

## **The Gracewood Gazette**

***Kamala Balakrishnan, Ann Knighton, and Theresa Senior***

***The Gracewood Intermediate Care Facility has one hundred and one residents and twenty-six residents in the Skilled Nursing Facility. The Staff turnover is high; the rationale is that the staff is not sure of their future with the facility. The Intermediate Care Facility residents live in one building and the Skilled Nursing residents live in another. Many of the buildings have deterioration issues due to age and lack of up keep.***

***The East Central Georgia Family Council submits the following report. We have had three executive body meetings and three regular meetings – January, April, and July. In October we had our annual Family Council Picnic. Last June four members of the council attended the VOR Washington Initiative. On February 14, 2019 six members of the family council joined members of the Augusta Interfaith Coalition to travel to the capital to meet with our governor, Brian Kemp, and the Director of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, Ms. Pat Fitzgerald. We met with our legislators. The meeting was pleasant, but not fruitful.***

***We continue to have placements in group homes and accidents occurring at alarming rates.***

***Georgia has a dark history of how it treats its developmentally disabled and medically fragile. That being said for several years now representatives of the family council who attend the Washington initiative meet with members of the Justice Department regarding the status and future of the state of Georgia about its care for disabled people. As we continue the journey of advocacy for our beloved developmentally disabled and medically fragile, we remember that some people hear a different drummer, and consequentially we remind ourselves of Robert Frost who has urged us to take the road less traveled. And finally, we remember Khalil, the Rabbi who lived before Christ, and I paraphrase these words, "If we are not for the developmentally disabled, who are we? And if we will not be for the developmentally disabled, what are we? And if not now, when?"***