



**SGS Advocacy in Aging Virtual Forum**  
**Finding Your Place in Advocacy for**  
**Disaster Planning & Response**  
**October 17 & 18, 2023**

**SGS** SOUTHERN GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
 Bridging Aging Research & Practice

This two-day virtual forum will provide opportunities to explore challenges, highlight best practices, and discuss ways for attendees to become more involved in addressing disaster planning and response activities within their own organizations and communities. We'll hear from local, state, national and international voices on disaster response networks, best practices, key resources and training, and volunteer opportunities.

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



**DAY 1: OCTOBER 17, 2023**  
**1:00 - 3:30 PM**

**1:00 PM – 1:10 PM**

**Welcome**

Amanda James  
*SGS Executive Director*

**1:10 PM – 1:35 PM**



**Community-based Older Adults and Disasters:  
Who is Responsibility for their Safety?**

Dr. Lindsay Peterson  
*School of Aging Studies*  
*University of South Florida*

A review of the vulnerability of older adults who live on their own in the community and the varied regulations and policies concerning how to ensure their safety in disasters, with a focus on gaps and opportunities.

**1:35 PM – 2:00 PM Guidance for Disaster Preparedness for Older Adults**



**FEMA**

Jacqui Robinson  
*Community Preparedness Officer, Region 3*  
*Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)*

A comprehensive outline for tips, guidance, resources, and tools available to help older adults stay safe during times of natural disaster.

**2:00 PM – 2:10 PM**

**Sponsorship Appreciation Break**

*Thank you to our Sponsors for their support. Please take time to learn more about our sponsors by reviewing their descriptions in this program.*

**DAY 1: OCTOBER 17, 2023 CONT.**  
**1:00 - 3:30 PM**

**2:10 PM - 3:10 PM**



**The State Perspective:  
From Advocacy to Action**

*Facilitated by Chanel Reid*

Martha Roherty (unable to attend due to sickness)  
*Executive Director  
Advancing States*

Jennifer Hogan  
*Disaster Preparedness Coordinator  
Division of Aging Services  
Georgia Department of Human Services*

Kira Houge  
*Bureau Chief of Community and Support Services  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

Ashley Apthorp  
*Director of Statewide Community Based Services  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs*

Discover the interplay between advocacy and action in state disaster preparedness and response. Learn about how some states are using Master Plans to incorporate disaster planning. Discuss challenges, best practices, and learn how you can help!

**3:10 PM - 3:25 PM**

**Breakout Discussion Groups**

We end the day by learning from one another: Attendees will breakout and discuss their experience(s) with disaster planning, the gaps they have noticed and share resources with one another.

**3:25 PM - 3:30 PM**

**Closing**

Annie Rhodes  
*SGS Advocacy and Public Policy Committee Chair*

**DAY 2: OCTOBER 18, 2023**  
**1:00 - 3:30 PM**

**1:00 PM – 1:05 PM**

**Welcome**

Annie Rhodes  
*SGS Advocacy and Public Policy Committee Chair*

**1:05 PM – 1:20 PM**



**Community Emergency Response  
Team Volunteering:**

**Becoming a trained ally to act effectively and safely in local,  
state, and federal disaster mitigation and response**

Andrew Ferguson  
*FEMA Type III Incident Management Team Liaison Officer  
Western Branch of North Carolina Emergency Management*

Dr. Lee Ann Ferguson  
*Program Manager and Trainer  
Alexander County CERT team*

Disaster situations and recovery often become a catalyst for people wanting to offer their help. Without proper training in aspects such as basic disaster response, operations, disaster psychology, fire safety, and search and rescue, well-intended volunteers can quickly become a liability and risk, more than an aid to the situation or those who are responding to it. Community emergency Response Team (CERT) trained volunteers work as a team, are deployable by emergency officials, and have been widely recognized as valued contributors in both non-emergency and disaster situations. In this session, The Ferguson team will discuss the CERT program, explore the basic CERT training module, and emphasize the many ways in which CERT volunteer teams and their trained members serve as a valuable support.

**1:20 PM – 2:05 PM Equity and Policy in Disaster Planning and Response**



Dr. Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed  
*Research Lead  
Centre for Disaster Protection*

Taking an equity approach and lessons learned from across the Globe, Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed will review how disaster planning and response can fall short for those with historically marginalized identities and provide examples of how we can move forward into an equitable and inclusive disaster policy landscape.

**DAY 2: OCTOBER 18, 2023 CONT.**  
**1:00 - 3:30 PM**

**2:05 PM – 2:15 PM**

**Sponsorship Appreciation Break**

*Thank you to our Sponsors for their support. Please take time to learn more about our sponsors by reviewing their descriptions in this program.*

**2:15 PM – 3:15 PM**

**Collaborations and Community in  
Disaster Planning and Response:**

**Learn about different players and how they integrate in the disaster puzzle**

*Facilitated by Sandi Lane*



**Stephen Sneed**

*Media Relations Specialist*

*Samaritan's Purse*



**Georgia Department of  
Behavioral Health and  
Developmental Disabilities**

**Kalie Burke (unable to attend due to sickness)**

*Disaster Mental Health Coordinator*

*GA Department of Behavioral Health  
and Developmental Disabilities*

*Georgia Emergency Preparedness Coalition*

**Neil Ligon, J.D.**

*Executive Director*

*Living Independence for Everyone (LIFE), Inc.*

*Georgia Emergency Preparedness Coalition*

*Coastal Alliance of CILs Active in Disaster*



Disaster planning, response and mitigation is complex and require cooperation and coordination from diverse groups. Join Samaritans Purse and the Georgia Coalition for Emergency Preparedness to learn about the role of community-based organizations in disasters, how community-based organizations collaborate with one another and regulatory agencies to prepare and respond to disasters.

**DAY 2: OCTOBER 18, 2023 CONT.**  
**1:00 - 3:30 PM**

**3:15 PM - 3:25 PM**

**Breakout Discussion Groups**

Get ready to close our forum by discussing the next steps for the Southern Gerontological Society. Let us know what you would like to see from SGS and how this information will influence your work or personal life.

**3:25 PM - 3:30 PM**

**Closing**

Amanda James  
*SGS Executive Director*

**Please be sure to visit our new Older Adults & Disasters webpage for additional resources.**

<https://southerngerontologicalsociety.org/older-adults-and-disasters.html>



The image is a promotional poster for the Southern Gerontological Society's 45th Annual Meeting & Conference. On the left side, there is a vertical stack of five smooth, dark grey stones. The background is a light blue gradient with a subtle pattern of water ripples. The logo for the Southern Gerontological Society (SGS) is centered at the top, featuring a stylized arch over the letters 'SGS'. To the right of the logo, the text reads 'SOUTHERN GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY' and 'Bridging Aging Research & Practice'. Below the logo, the text '45TH ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE' is displayed in a bold, dark blue font. The main title, 'A Balanced Approach: Seeking Evidence-Based Holistic Strategies to Promote Healthy Aging', is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. At the bottom, the dates 'APRIL 2 - 6, 2024' and the location 'GREENVILLE, SC' are listed in a bold, dark blue font.

**SOUTHERN GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
*Bridging Aging Research & Practice*

**45TH ANNUAL MEETING & CONFERENCE**

**A Balanced Approach:**  
*Seeking Evidence-Based Holistic Strategies to Promote Healthy Aging*

**APRIL 2 - 6, 2024**  
**GREENVILLE, SC**

## SGS Advocacy in Aging Virtual Forum Sponsors



AGEC is a 501c3 organization that collaborates with but is independent of the Gerontological Society of America and the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education. It is overseen by a Board of Governors consisting of nine members representing higher education gerontology programs and entities associated with the field of aging. The organizational structure includes review teams, site visitors, an executive director, and staff. Our mission is to serve societies, national and global, by establishing and applying standards that assure quality and continuous improvement in the preparation of gerontologists reflecting the evolving nature of higher education, research, and practice.

Learn more at <https://geroaccred.org/>



The Gerontology Institute builds on more than 40 years of gerontology education. It is among the oldest and most accomplished gerontology programs in the Southeast. Gerontology students receive individual attention and mentorship but also have all the benefits of being at a large, urban university. In downtown Atlanta, Georgia State is in proximity to numerous programs, services and organizations that provide students with first-hand experiences in the field of aging. The Gerontology Institute offers a Master of Arts degree and a certificate in Gerontology for students who wish to prepare for careers in the field of aging. The Gerontology Institute offers several programs at the undergraduate level: Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies (B.I.S.), a certificate in gerontology and a dual-degree program - bachelor's in sociology/master's in gerontology.

Learn more at <https://gerontology.gsu.edu/>.



NAPG is a not-for-profit organization recognizing a core body of Gerontological knowledge held by individuals who provide quality services and programming for older adults.

NAPG Offers:

- Credentialing for gerontology professionals
- Promotion of discipline standards and credibility
- Consultation for the public and private sectors
- Networking for professional aging specialists
- Testing and evaluating gerontology competencies
- Administrating and scoring exit exams

Learn more at <https://www.napgerontologists.org/>



The UofL Trager Institute/Republic Bank Foundation Optimal Aging Clinic works to improve how people age and to change the way health care is delivered. We want people to view aging as a positive stage in their lives. We use advanced methods to help patients, work together on research, and teach health care professionals. We provide medical care, telehealth, therapy, and wellness services. FlourishCare™, our holistic health care model, involves a team of health care workers to meet the needs of our patients. We focus on helping patients maintain good physical and mental health as they age.

Learn more at <https://www.tragerinstitute.org/about-the-institute>.





## THE ERICKSON SCHOOL OF AGING STUDIES

ESAS combines a passion for creating leaders and scholars in aging with a genuine connection to real world applications. The unique strength of our community is that it brings together so many exceptionally talented people of different backgrounds, lived experiences, interests, approaches and methodologies. Our goal, since our founding in 2005, is to integrate aging issues, business management and public policy. Our business orientation – applicable to nonprofit, for profit and government sectors encourages leadership and entrepreneurial behavior. We created and continue to refine a distinctive interdisciplinary and integrated educational approach combining the critical elements of aging studies, management, and public policy. This unique model includes an active learning environment based in practice in addition to theory. Collaborators with ESAS have the opportunity to extend their interdisciplinary efforts further through partnerships with other units within UMBC including the Hilltop Institute, School of Public Policy and the PhD in Gerontology. Our curriculum includes all aspects of aging services, with particular emphasis on expanding opportunities for individuals in the longevity economy. Students, both full and part-time, can earn a B.A., M.A. and Accelerated B.A. /M.A. and a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in the Management of Aging Services.

Learn more at <https://erickson.umbc.edu/>.

## **SPEAKER BIOS**

### **Ashley Apthorp**

Ashley Apthorp serves as the Division Director for the Division of Statewide Community Based Services at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. Mrs. Apthorp has been with the Department since 2022 and prior to that she served in the Governor's Office of Policy and Budget Health and Human Services Unit, the Agency for the Health Care Administration, and the University of Florida. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree from the University of Florida in Political Science and a Master's Degree from Florida State University in Public Administration.

### **Kalie Burke**

Kalie Burke is the Disaster Mental Health Coordinator with the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). Prior to joining DBHDD, Kalie worked in emergency management consulting, providing support to Florida and California during COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. Kalie is a double Seminole, receiving her B.S. and Master of Public Health degrees from Florida State University. In her free time, Kalie enjoys exploring Atlanta with her two dogs and visiting her extended family in Athens, GA.

### **Andrew Ferguson**

Andrew Ferguson is a public safety professional, with over 36 years of military, law enforcement, emergency medicine, technical rescue and emergency management experience. For over a decade he served as the Senior Lecturer of Homeland Security and Disaster Management for Appalachian State University. He now serves as a FEMA Type III Incident Management Team Liaison Officer for the Western Branch of North Carolina Emergency Management, and is involved in FEMA Community Emergency Response Teams at the local, state and federal level. His current activities include evaluating and training basic level community emergency services to underserved portions of the Bay Islands, Honduras, currently serving as the contractual Chief of Public Safety/Police and Fire for the Municipality of Guanaja.

### **Lee Ann Ferguson**

Lee Ann S. Ferguson has served as the Program Manager and Trainer for the Alexander County CERT team for the past three years. Dr. Ferguson is the current Director of Graduate Programs and Clinical Assistant Professor at the UMBC Erickson School of Aging Studies. Her primary research focus is that on socio-environmental and geographic factors influential to the lives of older adults living in the Bay Island of Honduras. Lee Ann is the former Executive Director of the Southern Gerontological Society and has served for nearly 20 years in academic appointments at Appalachian State University, Lenoir Rhyne University, and Caldwell Community College.

## **Jennifer Hogan**

Jennifer Hogan is the Disaster Preparedness Coordinator for the Georgia Division of Aging Services. She works with older adults, the 12 Area Agencies on Aging, State and Local partners to coordinate disaster preparedness planning, response and recovery for older adults and people with disabilities. Jennifer is a member of the Georgia Emergency Preparedness Coalition for Individuals with Disabilities & Older Adults. Jennifer received her undergraduate degree in Sociology from Emory University and her Masters in Social Work from the University of Pennsylvania. In her spare time, she is grandmother to Jade and Giovanni and volunteers with Angels Among Us Pet Rescue.

## **Kira Houge**

Kira Houge serves as the Bureau Chief of Community and Support Services at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. Ms. Houge has worked for the Department of Elder Affairs for 15 years ensuring services are available to help seniors and their caregivers live well and age well. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Drake University in Public Relations and Radio/Television Production.

## **Neil Ligon**

Neil Ligon has served as the Executive Director of LIFE, Inc., the Center for Independent Living for SE Georgia, since 2016. He has been involved with emergency planning since Hurricane Matthew in the Fall of 2016, serving as a member of and, at one time, Secretary of the Chatham County ESF 6&8 group, as well as a member of the Georgia Emergency Preparedness Coalition and supporting the founding of the Coastal Alliance of CILs Active in Disaster group. He continues to seek opportunities for PwD to share their lived experiences with emergency planners to ensure their inclusion in the planning process.

## **Zahrah Nesbitt-Ahmed**

Zahrah is a Research Lead at the Centre for Disaster Protection. Zahrah has extensive experience leading work on women's rights and gender equality. She brings thematic expertise in social protection, women's economic empowerment, the care economy, and urban development and infrastructure. She has grown her expertise through various research and evaluation pieces, teaching, training, consultancy assignments, project management, and technical advisory roles. Before joining the Centre, Zahrah was a Gender & Development Manager for Research at UNICEF. She has worked in senior expert advisor and research roles with ActionAid UK, as an Africa Fellow in the Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice at the World Bank Group, and as a Technical Specialist on Women's Economic Empowerment at Social Development Direct, as well as a Research Fellow with the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. Zahrah holds a PhD in Human Geography and Urban Studies and an MSc in Urbanisation and Development from the London School of Economics, and a BSc in Human and Physical Geography from the University of Reading.

## **Lindsay Peterson**

Lindsay Peterson is a research assistant professor in the School of Aging Studies at the University of South Florida. She researches long-term care staffing and quality and disaster preparedness for older adults. Additionally, she directs the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging. She began at USF in 2017 after completing a PhD in the School of Aging Studies. Before that she was a journalist, working for two decades at the Tampa Tribune, writing about a range of topics from education to aging.

## **Jacqueline Robinson**

Jacqueline Robinson is the Community Preparedness lead for FEMA Region 3. Her main mission is to enhance disaster preparedness amongst individuals and communities by providing valuable information, tools, and resources through FEMA, stakeholder, and state collaboration.

## **Martha Roherty**

Martha Roherty is the Executive Director of ADvancing States (formerly NASUAD). ADvancing States represents the nation's 56 state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities and long-term services and supports directors. ADvancing States supports visionary leadership, the advancement of systems innovation and the articulation of national policies that support long term services and supports for older adults and people with disabilities. The primary purposes of ADvancing States are to serve as a focal point of communication between the states and the federal government and to provide an information network among the states on long-term services and supports. Ms. Roherty and her staff are responsible for educating Congress, the Administration, other state executive branch organizations, advocacy groups, and the general public on administrative and health and social policy issues of special concern to the state officials administering the programs for long-term care services. Ms. Roherty also furnishes technical assistance to state Aging, Medicaid, and Disability program staff, including the development of competencies in the transition to person-centered planning, options counseling, and self-direction. Ms. Roherty currently serves on various Boards of leadership: the National Resource Center for Participant Directed Services; the National Academy of Social Insurance; the National EVV Association; the Center for Excellence in Assisted Living; and the Long-Term Quality Alliance. She holds a Master of Public Policy with a concentration in finance from the University of Maryland. Ms. Roherty is the mother of 5, including an adult son with autism who is on the Medicaid waiver, and annually participates in his own person-centered planning process.

## **Stephen Sneed**

Stephen serves as a media relations specialist for Samaritan's Purse and has worked in the disaster relief sector for the past six years. In his current role, Stephen regularly deploys to both domestic and international crisis zones to report on humanitarian issues from the ground and facilitate frontline media. Stephen has international disaster relief

and development experience in Guatemala, Bosnia, Liberia, Italy, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Poland, Ukraine, Turkey, Cambodia, and Egypt. Stephen has also served in response to natural disasters throughout the United States, helping families recover from events such as floods, wildfires, tornadoes, and hurricanes across seven states.