

NEWS FROM

GAMFT

Georgia Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

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DECEMBER 2021

The Journey of the Past Two Years

Andrea Meyer Stinson, PhD, LMFT, CFLE




Andrea Meyer Stinson

I love taking my kids on hikes; getting them out of the house, away from technology and breathing the fresh air! When we first start on a hike, the focus is all about the destination (both for myself and the kids). Where are we going? When will we get there? How much longer? If you are a parent or work with children, these are familiar questions. My favorite moment while hiking is when the kids stop focusing on the end and start focusing on the present. They notice the cool mushroom sitting on a fallen tree limb they hear an unfamiliar bird

and try to repeat it's call, they pause and breath in the new smells around them.... they stop planning and let their inner curiosity take over.

As I reflect on writing my last newsletter article as President of GAMFT, I am mindful that these reflections are happening during a season of giving thanks and the sharing of gifts. Over the past two years in this role, I have witnessed many individuals giving their time, energy, money, and many other gifts to ensure the success of GAMFT. The path of navigating a professional non-profit organization through a pandemic was very similar to an adventurous hike with my kids. We had many similar questions when I took the role of President in January 2020, such as: How did we get here? Where are we going? It has been a path full of rocks, some that we jumped over and overs that made us stumble. Quite often we were walking together without a proper map! Nonetheless a group of committed and amazing people came together, listened, worked hard, and endured. As Fred Rogers states, "The gifts we treasure most over the years are often small and simple. In easy times and tough times, what seems to matter most is the way we show those nearest us that we've been listening to their needs, to their joys, and to their challenges". I am forever grateful to those members of the board that were part of this amazing two-year journey with me; you have all made this trek worth it!



Inspired by hikes with my children, I want to take a moment and notice where we are as an organization today. Not where we are going, or where we have been, but who we are in this moment. We are an organization that fights to protect and expand our license and profession in Georgia. We are an organization that hopes to nurture and connect. We are an organization that wants to educate and support. We are an organization that is walking through a changing world but sticking true to our core values. We are bound together by a way of thinking that is systemic and acknowledges complexity and context.

If the last two years were a long hike, what have I noticed during this journey? First and foremost, GAMFT is an essential organization to the success and future of MFTs in Georgia. It is an organization run by volunteers, working tirelessly to carry out the mission and vision. In the last two years we have successfully navigated to online education, offering both virtual town halls and training experiences in a safe and accessible manner. We have spent hours upon hours advocating for MFT rights at the state level, which culminated in the successful passage of HB591 (1013/2013s). We reduced our expenses and increased financial security while at the same time learning how to operate without paid staff. We have completed a strategic planning process that will guide our organization towards new and different goals moving forward.

What a hike it has been my friends! And there is no one else I'd rather have this journey with than those who have served on this board. Thank you especially to the relentless and amazing work of the executive council members, Jennifer, Jennifer, Adam, Bowden, and Kara. We have truly worked as a team to create an organization that we should be proud of! I know that as you move into new hikes together, with Kara at the lead, you will achieve much, bounce back from obstacles, but most importantly you will listen to one another and acknowledge your joys and challenges. ■



2021 GAMFT Election Results

We would like to congratulate the following on being elected to GAMFT Board positions.

Their terms will begin on January 1, 2022.

Vice President:

Andrew Benesh

Treasurer:

Jennifer Lambert-Shute

Elections Committee Member:

DeKeisha Teasley

The GAMFT board looks forward to formally introducing you to our newly elected board members in early 2022.

Upcoming GAMFT Events



Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi
Student Representative

Virtual Coffee with your Student Rep

- Date: Friday, December 17
- Time: 12:00pm to 1:00pm, EST
- Location: Zoom

Join Student Representative Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi for her monthly virtual coffee where students and new professionals are invited to connect, ask questions, and discuss topics related to becoming a MFT.

[Click here to register!](#)



Brighter Tomorrows Consulting Institute

6 CEU's Training/Workshops

Addictions Counseling:
 Pushing Through the Resistance to Change
 The Role of Families in Addiction Recovery:
 Enablement vs Support
 A Clinician's Guide to Co-Occurring Disorders
 A Clinical Overview to HIV/AIDS Awareness
 The Art of Sand Tray
 Advanced Sand Tray Techniques:
 Assessment & Treatment Planning
 Structural Family Therapy
 Ethics: Putting the Puzzle Together
 Puppetry Arts
 Storytelling Techniques
 Play Therapy with Adolescents
 Play Therapy with Adults
 Psychodynamic Play Therapy
 Art Therapy Interventions in the Playroom
 Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy Counseling the Elderly
 Suicidality Assessment in the Play Therapy Setting
 Courtroom Ethics
 DSM V: Clinical Overview
 Parenting: General
 Parenting: Young Children
 Parenting: Adolescents

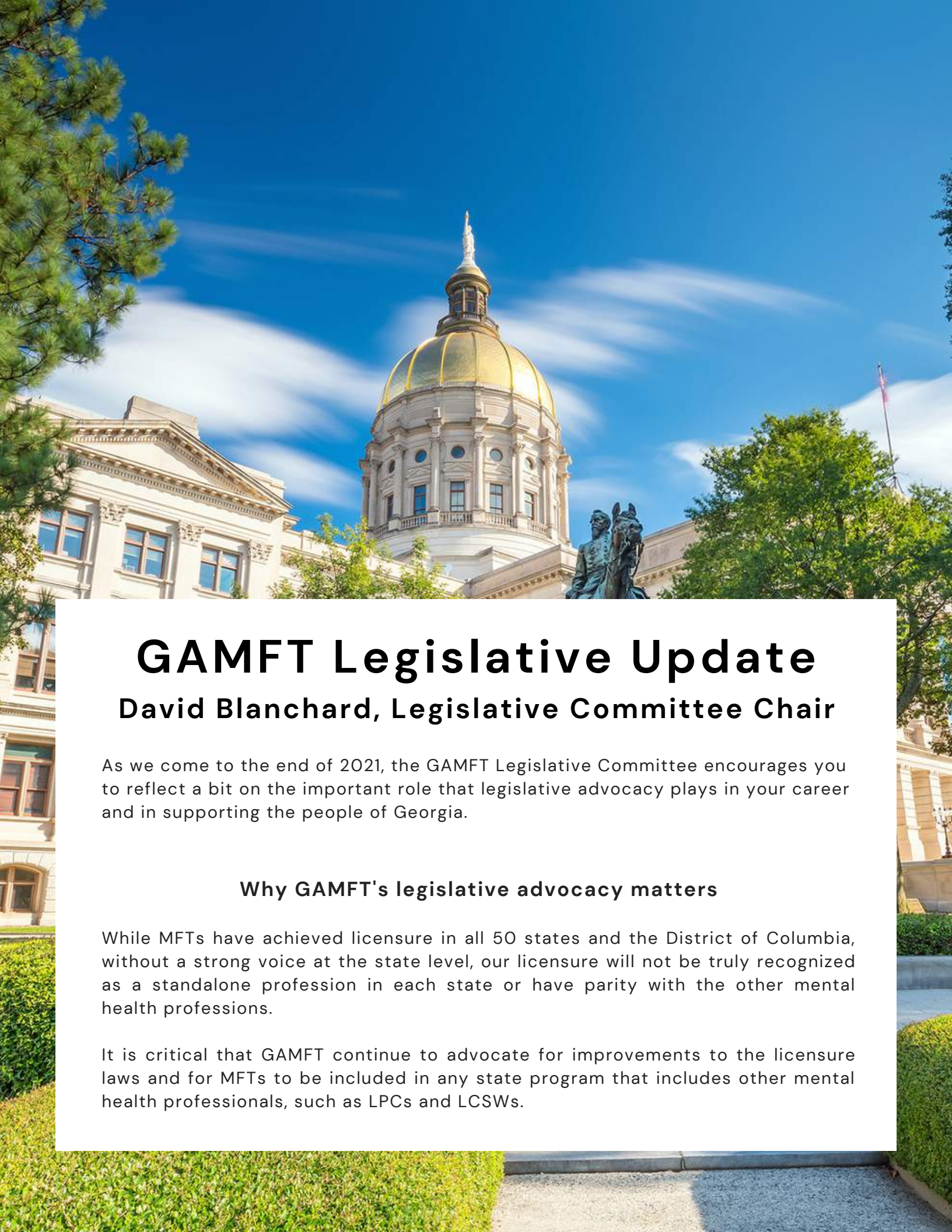
12 CEU's Training/Workshops

Substance Abuse & Risk Education
 Play Therapy Foundations & Theories
 Adlerian Play Therapy
 Expressive Arts in Play Therapy
 Effective Play Therapy Interventions for the ADHD
 Child
 Autism Spectrum Disorder: Support and Interventions
 for Clinicians & Parents
 Cultural Diversity
 Trauma, Grief Loss
 Treatment of Anger
 Counseling Theories
 Motivational Interviewing
 Psychopharmacology
 Divorce
 ASAM
 Survivors of Sexual Abuse



770-468-7424

We specialize in providing initial and renewal continuing education credits for Marriage and Family Therapists, Registered Play Therapists, and Addiction Counselors. Our workshops carry provider numbers for GAMFT, APT, GACA, ADACBGA, and NBCC. We also offer renewal education credits for Licensed Professional Counselors. For more information on all of our educational opportunities, please visit our websites! www.btcinstitute.org * www.brighter-tomorrows.com



GAMFT Legislative Update

David Blanchard, Legislative Committee Chair

As we come to the end of 2021, the GAMFT Legislative Committee encourages you to reflect a bit on the important role that legislative advocacy plays in your career and in supporting the people of Georgia.

Why GAMFT's legislative advocacy matters

While MFTs have achieved licensure in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, without a strong voice at the state level, our licensure will not be truly recognized as a standalone profession in each state or have parity with the other mental health professions.

It is critical that GAMFT continue to advocate for improvements to the licensure laws and for MFTs to be included in any state program that includes other mental health professionals, such as LPCs and LCSWs.

GAMFT advocates for you and causes across the state

Most critically, our legislative efforts focus on protecting and strengthening your MFT license. We are also proud to support mental health causes that impact individuals, families, and systems throughout the state.

While we have made important progress over the last year to successfully advocate for MFTs' right to provide for our clients' safety in a mental health emergency through the authority to utilize the 1013/2013, we have much work yet to be done in Georgia.

To continue this progress, we're asking for your financial support

A donation to the 2022 GAMFT Legislative Fund is an investment in your license, in your MFT colleagues, and in the people of Georgia we serve. For 2022, your donation will go toward funding the representation at the state capitol that our profession deserves.

Help GAMFT sustain our advocacy and legislative efforts with the experience and credibility needed to advocate for important issues such as:

- Active collaboration with other agencies to advocate for mental health parity in Georgia through legislative and budgetary initiatives
- The inclusion of MFTs as professionals eligible to participate in state-based programs that provide student loan forgiveness for providers who meet certain conditions
- Improvements to portability of the MFT license from state to state
- The improvement of insurance standards to require parity of disbursement for mental health services equal to other health care costs
- And the recognition of MFTs as eligible providers by state Medicaid plans

With a donation today, you will be helping us to monitor mental health related legislation in order to both defend against threats to our profession as well as advocate for its advancement and the overall improvement of mental healthcare in Georgia, each of which is vital to a strong safety net that reaches across urban and rural areas of our state.

Suggested donation levels

Please be a part of this effort at whatever level you can. We ask that you please consider making a donation in the amount of your standard session rate, whether that's \$25 or \$250. Or go above and beyond to donate \$1,013 – a nod to our success from last year, now that MFTs can complete life-saving 1013s.

No matter the donation amount, we appreciate your generosity and will invest every donation back into protecting and supporting MFTs and the people of Georgia. By donating to this fund, you are becoming a 2022 partner in our legislative fund. Without you we would not be able to make a difference.

Success level – \$1,013 or more

Vision level – \$500 or more

Champion level – Your session rate

Leader level – \$40 or more

Inspire level – \$20 or more

[CLICK TO DONATE](#)

2022 GAMFT Legislative Fund Committee

GAMFT would like to thank all the members of the 2022 GAMFT Legislative Fund Committee for the time and efforts they donate to this important work.

A special thank you to our committee chair, Michael Chafin.

Committee Members:

- David Blanchard
- Shannon Eller
- Tommy Hampton
- John Hill
- Carl Johnson
- Michele Smith
- Andrea Meyer Stinson
- Bowden Templeton
- Dan Upshaw

If you'd like to get involved or have any questions, please contact office@gamft.org ■

Selected CE Opportunities

See a full list of all continuing education events at gamft.org/upcoming-ce-events/

12/04 **Violence in Fairy Tales: A Symbolic Key to Violence in our Culture and Its Possible Transformation**

Hosted by C.G. Jung Society of Atlanta
2 Hours; Live webinar
Call 404-735-2125

12/14 **Complex Identity Formation for Adoptees & Donor Conceived Individuals**

Hosted by East Chapter of GAMFT
1 Core Hour; Live webinar
Email kshawburch@aol.com

12/07 **2-Day Certification Course on Grief Counseling for Children & Adolescents: Developmentally-Appropriate Assessment and Treatment Strategies for Processing Grief**

Hosted by PESI, Inc.
12.5 Hours; Live webinar

12/14 **Gender Spectrum: A Training for Mental health Clinicians**

Hosted by Fleurish Psychotherapy, LLC
2 Core Hours; Live webinar
Call 404-354-4026, ext. 2

12/08 **Compassion Fatigue Certification Training for Healthcare, Mental Health and Caring Professionals**

Hosted by Pesi, Inc.
6 Core Hours; Live webinar

12/15-12/17 **3 Day Dialectical Behavior Therapy Certification Training**

Hosted by Pesi, Inc.
12 Core Hours; Live webinar
Call 715-855-8131

12/10 **IFS and Polyvagal Theory: Healing Through Compassionate Connection**

Hosted by The Knowledge Tree
6 Core Hours; Live webinar
Call 404-913-2005

12/17 **Self Care for the Clinician: Cultivating Tools to Combat Multi-Layer Trauma and Burnout**

Hosted by Mindful Life Services, LLC
2.5 Ethics Hours; Live webinar
Visit www.selfcareincolor.net

Classifieds

Opportunities posted with GAMFT for employment, supervision, and more.

Employment Opportunity

Successful counseling practice in Alpharetta looking to add a skilled couples counselor. Experience working with couples in graduate school and/or clinical settings required. Marriage and Family Therapy license an advantage. Must have scheduling flexibility to be willing to see some clients on Fridays and Saturdays. Please send cover letter and resume to andrew@mconaghiecounseling.com.

Supervision Opportunity

New post graduate supervision group forming this spring. Meets the 2nd Friday of the month 9-11am in Roswell. Cost is \$60. Consultation prior to group start is required. Led by Jennifer Vann, LMFT, AAMFT Approved Supervisor.
<https://www.cornerstonefamilyservices.com/copy-of-jennifer-vann-lmft>.

Employment Opportunity

Thriving private practice in Woodstock, Georgia seeking licensed clinician to perform intake, therapy, and possible assessment/testing responsibilities. Clinician must be willing to join major insurance panels if not already a participating provider. Warm, friendly work environment with administrative and collegial support. Significant independence and ability to plan own work hours. Please contact office manager, Teresa Ingram, if interested at 770-592-0150.

Employment Opportunity

Accelerated Recovery Centers is seeking experienced LMFTs for Full-Time and Contract openings in our Family Systems Program. For more information, please contact Scott Ferguson at 678-429-3958 or at sferguson@iwanttostopnow.com. Days, Nights and Weekends.

Office Space

BEAUTIFUL OFFICE SPACE NEAR CLAIRMONT AND I-85. Amenities include office supplies, equipment, free parking and handicap access. Reasonably priced. Contact Jeanne Montgomery MA, LMFT 404-633-3347.

Submit to an upcoming issue

In addition to sharing relevant information with our members, the goal of the GAMFT newsletter is to strengthen our MFT community by supporting and promoting connection and inclusiveness through sharing our collective wisdom, resiliency and enthusiasm. Therefore, the more of us who contribute our knowledge, experience, and ideas, the richer our GAMFT family becomes.

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S. Anni Skurja

that offer educational and/or inspirational insights to your colleagues, reviews such as books or movies that may be valuable to MFT's, or any relevant information on issues involving the GAMFT community.

Please note that this does not include advertisements for workshops, employment or office space so please refer to the protocol for these submissions in the advertisement section. All submissions will be printed in full as received whenever possible but are subject to editing for length, clarity, readability, grammar, spelling, biased language, and appropriateness. Opinions expressed in the GAMFT newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GAMFT. Submission of an article does not guarantee its publication.

Submission Guidelines:

- Articles can include a maximum word count of 920 for full page; recommend maximum 750-word count with photo. Approximate word counts also include: 690 for 3/4 page; 460 for 1/2 page; 230 for 1/4 page.
- We encourage including a professional photo of the author. Please also provide your name and credentials as they should appear in the article. Please submit a 1-2 line biography of the author as well to be added at the end of the article. The Newsletter is published quarterly, in February, May, August, and November.
- Submissions need to be received by noon on the 20th of the month prior to the newsletter going out that you would like your submission included in.
- Articles can be submitted in Word or PDF format to socialmediagamft@gmail.com and any questions can be directed to our Communications Chair and Newsletter Editor, S. Anni Skurja, at the above email address.

We look forward to hearing from you and including your voice in this process. Thank you!

Advertise with us

Looking to announce an upcoming workshop, employment opportunity or available office space? The GAMFT newsletter is released quarterly in February, May, August, and November and provides a great option to reach our active members.

Rates:

- Classified listing \$35.00
- 1/4 page (3 1/2 x 4 5/8) \$70.00
- 1/2 page (7 5/8 x 4 5/8) \$140.00
- Full page (7 5/8 x 9 7/8) \$280.00

★ 20% Discount for GAMFT Members

Submission Deadlines:

- January 15
- April 15
- July 15
- October 15

To inquire about advertising with us, email saskurja@phoenixrisingga.com



Board of Directors

Executive Committee

President: Andrea Meyer Stinson, Ph.D., LMFT, 478-301-4098

President-Elect: Kara McDaniel, Ph.D., LPC, 678-430-8089

Vice President: Adam Albrite, Ph.D., LMFT, 404-804-0218

Secretary: Jennifer Vann, LMFT, 770-910-2753

Treasurer: Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., LMFT, 229-245-4323

Committee Leadership

Approved Supervisors: Elizabeth Bizzell, LMFT, 478-952-8736

Continuing Education: Jeff Bickers, LMFT, 229-244-4200

Elections:

Tiana Teague, LAMFT, 470-354-0239

Adam Froerer, Ph.D., LMFT, 678-547-6787

Tabitha McCoy, ABD, LMFT, 229-921-7761

Ethics: Meg McLeroy, LMFT, 404-721-3596

Legislative: David Blanchard, LAMFT, 770-876-0639

Membership: Ronda Shirley, LMFT, 478-922-2700

Multicultural Issues: Cecil Walker, LAMFT, 470-231-9640

Personnel: Michael Williamson, LMFT, 478-227-4189

Public Relations: Abby Culin, LAMFT, 678-329-7009

Student Representation: Shirley Shani Ben-Zvi, LAMFT, 770-846-2595

Communications: S. Anni Skurja, LMFT, 404-907-3958

Chapter Leadership

Coastal GA (Savannah): OPEN

East GA (Augusta): Ashley Quamme, LMFT, 919-218-8697

Metro Atlanta: Dan Upshaw, LMFT, 404-585-1404

North Metro Atlanta: Ken Cross, LMFT, 770-429-9293

Middle GA (Macon): Andrew Benesh, Ph.D., LMFT, 478-301-4078

Northeast GA (Athens): Jennifer Gonyea, Ph.D., LMFT, 762-499-6700

Northwest GA (Roswell): OPEN

South GA (Valdosta): Leah McMillan, DPA, LMFT, 229-262-1000

South Atlanta: OPEN

Southwest GA (Albany): OPEN

West GA (Columbus): OPEN

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