



CASA Connection

Volume 9: Issue 4

Abuse Hotline
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April/May 2022

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City Proclamations

In 1983, by presidential proclamation of then President Ronald Reagan, April was declared National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Every year since, the President rededicated the month with a new proclamation. Many state governors and local governing bodies also issue proclamations to encourage public awareness, as well as recommit resources, to the cause and promote community involvement through state and local activities.

Jackson County CASA, Inc. received overwhelming support for the CASA mission this year from Jackson and George Counties. April 5, at their monthly meetings, each county proclaimed April as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. The cities of Gautier, Moss Point, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula followed suite at their monthly meetings as they also recognized April as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention month. Representatives of the CASA governing board and staff and Child Protection Services (CPS) staff members attended each meeting to accept the proclamation and discuss the importance of community support in fighting for the protection of the most vulnerable citizens. It is an honor to provide advocacy for the abused and neglected children of these local communities. We are grateful to have their support of the mission. The proclamations are proudly on display in the CASA office as a reminder of the local communities continued support.

During April, people across the country come together to raise awareness of child abuse and neglect prevention. You continue to make a difference year round through the donation of your time as a CASA advocate.



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There were a lot of activities and events that were centered around April as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. The month began with dedicating each Wednesday as the day to wear blue. Blue signifies the color of the bruises from the abuse that is suffered by so many children. Staff, volunteers, board members, Youth Court staff, and other community agencies came together to show support on *Wear Blue Wednesday's*. Many thanks to everyone who joined in the efforts to bring awareness to child abuse and neglect in our communities. Special thanks to the city of Ocean Springs for its efforts to bring public awareness to child abuse and neglect by spot-lighting City Hall each Wednesday in April with blue lights.

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



2022 CASA Blues

Our seventh annual CASA Blues was hosted on March 11 at Jackson County Civic Center in Pascagoula. Thanks to our sponsors and all of you who attended, it was an amazing success. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to each of the following supporters for their contribution to the event. We could not have done it without them.



Rhythm & Blues Sponsors

Coldwell Banker • Keesler Federal Credit Union • Pascagoula Men's Club Foundation, Inc..

Rock & Roll Blues Sponsors

Chevron Products Co. • Edward Jones, Lisa Cannon • Gulf Trust Federal Credit Union • Navigator Credit Union

Country Blues Sponsors

*Coast Chevrolet • Crown Dodge • Ingalls Shipbuilding • Jerry Lee's Grocery
Mississippi Export Railroad Company • Pascagoula Bar Pilots Association • The First Bank*

Boogie Woogie Blues Sponsors

Burrow Law Firm • Foster Brimm Consulting • Merchants & Marine Bank • Merlin Wagner • Stacie Zorn

In-Kind Sponsors

*Azteca's - San Miguel Restaurants • Brass Hanger Cleaners • Coca-Cola Bottling Co. • DZT Photography & Event Studio
Gulf Coast Produce Distributors, Inc. • Mitchell Distributing • McAlister's • Ft. Bayou Wine & Spirits • Golden Nugget
Jackson County Board of Supervisors • Jackson County Sheriff's Department • Jen & Chuck Photography
Junior Auxiliary of Pascagoula-Moss Point • N2 Blue Band • Turf Masters Lawn Care, Inc.*

Silent Auction items were donated by the following

BILOXI

*Big Play Entertainment Center • Biloxi Shuckers • Congressman Steven Palazzo • El Saltillo • Finishline Performance • Fuji Sushi House • Golden Nugget Biloxi
Hotel & Casino • Grant's Menswear & Peter Grant Clothiers • Half Shell Oyster House • Harrah's Gulf Coast •
IP Casino Resort Spa • Mary Mahoney's Old French House • Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art • Ruth's Chris Steak House • Sal & Mookie •
Scarlet Pearl Casino Resort • Woody's Roadside*

D'IBERVILLE

*Buffalo Wild Wings • Chicken Salad Chick • Chili's Bar and Grill • Edible Arrangements • European Wax Center • Massage Envy •
Newk's Eatery • Panda Palace • Ruby Tuesday • Sports Clips • The Grand Theater*

GAUTIER

*Auto Zone • Burnham's Drugs • Casual Cuts • David Heverly • DeLo's Heavenly Coffee • Eco-Tours of South MS •
Foster's Heating and Air • Hickory Hills Country Club • Killer Crab & Seafood • Lady May • Lowe's • New York Pizza • O'Reilly's Auto Parts • PIN-UPS •
Shell Landing Golf Club • Spanish Trail Lanes*

OCEAN SPRINGS

*Ace Hardware • Aunt Jenny's Catfish Restaurant • Auto Zone • Bailey Lumber and Supply • Big Lots • Blossman Family YMCA •
Broome's • Buff City Soap • Charisma • Charred, a Steak & Oyster Bar • Cheryl's Steakhouse • Downtown Cart Rentals • El Saltillo •
4 Bulls • Glory Bound Gyro Co. • Goodyear Auto Service • Hillyer House • Leather and Pearls • Lee Tracy Boutique • Lost Pizza Company •
Mosaic Restaurant & Bar • Murky Waters • NAPA Auto Parts • New York Pizza • NTB Tire Company • Ocean Springs Mercantile • O'Reilly's Auto Parts • Palm
Beach Tan • Papa John's • Phoenixia Gourmet Restaurant • Raising Cane's • Purelux Nails & Spa • Rib Crib • Rooftop Taco & Tequila • Sea 2 Swamp • Shear
Attitude Studio • Shearwater Pottery • Sports Clips • Tato Nut Donut Shop • The Beatnik • The Candy Cottage • The Crawfish House and Grill •
The Honey Baked Ham Company • The Pet Connection • The Roost Boutique Hotel •
The Shed Barbeque & Blues Joint • Walter Anderson Museum of Art • Woody's Roadside*

2022 CASA Blues

PASCAGOULA

Anntina Beauty Salon • Army Navy Store • Auto Zone • Bozo's Grocery & Seafood Market • Bozo's Too • Dad's Super Pawn • Jack's by the Tracks • Johnson Brothers Jewelry Company • Lauren's Hair Salon • Lincoln on Demand • Liquors Unlimited • Lowe's • Carl Nulta • O'Reilly's Auto Parts • Paradise Deli & Grill • Poppy's • Posies & Puddles • Sav-Rex Pharmacy • Singing River Art Association • Southern Pest Control • Spencer Bailey • Sherri Hodges-Thornton • Wayne Lee's Grocery & Market • Willis Furniture

GULFPORT

• Chicken Salad Chick • Chili's Bar and Grill • Cracker Barrel • Felix's Restaurant & Oyster Bar • Salute Seafood and Italian Restaurant • Sicily's Italian Buffet • TGIF • The Chimney's

OTHER LOCATIONS

• Pascagoula River Audubon Center, Moss Point • Hollywood Casino Gulf Coast, Bay St. Louis • New Orleans Steamboat Company • Pat Harrison Waterway District, Hattiesburg • The Peabody, Memphis, TN • Carrabba's Italian Grill, Mobile • Red Lobster, Mobile

and many Anonymous Donors
Thank you for your support.



Mark Scott, Director of Government Affairs, Corporate Services for VT Halter Marine, our presenting sponsor, began the program for the event. Halter Marine is invested in the local community and wants to make a positive impact on the lives of the citizens. We are forever grateful for their support of the CASA mission, providing quality trained volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children and youth who have experienced abuse or neglect. This best-interest advocacy makes a life-changing difference for these most vulnerable citizens of the community. Thank you, Halter Marine!



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

Fun at CASA Blues



Frances and Judge Sigalas



**Judge Sharon Sigalas
Keynote Speaker**

2022 CASA Blues KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Honorable Sharon W. Sigalas
Jackson County Youth Court Judge**

A message from Judge Sigalas:

As I write this brief message, it hits me that this will be my last year to be the Youth Court Judge for Jackson County. To say that it has been an honor to have served in this position for almost 20 years would be an understatement. My life has been truly blessed by the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of children and families in Jackson County. I will retire knowing that I have done my best. Even when I made mistakes, I took that opportunity to learn from my mistakes. I have enjoyed watching our CASA program grow under the leadership of Frances Allsup from a mere four volunteers serving 11 children in 2006 to over 100 volunteers today serving 217 children in the calendar year 2021. I have personally seen the difference a CASA volunteer makes in the lives of the children they touch. I will be forever grateful for the honor of working so closely with such a wonderful group of dedicated community volunteers.

2022 CASA Blues CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN

Angel Myers McIlrath was selected this year's *Champion for Children*. Angel is serving as the District Attorney for the 19th Circuit Court District, serving the citizens of Jackson, George, and Green Counties.

As a member of the Mississippi Prosecutors Association Board of Directors and Legislative Committee, she has been integral in drafting and lobbying for MPA sponsored legislation, including the Lonnie Smith Act, which amended the child abuse laws to better protect children, and a number of other laws making our community safer.

Angel also teaches law enforcement, attorneys, and medical professionals on various subjects concerning physical and sexual abuse of children, exploitation of children, and best practices in criminal investigations.

Without a doubt, she is a true *Champion for Children*.



Angel Myers McIlrath



**Angel and her parents
Pam and Jim Patano**

Change a Child's Story ®

Fun at CASA Blues



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TBRI® Practitioner Training

Congratulations to Angela Lynn, JC CASA Advocate Supervisor, who has been accepted to the TCU / Karyn Purvis Institute for Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI®) Practitioner training. Angela applied for and received two scholarships to cover the cost of the training, one from *Show Hope* and the other from Hancock and Harrison Counties judicial system. Hancock and Harrison Counties, with grant funding, is offering this training program to individuals along the gulf coast to receive TBRI® training.



TBRI® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® uses *Empowering Principles* to address physical needs, *Connecting Principles* for attachment needs, and *Correcting Principles* to disarm fear-based behaviors. While the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, the heartbeat of TBRI® is connection.

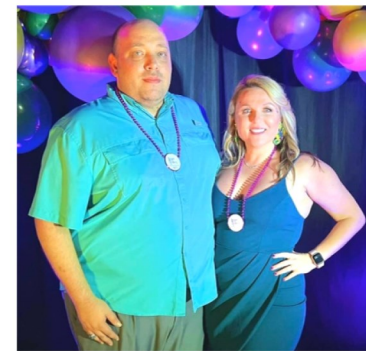
Angela will start her 10 weeks of online training in April, followed by a week of in person training in Biloxi. Upon successfully completing the training, she will become a certified TBRI® Practitioner, allowing her to train our staff and volunteers, foster parents, and others in the child's support system.

FYI



March 4: Shelly Laughlin, Margrett Lipps, Cheryl Johnson, and Brittlyn Carzoli with the Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi-Ocean Springs (JABOS) came by the office with wonderful birthday gifts for our children who celebrate their birthdays in April. Beautifully wrapped big birthday bags filled with gifts are sure to delight children of any age.

March 5: CASA staff, Jonathan Mills and Frances Allsup, attended Junior Auxiliary of Pascagoula-Moss Point (JAPMP) Charity Boil. The Charity Boil was held at the Grand Magnolia Ballroom in Pascagoula. They had a fun time listening to music, shopping the silent auction, and talking to friends. Samantha Bignell, CASA governing board secretary and member of JAPMP, joined in the fun.



April 12: The wonderful Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi-Ocean Springs (JABOS) dropped off a large assortment of Easter buckets filled with goodies! Volunteers came by the office to get buckets for their CASA children. Needless to say, the children were excited with these special baskets. Also on April 12, five dedicated representatives from the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College Phi Theta Kappa honor society

arrived at the office with adorable Easter boxes filled with treats and toys for our CASA youth and children for the upcoming holiday. This dedicated group of young people has done an outstanding job of remembering our CASA kids in special ways in 2022. Pictured with just a sample of the fun gift boxes are Kaitlyn McDonald, Chloe Nguyen, Sophia Incer, Tim Miller, and Thuy Pham. Their enthusiasm and creativity were evident from the moment they entered the building. Their group is super excited to continue to be a part of the CASA mission here in Jackson County.



FYI

March 24: The Mississippi Regional Housing Authority VIII presented a Free Community Health Fair at the Pascagoula Senior Center. Jackson County CASA was one of the many community resources in attendance that day. Jonathan Mills and Patty Waters provided program information, answered questions, and made interested individuals better aware of the CASA mission. A number of people signed up to receive the monthly newsletter and requested follow-up information on becoming a CASA volunteer.

March 18: The Blind Tiger and Marina Cantina Match Challenge concluded with the check presentation by owner Thomas Genin. After recognizing the importance of the CASA role, serving the abused and neglected children, Mr. Genin held the Match Challenge to raise funds for the Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson County CASA programs. We are grateful for his generosity and kindness. Not only did Mr. Genin inspire others to give, he also created awareness for our mission and encouraged others to step forward to volunteer. Thank you, Mr. Genin, for seeing beyond the critical needs of our programs and taking action!



April 20: Jackson County CASA was honored to be selected as one of the donor recipients from the Gautier Mullet and Music Fest Association. Special thanks to Board Member, Rene' Shaw, for representing CASA and accepting the gift on behalf of the program. THANK YOU to the Gautier Mullet & Music Fest for helping to

Change a Child's Story®

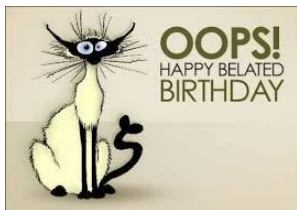
April 25: The advocate supervisors from Hancock, Harrison, and Jackson Counties met at the Half Shell Oyster House in Biloxi for a day of learning and sharing across county lines. Topics from volunteer recruitment and retention to dealing with second-hand trauma were discussed at length, while ways to grow together as a unified coastal CASA family were explored. Many exciting ideas were shared as the advocate supervisors of the three CASA programs discovered their similarities and celebrated their unique differences that help make each program successful. Round table discussions regarding challenging cases and overcoming the many obstacles they bring and stories of successes from each program were discussed. The meeting was very productive and helpful and led to the development of new friendships. The advocate supervisors decided to hold quarterly meetings so that the relationships with the coastal CASA programs will continue to strengthen.



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 March 31, 2022, **98 Volunteers** have served **157 children** from **99 families** with **1,087 donated hours of service during the 2022 calendar year.**

April and May Birthdays



April 1
Gwendolyn Kennard

April 2
Ricky Wolbrecht

April 4
Cathy Groff
Mary Marnecheck

April 5
Tim Billings
Avonne Pol

April 7
Aaliyah Dock

April 18
Joan Pylate

April 24
Regina Krebs

April 26
Mark Roberts

April 27
Denise King

April 29
Bridget Pickett

May 1
Terry O'Connor

May 5
Lucy Newman
Judy Schneider
Christian Young

May 6
Stacie Zorn

May 12
Dobbs Dennis

May 14
Tahnya Tremonte

May 22
Lindsey O'Connell

May 27
Stephanie Coghlan
Samantha Lucas-Ringle

May 28
Sharon Sigalas



Continuing Education for Volunteers

Reminder— to maintain your CASA standing, you are required to complete 12 hours of Continuing Education training each year. Be sure to include any completed Continuing Education hours on your monthly activity reports that are submitted in OPTIMA. We would like to add additional topics that would be beneficial to you as a volunteer. Please contact the CASA staff if you have special requests.

CASA MOVIE NIGHT: *Exposing the World of Parental Abduction and Kidnapping*

We will provide two opportunities to view the movie, Thursday, May 19 at 6:00 p.m. and Monday, May 23 at 3:00 p.m. The film is 45 minutes long. If you desire, you may bring a brown bag meal.

RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED. Contact your supervisor or any CASA staff, via text, email, or phone call to reserve your seat for the date you would like to attend. 1.5–2 hours credit

Note: Please remember that a volunteer must complete 12 hours of continuing education annually to remain in good standing.

