

# JACKSON COUNTY CASA, INC.

## 2017 Annual Report



Lift up a child's voice.  
A child's life.™

*An agency of United Way for Jackson and George Counties since 1999*

# JACKSON COUNTY CASA, INC.

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## THE STAFF



Frances L. Allsup  
Executive Director



Brenda Lancaster  
Permanency Coordinator



Adrian McCullum  
Program Assistant



Amy Guidry  
Volunteer Coordinator

## THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Marilyn Montgomery  
President



Lucy Selman  
Vice President



Karen Whitford  
Secretary



Ken Rice



Troy Ross



Misty Russell



Shannon Vincent



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As most of you know, Jackson County CASA, Inc. was started in 1985 by Judge Emily Baker. I began my reign with CASA in 1996. Our program has made a lot of progress since those humble beginnings and I have been able to bear witness to most of it.

Recently, I took some time to reflect on our growth and many changes. In doing so, I took some time to look through our scrapbooks, or as I like to call them, our *History Books*. My heart was touched by the many faces of those that have been a part of our program, from the board members to the volunteers. As I looked through each book, I was reminded of how much each person had given of themselves and the differences they had made, not only to this program but to the children we serve. Their contributions and dedication helped make CASA what it is today.

Fortunately, the books only reflect the happy moments. The photos captured the smiles of the dedicated individuals that committed to work tirelessly for our mission, while hidden among the pages of each book are the many heartaches that are not pictured. People always tell me that we make everything look so easy. Unfortunately, it is not easy at all. Jackson County CASA is privileged to have a committed and devoted staff that goes over and beyond the call of duty to ensure the quality of our program is maintained at the highest standards. I can't imagine this mission without them. They are my ROCKS!

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are the superheroes that come to the rescue of countless numbers of abused and neglected children in Jackson County. The children they serve never asked to be on this journey through the youth court system. They are there through no fault of their own. We will never understand the depths of their pain or the fears that they face. Thankfully, we have quality trained Volunteer Advocates ready to step in and help turn their tears into a sea of wonder. They help to ensure that a child's dreams can become a reality.

Each day I am humbled by our community and faithful benefactors who support our mission. They keep us steadfast on our journey to make a difference in the lives of the children we are tasked to serve. I am thankful for our esteemed leaders, our Board of Directors who keep the administrative roles within regulations and requirements of National CASA. Each of you is a footprint of our advocacy. Your dedicated support means so much to me.

This past year has been filled with many hurdles and triumphs. But, no matter what, our work will continue and our goal will stay the same...to serve every abused or neglected child in Jackson County.

With a grateful heart,

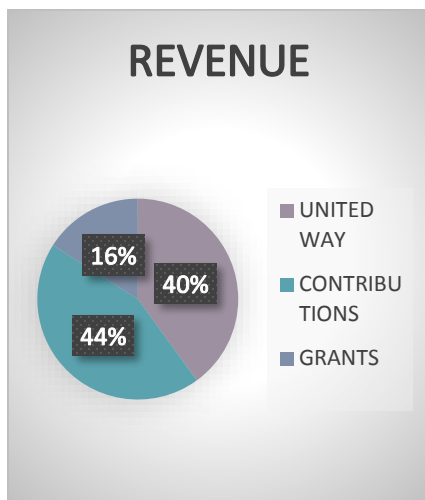
Frances L. Allsup



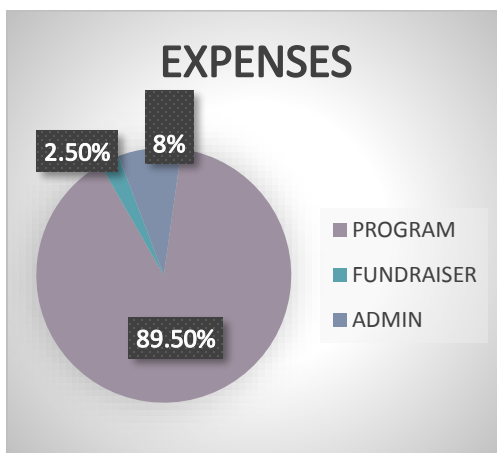
## FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR 2016

Jackson County CASA, Inc. is funded through public, private and foundation support. United Way for Jackson & George Counties has funded our program since 1999.

Revenue for the 2016 calendar year was \$148,668.



In 2016, 89.50% of total expenses was used for our program operations such as recruiting and training quality advocates for the volunteers to serve our children, 2.50% toward fundraising efforts, and leaving 8.00% toward Administrative cost. Total expenditures for the calendar year was \$168,128.



## AUGUST 2016

Throughout the month, we received several donations of school supplies from some of our Arms of CASA. These Arms are organizations that help and support us in the pursuit of our mission. Thanks to Biloxi-Ocean Springs Junior Auxiliary, Dixie Dart Association, Republican Women's Club and Debbie and Terry Franklin our children were well prepared for the first day of school.



Mary Purvis, the new Executive Director for CASA Mississippi, arrived at the CASA office on August 18. Ms. Purvis began her new role in June and has been busy making her way throughout the state to visit with each CASA program. Later that morning, the staff attended a meeting of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative Community Partnership Board to continue efforts towards building a network of resources throughout the state that will be available

to all youths and families in the state. The meeting was facilitated by Ingrid Cloy, Site Leader for Jim Casey, and attended by representatives from area business, organizations and agencies.

Friend of CASA Dylan Demouey and her husband Dustin hosted a birthday party for their one year old son, Tyler, on August 20. They asked invited guests to bring a new and unwrapped book in lieu of presents for a donation to our program. What a thoughtful and generous gift for our CASA children!

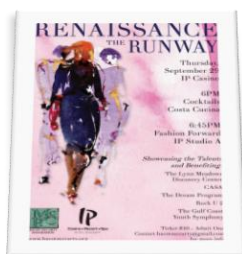


## SEPTEMBER 2016



Our final Volunteer Training was held throughout the month. The Induction Ceremony for the 11 participants was scheduled for October 10. The training was conducted by the CASA staff. Assisting were several guest speakers and facilitators.

The United Way 2017 Campaign, *Live United* got off to a big start at the September 9 Kick-Off Event which was held at the Family Interactive Center in Pascagoula. CASA and the other United Way agencies were on hand to provide information about their organizations. We were also presented a certificate in recognition for our contributions as Pacesetters for this year's campaign.



Bacot-McCarty's *Renaissance the Runway* was held at the IP Casino on September 29. This fundraising event benefited our CASA program, CASA of Harrison County and other nonprofit agencies in our community. The event began at 6:00 p.m. with cocktails and a silent auction in IP Studio A and concluded with the fashion show which showcased area celebrities as models for the night.



## OCTOBER 2016

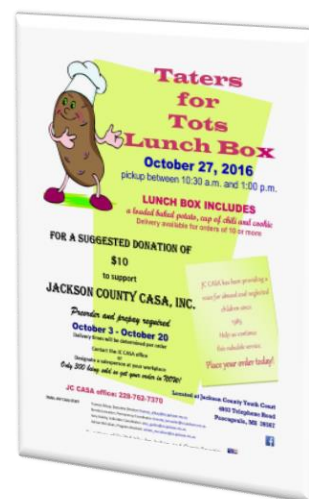
Joyce Nelson was selected by AARP, the nonprofit organization for people 50 and older, to receive the 2016 AARP Mississippi Andrus Award for Community Service. Joyce was selected for her dedication and volunteer service to her community. She has been an active CASA Volunteer since 2001 and has been instrumental in inspiring others to volunteer. She was honored at an award ceremony October 5 at the Pascagoula Senior Center. AARP Mississippi provided a donation of \$1,000 to Jackson County CASA on behalf of Ms. Nelson.



Jackson County's Mass Adoption Day was held at Chancery Court October 7. Eleven children were adopted, 9 of them were CASA children. Once again, Jackson County Child Protection Services invited us to host a reception for the new families and their guests. With the help of our many Friends of CASA, we were able to help make this an even more special day. Biloxi-Ocean Springs Junior Auxiliary provided the cake for the reception and a special gift for the

children. They even sent three representatives along to assist with the reception. Rainbow Water provided bottled water for the guests. A beautiful floral arrangement for the table was provided by Pugh's Florist. Each child that was adopted was presented a handmade quilt made by a middle school home economics class in Bonifay, FL. Each quilt was carefully wrapped and included a photo and a note from each child who made it. To commemorate this special day, a professional photographer, William Colgin, was on hand to capture the first photo of each new family, courtesy of Chevron Refinery in Pascagoula. To make this an even more special event, the volunteers assigned to each CASA child being adopted was invited to attend the adoption and help celebrate this monumental day.

Our third annual Taters for Tots fundraiser was a huge success. This year we increased our sales, offering 300 lunchboxes for purchase. Once again our Friend of CASA Mark Roberts, with help from Volunteer Paula Perry, was primarily instrumental for this success. Thanks to Mark, most of the foods as well as the items used for packing were donated. We also received monetary contributions that enabled us to purchase the remaining necessary items. Not only did we need the items to prepare the lunchboxes, we needed manpower to help package the meals and deliver them. We received tremendous support from many of our Volunteers and Friends of CASA. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the generous donations from area businesses and sponsors. We are forever grateful for their continued support of our mission.



## NOVEMBER 2016

Jackson County CASA Volunteer Coordinator Amy Guidry, Program Assistant Adrian McCullum and Volunteers Patty Waters, Paula Perry and Karen Bradley attended the National CASA Association Training of Facilitators (TOF) 2016 which was held at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi, November 9-11. The training was open to all CASA programs in Mississippi and Louisiana. The three-day training course prepared CASA employees and volunteers to facilitate the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association training curriculum to new advocates.



November 20, the Dixie Dart Association held its *Annual Turkey Charity Day* tournament to benefit our program. CASA Volunteer Kerry Brink attended the event on our behalf. He was presented a monetary donation for our program. Sweets Lounge also provided a monetary donation from their team that participated in the tournament. To top off the event, Gerry Ritch presented Kerry with two boxes filled with handmade dolls and bears for our children.



## DECEMBER 2016



December at CASA is always very busy. Our many supporters, from individuals, organizations and businesses from our community, stepped forward and helped to provide a wonderful Christmas for our children. Their generosity was truly amazing and deeply appreciated. We hosted our annual *Holiday Happening* on December 14. Volunteers arrived to collect their children's gifts so they could deliver them in time for Christmas. The Golden Nugget

sponsored more than forty of our children for Christmas. Not only did they provide gifts for them, they also hosted a *Breakfast with Santa* on December 21.

On Friday, December 9 students from College Park Elementary School arrived at the CASA office bearing Christmas gifts for our CASA children. The children were the school's House Council and Crest Earners. The school's theme for this year was "College Park Elementary—Making the World a Brighter Place". Principal Suzanne Ros stated that giving back was something that needed to be taught and instilled in children.



## JANUARY 2017

The CASA staff joined CASA MS Director Mary Purvis and representatives from CASA of Hancock County and CASA of Harrison County on January 12 for *CASA Mississippi Capitol Day* in Jackson, where we spent the morning meeting with



State Legislators and their staff, helping to bring awareness of the CASA mission throughout our state. We attended the *Gulf Coast Legislative Reception*, hosted the previous evening at the *Trade Mart* in Jackson, which provided an opportunity to meet face-to-face with our legislators, key public officials and opinion leaders to further our mission. More importantly, it was the perfect chance to discuss with them the proposed legislation, House Bill 1213, that would provide the needed explanation of our work on behalf of child victims of abuse and neglect and would legitimize our work. January 13, we met with the CASA Mississippi Board of Directors for a *Strategic Planning Retreat*, facilitated by Nancy Burris Perett, at the MS College School of Law.

## FEBRUARY 2017



February proved to be a very busy month with many speaking engagements to promote our mission and upcoming events and even for volunteer recruitment. Frances began on February 6 with St. Paul's United Methodist Women and the Mosaic Church on the 10th. The United Way campaign kicked off on February 7 with our first speaking engagement for the campaign at the West Jackson County Utilities. To promote the *Gulfport Rotary Walk* to benefit the coastal CASA programs, Frances spoke to the Pascagoula Rotary on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the Ocean Springs Rotary on the 8<sup>th</sup>. There were many speaking engagements that promoted our upcoming

CASA Blues: Tammy Moore, member of CASA Blues fundraising committee, joined Todd Trenchard of Bacot McCarty Foundation on *Spotlight Gulf Coast*, WGUD; Evelyn Delcambre joined Frances on Dr. Sherman Blackwell's *Singing River Services* program on WGUD; Richard Chenoweth, owner of Scranton's and Grand Magnolia Ballroom, joined Frances on WLOX's 4 O'clock show; Frances interviewed with Eugene Eubanks at WPMO radio station.





## MARCH 2017

United Way for Jackson & George Counties and Jackson County Literacy Council sponsored literacy week for children March 6 – 10. Volunteers and staff visited the Jackson County Head Start Centers and read stories to the children. Volunteers also collected new or “gently read” children’s books for ages birth to 18. Over 2000 books were donated to the Excel by 5 communities in Moss Point, Ocean Springs and Pascagoula, Boys & Girls Clubs of Jackson County, Jackson County CASA, and Mississippi Gulf Coast YMCA.



The Rotary Club of Gulfport sponsored a half-marathon walk to benefit the CASA programs of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties on March 17. Participating walkers could choose their starting point, the foot of the Pass Christian Bridge or the Biloxi bridge. Our very own Frances Allsup walked 7 miles while Adrian McCullum managed to complete the 13-mile walk, which ended at Jones Park in Gulfport.

Our second annual CASA Blues was hosted on March 3 at the Grand Magnolia Ballroom in Pascagoula. Thanks to our Presenting Sponsor, Bozo’s Seafood Market & Deli, the many additional supporting sponsors and all who attended, it was an amazing success. This year’s event honored Jackson County leaders Dorothy Shaw and Joe Martin. It was held at the Grand Magnolia Ballroom with Richard Lucas as Master of Ceremony and Honorable Michael Watson, Jr. as Keynote Speaker. Honorable Sharon Sigalas addressed the guests on behalf of the children we serve. Our special guests were Miss Mississippi, Laura Lee Lewis, and Schooner, Biloxi Shuckers mascot. Returning to provide the music for the evening was *N2 Blue Band*, featuring CASA Volunteer Sam Owens on the drums. The Pascagoula-Moss Point Junior Auxiliary assisted with the Silent Auction and Marta Williams, Ft. Bayou Wine & Spirits, supplied the beverages.



In late March, CASA was notified that we were approved for a \$2,500 grant from Wells Fargo Bank. The grant request was for funding needed to support our program. Also in late March, we were awarded a \$10,000 VOCA grant for the specific purpose of purchasing office equipment. This wonderful opportunity allowed us to purchase some much-needed equipment for the office.



## APRIL 2017

April 3, Jackson County Board of Supervisors proclaimed the month of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Brenda Lancaster from CASA and Sherba Hinton and Stephen Jackson from CPS stood by Frances as she accepted the proclamation from Board President Troy Ross and expressed appreciation for the County's support.



For the past several months CASA has been enlisting support for House Bill 1213, which would both legitimize and provide consistency for our organization by clarifying CASA's work on behalf of child victims of abuse and neglect in Mississippi. April 12, H. B. No. 1213 was signed into law, authorizing the Youth Court to utilize volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates in abuse and neglect cases.

April 20, we hosted *"Working Together: Piecing the Puzzle Together for Children"* at the Pascagoula Country Club. The CASA staff and several volunteers joined the staff of JC Department of Child Protection Services for a meeting designed to bring about a better understanding of the roles of each organization and to improve working relations. The meeting was facilitated by JC CASA Board President, Marilyn Montgomery. Guest speakers for the morning session included Johnnie Bernhard of Ocean Springs, author of *A Good Girl* and former JC CASA Board President, Seth Shannon, Chief of Staff for the Commissioner of Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services, Mary Purvis, Executive Director for CASA Mississippi, Inc., and Honorable Sharon Sigalas, Jackson County Youth Court Judge. Following lunch, the attendees participated in a question and answer session, guided by representatives from CASA and CPS and facilitated by Amy Guidry, CASA Volunteer Coordinator.



National Volunteer Recognition Week was celebrated on April 23 – 29. It honors all volunteers who are working on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain. The staff of JC CASA would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to each of our dedicated Advocates, Friends of CASA, Arms of CASA and community supporters for everything they do for us and the children we serve. As always, thank you for making a difference in the lives of the children in need.



## MAY 2017

This is the first time we have had a month that did not have any prescheduled events or activities. May provided some much-needed time for the CASA staff to catch-up on things and to prepare for upcoming training and the many events scheduled for the next few months.

## JUNE 2017

The Dixie Dart Club hosted a charity tournament on June 4 at the VFW in D'Iberville to benefit Jackson County CASA. On June 25, Frances Allsup and Volunteer Katie Allsup attended the club's meeting where they were presented with a monetary donation from the proceeds of the tournament. They also accepted a donation of back-to-school supplies collected by the club members for our CASA children.



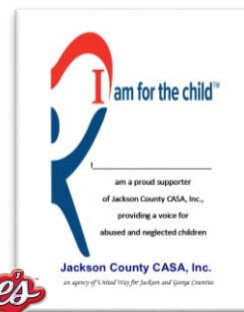
*Summer Fun Day* for our CASA children was organized by Volunteer Beverly Goff and her husband Victor and Echo and Bryan Hamilton owners of H&H farms in Moss Point, the location of the special event. The *Fun Day* was held Saturday, June 17. Even though the weather was not perfect, it did not stop the fun. The children and guests enjoyed horseback riding and many other activities including a bouncy castle, cornhole, horseshoes, sack races, face painting and more. The chance of winning a door prizes added to the excitement. The rain brought the picnic lunch inside. Each child received an *Survived Summer Fun Day* t-shirt. Events like these provide a wonderful opportunity for us to see the children enjoying traditional family fun, laughing, smiling and simply having a grand time! It was truly a heartwarming event.

For the first time in several years, volunteer recruitment was a struggle. We diligently searched for new and innovative methods to help bolster our recruitment efforts. On June 19, our first Volunteer Training for 2017 began with only five candidates scheduled to participate. Due to personal conflicts, we started training with only three. Our next scheduled training is set for September.



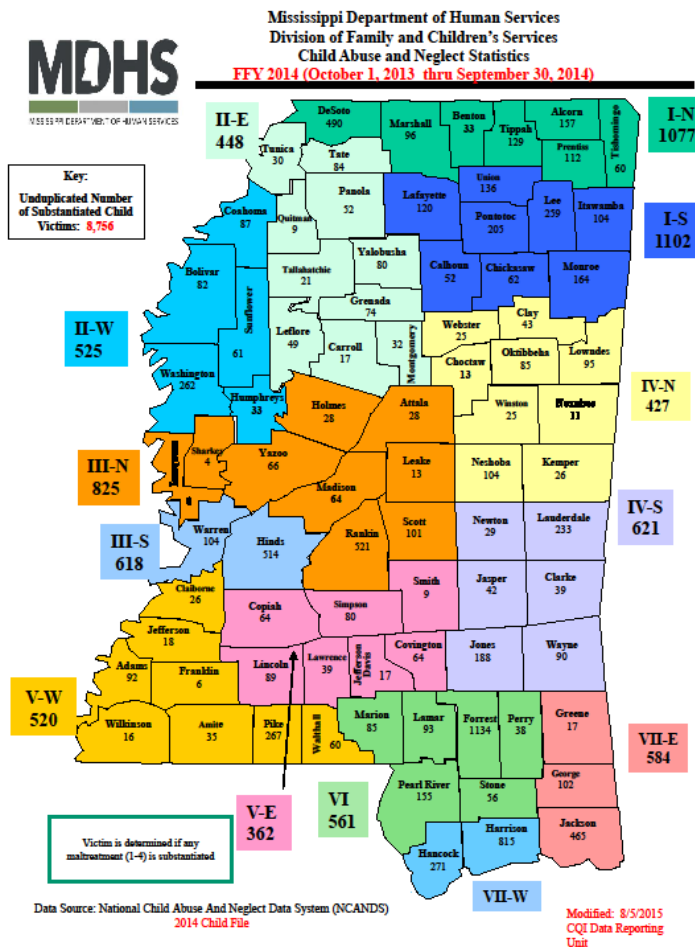
# JULY 2017

Paradigm Investment Group, parent company of the local Hardee's restaurants, held a major fundraising event for our program. Participating Hardee's restaurants in Jackson County, located in Gautier, Moss Point and Pascagoula, accepted donations on our behalf throughout the month of July. CASA squares were offered to customers for a \$1 or more donation. The donation squares were posted in the restaurant for display.



Not only did July mean the end of summer vacation, it meant Back-to-School for our area school districts. The Dixie Dart Club continued to collect school supplies for our children. The Biloxi-Ocean Springs Junior Auxiliary donated filled backpacks for each school age CASA child. Once again, our children could begin school with the supplies they needed for a successful beginning.

## COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES change lives



CASA is a volunteer-powered network of committed people, from all walks of life, who believe society has a fundamental obligation to children of abuse and neglect. We are people just like you who believe that every child has the right to be treated with dignity, to be safe, and to thrive in the embrace of a loving family. With a CASA volunteer, a child is half as likely to languish in the foster care and child welfare system, and much more likely to find a safe, permanent home.

The latest statistics reported by Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) shows Jackson County with a staggering 465 children in custody due to abuse and neglect. As of July 31, JC CASA has 110 Volunteers donating over 14,000 hours to serve 171 of these children from 96 families.

Our goal is to provide a volunteer for each child in custody due to abuse or neglect.



## CASA VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES

Katie Allsup  
 Jimmy Allsup  
 Rachel Armstrong  
 Nyka Barganier  
 Timothy Billings  
 Middie Blake  
 Karen Bradley  
 Debbie Braudis  
 John Braudis  
 Kerry Brink  
 Virginia Brink  
 Darlene Brown  
 LeAnne Coleman  
 Cecil (CD) Colson  
 Judy Colson  
 Cassie Crocker  
 LaTrekka Dailey  
 Lamar Davis  
 Evelyn Delcambre  
 Kim Dossett  
 Rebecca Drury

Jamie Farnham  
 Shelly Ferguson  
 Debbie Gill  
 Beverly Goff  
 Lucy Hurst-Gordon  
 Amy Guidry  
 Carolyn Hickman  
 Celena Hoover  
 Gwendolyn Kennard  
 Sandra King  
 Tiffany Kirkland  
 Sherita Knowles  
 Regina Krebs  
 Brenda Lancaster  
 Conal Lancaster  
 Shana Lane  
 Lenita Long  
 Rhonda Massey  
 Charlotte McClendon  
 Adrian McCullum  
 Joyce Nelson

Julia Noble  
 Samuel Owens  
 Paula Perry  
 Joan Pylate  
 Megan Rogers  
 Barbara Saavedra  
 Miguel Saavedra  
 Mary Ellen Spalding  
 Kristin Stephens  
 Kathy Stevens  
 Pat Stockman  
 Kiara Taite  
 George Tillman  
 Patty Waters  
 Alexis Watson  
 Mike Wheatley  
 Peggy Wolbrecht  
 Ricky Wolbrecht  
 Pat Zdenek

## FRIENDS OF CASA

Amanda Allen  
 Karen Blakeney  
 Anita Bosarge  
 Dav'etta Bradley  
 Candace Cripps  
 Alex Davids  
 Dylan Demouey  
 Kathy Fordemwalt  
 Nancy Gager  
 Shelby Guidry  
 Shirley Hadley

Rachel Hanser  
 Leigh Jaunsen  
 Beth Keenan  
 Alisha Keys  
 Rob Kirkland  
 Elizabeth Lassere  
 Denise Lee  
 Terry Lee  
 Dana Newell  
 Kristy Pleasant  
 Mark Roberts

Nancy Snodgrass  
 Melissa Stanfield  
 Robert Stanfield  
 Kea Theroux  
 Susan Wentzell  
 Miriam Wheatley  
 Linda Wiggins  
 Cynthia Wilson

## ARMS OF CASA

Adorable Miss Pageants  
 Bacot McCarty Foundation  
 Biloxi-Ocean Springs Junior Auxiliary  
 Bozo's Grocery & Grill  
 Corvette Club  
 Dixie Dart Association  
 Golden Nugget Resort and Casino  
 Jackson County Republican Women's Club  
 Janet Bryant Quilting Bee  
 Kiwanis Club

MAD/PIF  
 Magnolia Miss and Master Pageant  
 MBWGC  
 MS Gulf Coast Pool League  
 Pam Williams  
 Pascagoula-Moss Point Junior Auxiliary  
 United Way for Jackson and George Counties  
 USCG Pro Gulf Coast  
 Zachry

