



RIVER EDGE
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER

2014

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES
ADDICTION RECOVERY SERVICES

Regional Impact: Ready for the Future

WE ARE

behavioral healthcare that adds substantial quality of life through high quality professional services that respect the uniqueness of all individuals

The keystone provider of behavioral healthcare in our community

To our friends and partners, thank you for your help this year furthering the message that mental illnesses, addictions and developmental disabilities are biologically based conditions unworthy of the stigma they have endured.

Thank you for helping us tell far and wide that River Edge outcomes prove that...

Treatment is effective. Recovery can be expected.

Recovery from behavioral health disorders is real, restoring the lives of family members and neighbors every day in every way.

Thank you for being welcomers, helping River Edge prove that with the right supports, persons with developmental disabilities can live meaningful lives of independence and inclusion in their home communities.

To support recovery and resilience, independence and inclusion, hope and health as well as regional revitalization and economic development, River Edge continued its service and infrastructure growth this past year. Celebrate with us as you read within these pages the centers of excellence your partnership helped us to accomplish.

There is still much to be done. In advance, thank you for your continued, strengthened partnership.

Together, we will make life even better.



Shannon Terrell Harvey, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer

EXECUTIVE TEAM

Shannon Terrell Harvey, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer

Sue B. Chipman
Chief Advancement Officer

Miranda Nunez, LCSW
Chief Clinical Officer

Lisa Rudeseal, LPC
Chief Operating Officer

Beth Tyler
Chief Financial Officer

Ali Yallah, Ph.D., PMP
Chief Information Officer

We appreciate your interest in our annual report of performance on behalf of persons served by River Edge Behavioral Health Center.

The Board and Management Team of River Edge are humbled by CARF International's identifying our leadership as exemplary during the 2013 site visit.

It is our honor to serve as we work together with you to promote recovery and resilience, independence and inclusion, hope and health, **to make life better** for the people, partners and communities we serve.

Read. Enjoy. Celebrate accomplishments with us. More importantly, stay engaged. Help us make life even better. We need you.

Ray A. Bennett
Chairman of the Board

COMMUNITY SERVICE BOARD



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Utilization Management



RIVER EDGE

For over 60 years, River Edge has provided comprehensive mental health, addictive disease, and developmental disabilities services and supports in Central Georgia. Through multiple locations, River Edge currently serves nearly 15,000 youth and adult residents in Central Georgia annually.

With special expertise to assist individuals with intensive support needs, River Edge empowers, encourages recovery and strengthens resilience.

WHEN ASKED TO TELL HER STORY, THE ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT YOUNG WOMAN FROM A PROMINENT FAMILY DECLARED, “I DRANK MYSELF OUT OF A HOME AND CAREER.” This graduate from an internationally renowned college, chose not to be identified. Why? To spare her family from more pain, given the stigma that—unfortunately—still surrounds behavioral health disorders.

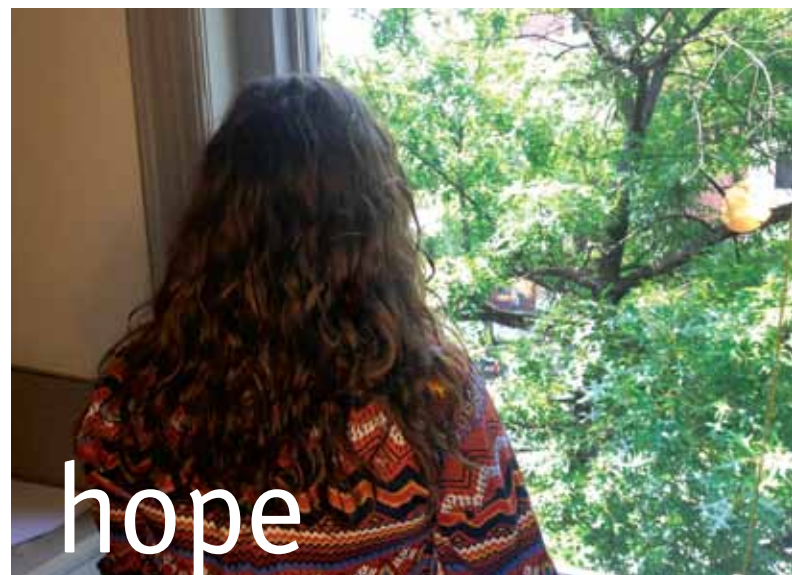
She recently passed the exam to become a Certified Addiction Counselor; however, her journey to healing has been a long and painful one for her and her family. When she got drunk two times in high school, she promised her parents it would never happen again. That promise was broken soon after she arrived at college where drinking to relieve the pressure was a “way of life.”

Early on she knew she was not the “normal” drinker. She “drank to get drunk” and would drink until she passed out. Finally, after a two-week jail stint, praying for God’s help and knowing assistance from family and friends was unlikely, the judge asked if she was ready for treatment. She agreed and entered Project Connect, chemical dependency recovery services specifically designed for women of child-bearing age, at River Edge. Once, when she didn’t show up for a scheduled session, staff from River Edge, going above and beyond, found her passed out in her home. On the way to the hospital, her heart

failed. She brushed death. “I’d be dead now if it weren’t for the caring staff of River Edge who went above and beyond for me,” she says.

She describes her journey as “six years of hell” through joblessness, homelessness and a sense of not being worthy to her present place of peace and promise as an addiction counselor. Though it took several tries before she achieved sustained sobriety, her experiences give her a unique ability to share strength and hope with addicts who still suffer.

Her conviction is evident as she supports and assists persons served by River Edge as they pursue their own recovery. Daily, she works to make life better.





empowerment

“If it hadn’t been for River Edge, I couldn’t have done this.”

—James Palmer

“I’LL GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE THIS FALL WITH A 3.9 INSTEAD OF THE 4.0 I PLANNED,” says James Palmer with disappointment. The academic overachiever has learned a lot about self-discipline and goals in recent months. “Now, thanks to River Edge, I’m facing life on life’s terms.”

James explains he was always a good student and in high school, he was jointly enrolled in college. His parents were not supportive of his plans to continue his college career in Atlanta after high school, but he stubbornly went anyway. Now, over 25 years later, he wishes he had listened to them.

“I battled drug addiction and alcoholism from about the time I was 20 until ... 45 or so,” he said. In and out of rehabilitation, James wanted to live a different life but somehow always fell back into old lifestyle choices. Then, after a stay at a homeless shelter, someone referred him to River Edge. “River Edge provided me with supportive housing and wrap-around supports. Then, I could focus on sustaining my sobriety and bettering my life.” James made excellent use of the assistance provided by River Edge.


Without doubt, he has bettered his life. James proudly shared a folder full of certificates—highest score on the Certified Billing and Coding Specialist exam, perfect attendance, President’s List, Certified Peer Specialist, and more. He’ll graduate in September and feels sure his parents will be there cheering him on. His “disappointing” 3.9 GPA will likely be of great assistance when he starts his career in the medical records business. And, James is quick to again point out, “If it hadn’t been for River Edge, I couldn’t have done this.”

> \$104 MILLION

Positive Economic Impact
of River Edge to
Central Georgia in 2014

1,191

Number of Jobs Created
by River Edge in 2014



River Edge dispensed prescriptions valued wholesale at \$3.8 million last year to the uninsured. This was made possible by public-private partnership and the generosity of donors.

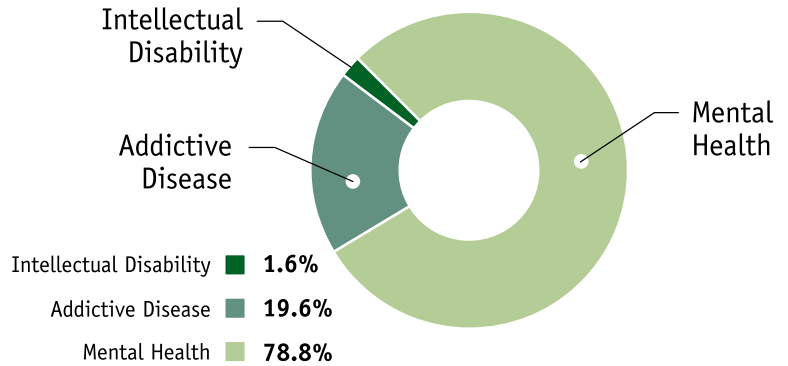
Donna Cunningham, a pharmacist at the River Edge pharmacy in Macon, fills a prescription.

14,671

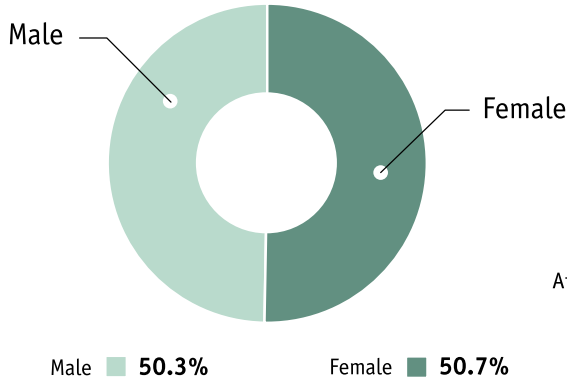
People Served in 2014*

*FISCAL YEAR: JULY-JUNE

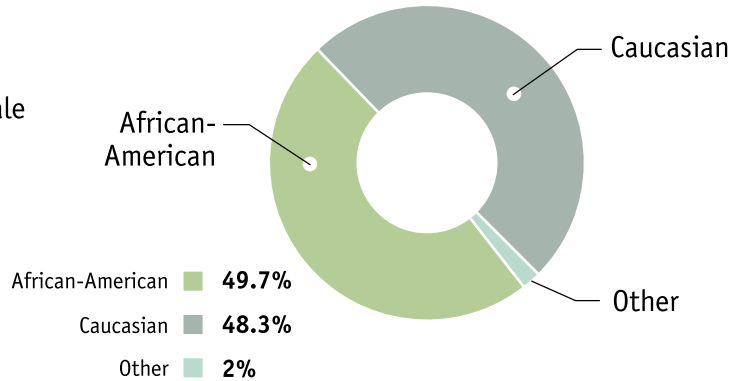
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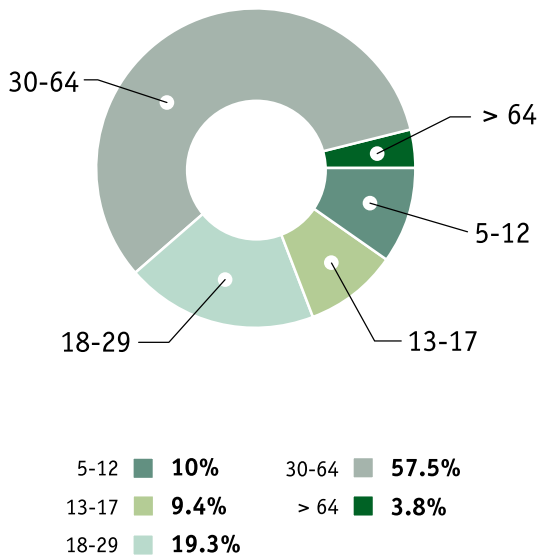
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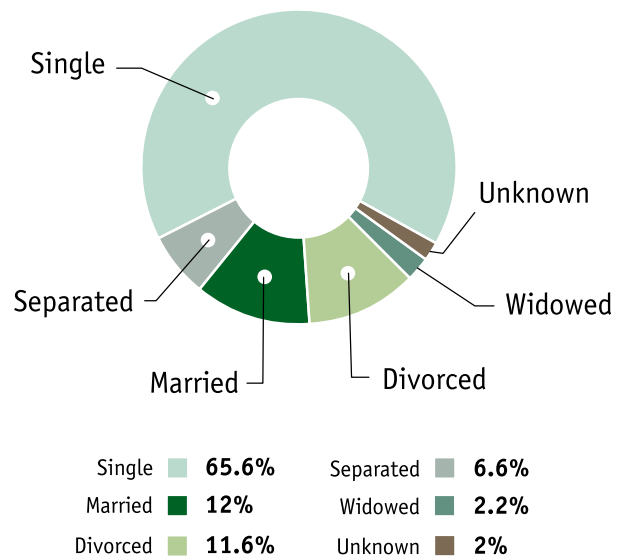
Served by
RACE



Served by
AGE



Served by
MARITAL STATUS





Ronnie Gehling with his sister,
Bonnie Gehling

independence

With the right supports, persons with developmental disabilities can live meaningful lives of independence and inclusion in their home communities.

WHEN BONNIE GEHLING MOVED FROM WISCONSIN TO GEORGIA IN THE EARLY 90s, SHE HOPED HER MOM AND BROTHER RONNIE WOULD FOLLOW. After a visit to the south over the winter, they did just that. Ronnie, who has a developmental disability, lived with their mom until she died in 1996. Bonnie accepted the responsibility as his primary caregiver with love and compassion. Bonnie also knew Ronnie could, and should, have the opportunity to be more independent.

While Ronnie participated in community access day services, teaching full-time and meeting Ronnie's needs often required creative scheduling on Bonnie's part. Then, the Residential Coordinator of River Edge suggested that Ronnie could live more independently. Guiding her through the application and qualifying process, Ronnie now lives with three other adults in a neighborhood home with independence supports provided by River Edge.

"Family members shouldn't be afraid to let go.

Too often, we hang on trying to provide all the care needed—more out of guilt than anything," Bonnie said. She sees that Ronnie living in his own home has allowed him to broaden his horizons while allowing her to take care of herself. And, she still has a wonderful relationship with her brother.

"I have been an active sister and freely express my feelings about Ronnie's needs and the care he receives. River Edge listens and responds," she declared. She sees that River Edge actively seeks opportunities to better serve, adapting to the individuals' changing needs as they age.

Bonnie's confidence in River Edge and its ability to provide superior supports to Ronnie is apparent. She declared that central Georgia is fortunate to have an organization like River Edge providing specialized services that promote independence and inclusive, meaningful life for persons with disabilities. She takes comfort in knowing that River Edge will assure that Ronnie will have a good life—even after she is gone.

health

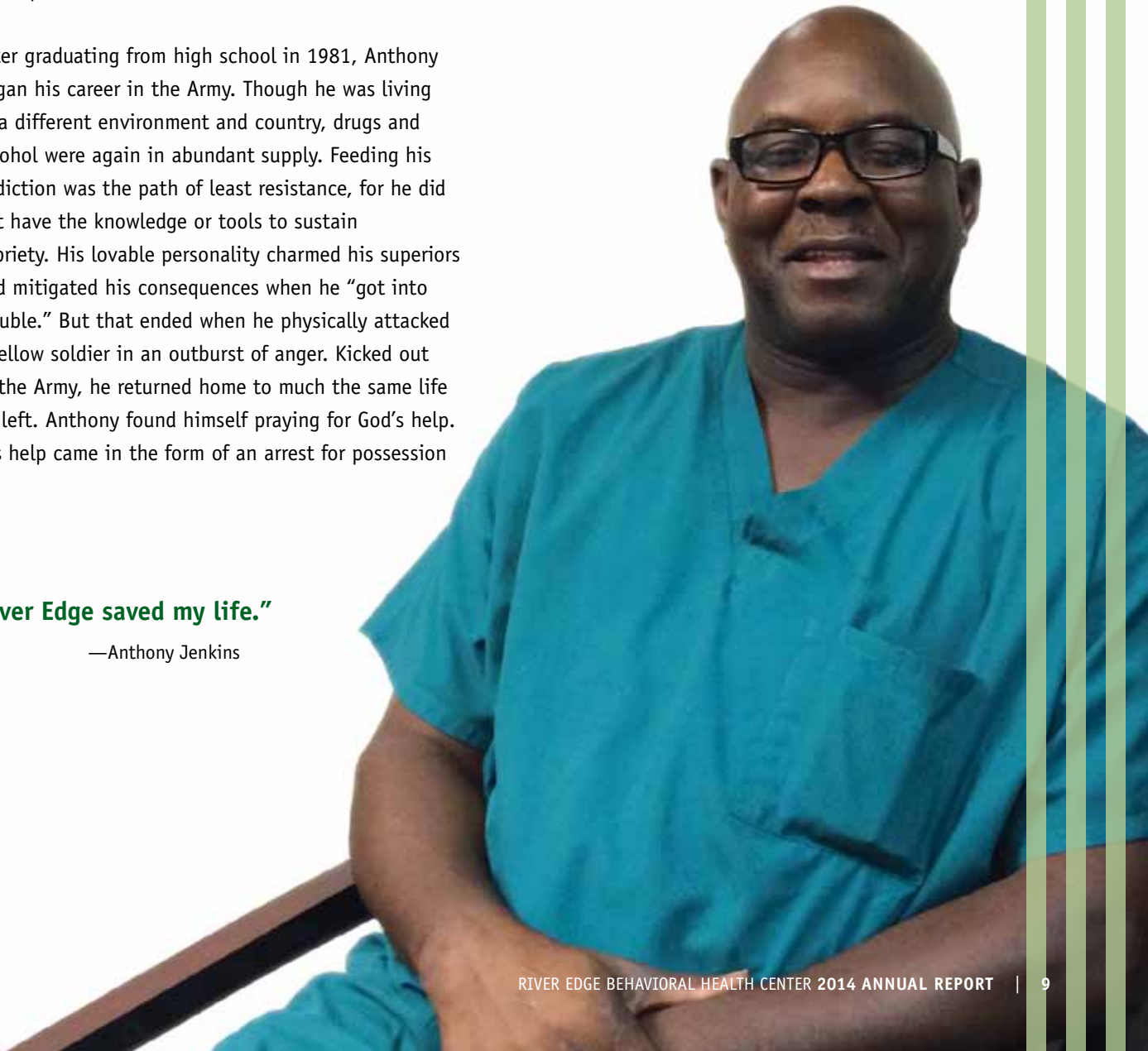
GROWING UP IN A ROUGH NEIGHBORHOOD OF MACON, ANTHONY KNEW HE WANTED A LIFE DIFFERENT FROM HOW HE GREW UP—drugs, alcohol, violence, and instability. His mother worked hard to provide the basics of life for her two sons but it was always hard. Surrounded by “bootleggers” and drug users, he witnessed a lot of painful abuse. He was introduced to alcohol and drugs at home, taking his first drink at age six and frequenting clubs by 14. He found “liquid courage” in alcohol. He started drinking and using for fun. Soon, however, alcohol and drugs gained the upper hand and addiction began to control him. The person he became while under the influence was a person he didn’t know or want to be.

After graduating from high school in 1981, Anthony began his career in the Army. Though he was living in a different environment and country, drugs and alcohol were again in abundant supply. Feeding his addiction was the path of least resistance, for he did not have the knowledge or tools to sustain sobriety. His lovable personality charmed his superiors and mitigated his consequences when he “got into trouble.” But that ended when he physically attacked a fellow soldier in an outburst of anger. Kicked out of the Army, he returned home to much the same life he left. Anthony found himself praying for God’s help. His help came in the form of an arrest for possession

and a referral to drug court. There he met a counselor who told him, “If you are struggling, we will get you some help.” The next morning, he found himself at River Edge where he began his recovery. He vowed to do whatever the people there told him to do. With tears streaming down this big, strong man’s face, he declared, “River Edge saved my life.” He now arrives at his job as a Health Services Technician at River Edge’s Crisis Recovery Center singing a happy song and ready to do whatever needs to be done. Sober for almost twelve years now, he welcomes the opportunity to tell his story and give credit to River Edge and the higher power he found there.

“River Edge saved my life.”

—Anthony Jenkins



BEYOND THE NUMBERS

RIVER EDGE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER CONTINUES TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE SERVICES.

Re-secured \$450,000 of federal money to provide residential supports to persons with HIV infection at Serenity FALLS (a Fresh Approach to Living Life Successfully);

Hosted National Recovery Month celebration on September 27, 2013 in Milledgeville with over 300 participants;

Negotiated an agreement with TenderCare/Family Medical of Milledgeville to open primary care services inside River Edge's Baldwin Outpatient location;

Implemented a new supervisor's curriculum;

In partnership with Macon-Bibb County, developed a complex of ten mixed use housing units, completing the revitalization of an entire city block;

In partnership with the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and Georgia Behavioral Health Services, Inc., constructed 12 new units of affordable housing in Baldwin County, River Shoals;

Entered a partnership with Auburn University bringing board certified behavior analysts to Macon;

Developed a strategic alliance with a private firm, Veamea, to expand the use of telemedicine in behavioral health service delivery;

Was awarded new funds to build two new green and universal designed homes for adults with intellectual disabilities;

Established a new in-network relationship with Triumph Aerospace in Milledgeville to serve as the provider of choice for employees in need;

Became Georgia's first mental health center to work toward leveraging additional federal dollars with the Governor's Office of Offender Re-entry;

Established an Office of Advancement to strengthen relationships with the private donor community.



PHOTO: KRISTEN SOLES

RECOGNIZED PERFORMANCE

For innovation with health information technology by the United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the American Telemedicine Association;

By receiving a 3-year CARF International accreditation, achieving exemplary designation in the areas of leadership and supportive housing;

By naming River Edge's CEO to the Georgia Wellcare Clinical Advisory Committee;

By being selected by the University of Southern California to provide an executive masters in social work internship;

By tapping River Edge leaders to provide community input regarding planned changes to Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities contract performance indicators and funding mechanisms.



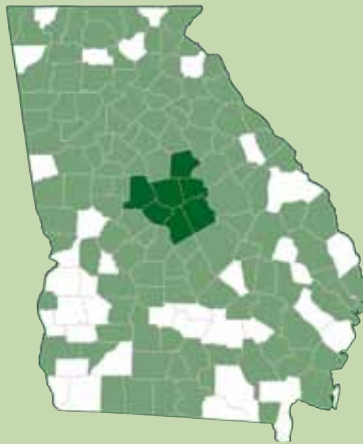
RIVER EDGE

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER

175 Emery Highway
Macon, GA 31217
(478) 803-7600
www.river-edge.org

River Edge Foundation
(478) 803-7800 Office
(478) 803-8528 Fax

Together, we will make life even better.



In FY14, River Edge served 14,671 youth and adults from 7 primary counties (Bibb, Baldwin, Jones, Monroe, Putnam, Twiggs and Wilkinson) and 117 additional Georgia counties.



River Edge - Bibb County

175 Emery Highway
Macon, GA 31217
(478) 803-7600

River Edge - Baldwin County

60 Highway 22 West
Milledgeville, GA 31061
(478) 451-2700

River Edge - Monroe County

168 Old Brent Road
Forsyth, GA 31029
(478) 803-7602

River Edge - Jones County

530 Settlement Drive, Suite A
Gray, GA 31032
(478) 803-8701

River Edge - Twiggs County

952 Main Street
Jeffersonville, GA 31044
(478) 803-8711

The Recovery Center Crisis Stabilization Units

3575 Fulton Mill Road
Macon, GA 31044
Child and Adolescent (478) 803-8605
Adult (478) 803-8617

LifeSPRING

5113 College Crossing Drive
Macon, GA 31206
(478) 803-8729

Billingslea Recovery Residence

1243 First Avenue
Macon, GA 31204
(478) 803-8723

Developmental Disabilities

139 Woodfield Drive
Macon, GA 31204
(478) 803-7657

Options Senior

595 Wimbish Road
Macon, GA 31210
(478) 803-8083

Crisis Service Center

60 Highway 22 West
Milledgeville, GA 31061
(478) 451-2797

Forensic Social Services

Bibb County Law Enforcement Center
688 Oglethorpe Street
Macon, GA 31201

The Prevention Resource Center

175 Emery Highway
Macon, GA 31217
(478) 803-7707