



Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc.



*Live Well With
Sickle Cell*

MEDIA RELEASE

ENGAGE. EDUCATE. ENERGIZE.

CONTACT:

Dexter Chambers | Public Relations & Communications
Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc.
Phone: 404.755.1641 | Fax: 404.755.7955

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Commends Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA – [November 8, 2021] Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn congratulated the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc. (SCFG) on its 50th Anniversary of bringing testing, counseling and educational awareness of Sickle Cell Anemia to residents, physicians, nurses and care providers across the state.

“Rosalynn joins me in congratulating you and the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc. (SCFG) on 50 years of outstanding service to the citizens of Georgia. It does not seem that long ago since your father, Dr. Nelson McGhee, Dr. Delutha H. King, Jr., and Xernona Clayton came to me when I was Governor of Georgia, to ask for a match to funds they had raised in response to the infant mortality rate and the growing number of children who died before their 18th birthday. At that time, the average life expectancy for children living with sickle cell was age 16 or younger,” President Carter said in a letter to former SCFG President and CEO Debra McGhee-McCrary.

“I am pleased to have had an opportunity to play a small part in the establishment of a community-based organization that has become the cornerstone for testing, support, and advocacy related to sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait in Georgia. The original funds were designated to build awareness, detect the disease, identify carriers of the trait, and improve the quality of life for Georgians living with sickle cell disease.”

“The Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc. has lived up to its mission to engage, educate, and energize the community to improve the quality of life for Georgians affected by sickle cell disease and fostered its vision of “Living well with Sickle Cell”, the President said.

“This commendation is humbly received by all of us at the Foundation,” said SCFG Executive Director Tabatha McGee. “While we are celebrating 50 years of service, we are also paying homage to those who worked tirelessly to establish the SCFG in our community and especially to our former Executive Director Debra McGhee-McCrary, who recently lost her battle with cancer. They are all looking down at us with a smile and saying *our fight to end the sickle cell cycle, has only begun.*”

For half a century, the SCFG has worked on three core strategies: to identify persons at risk of the disease, to help the thousands who suffer from it, and ultimately, to end all new sickle cell disease births in Georgia.

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Media mogul Xernona Clayton (kneeling front and center) and the “Souls for Sickle Cell” raised seed funds to establish the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc. (SCFG) Funds were matched by then- Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter.

The late Dr. Nelson McGhee and the late Dr. Delutha H. King, Jr. established SCFG in 1971, and they were determined to save black lives and warn about the little-known disease ravaging the community. Thus, the rallying cry continued -- education, testing, and assistance to help patients live longer with better treatments.

By 1979, SCFG actively participated in passing a Georgia law that requires mandatory newborn testing for SCD and other abnormal hemoglobin. Today, Newborn Screening Programs have been adopted nationally. As a result, babies with SCD are identified at birth.

SCFG is the only state-wide community-based organization providing Sickle Cell education, testing, counseling, and transition services. SCFG works daily with the state of Georgia, medical facilities, Sickle Cell support groups, health care providers, volunteers, and other stakeholders to maintain the life-saving services being provided to families despite the pandemic.

For more information, visit our website at <https://www.sicklecellga.org>.

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New digital billboard sign by the Sickle Cell Foundation of Georgia, Inc. and Outfront Media.

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