



**Media Contact:**  
**Chaunda Lockett**  
[Chaundra.Lockett@CHRIS180.org](mailto:Chaundra.Lockett@CHRIS180.org)

**CHRIS 180 ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF PRESIDENT & CEO**  
*Kathy Colbenson, LMFT, Retires after 37 Years Serving Atlanta's Youth*

**ATLANTA (April 24, 2024)** – After an extraordinary career in mental health spanning four decades, Kathy Colbenson, LMFT, is retiring as the Chief Executive Officer of CHRIS 180. Colbenson, a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with more than 40 years of experience, has been the driving force behind CHRIS 180's transformative growth since assuming leadership in 1987. The organization was founded in 1981 by The Junior League of Atlanta, Inc. in partnership with the Menninger Foundation.

"Kathy has created a tremendous legacy of service," said Jay Bernath, chair of CHRIS 180 board of directors. We celebrate the foundational programs that have been established under Kathy's leadership, and we are committed to sustaining the critical services that so many have come to rely on. More than 200,000 individuals in the Atlanta area have been served, trained and supported with CHRIS 180. And, as our work continues to grow and evolve, we expect to serve hundreds of thousands of others."

During her 36-year tenure, Colbenson has spearheaded several groundbreaking initiatives, including the establishment of Georgia's first wraparound pilot, the Southeast's first program for youth experiencing homelessness with targeted outreach to LGBTQ+ young adults in 2000; the creation of Georgia's inaugural supportive housing program for youth aging out of foster care and experiencing homelessness in 2010; the state's first school-based mental health program, and the current development of its Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic to increase the delivery of these services to underserved and vulnerable populations, just to name a few.

Under Colbenson's stewardship, CHRIS 180 became a two-time winner of the Managing for Excellence Award from the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta and has garnered national recognition for its expertise in trauma-informed care and excellence in program delivery. Her unwavering commitment and leadership have earned her numerous accolades and awards, including the Dan Bradley Humanitarian Award from the Human Rights Campaign in 2003, the Evelyn Ullman Innovative Leadership Award in 2010, and the Turknett Leadership Character Award in 2013. She has been selected as one of Atlanta's Most Admired CEOs by the Atlanta Business Chronicle, and in 2020 Kathy was recognized by the YWCA of Greater Atlanta as a Woman of Achievement and was named as a 2020 Woman Making a Mark. In 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 & 2024, Colbenson was named one of Atlanta's 500 Most Influential Leaders by Atlanta Magazine.

Recently Kathy also received the Vision for Children award from Together Georgia, a network of child and family service providers dedicated to promoting the welfare of children and families across the state.

“Within three months of starting at CHRIS 180, I knew I was where God had prepared me to be. And while I’m going to take some time for myself when I formally retire, I don’t plan to walk away from my commitment to the work of CHRIS 180 or my advocacy on behalf of children, youth and families,” Colbenson said. “I will remain involved in new ways and continue to work to expand services for our community.

The CHRIS 180 Board of Directors has engaged Boardwalk Consulting to conduct a formal, nationwide search for Colbenson’s successor. She will continue to lead CHRIS 180 and work with its new leader and the board during the transition.

In recognition of Colbenson’s leadership, CHRIS 180 will honor her at its annual fundraiser, [The CHRIStal Ball](#) on Saturday, August 17. The event will commemorate her legacy and celebrate her remarkable contributions to thousands across Metro Atlanta.

#### **About CHRIS 180**

CHRIS 180 was founded in 1981 and provides life-changing trauma-informed behavioral health services and wraparound support to children, adults and families that empowers them to change the direction of their lives. For more information, visit [CHRIS180.org](http://CHRIS180.org).