

Record Series #: 1121-119**Name: Greenbriar Children's Center records****Dates: 1944-1957, no date****Extent/Size: 22.0 legal folders (0.5 cubic feet)****Language: English****Name of Creator(s):**

Mary G. Cooper

Administrative History:

The Greenbriar Children's Center was first imagined through the estate of Adeline Graham, who passed away in 1943, and left \$2,200 dollars to be used for an orphanage for African American children. A group of young women members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Gamma Sigma Omega chapter, newly established in Savannah, Georgia, decided to take on the task to create an organization and fundraise to start this center. In June of 1944 Greenbriar Children's Center, Inc. was established as a non-profit organization. Their efforts began to gain additional members and raise funds to construct a building to house orphaned African American children to prevent them from being homeless or sent to the local penal farm operated by Chatham County. At the time, there were only children homes for white children. Early advocates for the center included Reverend Ralph Mark Gilbert, Captain Frank W. Spencer, Agatha A. Cooper, and Martha Wilson.

After successful fundraising, with help from the white and the religious community, Greenbriar was able to obtain a lease with the City of Savannah to occupy the Women's Army Corp (WAC) building on Hunter Army Airfield. After extensive renovations, the building was opened in July 1949. The center was only housed in this new building for a few months when the City of Savannah turned the airfield back over to the United States federal government and the Greenbriar Children's Center was pushed out.

The Greenbriar Children's Center then moved to multiple houses in Carver Village, at the beginning of 1950 until 1955. During this time, the center once again fundraised to build a completely new building equipped to handle more children and preschools. With help from the Chatham County government and the Savannah Foundation, the Greenbriar Children's Center opened on October 1, 1955 at 3709 Hopkins Street, near DeRenne Middle School. Operation funds for the center were provided from Chatham County and the United Community Services. In 1964, the center started admitting children of all races.

As of 2021, the Greenbriar Children's Center is still housed in the Hopkins Street building. The center currently operates two accredited early learning centers for low income families, an emergency shelter for neglected or abused children, is a Project Safe Place, and a Family Preservation and counseling program, which provides free counseling to children and families who are most vulnerable.

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Scope & Content:

The Greenbriar Children's Center records were found in an original folder together. Items in the collection include correspondence, news articles, the organization's bylaws and constitution, officer lists, reports, event documents, and floor plans. Correspondents include Captain Frank W. Spencer, Doris Roberts, and Donald Thomas. Items of note include a speech by Captain Frank W. Spencer at the dedication of the new center on November 27, 1955 and a drawings for the renovation of the WAC building built on Hunter Airfield in 1947.

System of Arrangement & Ordering:

The Greenbriar Children's Center records are arranged alphabetically by subject.

Conditions Governing Access:

Collection is stored offsite and researchers must request desired records at least one (1) full business day before research appointment for access.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use:

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Related Collections:

Record Series 1121-102, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Savannah branch records. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Record Series 1121-108, W. W. Law Periodical collection. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

Record Series 1121-117, Ralph Mark Gilbert papers. City of Savannah Municipal Archives, Savannah, Georgia.

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Access Points:

African American children--Care.

African American children--Education.

African American homeless children

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Gamma Sigma Omega Chapter (Savannah, Ga.)

Gilbert, Ralph Mark, 1899-1956

Greenbriar Children's Center (Savannah, Ga.)

Hunter Army Airfield

Roberts, Doris

Savannah (Ga.)

Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce

Social work with African American children

Spencer, Captain Frank W.

United Community Services (Savannah, Ga.)

Wilson, Martha

Sponsors/Funding:

Chatham County, Georgia, Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funding.

Preferred Citation:

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Processed by:

M. Kerkhoff, March 2021.

Record Series 1121-119, Greenbriar Children's Center records

Inventory:

Box

Folder

Folder title, Date(s) [archivist notes]

Box 1121-000-03

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|----------------------|--|
| Folder 1121-119-0001 | Board of Directors, officers, and committee lists, 1956, no date |
| Folder 1121-119-0002 | Correspondence, 1944-1946 |
| Folder 1121-119-0003 | Correspondence, 1947 |
| Folder 1121-119-0004 | Correspondence, 1948-1950 |
| Folder 1121-119-0005 | Correspondence, 1951-1953 |
| Folder 1121-119-0006 | Correspondence, 1954 |
| Folder 1121-119-0007 | Correspondence, 1955 |
| Folder 1121-119-0008 | Correspondence, 1956 |
| Folder 1121-119-0009 | Correspondence, 1957 |
| Folder 1121-119-0010 | Event programs, invitations and speeches, 1947, 1955, no date [speech by Captain Frank W. Spencer] |
| Folder 1121-119-0011 | Financials, 1948, 1952 |
| Folder 1121-119-0012 | Floor plan and property map of Children's Center, 1947-1948 |
| Folder 1121-119-0013 | Fundraising campaign, 1947 |
| Folder 1121-119-0014 | General records, 1957, no date [on collection donation, notes, and newsletter] |
| Folder 1121-119-0015 | History and additional information, no date |
| Folder 1121-119-0016 | News clippings, 1947 |
| Folder 1121-119-0017 | News clippings, 1948-1949 |
| Folder 1121-119-0018 | News clippings, 1951-1953 |
| Folder 1121-119-0019 | News clippings, 1954-1955 |
| Folder 1121-119-0020 | News clippings, 1956-1957 |
| Folder 1121-119-0021 | News clippings, no date |
| Folder 1121-119-0022 | Petition to the City of Savannah on continuing their building lease, 1949 |
| Folder 1121-119-0023 | Reports on children, budget, and activities, 1945, 1957, no date |