



DR. ANNISE  
**MABRY**  
FOUNDATION

# Tiers Free Academy The Box Breakers Project

Disrupting the Dropout Crisis

in

South Georgia



# Dr. Mabry's Journey to Tiers Free Academy

- In 2011, Dr. Mabry's then-13-year-old daughter became a victim of extreme bullying
- Dr. Mabry found herself trying to navigate the adolescent mental health care system in GA
- She realized there really wasn't a system at all
- She needed a tool to educate her daughter, who had been diagnosed with PTSD and schizoaffective disorder as a result of her traumatic school experience
- She pulled together her experience as a police officer, Dean of Graduate Studies, and curriculum developer to build an online program that used GA homeschool laws to provide a path to a high school diploma
- The Tiers Free Model was born. Today, Tiers Free focuses on providing sex trafficking survivors, homeless LGBTQ youth, and high school dropouts with the opportunity to earn their high school diploma.
- Tiers Free Academy hosts a graduation ceremony each year in Rockdale County, GA



# One Model, Many Programs

- Tiers Free is Georgia's only nonprofit alternative diploma program that is housed inside of a police department. Since its founding in 2018, the organization has grown quickly to serve homeless LGBTQ youth, sex trafficking survivors, and high school dropouts through the following programs:
  - Tiers Free Diploma Program
  - Thrive with Pride Program
  - Chief's Diploma Program
  - Nonprofit Partner Program



# Tiers Free Academy: Tiers Free Diploma Program

- The Tiers Free Diploma Program operates in Rockdale County, GA and is open to anyone who does not have a high school diploma
- Tiers Free uses GA homeschool laws to empower parents, police departments, and nonprofit partners to assist students who have dropped out of school in obtaining a high school diploma
- Tiers Free students don't start over—they simply pick up where they left off
- Tiers Free uses online curriculum providers for academic and career pathway elective courses
- Students must complete one class every 30 days to remain eligible to participate in the program

# 2019 Rockdale County Graduates



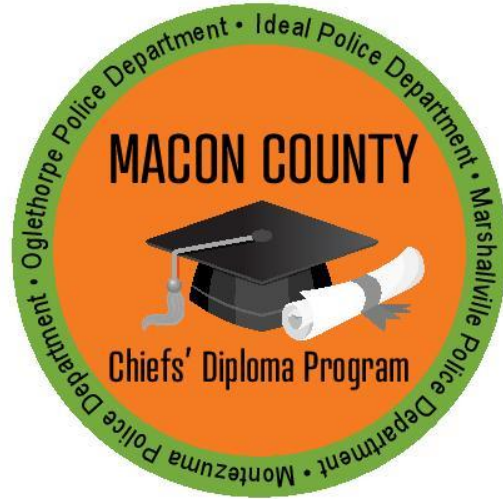
# Tiers Free Academy: Thrive with Pride Program

- A 2019 GSU study revealed that more than half of the homeless youth in metro Atlanta have experienced human trafficking, with minority and LGBTQ youth being more likely to be forced into working against their will
- Most of these youth don't start out as homeless in Atlanta; they arrive in Atlanta from suburbs and small rural towns
- Thrive with Pride works with the Atlanta Pride Committee and LGBTQ outreach organizations to identify youth who can benefit from the program
- Thrive with Pride graduates are eligible to apply for Thrive with Pride Transition Scholarships to help them transition into a technical college

# Tiers Free Academy: Macon County Chief's Diploma Program

- In 2018, Chief Rachael Hart of the Oglethorpe Police Department realized that 9 out of 10 people on active probation in Macon County, GA didn't have a diploma
- 8 out of 10 had attempted the GED test at least twice and simply gave up on ever graduating
- The Chief's Diploma Program started with two police departments in 2018
- Today, this program is in 8 counties and 7 police departments
- The program is a collaborative partnership between the police departments, the school systems, Southwestern Circuit Probation, and the local technical college

# By the numbers: Chief's Diploma Program



## 2019 Chief's Diploma Program Corporate Sponsors

Flint Energies	\$2,000
State Farm	\$1,700
International Paper	\$1,453

Youngest graduate: 18

Oldest graduate: 63

2020 number of residents enrolled: 40

2019-2020 number of new graduates: 22





# 2019 Macon County Chief's Diploma Graduates



# Tiers Free Academy: The Box Breakers Project

- There are more than 115,000 adults in South Georgia without a high school diploma
- The poverty level in several South Georgia counties is as high as 41.5%
- The Box Breakers Project is open to 40 residents in South Georgia between the ages of 16-59 who dropped out of school in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade
- Box Breaker participants will receive 10 hours of life coaching, vocational mentoring, and/or academic tutoring each month
- Box Breaker participants who graduate from the program will receive a \$100 Fresh Start scholarship
- Fresh Start scholarship funds can be used to pay for continuing education classes, technical college application fees, state licensing testing fees, or county business licenses
- Participants must complete one class every 30 days to remain eligible for the program

# The Box Breakers Program Budget

• 400 hours for academic tutoring & life coaching (10 hours per month per student)	\$6,000
• Online Curriculum Licenses (40 online curriculum licenses)	\$5,100
• Thrive Transition Scholarships (3 \$200 Thrive with Pride Scholarships) (37 \$100 Fresh Start Scholarships)	\$4,300
• Graduation Ceremony and Reception	\$700
• Office Supplies and Copies	\$200
<b>Total Project Budget:</b>	<b>\$16,300</b>

Five Moms, Two Police Chiefs,  
One Mission...  
Impact Human Trafficking by Disrupting the Dropout Crisis

