



PO Box 170010, Atlanta, Georgia 30317  
[www.historickirkwood.org](http://www.historickirkwood.org)

August 10, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

The Kirkwood Neighbors Organization (KNO) applauds the establishment of Kirkwood HELPS.

According to organizers, *HELPS* is an acronym for *Heal, Empower, Listen, Provide, and Shelter*, “representing some of the key attributes and objectives of this targeted pilot initiative to help support those in need living on the streets in the Kirkwood neighborhood in a more compassionate manner.” To supply this support, the initiative is contracting with Kenny Anderson, an experienced service navigator and advocate for those experiencing housing insecurity, currently providing similar supports in two other communities in DeKalb County. Mr. Anderson's firsthand experience provides him with a unique understanding of the challenges faced by those in need. His deep knowledge of local public and nonprofit resources allows him to effectively connect with and support individuals experiencing housing insecurity.

Kirkwood HELPS aims for a streamlined service approach: build relationships with Kirkwood residents without stable housing, learn their interests and barriers faced, make connections with relevant resources, and advocate for individuals within institutions and systems. In this way, the initiative hopes to meet several objectives: (1) get help to those looking for support sooner, (2) generate success stories that can advance the initiative and build momentum, (3) complement and inform the larger “Unhoused Initiative” currently being structured with the City of Atlanta, (4) serve as model for other initiatives, and (5) demonstrate that “less can be more” (emphasize responsiveness to and support of individuals over onerous case management and paperwork).

Kirkwood Neighbors Organization exists to encourage and advocate for high quality of life for all current and future residents of Kirkwood, regardless of race, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation or economic status. We do this through strengthening our community, performing acts of service, and championing those of us who are most vulnerable. The Kirkwood HELPS initiative aligns with this mission, with its emphasis on honoring all people who call our neighborhood home, regardless of their access to permanent structural housing.

We look forward to working with organizers as they build out the initiative's operational infrastructure and will consider the invitation to join the Kirkwood HELPS Steering Committee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mathew George". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mathew George  
President, Kirkwood Neighbors Organization