



SCOTTISH RITE ORIENT OF GEORGIA



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Media Contacts: Gene Jernigan, President
President, Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia, Inc.
229-407-0477 (cell)
gjjralb@aol.com

Rebecca Whicker
Media Relations
678-283-2885 (cell)
rebecca@domarketingfundraising.com

Children with Communication Disorders find their ‘voice’ through The Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia, Inc.’s RiteCare Program

Launching The Power of 3, a \$3M in 3 Years fundraising campaign to provide low- or no-cost intervention for Georgia children

Atlanta, GA (April 02, 2024) – Imagine being unable to communicate with anyone. Imagine you or your child not having the ability to formulate language, express thoughts or feelings, or your child falling behind their peers. An estimated 200,000 of Georgia’s 2.5M children ages 1-17 have some form of speech or language deficit (Accreditation Oversight: Georgia Speech-Language Hearing Association – Buford). And five million+ children in the U.S. ages 3-17 have disorders related to their speech, language, and voice, including autism. Enter Georgia’s [RiteCare](#) program that provides low- or no-cost intervention support to families in need. “Clinicians involved with the RiteCare program are grateful for the support. We have seen parents hear their children speak and say I love you for the first time because of the [RiteCare](#) program,” says [Erica Wilson](#), M. ED, CCC-SLP, [Clear Speech, LLC](#). Ray, the campaign’s iconic ambassador, helps light the way, ensuring all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and shine brightly in their communities.

Language is the foundation of all communication. It affects how we experience the world, express ourselves, and understand information; it impacts how we communicate ideas, retain and recall information, and interact with others. For a child, it is essential to their classroom and academic success. The Scottish Rite Orient of Georgia and its Foundation are working to give every child who needs it their voice, and we’re making that possible through our partnership with RiteCare partners across the Georgia,” says Jernigan.

“Speech and language services can get expensive quickly, even for high income families. Speech and language research shows that early intervention is key. Ninety percent of children with reading difficulties will achieve grade level if help is received by first grade. Seventy-five percent of children who do not receive help before age nine will continue to struggle. Treatment takes four times as long to achieve success if delayed until fourth grade instead of kindergarten, says Dr. Matt Carter, Ph.D., Director of Valdosta State’s Speech-Language and Hearing Clinic. Gene Jernigan, President of the Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia, Inc. says, “Our goal at the Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia is to help provide funding to offset the costs, allowing for more children to be served.”

Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia, Inc.
P.O. Box 7927, Warner Robins, GA 31095 • 478-447-2831

In some areas of Georgia, the wait for service can be as long as four years due to lack of resources and funding. Thanks to [The Scottish Rite Orient of Georgia](#) Masons and [The Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia, Inc.](#) who have been supporting RiteCare speech and language disability clinics for children since 2007, more help is on the way. Beginning April 5, 2024, the Foundation is launching a \$3 million campaign to help serve more children. RiteCare programs are currently in seven locations across the State ([Georgia Southern University](#), [Valdosta State University](#), [University of West Georgia](#), [RiteCare Clinic at Scottish Rite Medical Center in Sandy Springs](#), [Therapy Specialists of Georgia in Macon](#), [Clear Speech, LLC in Atlanta](#), [Apparo Academy in Augusta](#), [The Autism Learning Center in Columbus](#)), but the need is great. The financial burden to families can be daunting.

To increase their support of families, they have big plans over the next three to five years. Efforts are underway to raise funds to serve more children and families through expanded support in current clinics and eventually seeking potential new partners in other parts of the State. “Wherever you see the RiteCare icon, beams Jernigan, families can recognize it as a sign that support is available to help their child by removing communication barriers that may hold them back in life. It signifies that a partner is in your community who will help support you and/or your child financially and emotionally with low- or no-cost speech/language interventions. Often, we help defray the cost over what insurance doesn’t cover. This is the way Georgia Scottish Rite Masons shine our light into our local communities, continues Jernigan. It’s all about helping individuals reach their full potential and thrive. The RiteCare Program mission is to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and shine brightly in their communities through client care, research, and education. We make a difference one child at a time. Interventions for early childhood speech and language disorders, educating more speech pathologists who will impact thousands of lives over their careers, and empowering parents and administrators with affordable intervention and support is our goal. This effort is augmented by our scholarship program in supporting the nation's future leaders in obtaining a post-secondary education so they may pay it forward in their communities, and master’s level degrees to support the development of speech pathology and audiology majors who we believe will treat thousands of children in over their careers.”

What do RiteCare Clinics provide? Without early detection, many treatable disorders are overlooked in childhood. Each RiteCare clinic offers different services based on what the particular community needs. Some of the services include literacy evaluations, tutoring services, targeted screening services, educational sessions for parents/teachers/community stakeholders, continuing education for speech-language pathologists, clinical hands-on experience for speech and language students, phonics, dyslexia and autism support, language support for stroke victims, hands-on graduate student group language therapy sessions, hearing, speech screenings and evaluations for PreK and Head Start classes, integrating speech and language via summer camps, summer literacy programs, hearing screenings at local businesses and community events, advocacy for speech & language programs at local community career days, and more.

You can help make a life-changing difference. Visit www.gascottishrite.org to donate, or click this link to read more about our RiteCare story and learn about celebrities who have communication disorders: [SRF-Story.pdf \(gascottishrite.org\)](#).

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About:

The Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia, Inc.

Founded in 1980, the Scottish Rite Foundation of Georgia was established with a focus on Children, Charity and Community. The Foundation funds RiteCare speech and language disability clinics for children and [scholarships](#) (\$2.4M+ to date) for deserving Georgia students and across the State. Visit www.gascottishrite.org to learn more.

Personal interviews available on request for various locations.

Images for media use:



Meet Ray

Help Ray inspire donations through the **\$3 million** fundraising campaign

\$300 supports a child for one academic year



The Scottish Rite Foundation, represented by the sun, shines its light on Ray. Together, they spread the mission of RiteCare: speech, language, and literacy.

Every RiteCare child is a "ray of light" and a beacon in their communities. We like to call them the **Sunny Rays**.

You, too, can be someone's ray of light.

RiteCare Four-Step Growth Plan

Goal: **\$3 million** in new funding over 3 to 5 years

1

Sustaining

Sustaining current programs in the 8 clinics beyond what local fundraising efforts and membership dollars provide

2

Serving More

Serving more clients in current locations
(reducing 4-year waiting period)

3

Partnering

Partnering with Georgia universities offering speech and language degrees

4

Expanding

Open new donor-funded programs and clinics