



***Our Mission:*** *To provide an outlet for adopted teens to address many of their concerns in a supportive group environment among their peers. This mentoring program is truly a special place for special friends where group members feel safe in sharing their thoughts relating to adoption.*

The Adopted Teen Empowerment & Mentoring Program (ATEAM) is a post adoption service program established in partnership by the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services, Social Services Administration Unit and Family Matters Consulting, Inc. Both public and private colleges and youth facilities host these monthly support meetings across the state. Meeting times are generally from 9:15 am – 4:30 pm with two weekend retreats planned each year.

### ***Who is this program designed for?***

The ATEAM is designed for adopted teens in 6th—12th grades. The ATEAM provides participants with an opportunity for mutual support and self-expression through group interactions with other adopted teens. Members strive to understand the unique aspects of adoption and are encouraged to express their concerns openly. By hearing how others have coped with their feelings, participants can oftentimes inspire other adopted teens to work through their own issues and learn to grow in self-acceptance and self-respect.

In addition, the ATEAM offers guided parent support meetings, educational resources, training materials and respite opportunities for adoptive parents.

### ***Where are these programs held?***

The ATEAM values the importance of these programs being placed on college campuses and youth facilities across the state in order to expose adopted teens to the many resources and opportunities available to them through this type of environment. These settings offer teens exposure to experiences and resources readily available on campus, including cultural events, social activities, recreational venues, and academic enrichment.

### ***What is the purpose of this program?***

Adoption adds to the complexity of adolescent development, and adopted teenagers may need extra support in dealing with certain adoption issues.

Adopted teens and adult mentors come together every month to help validate each other's feelings. For those who were adopted at an older age from the foster care system, this type of supportive environment may be helpful. In most cases even when teens appear happy and well adjusted in their adoptive families, they may still be dealing with the effects of their early life experience.

The ATEAM is designed for adopted teens and their adoptive parents to help them handle whatever emotions they may be feeling. By offering this special population the additional support they

sometimes need, we hope to help them forge even stronger family attachments and enhance their future relationships.

### ***What does this program have to offer?***

This unique program offers a safe, well-supervised environment for adopted teens to have fun with their peers during meetings and retreats. All activities are sequenced to promote trust and build group cohesion. The ATEAM offers a variety of “hands on” activities involving teambuilding initiatives, cooperative games, focus discussion, and role-play.

Through experiential learning activities both on and off site, teens are inspired to face their obstacles, make their own decisions, and develop leadership skills. The structure, content and processing of activities is aimed toward enhancing interpersonal relationships, increasing social skills, and improving family communication.

### ***Who May Participate?***

Eligible teen participants are those receiving Adoption Assistance that have been in the custody of a state agency and are either in an adoptive placement or a finalized adoption. The ATEAM welcomes adopted teens that will benefit from becoming part of a supportive group where there is mutual respect among all members. Mentors encourage teens to share their creative ideas, exhibit problem-solving ability, and demonstrate an acceptance of others in a group setting.

This program is offered to teens whose needs and goals are compatible with the overall goals of the group and may not be well suited for teens that may experience difficulties interacting within a large group setting. This program does not provide psychological treatment of any kind and should not be considered as a substitute for professional counseling or therapy. The ATEAM encourages participation from teens that are willing to abide by the ATEAM Code of Conduct.

### ***Program Goals:***

The overall goals of the ATEAM program are to provide adopted youth with the following opportunities:

- Personal growth through experiential learning activities, mentoring, and guided support
- Experience a college campus and the resources that are available in this type of setting by providing enhanced learning opportunities including cultural events, social activities, athletic venues, and academic enrichment
- Assistance and support to help teens address issues relating to their adoption
- Skills and information for future goal setting and career development

***Our Vision:*** Is to offer adopted teens emotional support and guidance in order to help them work through the past and prepare them for the future.

## ATEAM Locations in Georgia

Location	Host	Regional Site Coordinator	Phone/Email
Rome	Berry College	Nyoka Rogers	706-594-5700 <a href="mailto:ateamberry@familymatters-ga.com">ateamberry@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Atlanta	Mercer University, Atlanta	Letitia Robinson	912-484-4944 <a href="mailto:ateamatlanta@familymatters-ga.com">ateamatlanta@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Morrow	Clayton State University	Sirocus Barnes	229-630-8760 <a href="mailto:ateamclayton@familymatters-ga.com">ateamclayton@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Carrollton	The University of West Georgia	Orondus Mons	770-815-8632 <a href="mailto:ateamwestga@familymatters-ga.com">ateamwestga@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Athens	The University of Georgia	Jeff Barnett	706-540-3221 <a href="mailto:ateamathens@familymatters-ga.com">ateamathens@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Macon	Middle Georgia State College	Carmelita Mason	708-466-9736 <a href="mailto:ateammacon@familymatters-ga.com">ateammacon@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Milledgeville	Middle Georgia State College	Carmelita Mason	708-466-9736 <a href="mailto:ateammacon@familymatters-ga.com">ateammacon@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Augusta	Augusta University	Dave Mihoulides	803-507-1709 <a href="mailto:ateamaugusta@familymatters-ga.com">ateamaugusta@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Columbus	Columbus State University	Ronnie Bell	706-587-6246 <a href="mailto:ateamcolumbus@familymatters-ga.com">ateamcolumbus@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Thomasville	Georgia Military College	Kevin Keve	229-224-0186 <a href="mailto:ateamvaldosta@familymatters-ga.com">ateamvaldosta@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Valdosta	Georgia Military College	Kevin Keve	229-224-0186 <a href="mailto:ateamvaldosta@familymatters-ga.com">ateamvaldosta@familymatters-ga.com</a>
Savannah	Georgia Southern University Armstrong Campus	Bobby Roberts	929-352-5950 <a href="mailto:ateamsavannah@familymatters-ga.com">ateamsavannah@familymatters-ga.com</a>

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