



# Athens-Limestone Co. Family Resource Center

*Strengthening Limestone County Families.*

The Athens-Limestone County Family Resource Center (ALCFRC) is dedicated to helping families find success by providing guidance, information, and personal mentoring. We are passionate about improving the quality of life for all residents in our community.

## **ANNUAL REPORT**



**CHARTER:**

The Athens-Limestone County Family Resource Center (ALCFRC) is a not-for-profit agency founded in 2007 to strengthen Limestone County families and help them move toward healthy self-sufficiency. Today, the Athens-Limestone Family Resource Center stands as a viable resource in the community for families in need.

**MISSION:**

To strengthen Limestone County families and support child safety and development through life-changing programs and services.

**TAG LINE:**

Strengthening Limestone County Families.

**VISION STATEMENT:**

Every family in Limestone County be given an opportunity to thrive.

**VALUES STATEMENT:**

**Faith**... We have full faith and confidence in the human spirit to overcome adversity especially when guided and supported by the community. It is our honor to be the connection between those in need and those who can guide to foster deeper family foundations.

**Respect**... We respect the dignity of each person and family we serve — protecting their privacy, providing appropriate services in a timely manner, and listening with an open heart. We respect our colleagues and volunteers — collaborating through positive activities and communications. We respect other non-profits, government agencies, and businesses as they share their resources and expertise to build stronger Limestone County families.

**Cooperative and Collaborative**... These relationships strengthen our families and therefore our community. We welcome constructive input, volunteers of all ages and abilities, partnerships with service-driven organizations and other forms of community support. We are engaged with local civic organizations, non-profits, and churches as we keep pace with social and economic conditions.



**ALCFRC Staff and Programs**

Our facility is open to serve Athens-Limestone County residents Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Our staff includes (4) full-time and (2) part-time employees. In addition, many volunteers & interns help us fulfill our mission. *Since 2010, we have impacted approximately 25,000 lives!*

Our services include Family Solutions, Family Ramp, Workforce Development, and Shepherd’s Closet. On July 12, 2023, we officially became the Limestone County hub for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and soon we will be adding a parenting / fatherhood program.

<b>GENERAL OVERALL NUMBERS</b>			
	<b>July 2020 to June 2021</b>	<b>July 2021 to June 2022</b>	<b>July 2022 to June 2023</b>
Sign-Ins and Calls Logged*	8,605	9,448	9,454
Volunteer Hours	1,914	2,341	2,271
Households Served	605	674	732
Children Served	493	517	593
Family Solutions Program Appt.***	514	527	401
Wheelchair Ramps Built	27	25	29
<i>*This number includes only Participants who signed in &amp;/or that we noted on phone log</i>			
<i>***This number includes only Participants who showed up for their appointment</i>			

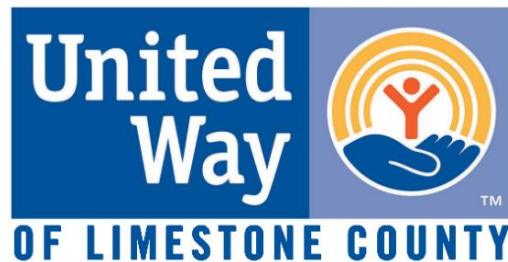
**Our records also include the following number of appointments during the 2022-2023 span:**

65 Pastoral Counseling      28 Financial Counseling      324 Financial Class      1,962 Career/Job

### Local Partnerships & Supporters

ALCFRC partnerships with the Limestone County Commission, City of Athens, United Way of Athens-Limestone County, Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers and numerous local churches ensure that our doors are open to serve residents. Without this funding, we would not be able to focus our attention on making an impact in the lives of families and future generations. Your generosity along with the entities mentioned above provide us with the ability to focus on helping people become stable, productive, useful members of the Athens-Limestone County community.

<b>LOCAL OPERATIONAL FUNDING SUPPORT</b>			
	<b>July 2020 to June 2021</b>	<b>July 2021 to June 2022</b>	<b>July 2022 to June 2023</b>
Limestone Co. Commission	\$20,000 (+ utilities)	\$20,000 (+ utilities)	\$25,000 (+ utilities)
City of Athens	\$18,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
United Way of Athens-Limestone County	\$25,000	\$23,833	\$15,000
Local Churches	\$34,534	\$28,400	\$22,200
ANFRC (Circle of Care)		\$10,000	\$10,093.75



## **MEMBERSHIP CREDENTIALS**

### **Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers**

ALCFRC has been a member of Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers (ANFRC) since March 2021. In May 2000, the Alabama State Legislature passed into law the 25 standards for Alabama family resource centers (Section 31-8-2, code of Alabama 1975). This major milestone protects the integrity of the Alabama's family resource center model and ensures the highest quality of service for Alabama families. Each of the 25 standards is specific and measurable and ensures that the highest quality of service is available to those families seeking assistance from a member site. Membership in the ANFRC is based on proven implementation and maintenance of each of the 25 standards. As a full member, ALCFRC must periodically resubmit an ANFRC application to ensure continued attainment of membership standards. Our next recertification is May 2025. Membership in ANFRC is further evidence that we provide impeccable services for our Athens-Limestone County residents. In addition, membership has led to us receiving Workforce Development Grants (A-RESET and TANF) totaling \$115,000 to assist residents with becoming gainfully employed. Lastly, we have received a \$10,093 Alabama Board of Education-Circle of Care pass-through grant to focus on child mentoring.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Family Solutions Program (FSP)**

The Family Solutions Program (FSP) is funded by the United Way of Limestone County as well as local churches. FSP has a goal of helping families and individuals in unsustainable situations by putting them on a path towards sustainability and success. We help lower income families and individuals financially by assisting with rent and utility payments. We then create a simple plan for success that is achievable. This is with resource referrals that are specific to their situation. Our participants must also attend a financial management class taught by representatives from the following local banks: Regions Bank, Redstone Federal Credit Union, Listerhill Federal Credit Union, Trustmark Bank and Bank Independent. These industry experts provide instruction focusing on proper budgeting and spending. The goal is that this instruction will positively influence our clients' spending and saving habits and prevent them from needing this service in the future.

After our clients have attended the class and assistance has been granted, we check in with our clients to see if they are well on their way to achieving their financial goals. Our participant follow-up system allows us to see how the participant is progressing and allows us to give further guidance and counseling if needed. As you know, this program took a three-month hiatus this spring, but relaunched under a new program coordinator. Since the relaunch on May 8, 2023, through June 30, 2023, we have assisted ten (10) families with their utilities totaling \$1,632.96 and we have assisted 17 families with their rent payments totaling \$4,554.89. We are proud to have been able to get back up and running and able to assist 27 Limestone County families in just seven (7) weeks.

### **FSP Success Stories**

1. This success story exemplifies why we do what we do. A gentleman came in here who had never received financial assistance elsewhere and he had been spending countless nights at the hospital. His baby was super sick. His fiancé was at the hospital with the baby. His employer was also cutting his hours. He had not slept that night yet still came 15 minutes early and was extremely positive yet real. We completed the intake; he attended the financial management class, and we were able to help him with his rent. When I told him we could help him he just broke down in tears and thanked me over and over. He came back a week later and told me that his baby girl was out of the hospital and stated how he could never repay us. He proudly showed pictures of her to me and even brought donations in for the Shepherd's Closet. He told me, "I may not have much to give but I will keep giving what I have back to this awesome organization!"
2. A second success story comes from a woman in a situation not many of us could ever picture ourselves in. She had to take in her nieces until DHR could find the children a foster family due to their mother being deemed unfit. She agreed to do it temporarily because you help family in a time of need. The young woman was already low income herself. She spent her extra money feeding the extra three children in the home. She just needed utility assistance from us which we helped with. She recently came back to the center to talk to me. She told me the children were placed in a home and absolutely love it there and the family plans on adopting them!



## **Workforce Development Program**

The Workforce Development Program was launched in October 2022 with the goal to serve at least 50 clients. The goal is to serve individuals in Limestone County that need assistance with removing barriers that might prevent them from reaching their professional goals in life. We focus on the individual clients and how to best serve them. Each client is given a needs assessment. We partner with other resources to assist with education, work readiness, and financial assistance. Funding comes from A-RESET, TANF, and Arby's (Inspire Foundation) to serve Limestone County residents between the ages of 16 to 59 years of age.

After a short time to regroup and refocus from February through April 2023, the program was relaunched in May. Initial focus has been on public awareness to reach out to the community and let them know that the program exists and is ready to serve the community. Currently, we have seven residents enrolled in the program.

We teach skills that everyone should have before completing the program. The goal is to give participants the ability to create a resume and keep it updated, complete a job application, have the confidence to present themselves well in a job interview, and understand professional soft skills.

Having a successful Workforce Development Program requires collaboration with other Limestone County community service organizations. Calhoun Community College has partnered with us to assist our individuals with Adult Education, MAPS, and ACES. We have also partnered with Juvenile Probation in Limestone County to be able to serve those individuals that might need assistance in getting a job or work readiness skills. In the next year, we want to build partnerships with others in the community. This would include businesses from different industries that will assist in finding positions for the program participants. This would allow our participants to work toward a goal of finding a career that will be sustainable for themselves and their families.



## Family Ramp Program

The Family Ramp Program is designed to help homebound residents acquire or maintain mobility. Access to wheelchair ramps improves quality of life and permits independence for these residents. We receive funding from local churches, community residents and TARCOG. Thankfully, the cost of materials has begun to decline some this year. We have a new Ramp Program Coordinator. Since shifting from volunteer to employee she has updated guidelines and assessments and has also added four (4) new volunteer teams to our line-up.

### Program Essentials:

- Ramp assistance minimizes hazards which could result in physical harm.
- Ramps improve quality of life through the ability to be mobile and/or independent.
- We provide complete wheelchair ramp & rail installation for residents who qualify. This includes material and construction.
- For residents who do not qualify for monetary assistance, we provide standards and specifications for self-installation.

<b>FAMILY RAMP PROGRAM</b>			
	<b>July 2020-June 2021</b>	<b>July 2021-June 2022</b>	<b>July 2022-June 2023</b>
Material Cost	\$25,293.72	\$20,954.27	\$16,252.62
Ramps Completed	27	25	31
Home Assessments	33	31	31
Phone Assessments	42	43	69
<b>JULY 2022 TO JUNE 2023</b>			
<u>  8  </u> Teams from <u>  8  </u> Churches	<u>  75  </u> Ramp Volunteers		
<u> 1239 </u> Hours	<u>  31  </u> Ramps Built		

### Family Ramp Success Story

A middle-aged man with four children had a car accident that left him a quadriplegic. The wife did not even have a way to get him to the doctor. A ramp was built by a local church. This allowed him not only to get to the doctor but also out in the community and his children's events. A



bonus to this story is that, with the ramp being built, the neighborhood and the building team's church took the initiative to further help the family in many other ways. This family was new to the area and were amazed by the outpouring of help that they received. In addition, the community was blessed by being able to help.



### **Dolly Parton Imagination Library**

On July 12, 2023, ALCFRC became the Limestone County hub for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL). This program is a book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth to age five. DPIL has received honors and awards for their dedication to enriching the lives of children everywhere. The Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, Best Practices award from the Library of Congress Literacy Awards and recognition in Reading Psychology are just a few among a long list of the prestigious acknowledgements the program has received. Currently, we only have funding to serve the 35614 and 35620 zip codes. Hopefully with the help of the Limestone County Commission and others we will be able to increase funding enabling us to serve all zip codes in Limestone County. We are very excited to add DPIL to our list of services for Limestone County families.

## **Project Smile**

Project Smile provides school-based mentoring relationships for children kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> grade who often have interfering, hindering or disruptive behaviors in the classroom. Each child will receive an age-appropriate lesson that focuses on coping skills, life skills, and redirecting behavior in and out of the classroom. Mentors (employees of ALCFRC) will meet with children in a group and/or individual setting each week to discuss a lesson. Mentors will be assigned to a school or organization and will be meeting with those students on a weekly basis. The children will be referred to ALCFRC by an organization that has met with and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ALCFRC before services have started.

## **Project Game Changers**

Project Game Changers is a school-based mentoring program providing after school activities for 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to promote healthy self-esteem, confidence building, and a stable environment during hours when youth tend to get off track. The program will also deter problematic behavior that can lead to delinquency, dropping out of school, and running away. Mentors (employees of ALCFRC) will meet with youth in a group after school each week to discuss a lesson. One mentor will be assigned to the group of youth and will be meeting with them on a regular basis. Youth will be referred to ALCFRC by an organization that has met with and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with ALCFRC.

## **Participant Services**

In addition to the programs, there are other services that ALCFRC offers.

- **Shepherd's Closet** is full-service clothes closet open to any resident of Limestone County that needs its services. The closet has household items and essential hygiene items as well. Caring Limestone County residents, **Walmart** and other local businesses donate to ALCFRC on a regular basis as does **Bombas** who donates socks, t-shirts, and undergarments.

- ALCFRC has provided **Military Blankets** for homeless Limestone County residents since 2020. We have increased our request for blankets every year, starting at 60 in 2020 and this year we have requested 150. We are grateful to the **Defense Logistics Agency** in Philadelphia, PA for donating these blankets providing warmth and care to some of our most vulnerable residents.
- Families are also served through our Thanksgiving and Christmas programs. What we can do varies year-to-year, but serving our vulnerable residents with food at thanksgiving and food and toys for kids at Christmas remains constant. **Walmart, Publix** and **Target** are frequent donors for these and our emergency services program. We are currently formulating plans for the 2023 holiday season.

<b>GENERAL PARTICIPANT SUPPORT</b>			
	<b>July 2020 to June 2021</b>	<b>July 2021 to June 2022</b>	<b>July 2022 to June 2023</b>
Clothing/HH/Toiletry Items	11,871**	12,367**	11,890**
Emergency Food/Diapers/Misc	2,032*	2,254	2,160
Assessment Services	729	921	684
Thanksgiving (Adults & Children)	127	127	127
Teen Christmas & Family Sponsorship	257	203	194
<p><b>*Shepherd's Closet closed March thru June; we served needs by handing items through the door PRN.</b>  <b>** Shepherd's Closet by appointment only since July 2020 to limit number of people in lobby.</b></p>			

## Our Volunteers

ALCFRC has many dedicated volunteers, program interns, and community service participants who are an essential part of this agency's effort. Volunteers operate the Shepherd's Closet, provide pastoral and financial counseling, build ramps in the Family Ramp Program, conduct repairs and maintenance of ALCFRC, perform general clerical duties, and custodial functions.



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**LAUNCH**  
Career guidance & assistance  
Career Guidance & Assistance, ages 16 to 24  
Monday - Thursday 8 am to 4:30 pm  
Friday - 8 am to 12 pm  
**256-867-5329**  
Launch services provided through WIOA funding.



**CRISIS SERVICES**  
OF NORTH ALABAMA  
**Domestic Violence Services**  
Hours:  
Monday - Friday 8 am - 4 pm  
**256-230-1240**



**Athens Career Center**  
Job Related Services  
Hours: Tuesday 8 am - 4 pm  
Friday 8 am - 4 pm  
**256-230-0880**

We are so thankful for our partner agencies that also serve our Limestone County residents in our facility. We work together as a team even though we maintain separate entities with unique missions.

## Board of Directors

Below is a roster of our dedicated board members and the committees in which they serve. The Board of Directors meets quarterly.

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Committee</b>	<b>Serving Since....</b>
Mark Maclin	President	(Oversees all)	2021
Jackie Brown	Vice-President	Fund-Raising/Marketing	2021
Tiffany Malone	Secretary	Governance	2021
Jacob Magnusson	Treasurer	Finance	2019
Carol Copeland		Programs	2007
Debbie Wilson		Programs	2008
Larry Keenum		Fundraising/Marketing	2017
Diane Witmer		Fund-Raising/Marketing	2023
Joe Curtis		Governance	2016
Rep. Danny Crawford		Finance / Governance	2023

