Office of Child Advocate (R-L)

Growing Georgia Appleseed

We believe these pages speak for themselves on Georgia Appleseed's impact across Georgia in our short two-year existence.

Please support Georgia Appleseed and nurture our ability to sow seeds of justice throughout Georgia.

- Return the enclosed envelope with your check today
- Log on to www.GaAppleseed.org and click "Donate Now"
- Prefer to donate stock? Contact us at 404.685.6750
- Become a Sponsoring or Supporting Law Firm (info@GaAppleseed.org)

Thank you for your generous support.

Georgia Appleseed

- Research ■ Disseminate ■ Effect change

Georgia Appleseed @ the Podium around Georgia

June 4: Sharon Hill addressed 1100 bankers from around the country as a featured speaker at the "Serving Ethnic Markets" Plenary Session at the 21st Annual American Bankers Association Regulatory Compliance Conference held in **Atlanta**.

October 4: Speaking to the **Rome** Rotary Club, the largest in the state, Sharon Hill explained to more than 200 community leaders about Georgia Appleseed and the JUSTGeorgia project. Thanks to Georgia Appleseed Board Member Norman Fletcher for arranging this opportunity.

November 6: A former juvenile court associate judge, Sharon Hill spoke on the topics of juvenile justice and the JUSTGeorgia project to the 150 attendees of a UGA campus-wide symposium in **Athens**, entitled *The Prison Pipeline: The Criminalization of America's Children*.



(L-R) Laura Dobbs, Sandy Wilkins, Tom Upchurch and Georgia Appleseed Board Members Former Governor Roy Barnes and Dr. Portia Shields gather at the "Parent Involvement Under NCLB" Knowledge Forum

Meet our Georgia Appleseed Board of Directors

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Kilpatrick Stockton LLP
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Inaugural Issue!**

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