

PROGRAMMER'S WORKSHOP

Session Schedule

Wednesday, April 29, 2026
South Bibb Recreation Complex
7035 Houston Road Macon, GA 31216

8:00 AM - Workshop Check In
9:00 AM Light Breakfast Refreshments Provided by Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation

9:00 AM - **Robert Walker**, Director of Macon-Bibb County Parks and Recreation, will kick off the GRPA Recreation Programmer's Workshop and welcome everyone to the South Bibb Recreation Complex!
9:15 AM

We will also facilitate program-area networking chats designed to spark connections, set the tone for the day and meet fellow attendees, share programming ideas, and learn how to make the most of your workshop experience. Be sure to bring your business cards to swap with your peers!

9:15 AM - 10:15 AM

* Why Programming is My Why

Speaker: *Morgan Rodgers, Director - Alpharetta Recreation, Parks & Cultural Services, GRPA President-Elect*

Room: Studio 1 & 2

This fun filled, interactive sessions will highlight why Programming is more important (& essential) now more than ever before. The session will explore the importance of programming, how it enhances the quality of life and why it's important to your citizens.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Understand the importance programming has in today's society.
- 2) Recognize the tangible benefits programming offers.
- 3) Take home programming ideas that can be started next week.

10:20 AM - 11:20 AM

* Cultivating Connections

Speaker: *Michele Coursey, City of Powder Springs Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs*

Room: Lab 2

This session focuses on intentional relationship building to develop trust and rapport, which leads to effective collaboration resulting in successful programs and events. We will have an active discussion on who, what, when, where and why meaningful relationships are vital to successful collaboration for impactful programming and events.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Participants will gain a blueprint for effective listening for smoother planning.
- 2) Gain tools for equipping through communication for stronger engagement.
- 3) Discuss strategies for engaging team members for better outcomes.

* From Planning to Impact: Operating a Successful Summer Camp

Speaker: *Haneefah Abdullah, City of Atlanta Office of Recreation*

Room: Lab 3

This session will provide an overview of the planning, coordination, and operational strategies that support a successful multi-site camp model. Attendees will gain insight into staff development, site alignment, daily programming structure, and the systems that ensure consistency and quality across locations. Participants will leave with practical tools and scalable ideas to strengthen their youth camp programs.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Identify key strategies for managing a successful multi-site summer camp program.
- 2) Recognize effective staff training practices that promote positive youth engagement and development.
- 3) Apply practical tools to enhance camp operations and improve outcomes for participating youth.

11:25 AM - 12:25 PM

*Atlanta Teen Leaders Academy: Inspiring The Next Generation Of Leaders

Speaker: *Nick Clark, City of Atlanta Office of Recreation*

Room: Lab 2

This session will provide an overview of the planning, coordination, and operational strategies that support a successful multi-site camp model. Attendees will gain insight into staff development, site alignment, daily programming structure, and the systems that ensure consistency and quality across locations. Participants will leave with practical tools and scalable ideas to strengthen their youth camp programs.

Session Outcomes:

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*Glow Big or Go Home

Speaker: *Tara Vroman, Cobb PARKS*

Room: Lab 3

Glow Big or Glow Home: How to Make Your Events Glow is a presentation focused on using glow-in-the-dark elements to enhance programs and events. Participants will review successful examples, brainstorm ideas, and learn practical tools and setup techniques to implement glow-themed events in their own facilities.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Understand the impact & appeal of glow-in-the-dark programming & why it attracts participants across age groups.
- 2) Identify key components, equipment, & resources needed to successfully plan and execute a glow-themed event.
- 3) Develop creative, actionable ideas for implementing glow elements into future programs & special events.

12:30 PM - 1:15 PM

Lunch

Sponsored By:  **GREAT SOUTHERN**

1:15 PM - 2:15 PM

✳ Understanding the Simple Science Behind Meltdowns

Speaker: *Lori Harris, President - Superpowers For Good, LLC*

Room: Lab 2

Discover the science behind tantrums, meltdowns, and physical aggression so that you can understand and apply strategies to strengthen resilience to bad behaviors and increase the student's ability to make good internal choices.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Learn how to identify a meltdown, its various forms and how to manage a meltdown and preempt future meltdowns.
- 2) Understand brain development and brain maturation sequence.
- 3) Understand what primitive reflexes are, particularly the Moro Reflex and how it contributes to meltdowns.

✳ Main Character Energy: Creating Special Events That Hit

Speaker(s): *Joycelyn Eason, Brandon McLester, Kierra Cordell, & Amiya Law, Clayton County*

Room: Lab 3

This session will cover the fundamentals of effective event planning, with a focus on logistics, timeline development, and creating practical checklists to ensure smooth execution. Participants will learn strategies to minimize last-minute challenges, expand marketing efforts beyond their organization, and better understand and engage their target audience. The session will also include an interactive game to reinforce key concepts and encourage participation.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Effective Planning
- 2) Marketing in a way to increase attendance.
- 3) Improving the quality of events.

2:20 PM - 3:20 PM

✳ How to Bring Outdoor Recreation to Your Park

Speaker(s): *River Cheeks, Georgia Gwinnett College*

Room: Lab 3

Learn how to introduce engaging outdoor recreation programs in your park without a large budget. This session will explore low-cost opportunities and "shoestring" programming ideas that make the most of existing spaces, natural resources, and community partnerships. Participants will discover practical strategies for creating fun, inclusive outdoor activities using minimal equipment while maximizing community participation and park engagement.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Identify low-cost outdoor recreation activities that can be implemented in parks using minimal equipment and existing natural resources.
- 2) Develop practical strategies for creating engaging "shoestring" recreation programs that maximize participation while staying within limited budgets.
- 3) Explore ways to leverage community partnerships, volunteers, and local resources to expand outdoor recreation opportunities in parks.

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2:20 PM - 3:20 PM

* **Hidden in Plain Sight: The Real Roots of Behavior Challenges and Learning Struggles**

Speaker: *Lori Harris, President - Superpowers For Good, LLC*

Room: Lab 2

In this presentation, we step back from behavior charts, discipline systems, and “try harder” strategies—and look at what is often hiding underneath the behaviors we see in after school and summer programs. Many children are not struggling because they are disrespectful, unmotivated, or “bad.” They are struggling because their nervous system is working overtime to compensate for missing developmental foundations. We will explore four key systems that are frequently overlooked: primitive reflexes, mind-body awareness, ocular motor skills, and eidetic capacity (the mind’s eye). When these systems are unstable, attention collapses, transitions fall apart, learning feels exhausting, and behavior becomes reactive. When we understand what is really happening underneath the surface, we stop chasing symptoms and start building true capacity—for focus, regulation, cooperation, and success in group settings.

Session Outcomes:

- 1) Identify the difference between a behavior problem and a nervous system regulation problem in group program settings and explain how missing developmental foundations can show up as impulsivity, meltdowns, defiance, or inattention.
- 2) Recognize common “hidden in plain sight” signs of sensory-motor instability.
- 3) Understand why traditional behavior strategies often fail.
- 4) Apply simple, practical movement-based strategies that improve regulation, attention, and participation during transitions, games, and structured activities to create a more supportive environment for children who usually struggle.

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING THE 2026 PROGRAMMER'S WORKSHOP!

