



CASA CONNECTION

Volume 8: Issue 12

Abuse Hotline
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December 2021

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Ken Rice
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Shannon Vincent

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year



Jackson County CASA, Inc.

Frances, Angela, Beverly, Brenda, Jonathan, Mark, Sarah

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Volunteer Speaks for CASA at UW Event

United Way of Jackson and George Counties held its final event for the campaign season on November 5 at the Grand Magnolia in Pascagoula. Billy McCasland spoke to the guests at the event on behalf of Jackson County CASA. Billy, an outstanding volunteer, talked about some experiences as an advocate for children. He told the audience about his first case, which had many ups and downs, that lasted for over two years and finally ended in reunification with the mother. Thank you, Billy, for your service and dedication to the children you serve.



An agency of united way for Jackson and George Counties since 1999



Grateful For You Volunteer Banquet

November 16, the CASA staff, event sponsors, community leaders, friends, and family came together to celebrate our wonderful volunteers at our *Grateful for You Banquet*. The evening was dedicated to honoring the volunteers for the hard work they put forth as they serve the most vulnerable citizens in the community, and to let them know how grateful we are for their dedication to the mission.

Over the past eighteen months, our lives drastically changed. The entire world shut down, and some of the watchful eyes that used to be on our children were removed entirely. Family stressors rose, and our community's children suffered as a result. In a time where all felt dark and the world was at a standstill, abuse, torture, and neglect of children never stopped. This is when the CASA volunteers really stepped in. They provided each child served an independent voice, thereby empowering them to feel that they are important and involved in the decision-making process.

No one truly sees the tireless work they perform every single day. We are forever thankful for our volunteers! We also want to thank our amazing sponsors and community leaders who helped make the evening possible:

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Richard Lucas

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Senator Brice Wiggins

CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN

The Honorable Sharon Sigalas

THE LIGHT OF HOME

Entertainment by Chelsea Riches

PRESENTING SPONSOR

Heritage Funeral Home

SUPPORTING SPONSORS

*Walmart D'Iberville ♥ Scranton's Restaurant and Catering ♥ Jackson County MS Fair Grounds
Jen & Chuck Photography ♥ United Way for Jackson & George Counties ♥ Halter Marine, Inc.
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
Jerry Lee's Grocery, Inc.*

The emcee for the event, Richard Lucas, introduced our *Keynote Speaker* and former CASA volunteer, Senator Brice Wiggins. Senator Wiggins emphasized the importance of having CASA volunteers throughout our state. He stressed the impact the volunteers have on the children they serve and how their impact stretches far beyond one case.

There were many special moments at the *Grateful for You* banquet. A *Champion for Children*, Judge Sharon Sigalas, serving as Jackson County's Youth Court Judge for almost twenty years, opened her heart as she spoke to the guests. We are so thankful for her presence in our children's lives, especially when the decisions she must make are sometimes so difficult. Judge Sigalas reminded the volunteers to "let their light shine" and to "always keep pushing".

Judge Sigalas ended this portion of the program with the induction of Amanda Methven and Stacie Zorn as CASA volunteers. We were so thrilled to have them sworn in on this special evening honoring our volunteers. We are excited to have Amanda and Stacie join our CASA family.

The evening ended with the *Light of Hope* ceremony. Mrs. Chelsea Riches performed a beautiful rendition of "Amazing Grace" on the flute, as each person in attendance raised his/her flashlights in remembrance of the children we have lost at the hands of abuse and neglect. Yet as we remember the ones we've lost, we let our light shine for all of those children who still need a CASA light at the end of the tunnel.

Volunteer Spotlight



Senator Wiggins, Frances Atsup, CASA Executive Director, and Bob Merchant, CEO of VT Halter Marine



Senator Brice Wiggins



Judge Sigalas introduces new volunteers Stacie Zorn and Amanda Methvan



The Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College assisted CASA with the set up and break down of the banquet room. We are very grateful for their assistance.



Grateful for You
volunteer banquet
celebrates CASA volunteers

All photos curtesy of Jen and Chuck Photography

Taters-for-Tots

Taters-for-Tots is one of the most important and effective awareness and volunteer recruitment events for the program. The eighth annual *Taters-for-Tots* was held on November 3. With Administration and Planning Coordinator Mark Roberts spearheading the event and the continuation of the pandemic forcing some changes, the event was still a big success.

Once again, Jackson County Civic Center served as the base of operations and distribution center for the lunchbox meals. The lunchboxes were prepared and boxed for delivery to businesses and individuals throughout the county. The *Taters-for-Tots* event would not have been possible without the generous donations from area businesses and sponsors. We are forever grateful for their continued support of the CASA mission. Many thanks to:

Cornerstone Restaurant

Aramark
Azteca's, Gautier
Lisa Cannon, Edward Jones
Compton Engineering, Inc.
Cracker Barrel

Hilton Garden Inn

Family Frozen Foods
Four Seasons Produce
Michael Hillman Insurance,
Allstate
Jackson County Fairgrounds

Mark Riley, Dad's Super Pawn
Ocean Springs Lumber
Ruby Tuesday, Moss Point
San Miguel's, Moss Point
State Farm Insurance

Rex Foster, State Farm
Sherri H. Thornton
VT Halter Marine
W.A. Reynolds Wholesale
Walmart
Wilson's Mobile DJ Service

We could not have prepared and delivered the meals without our volunteers, Friends of CASA and Arms of CASA lending a hand. Many thanks to Jill & Bruner Bosio, Eric & Suzanne Delarosa, Trudi Dixon, Larry Fowler, Cathy & Gary Groff, Kathy Khayat, Helcha Marshall, Steve McCollum, Brianna Ricks, Connie Songe, Patty Waters, Paige Watson, Pattie Weiss, and many others that I am sure I forgot.



As a result of the event, we have received many requests for information regarding the CASA mission. If you are 21 years of age or older, you can become a CASA Volunteer Advocate for abused and neglected children. Contact the CASA office to learn more about our program or to request an application.

Do you want to start the new year by giving back to your community? If you do, then become a CASA VOLUNTEER! The first training class for 2022 will begin on January 11 with the final session on February 15.

National CASA Association's Guided Learning curriculum is used for training volunteers. This curriculum allows the training participant to complete most of the activities at home, at his/her own pace. The prospective volunteers will meet with the CASA training facilitator once per week for additional information and to review the independent activities completed.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED! Visit the program website at www.jccasa.net or contact the CASA office at 228-762-7370 to sign up for the volunteer training or if you would like further information. The **JANUARY 2022 VOLUNTEER TRAINING SCHEDULE** is provided below:

Overview: Part 1

January 11 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Overview: Part 2

January 13 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Bleux Case

January 18 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Green Case

January 25 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Amarillo Case

February 1 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Redd Case

February 8 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Wrap-up and Optima Training

February 15 6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

INDUCTION

To Be Scheduled

Latest Program Statistics

JC CASA is a volunteer-powered organization that advocates for the abused and neglected children of Jackson County. We have an amazing group of dedicated volunteers that provide a voice for these children throughout their court process. As of October 31, 2021, **91 Volunteers** have served **198 children** from **113 families** with **4107 donated hours of service during the 2021 calendar year.**

FYI

Patty Waters, CASA volunteer and training facilitator, was invited to speak to the members of the Friendship Civic Club of Ocean Springs at their November meeting held at St. John's Episcopal Church. This very dedicated group has been so supportive of our CASA children and youth throughout 2021. The members have supplied filled duffle bags and suitcases and donated gift cards, baby items, and beautiful throws to help these children as they transition to new homes and school situations. At the meeting, the group voted unanimously to sponsor 2 of the CASA children for Christmas. Many thanks to these special ladies for their continued support of the CASA program here in Jackson County.



November 4, Mark Scott, Director of Government Affairs and Corporate Affairs of VT Halter Marine dropped by the CASA office. On behalf of VT Halter Marine, Mr. Scott presented a monetary donation to our Executive Director Frances Allsup and board member Rene' Shaw to support our annual *Taters-for-Tots* fundraiser. We are very grateful to have such a generous community partner that supports our mission.

November 6 - 7, Jackson County CASA participated in Ocean Springs' 43rd Annual Peter Anderson Arts & Crafts Festival. On the first day of the event, Advocate Supervisor Angela Lynn and Trey, her husband and CASA volunteer, hosted a booth for the program to bring awareness to the CASA mission and to recruit new volunteers. It was a cold day, but warm hugs from many of the children currently and previously served by the program provided much needed warmth. The kind words of appreciation for CASA expressed by the children, foster parents, and passers-by really warmed their hearts, too. Special thanks to volunteer Bobbie Lankford and Board President Jeff Pierce for coming out on such a cold day to help with recruitment. Sunday, the final day of the festival, Mentor Coordinator Sarah Young and Christian, her husband and Friend of CASA, continued with the awareness and recruitment for the program. The awareness and recruitment efforts by Angela, Trey, Bobbie, Jeff, Sarah and Christian produced an overwhelming response from new interested recruits.



FYI Continued



In November, the **Barnes & Noble** bookstore in Gulfport began a Christmas book drive to collect books for children in the CASA programs of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties. The book drive will run through December 5. Representatives of each program collected the book donations on November 12 and 19 with the final pick up set for this Friday, December 5. Advocate Supervisor Angela Lynn picked up the donations on November 12 and 19 for JC CASA. So far, the program has received a wonderful selection of books for children of all ages. We are so thankful for their generous donation. What wonderful gifts these will be for our CASA kids.

November 13 was a busy day. Our Executive Director, Frances Allsup, had the opportunity to share the CASA mission with the *Mississippi Gulf Coast Volkswagen Club*. She particularly enjoyed meeting the members. The club presented her with a gift of kindness for the program. Also, Frances and our program Administration and Planner Coordinator, Mark Roberts, and his wife Pam attended the *Dixie Dart Association's* annual tournament. Proceeds from the tournament will be presented to JC CASA, their charity of choice. We are thankful to have such generous supporters of our program. It takes a village, thank you for being a part of ours. [#ChangeAChildsStory](#)



Jackson County CASA and Jackson County Youth Court hosted an in-service on drug trends and drug awareness in Jackson County. The Director of Narcotics for the South Mississippi Metro Enforcement Team, Joe Nicholson, presented an informative program on the local drug situation and how usage patterns have changed over the years. Included in his talk was a detailed look at marijuana legislation and various legal issues currently in the state legislature that affect filing drug charges and current release procedures for offenders. He also presented an excellent visual display of various items that are legally available for retail sale and showed specific items volunteers should be on the lookout for during home visits where drug usage is suspected.

The Blind Tiger and Marina Cantina Donation Match Challenge

COASTAL CASA'S & THE BLIND TIGER

December 1st through December 31st, The Blind Tiger is matching up to **\$5,000** dollars in donations for the Coastal CASA Programs. For companies that donate \$500 or more, their names will go into a drawing for a **\$500** gift certificate to eat at The Blind Tiger and Marina Cantina. All proceeds raised will directly impact the lives of abused and neglected children in Mississippi.



Paypal:
frances_allsup@co.jackson.ms.us

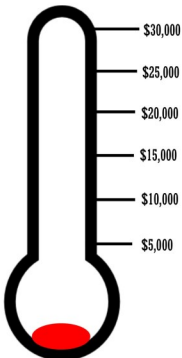
Website:
JCASA.net



The Blind Tiger & Marina Cantina Match Challenge



30°24'46" N 89°14'52" W



You heard it hear folks! Our friend Thomas Genin with The Blind Tiger and Marina Cantina is **MATCHING** total donations made between December 1—31 up to \$5000.

We are so excited and we are challenging **YOU**, as our community, to donate! Donate! Donate! The abused and neglected children of Jackson County deserve a chance to be heard!

You can donate through our website at <https://jccasa.net/donate/>

For more information, go to the Jackson County CASA social media formats, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.



Thomas and Frances