

## HISTORY OF AIDMORE

- November 1, 1936** A representative was appointed from the Georgia Elks Association to serve on a statewide committee to formulate plans to enable Georgia to secure legislation and an appropriation to participate in Federal matching funds. These funds were to be made available to states to finance medical treatment programs for indigent handicapped children. This committee became the Georgia League for crippled children.
- October 17, 1937** The Executive Committee of the Georgia Elks Association meeting in Decatur passed a resolution urging all Elk Lodges throughout the state to aid in arousing interest in civic and service clubs in programs for the handicapped. Columbus Elks Lodge was the first to act favorably on this resolution. The resolution also urged that each Elk make a voluntary contribution of fifty cents a year to finance work with the physically handicapped.
- August 1, 1937** A survey of crippled children and their needs in the state of Georgia was completed by the Works Progress Administration. The survey reported that at the time there were known to be 7,557 children with serious handicapping conditions in the state. Only one-half of these children who lived in cities were receiving needed treatment. One quarter of the children living in rural areas were being treated. One out of five of these children were unable to read and write.
- November 14, 1937** A meeting was held in Atlanta of all service agencies interested in crippled children. The old Georgia League for Crippled Children was reorganized and Dr. Theodore Toepel was elected President. At this meeting the League affiliated with the International Society for Crippled Children, which was later to become the National Society for Crippled Children and Adults.
- November 22, 1937** The General Assembly of the State of Georgia met and passed enabling legislation and an appropriation of \$60,000 making it possible for Georgia to take advantage of available federal funds and to establish a treatment program for indigent handicapped children. After establishment, this program was placed under the direction of the Child Welfare Division of the State Department of Public Welfare.
- February 4, 1938** Organizations other than the Elks dropped away from the Georgia League for Crippled Children. The group was again reorganized under the name of the Crippled Children's League of Georgia. On this date, corporation papers were granted by the Superior Court. The petitioners for this charter were Dr. Theodore Toepel, Judge John S. McClelland, J. Clayton Burke, and Charles G. Bruce.

- April 2, 1938** The first clinic for crippled children was held in Marietta, Georgia under the sponsorship of the State Department of Welfare.
- May, 1938** The League assumed sponsorship of a convalescent home on Windsor Street, then being operated by Dr. Martin Myers.
- July, 1939** The home was moved to 3784 Peachtree Road, which was leased by the League. The League sponsored a few children there but did not own or control the home.
- March 15, 1941** The League bought the above property and assumed complete control of its management. It was here that the name of Aidmore was born out of a contest held among children in the state to select a suitable name for the new institution.
- September, 1941** A committee was appointed to investigate the purchase of a larger building to house the now successful Aidmore program.
- November 13, 1941** Aidmore was moved to newly purchased property at 918 Peachtree Street where it remained in operation for 13 years.
- June 30, 1942** The first floor of Aidmore was remodeled and offered to the Crippled Children's Division of the Department of Public Welfare for use as an outpatient clinic. The offer was accepted, and in October of the same year, the first clinic was held there. At that time, Aidmore was offering inpatient care to the Crippled Children's Division at the rate of \$2.00 per day.
- 1948** Lee Dry became the administrator of Aidmore, when it was in Decatur. He remained in this position through 1958. He was instrumental in fund raising and the construction of the new hospital which opened in 1954. Mr. Dry also served as secretary/treasurer of the Board of Directors of the Georgia Hospital Association. He once reflected that when he took over, there was not enough money in the bank to make payroll the following Friday. He tirelessly visited Elks Lodges throughout the state to raise money for the children and made the special effort to seek out popular entertainers of the time, who would come by and pay personal visits to the patients. Bob Hope, Doris Day, Duncan Renaldo (The Cisco Kid), and Fess Parker (Davey Crockett, later Daniel Boone) all made numerous trips to see the children at Aidmore.
- February 14, 1951** A charter was granted to Elks Aidmore, Inc. by the Superior Court of Fulton County as successor to the old Crippled Children League of Georgia. The petitioners for this charter were: Judge John S, McClelland, Atlanta Lodge; Robert G. Pruitt, Buckhead Lodge; Edward A. Dutton, Savannah Lodge; Dr. I. H. Etheridge, Atlanta Lodge; John B. McCollum, Columbus Lodge; J. Herbert Rogers, Dalton Lodge; C. Spencer Worthy, Cordele Lodge; and,

Wayne Hinson, Waycross Lodge. All assets of the Crippled Children's League were then transferred to the new corporation.

- November 3, 1951** The Elks Aidmore Auxiliary was organized as a confederation of local Auxiliaries throughout the state. The purpose of this Aidmore Auxiliary as stated in the bylaws adopted on this date was to promote "the general support of the crippled children's program of Georgia Elks through Elks Aidmore Hospital and related services". Mrs. Russell Trimble was the first President.
- November 15, 1954** Aidmore purchased 3.7 acres of land from Emory University to build the present hospital. The total cost of this project was \$484,000. The building also included an outpatient clinic for the Crippled Children's Division. The hospital accepted its first patient on this date.
- July 1, 1955** An agreement was signed by Elks Aidmore, Inc. and the Citizens and Southern National Bank of Atlanta creating the Elks Aidmore Trust Fund for Crippled Children. This fund was to provide a permanent depository for memorial gifts, bequests, direct contributions, and other funds with the income being made available for the operation of Elks Aidmore Hospital. On March 14, 1963, a similar trust agreement was made with First National Bank of Atlanta for the same purpose.
- July 1, 1958** Al Koch became the Administrator of the Elks Aidmore Hospital.
- October 1, 1960** Construction started on additions and renovations to the hospital and clinic buildings. This project, which included a tunnel connection to Eggleston Hospital, was completed in January of 1962 and cost a total of \$665,000.
- October 1, 1961** The Board of Trustees approved the providing of inpatient hospital services to adults on a selected basis. This was done to accommodate requests from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- March 1, 1963** The Vocation Evaluation Unit was opened as an outpatient service for handicapped adults. The purpose of this unit was to assess the vocational potential of adults suffering from a wide variety of physical, mental and social handicaps. The first unit was closed on April 1, 1966, when this function was merged with a larger program operated by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the State Department of Education.
- December 3, 1967** Representatives of the Board of Trustees of Elks Aidmore, Inc. signed an affiliation agreement with Emory University. This agreement made Elks Aidmore Hospital an independent affiliate of Woodruff Medical Center of Emory University. This agreement made possible a closer working relationship between Aidmore Hospital, the eight divisions of the University in the area of health services, and seven other hospitals and institutions providing hospital and clinical services.

- December 1, 1969** The Georgia Center for the Multi-Handicapped Deaf-Blind began operation at Aidmore Hospital. This was a cooperative program jointly sponsored by the DeKalb Board of Education and Elks Aidmore Hospital for the evaluation of preschool children suffering from both visual and hearing impairment as a result of maternal rubella. The Georgia Center for the Multi-Handicapped Deaf-Blind is an affiliate of the Southeastern Center for the Deaf-Blind in Talladega, Alabama.
- June 18, 1970** The first meeting was held of the newly reorganized Aidmore Medical Hospital and Dental Staff with 52 physicians and dentists active in the Emory University and/or the Crippled Children's Service programs being granted charter membership.
- November 18, 1974** The Crippled Children's Unit of the Department of Human Resources moved from the Aidmore Clinic Building to larger quarters at 618 Ponce de Leon Avenue. This ended a relationship, which began 32 years ago when Aidmore first provided clinic space for the Crippled Children's Unit in the old building at 918 Peachtree Street.
- October 5, 1975** The Board of Trustees approved an amendment to the bylaws, which for the first time allowed full, voting membership on the Board of Trustees from the Elks Aidmore Auxiliary. The amendment provided for membership for the incumbent president and one representative from each of the four districts.
- March 15, 1976** The Elks Aidmore Hospital program was terminated because of increased operating costs and the building of a competing facility on the same block by Emory University. A planning committee was immediately charged with the responsibility of investigating other programs as an alternative to the hospital.
- November 14, 1976** The Board of Trustees approved the sale of the hospital properties to Emory University, the purchase price to be based on the appraised value. The sale was eventually consummated on July 18, 1977. The purchase price was \$1,268,373.83.
- December 12, 1976** The Board of Trustees approved the lease of office space at 2834 Washington Street, Avondale Estates. While at this address, the program operated under the trade name of Elks Aidmore Children's Fund.
- August 11, 1977** Aidmore received a letter of intent from the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation, owner and operator of the Plantation Manor Children's Home in Conyers, signifying their desire to grant the property to the Home of Elks Aidmore, Inc. Under the terms of the letter, the grant would be made in portions over a period not to exceed ten years.

- November 22, 1977** Aidmore entered into a formal agreement with the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation providing for the operation of the Home and the granting of properties.
- December 1, 1977** Elks Aidmore, Inc. officially took possession and assumed operating control of the Plantation Manor Children's Home under the terms of the agreement with the foundation. The home was renamed Elks Aidmore Children's Home.
- February 21, 1983** The deed for the final distribution of the properties was signed by the Foundation. The official presentation of the deed was made by representatives of the Foundation to the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting on March 13, 1983, and Aidmore became sole owner of the children's home properties.
- August 27, 1984** The first day of school for Aidmore's new on-campus school program. The school was started with eight girls who were not able to adjust to attendance in the Rockdale County public schools. A second teacher was hired, and a second classroom opened subsequently in March of 1985.
- February 1, 1985** Aidmore was licensed by the State of Georgia as a Residential Treatment Facility for young people ages 12 through 18 with significant emotional and behavioral problems.
- March 31, 1985** The Board of Trustees voted to change the name from Elks Aidmore Children's Home to Elks Aidmore Children's Center as being more in keeping with the program's status as a residential treatment facility.
- May 5, 1986** The Aidmore School Program received Provisional Accreditation from the Georgia Accrediting Commission.
- October 5, 1986** The Board of Trustees approved an amendment to the bylaws providing for the appointment of a member of the Elks Aidmore Auxiliary to the Executive Committee of the governing board.
- March 9, 1987** The Aidmore School Program was granted full accreditation status by the Georgia Accrediting Commission. The Aidmore School became the first school accredited under the new special purpose school standards of the commission.
- January 31, 1989** Al Koch retired after 31 years of service to Elks Aidmore; Assistant Director Milt Hayes, employed by Elks Aidmore as Assistant Director for Child Care since 1980, was named Acting Director. Mr. Hayes assumed the Executive Director position on October 1, 1989. He served in that capacity for one year.

- December 1, 1990** Dr. Barbara Wilkie was named Executive Director of Elks Aidmore; she served as Executive Director until January of 1993.
- March 1, 1992** The Board of Trustees approved the closing of the current Residential Treatment Facility and School due to continued operating expenses which exceed the revenues.
- April 5, 1992** After a request to reconsider the closing of the Residential Treatment Facility and School, the Board of Trustees, once again, reaffirmed the original decision to close the project.
- November 1, 1992** After many months of study of four possible projects, the Board of Trustees approved the Custodial Care Program as the new State Project. This project was designed to serve disadvantaged children of Georgia from ages 12 through 16 and will have a maximum capacity of 68 children. Referrals will be primarily from the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services. The program is designed to serve an all-female population, with review planned at a later date to determine the feasibility of serving males.
- March 5, 1993** The development of the new Custodial Care Program was on schedule with children anticipated in campus in July, 1993.
- June, 1993** Abe Wilkinson was hired as the new Executive Director for the program.
- August 3, 1993** After hiring administrative personnel and staff for the Willis Cottage, the first resident for the new program arrived on campus on this date.
- August 30, 1993** After hiring and training staff for the opening of the second cottage, the Wilson Cottage team accepted their first resident on this date.
- December 20, 1993** Hiring and training staff for the third cottage was completed in late November and early December. On this date, Delta Cottage accepted their first resident into care.
- October 6, 1994** Ab Cottage, the fourth and last cottage on the Aidmore campus, opened on this date as a Preparation for Independent Living Cottage. The program was designed to provide a life skills curriculum for residents who would most likely not be returning to their families.
- March, 1995** The foundation was poured for the Elks Aidmore Memorial/Patron Plaza. The plaza is located on the Elks Aidmore campus, directly in front of the Administration Building. The plaza serves as a perpetual remembrance of loved ones, both past and present.

- April, 1995** Aidmore Executive Director and Aidmore Board President were honored by the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children as “Outstanding Administrator of a Child Welfare Agency” and “Outstanding Board Service to a Child Welfare Agency”, respectively.
- Elks Aidmore Executive Director Abe Wilkinson was elected to a two-year term as Vice-President of the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children.
- May, 1995** During the annual Open House, the Memorial/Patron Plaza was officially dedicated.
- June, 1995** The Georgia Elks Aidmore Endowment was created during this month. The Endowment, fashioned after the Elks National Foundation, was established to provide opportunities for regular and honor membership, in support of Elks Aidmore Children’s Center.
- April, 1996** Elks Aidmore initiated collaboration with CHRIS Homes, Creative Community Services, Georgia Baptist Children’s Homes and Family Ministries, and Gwinnett Children’s Shelter to form the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC). A sixth member, Inner Harbour Hospitals, joined the alliance at a later date. The mission of MAAC was to provide a seamless array of services to youth and their families, from in-home family preservation through intensive hospitalization. Elks Aidmore Executive Director Abe Wilkinson served as the first President of MAAC and retained the position for 7 years.
- May 16, 1996** Elks Aidmore Children’s Center received notice they have been initially accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc.
- April 14, 1997** With a focus on developing the Adventures Ropes and camping programs to increase program exposure and generate new revenues, a Marketing and Public Relations Director began employment with Elks Aidmore.
- Executive Director Abe Wilkinson of Elks Aidmore began the first of two terms as the President of the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children.
- June 19, 1997** Employees of the Home Depot store in Conyers became the first group to utilize the Adventures Ropes course. The ropes course training was provided at no cost in exchange for Home Depot building two Adirondack shelters for the campsite.

- October 16, 1997** The campground was used on this date by the Rockdale Professional Counselors and became the official “opening date” for use of the camping facilities.
- January, 1998** The Multi-Agency Alliance for Children negotiated its first agreement with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, providing a “pilot” program designed for eight children and youth.
- April 17, 1998** The first Golf Fore Kids tournament, benefitting Elks Aidmore Children’s Center, was held at The Oaks in Covington.
- June, 1998** Elks Aidmore received a \$54,000 grant from the Governor’s Children’s Trust Fund to establish a position for a Family Preservation and Aftercare Coordinator. The grant was awarded for an eighteen-month period beginning on October 1, 1998.
- September, 1998** The Executive Committee of Elks Aidmore designed and independently funded the construction of a walkway on the Aidmore campus to honor Aidmore President Ed Hixon.
- November 21, 1998** The first “Turkey Trot” 5K run fund raiser was held on the Aidmore campus.
- December, 1998** With an anonymous gift of \$5000, the Executive Committee approved placing the money in a scholarship account in Ed Hixon’s name. The funds will be used to provide scholarships to current residents and recent graduates of Elks Aidmore Children’s Center.
- Spring, 1999** Major renovations were completed on the Aidmore campus. Renovations included: re-carpeting the cottages, reupholstering the furniture in the cottages, painting the cottages and the gymnasium; installing vinyl siding on the cottages, paving the road behind the cottages, enclosing and painting the Butler Building, purchasing new computers and a voicemail answering system for the administration building, and installing security systems in the cottages.
- March 4, 1999** Grand Exalted Ruler Valentine “Val” Bates conducted the ribbon cutting for the opening of the Supervised Apartment for Independent Living (SAIL). The apartment provides housing for two residents who have completed the Preparation for Independent Living program in Ab Cottage.
- April, 1999** The Multi-Agency Alliance for Children was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Joseph P. Whitehead Foundation to allow for the continuation of the collaborative under the supervision of a part-time executive director.
- October 10, 1999** Bianca Garrett, Cherokee Lodge #2727, was installed as the first female Elk to serve on the Board of Trustees for Elks Aidmore.

- May 2, 1999** The “Edward L. Hixon Walkway of Merit” was dedicated during the annual Aidmore Open House. Brenda Hixon (wife) and Kathy Johnson (daughter) cut the ceremonial ribbon to officially dedicate the walkway.
- January 23, 2000** The pavilion located on the Aidmore campus burned to the ground as a result of an electrical fire caused during an ice storm.
- April, 2000** Construction of a new pavilion was completed on the same site as the original pavilion. Renovations to the bathrooms in the gymnasium are completed and the interior of the gymnasium is completely repainted. Three new 18-passenger vans are purchased.
- May, 2000** Elks Aidmore Children’s Center received notice they have been reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc. Renovations are completed to the kitchens and laundry rooms in all the residential cottages.
- July, 2000** The first Aidmore resident to enter the Armed Services completed basic training. Prior to her entrance into the Army, she made the highest score on the ASVAB of any resident in Rockdale County history.
- August, 2000** The first current resident of the “new” program entered college for the fall semester. She attended Clark-Atlanta University in Atlanta, with a major in pre-med.
- September, 2000** Water lines are installed connecting most of the campus with Rockdale County Water Resources. Following the pavilion fire in January, the decision is also made to install fire hydrants at strategic locations throughout the campus.
- October, 2000** Elks Aidmore received a \$10,000 grant from the John H. and Wilhelmina D. Harland Charitable Foundation to create the position of Clinical Coordinator for Independent Living.
- November, 2000** The first community-based independent living apartment was opened in Clarkston, with expectations to expand the program into other areas of the state. The gymnasium kitchen was expanded and completely remodeled. Construction was completed on a bath house and pavilion complex at Honey Creek Campground.
- March, 2001** Elks Aidmore received a second grant for \$10,000 from the Frances Wood Wilson Foundation to complete funding for the position of Clinical Coordinator for Independent Living.

- April, 2001** All residents of Elks Aidmore Children’s Center spent a week at the Florida Elks Youth Camp. The Florida Elks provided \$10,000 in assistance to make the trip possible. Residents visited Disney, Epcot and SeaWorld during their stay.
- May 6, 2001** The monument erected to house the cornerstone from the old Aidmore Hospital was dedicated on this date.
- August 16, 2001** Fulton County Property, also known as the Robinson Property, was sold to Stanley Knowles.
- October, 2001** The first Haunted Halloween Hayrides were held on the Aidmore campus on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The hayrides were initiated as a fund raiser for Elks Aidmore.
- April, 2002** Tracy Roberson, Cottage Coordinator for Wilson Cottage, was named as Child Care Worker for the year by the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children.
- March, 2003** Rachel Tamerat, a former resident of Elks Aidmore, received the prestigious Kids to Kids National Service Award from the Child Welfare League of America. The award is presented annually to a young person to celebrate his/her accomplishments and outstanding contributions to the community through volunteerism. In her acceptance speech, Rachel cited Elks Aidmore “as the first place where I felt loved and cared for.”
- June, 2003** The Family House was converted into a second housing unit for the Independent Living Program and becomes known as SAIL 2. The first residents moved into the house during this month.
- January, 2004** Governor Sonny Perdue included \$12.9 million in his Amended Fiscal Year Budget to fund the Level of Care Placement System.
- The Board of Trustees authorized a “land swap” with developer Steve Goodsell to allow easier access to the Elks Aidmore property from Tucker Mill Road.
- April, 2004** Elks Aidmore CEO was elected to a one-year term to the 12-member board of the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children.
- May 2004** Elks Aidmore Children’s Center received notice they have been reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc.
- Elks Aidmore Memorial Brick Plaza was expanded to include an additional wall.

- October, 2004** Elks Aidmore received \$10,000 grant from the DeKalb County Sheriff's Posse to purchase new dining room furniture for all the cottages.
- January, 2005** The Georgia Elks Association was recognized as a Champion for Children by Georgia First Lady Mary Perdue. The award was presented based on the work that the Elks do through Elks Aidmore.
- March, 2005** In response to the changing philosophy of the Department of Human Resources to place all state children in family foster care, and a subsequent reduction in referrals and revenues for Elks Aidmore, the Board of Trustees closed Wilson Cottage.
- April 17, 2005** The New Friends Library opened on the second floor of the Elks Aidmore Administration Building.
- October, 2005** Georgia reached a settlement agreement in the case of Kenny A. vs. Sonny Perdue. The suit was originally filed in 2001, alleging mistreatment of children and youth in shelters in Fulton and DeKalb counties. A Consent Decree was signed outlining several outcome measures that must be met for the case to not proceed to trial.
- November, 2006** Elks Aidmore received another \$10,000 grant from the DeKalb County Sheriff's Posse to upgrade Wilson Cottage.
- April, 2006** Elks Aidmore Children's Center is recognized as Agency of the Year by the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children. Program Director Vickey Hale is also honored as Supervisor of the Year.
- March, 2007** The Finance Committee made a recommendation to the Executive Committee that the fiscal year for Elks Aidmore be extended by three months and that the new fiscal year is established as July 1 through June 30 to coincide with the State budget. The Executive Committee accepted the recommendation and forwarded it to the Board of Trustees for approval. Approval was given on June 24, 2007.
- April, 2007** The Agnes Hale Trust (LaGrange, Georgia) donated \$418,269 in stocks and cash to Elks Aidmore Children's Center. Since 1999, the Hale Trust has donated \$856,000 to Elks Aidmore, the largest contribution from a sole source.
- June, 2007** CEO Abe Wilkinson was elected Treasurer for the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children.
- July, 2007** The Department of Human Resources implemented changes to the methodology by which private agencies are reimbursed; all therapeutic services are contracted through a Medicaid Rehab Option model.

- Spring, 2008** Snapping Shoals EMC provided two grants totaling \$17,000 to replace windows in the Administration Building and make major repairs and upgrades to the Ropes Course.
- Summer, 2008** The Alcovy Magazine, a periodical serving Rockdale and Newton counties, ran a three-part series of articles on the service offered by Elks Aidmore. The summer of 2008 also marked the beginning of a severe economic downturn that impacted state revenues and budgets for the state departments supporting programs like Elks Aidmore.
- August, 2008** Elks Aidmore received notification that it has been reaccredited by the Council on Accreditation for the fourth time.
- October, 2008** Elks Aidmore held a 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on the Conyers campus on October 5<sup>th</sup>. October also marked the beginning of Elks Aidmore's presence on social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook.
- February, 2009** The Board of Trustees approved the purchase of the Denton property for \$225,000. The 16-acre property, adjacent to Elks Aidmore's current property, also had frontage on Highway 138 to allow for an alternate access to the Elks Aidmore property. A four bedroom, three bath house was located in the center of the property. Tentative plans were to use the house as a retreat center for visiting guests and corporate sponsors.
- April, 2009** Elks Aidmore CEO Abe Wilkinson was elected as President of the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC) for the second time and serves for an additional three years in the position.
- May, 2009** Elks Aidmore received the second of two \$10,000 checks from the estate of R. Arthur "Ramie" Brewer of Dublin.
- June, 2009** Due to continuing revenue shortfalls and declining referrals, the Board of Trustees voted to downsize the program to twelve (12) residents and 11 full-time, two part-time staff.
- July, 2009** The Department of Humans Resources began reorganizing into the Department of Human Services. Many fear it is the beginning of services becoming even more fragmented and harder to access.
- January, 2010** After continuing decline in operating revenues, the Board of Trustees voted to appoint a Transition Committee to review other service options for children, youth and their families.
- June, 2010** The Board of Trustees adopted a three-year Business Plan for Transition. The plan was designed to expand the residential program to serve six boys

and develop several community-based programs like Therapeutic Foster Care, respite services, and Community Based Alternatives for Youth (CBAY). Adoption of the plan also allowed for the expansion of community-based services into South Georgia. Projections are for the residential program to serve 19 youth, while the community services programs will expand to serve up to 48 youth and families by the end of the three-year plan. The plan is to be implemented in stages, beginning July 1, 2010.

- November, 2010** Elks Aidmore hired Jackie Jordan as the Director of Community Services. Jackie is a former foster parent and adopted two children whom she fostered. She brought with her many years of experience in the fields of child welfare and foster care.
- April, 2011** After several months of applications, visits and revisits from the Office of Provider Management, the Department of Human Services contract was amended to allow the admission of males into the residential program. The first male arrived on the campus on April 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Elks Aidmore also received a temporary license from the Office of Regulatory Services as a Child Placing Agency, the first step in expanding services to include Therapeutic Foster Care.
- The Office of Provider Management, Division of Family and Children Services, rolled out a plan to deliver “report cards” on agency performance. It is seen as the beginning of outcomes-based contracting.
- February, 2012** The Office of Provider Management approved the expansion of the program for Therapeutic Foster Care and included the change in the amended contract. Services were immediately instituted.
- March, 2012** The Board of Trustees approved the lease of a satellite office in Valdosta, Georgia. The office will provide services for Therapeutic Foster Care and Community-Based Alternatives for Youth.
- April, 2012** The Elks Aidmore Music Festival was held at the Georgia International Horse Park in Conyers. The event, designed to be a major fund raiser for Elks Aidmore, lost over \$20,000, but raised public awareness for the agency and its programs.
- August, 2012** Charlie Reed, a member of the Atlanta Northlake Elks Lodge #78, passed away, leaving his estate to Elks Aidmore.
- May, 2013** With approval from, the Board of Directors, Elks Aidmore reduced the number of girl cottages from three to two. Also, based on the dwindling

number of referrals, the Board approved the cessation of referrals and placements for the boy's cottage.

The Therapeutic Foster Care program has grown to serve 27 youth.

The Ambrose Golf Group, affiliated with Turner Broadcasting, held a charity golf event for Elks Aidmore, netting over \$10,000.

**June, 2013** The Board of Trustees approved an agreement with The Washington Group to assist with the development of the satellite office in Valdosta.

**September, 2013** Elks Aidmore received approval from the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities to expand the services being provided under the Community-Based Alternatives for Youth programs.

**January, 2014** Elks Aidmore received a \$10,000 grant from The Rich Foundation in Atlanta to support the educational program on the residential campus in Conyers.

**March, 2014** Elks Aidmore hired Cathy Burks to head the Valdosta office. Cathy had served as a regional resource advisor for foster and adoptive families for 13 years. She was a former recipient of the Foster Parent of the Year Award for Lowndes County Department of Children and Family Services and received the Citizen of the Year Award from the Mayor's Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Elks Aidmore rejoined Together Georgia, formerly known as the Georgia Association of Homes and Services for Children.

Governor Nathan Deal appointed a Child Welfare Reform Council, charged with the responsibility of making recommendations for change to the delivery of child welfare services in the state of Georgia.

**April, 2014** Elks Aidmore received distributions from the Agnes Hale Trust in excess of \$660,000.

**May, 2014** The Ambrose Golf Group, affiliated with Turner Broadcasting, held a second charity golf event for Elks Aidmore, netting over \$7,000.

The Charlie Reed house sold for \$90,000, completing transfer of the final estate assets to Elks Aidmore. The majority of furnishings were moved to the property on Highway 138, now officially designated "The Reed House".

- September, 2014** Therapeutic Foster Care programs, offered through the Conyers and Valdosta offices, are providing services to almost 60 children and youth each month.
- February, 2015** Due to the rapid expansion of the Therapeutic Foster Care program, and the subsequent lack of office space, one of the empty cottages is converted to office space for the staff serving the youth on the residential campus.
- March, 2015** The Board of Trustees approved a new Business Plan for Elks Aidmore, outlining opportunities for the next three years. Two major components of the plan are the addition of a Chief Operations Officer and the creation of a supporting foundation.
- May, 2015** The Therapeutic Foster Care programs in Conyers and Valdosta are now serving approximately 95 children and youth per day in 75 foster homes.
- The Board of Trustees approved a \$5.5 million dollar budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015. The amount was a new milestone for the program, as it has existed, since the late 1970's.
- July, 2015** Vickey Hale, Program Director for Residential Services, assumed the duties of the newly created Chief Operating Officer. Vickey had been employed by Elks Aidmore since August of 1993, having served in a variety of capacities. She is pursuing her Doctorate in Social Work, with an anticipated completed date of 2017.
- October, 2015** Queenyona Boyd-Richards, a former Elks Aidmore client, was elected to be the voice of foster youth on the Board of Directors for the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC).
- December, 2015** The Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees approved a supplemental budget that includes the expansion of the Therapeutic Foster Care program into Savannah.
- March, 2016** The Savannah office officially opened with the hiring of Heather Fox as the Office Manager/Family Consultant. Heather was previously employed in the Elks Aidmore program in Conyers.
- April, 2016** The Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees approved the proposed Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation to create the Aidmore Charitable Trust. The purpose of the Trust will be to increase community participation, identifying influential individuals who can assist in raising funds to support operations of Elks Aidmore. The Board of Directors for the Trust will consist of an equal number of Elks/Auxiliary members and

community participants. Upon this approval, application for 501(c)3 status with the Internal Revenue Service will be submitted.

Elks Aidmore received an “expedited” decision on the agency’s recent on-site review by the Council on Accreditation. On a national level, only about 10% of agencies seeking accreditation receive an expedited decision. This achievement represents the second consecutive cycle in which Elks Aidmore has been “expedited”. Elks Aidmore has been continuously accredited by the Council on Accreditation since 1995.

The Board of Trustees approved a \$6.8 million budget for FY17. The budget funded the continuing expansion of the Therapeutic Foster Care offices in Conyers, Savannah and Valdosta; established a retirement plan for current employees of the agency; and, reorganized the residential program to serve youth classified as Maximum Watchful Oversight.

**February, 2017** Therapeutic Foster Care services were expanded into Northwest Georgia with the opening of the Dalton office. Jaime Stafford was hired as Family Consultant/Office Manager, with Bethany Jackson joining the staff as a Recruiter.

**May, 2017** The Board of Trustees approved an \$8 million budget for FY18. One of the highlights of the budget was the addition of a Program Director for Community Services-South Georgia. Kamini Ramcharran, a former Family Consultant Supervisor in the Conyers office, was selected to fill the new position.

The May issue of The Elks Magazine (national) included an article about the Elks Aidmore history and programs. The author did an excellent job of capturing an enormous amount of information and condensing it into two pages.

**October, 2018** Elks Aidmore was recognized as the "Outstanding Agency" for 2018 during the Georgia Conference on Children and Families, held in Augusta, October 17th-19th. The award was presented by Juanita Stedman, Executive Director of Together Georgia. Together Georgia is the preeminent voice in Georgia's child and welfare policy making through advocacy, collaboration, networking and communication. The agency previously won Agency of the Year Award in 2006.

**October, 2019** At the Georgia Conference on Families and Children, Jordan D. received the Outstanding Youth Award for 2019. The Georgia Conference on Children and Families is the largest annual interdisciplinary event in Georgia designed to bring together the community that serves children and families.

## February, 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic began its paralysis of activities across the world. With so many individuals and families in quarantine and isolation there were collateral impacts in addition to the negative economic impact of COVID-19: increases in mental health issues; increases in substance abuse; increases in suicides; increases in domestic violence calls; and an increase in the number of child abuse reports. Tragically, the increase in the number of child abuse reports were still under-reported, and many were not investigated because of COVID-19 and staff shortages. School personnel are the primary reporters of child abuse. Since in-person school is suspended indefinitely, school personnel were not witnessing and/or reporting suspected child abuse situations. Referrals and placements to Elks Aidmore dropped dramatically.

The Elks Aidmore campus in Conyers limited public access to the property to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on the clients being served. Protocols were immediately implemented in the Residential Treatment and Therapeutic Foster care programs to protect clients, staff and foster parents. Although clients continued to be served in the residential treatment program, the Conyers campus remained closed to the public for over a year.

Two Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans (*totaling \$985,000*), authorized under the Family First Coronavirus Relief Act and CARES Act, were secured by Elks Aidmore. Only 4% of all PPP loans were awarded to non-profits. Both loans were eventually “forgiven” by the federal government, turning the loans into grants.

## May, 2020

Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees Chairman Ron Anderson appointed a Succession Planning Committee to replace CEO Abe Wilkinson, who is scheduled to retire in the summer of 2022. The committee was responsible for not only identifying his successor, but to also identify other positions within the agency which might require a succession plan. The committee was comprised of the following individuals:

- **Dannie Anderson** (Jesup Eleven O'clock Club; served in various local and state offices within the Elks Aidmore Auxiliary)
- **Bob Colie** (Lake Oconee Elks Lodge; Candidate for President-Elect of the Georgia Elks Association; current member of the Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees)
- **Pat Harper** (Atlanta Northlake Elks Auxiliary; Past State President of the Georgia Elks Aidmore Auxiliary)
- **Wayne Johnson** (Griffin Elks Lodge; Past State President of the Georgia Elks Association; former member of the Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees)
- **Stanley Santee** (Camden County Elks Lodge; Past State President of the Georgia Elks Association; currently 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President of the Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees)

Elks Aidmore foster parent Marlene Oliver was recognized by the Multi-Agency Alliance for Children (MAAC) as a “Shining Star” for 2020

### **August, 2020**

Six months earlier, very few could have imagined the impact COVID would have on personal lives, businesses, the country, and the world. It was a continual challenge to carve out a “new normal” in our daily lives. The impact to Aidmore was significant. Virtual learning became the norm for school systems. The Aidmore residential program in Conyers hired two part-time staff members in August to help implement the educational model for Rockdale County Schools, in addition to providing staff support coverage during the school day. Foster parents across the state were challenged with virtual learning options, especially in areas where internet access is inadequate. Staff in our Therapeutic Foster Care programs worked remotely since mid-March. Most interactions with foster parents were virtual. Traditional methods of recruiting foster parents all but disappeared. When the agency was able to successfully recruit, state approval mechanisms for approving the foster homes was slowed by the shortage of staff working in the DFCS central offices. Receipt of DFCS per diems and reimbursements were slower. And the list goes on and on.

On a more positive note, Elks Aidmore staff remained committed to providing quality services to the children and youth in our care. Residential staff continued to care for our youth without complaint. TFC staff adapted to working remotely and virtually meeting with foster parents and one another. COO Vickey Hale expanded Kaleidacare to allow for cloud-based client file management.

### **November, 2020**

Elks Aidmore received notification from the Council on Accreditation that the agency had been “*reaccredited...In addition, Elks Aidmore was expedited through the Pre-Commission Review process as a result of not receiving any out of compliance ratings...*” COA reviewers looked at 629 individual standards for Elks Aidmore. Of those, our agency received a “1” rating on 550 standards and a “2” rating on the remaining 79 standards. This represents the third continuous cycle of national accreditation in which Elks Aidmore has been “expedited”. Only 15% of agencies receive the “expedited” designation annually. In closing, the letter read, “*COA’s program of quality improvement is designed to identify providers that have met high performance standards and have made a commitment to their stakeholders to deliver the very best quality services. COA is proud to recognize Elks Aidmore, Inc. as one of these outstanding providers, and we wish you the very best in your continuing work with the individuals you serve.*”

- December, 2020** The Succession Planning Committee met three times since September. The committee reviewed salary and benefits of the current CEO; began development of interview questions; acknowledged COO Vickey Hale as a candidate; completed an update of the job description; developed and recommended a Succession Planning policy; and, reviewed the Staff Handbook. Considerable discussion was given to the creation of a position for Chief Financial Officer. A Succession Planning policy was developed by the Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees.
- The Aidmore Charitable Trust application to the IRS for 501c3 status was approved on December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, with a date of exemption retroactive to June 25, 2020. The initial members of the Board are Bruce Hayden, President and Secretary; Gina Sweenie, Vice-President; and Steve Petrie, Treasurer. Their terms are 1-year, 2 years, and 3-years, respectively. Due to the delayed approval from the IRS, their first terms will be in effect through December 31, 2021, 2022, and 2023, respectively.
- March, 2021** The Board members of the Aidmore Charitable Trust met via Zoom on March 6th for their initial meeting. The focus of the meeting was to: plan the frequency of meetings; identify potential members from the community who could provide diversity to the Board; discuss development of a Trust brochure, website, and social media presence; authorize opening a separate bank account; and, define support of Elks Aidmore staff to the Aidmore Charitable Trust Board.
- April, 2021** COO Vickey Hale is elected to a one-year term on the Board of Directors for Together Georgia.
- August, 2021** The Succession Planning Committee recommended the hiring of Elks Aidmore COO Vickey Hale as the CEO-Designate. The recommendation was unanimously approved by the Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees.
- Laura Nichols is introduced to the Board of Trustees as the new Financial Officer for Elks Aidmore. The position was approved in the FY22 budget. Laura assumed the newly created position on July 1, 2021.
- January, 2022** Elks Aidmore received approximately \$1.25 million in stocks from The Agnes Hale Trust, as partial payment for the final distribution of the Trust. Remaining funds of an estimated \$800,000 are expected to be received over the following 12-18 months. In total, donations from The Agnes Hale Trust have exceeded \$3.5 million.
- February, 2022** Renovations to Wilson Cottage are completed and the Conyers-based Therapeutic Foster Care program staff begin to occupy the building.

**April, 2022**

The Georgia Legislature approved a FY23 budget which included \$27,810,584 in funding for a 10% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.

The Elks Aidmore Board of Trustees approved a budget approaching \$10 million dollars, which included the continued expansions of the Therapeutic Foster Care program, the Independent Living Program, and the Teen Parenting program. The budget also included \$300,000 for capital improvements on the Conyers campus.

**July, 2022**

After 29 years of service, CEO Abe Wilkinson officially retired, and COO Vickey Hale officially became the Chief Executive Officer for Elks Aidmore.