



CASA Connection

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Abuse Hotline
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Sparklight—Charitable Giving Fund



Lisa Cannon, Shawn Landrum, Frances Allsup, Greg Capranica, Samantha Bignell, Leah Singleton, Mollie Hillburn, and Brandon Riches

We are so excited to announce that Jackson County CASA was selected to receive a Charitable Giving Fund Donation from Sparklight for \$2,500! The check was presented by Greg Capranica and Leah Singleton to Executive Director, Frances Allsup, and the CASA governing board members at their June 22 monthly meeting. This grant money will be used to purchase some much needed equipment – 4 Microsoft Surface Go 3 tablets, hardcover keyboards and a stylus for each. These tablets will allow advocate supervisors to work remotely and transfer critical records in an instant! A gigantic step above pen and paper that they currently use during court hearings, family team meetings, foster care reviews and more. By utilizing these tablets, it will eliminate the time consuming steps of reentering data from paper to computer, not to mention the time that will be saved can be better used to benefit increased direct services to the children and families the program serves. THANK YOU SPARKLIGHT for your generosity and commitment to the local CASA mission.

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Back-to-School

It is hard to believe, but it is true. Children of our communities will head back to school during the first week of August. Many area businesses, organizations and individuals have already made donations of school supplies for CASA to distribute to the children we serve. If you or your group would like to make a donation, items may be dropped off at the CASA office during regular business hours. Thank you in advance for making this a special event for these deserving children and families by providing their back to school needs!



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



FYI

Many thanks to the Kiwanis Club of Lucedale for inviting representatives of Jackson County CASA to share the program's mission with them at their monthly meeting on June 2. It was great to meet everyone! We look forward to working with you in the near future! Board member Doug Adams and Executive Director Frances Allsup were excited to attend and make several new friends in the George County area.

Right: Doug Adams and Frances Allsup



Members of the Dixie Dart Association prepare for the tournament

On June 11, Executive Director, Frances Allsup, spent the day with CASA's good friends from the Dixie Dart Association. Since 2015, this incredible community group has hosted charity dart tournaments twice a year to benefit Jackson County CASA. Their support continues not only with their monetary donations, they also donate backpacks and much needed school supplies for the children in foster care that the program serves. When Frances speaks of this group, she often references them as having "Hearts of Gold". With their faithful support of our mission, they have become an integral part of our village helping to "Change a Child's Story". It was a "Groovy" (in memory) day hanging out with these very special DDA friends. The Dixie Dart Holiday Charity Dart Tournament has been scheduled for Saturday, November 12, at the VFW Post 5699 in Ocean Springs. Proceeds from this tournament benefit Jackson County CASA, their designated charity of choice.



June 16, CASA hosted an informative continuing education opportunity regarding mental health issues in youngsters. The presenter was Donna Lewis, a licensed counselor, who has over 25 years of experience as a clinical social worker and therapist specializing in providing resources and assisting individuals heal from trauma, PTSD, and dissociative, attachment, and borderline personality disorders. Donna talked with volunteers and staff about some of the issues that affect the children in foster care and provided some practical tools and resources to help volunteers, parents, and foster parents develop a better understanding of how some children deal with their emotions in different situations. The Q and A that followed will potentially lead to a follow-up session for individual case-related questions. We are especially grateful to Gulfport Behavioral, and our amazing CASA advocate Michelle Wilson, for providing the delicious pizza, cookies, and cold drinks.

Left: Donna Lewis and advocate supervisor Beverly Goff

FYI

Happy Birthday! **June 22**, Lindsay Rothe with the Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi-Ocean Springs (JABOS) came by the office with a special birthday gift and a Crumbl cookie for one of our CASA children who will be celebrating a late June birthday. She and the other members of this group have faithfully provided beautiful handmade cards and wonderful birthday bags filled with gifts that were sure to delight each child on his/her special day.

Right: Lindsay Rothe



Above: Volunteers and board members captivated by John Harry's presentation on Hope against Adversity

On June 23, John Harry with Hope Rising Mississippi, a non-profit organization, presented a continuing education program for staff, volunteers, board members, and service providers focusing on *Hope against Adversity* and how instilling hope can change the trajectory of a child's life. John has extensive experience in working with the youth court process and foster children. The power point presentation was geared toward working with children and families who have been exposed to domestic violence and trauma, and how these factors can affect overall behavior and personality. He targeted working with clients to set real, attainable goals (both short and long term), helping them develop pathways (ways to get to this goal), and agency (making informed choices to help them achieve this goal). He presented a wealth of information about the effects and long-term consequences of ACE's (adverse childhood experiences) and the process of generalization. The closing small group activity focused on the role a CASA plays in the process by offering concrete suggestions on what caring adults can do to support their clients and the importance of communicating with a common voice and developing a simultaneous relationship with all involved (the court, CPS, associated parties, etc.).

FYI



Left: Phil Harris and Cindy Moe

Below: Felicia Coleman, Singing River Services, Jonathan and Angela, Jackson County CASA, Inc.



What termites? Unfortunately, the CASA building was invaded by termites. The pesky pests managed to do significant damage to one of the windows in the main hallway. The county maintenance crew was on top of the situation and went to work immediately to repair the damage. The finishing crew, Phil Harris and Cindy Moe, were able to complete the project. We are grateful for the entire Jackson County Maintenance Department! We will miss the tree that was outside of the CASA office, but not the termite infestation it may have helped to cause!

Advocate Supervisors, Jonathan Mills and Angela Lynn, have the honor and privilege to not only represent CASA as Board Members for the Jackson County MGCCC Human Services Technology department, they have been chosen to represent the new face of the department. Their feature photo, top photo on the right, will be used on the department recruitment banner, rack cards, and the college's website.

Angela and Jonathan speak to classes in the Human Services department each semester. They provide insight into the youth court process and explain CASA's role in providing a voice for the children as they journey through the system. As an added bonus, their speaking engagements provide an opportunity to recruit potential volunteers. Angela and Jonathan also assist the department in conducting mock interviews to help the students prepare for careers in Human Services.

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 May 30, 2022, **104 Volunteers** have served **168 children** from **106 families** with **1,831 donated hours of service during the 2022 calendar year.**

Late Summer Volunteer Pre-Service Training

Don't be late! Sign up now for the Late Summer Volunteer Pre-Service Training. Sessions will begin July 26 and end on August 30.

The curriculum used for the pre-service training, *Guided Learning*, is designed for independent learning. Participants receive material to review independently prior to the weekly in-person session with training facilitator, Patty Waters.

If you would like to participate in the training session or would like more information on the CASA mission, contact Patty at patty_waters@co.jackson.ms.us, call the offices 228-762-7370, extension 64785, or visit the website jccasa.net

Overview: Part 1 and interview

July 26 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Overview: Part 2

July 28 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Bleux Case

August 2 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Green Case

August 9 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Amarillo Case

August 16 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

The Redd Case/Fostering Futures

August 23 6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

Wrap-up and Optima

August 30

Law and Induction

TBA



July Birthdays



July 1

Cynthia Wilson

July 4

Mollie Hilburn
Mike Wheatley

July 11

Lee Ann Aguilar

July 17

Doretha Goodman

July 19

Brenda Lancaster

July 20

Victor Goff

July 23

Charlotte McClendon

July 25

Cynthia Lupton

July 27

Tashema Cannon

July 31

Kathy McDonald



*The CASA office will be closed
on Monday, July 4th.*

*Hope everyone has a safe
holiday!*

Continuing Education Opportunities

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.

On July 11 from **9 – 11 am** and from **2 – 4 pm**, the program will host two **CASA Cares** continuing education opportunities. This roundtable discussion provides a chance for volunteers, staff, and service providers to it down together and discuss in a safe environment the good and the bad situations and issues going on with individual cases. **This month's special guest speaker will be Katy Frazier.** Katy started out her career as a frontline worker with CPS. She has been a supervisor, heads up the Heartbeat Program for children ages 4 and under, and currently serves as the permanency coordinator and intake officer for the Jackson County Youth Court. With her wealth of knowledge, she will be able to answer questions and provide valuable information from her unique perspective. If you are new to CASA or do not currently have a case, please make plans to attend to learn more about how the volunteer's role is critical in creating a positive outcome for each child and family involved in the youth court system. Both sessions will be held at the Jackson County Civic Center on Shortcut Road in Pascagoula. RSVP to advocate supervisor, Angela Lynn (at 228-762-7370, ext. 64765 or Angela_lynn@co.jackson.ms.us), to reserve your spot at the table!

Book Selection for the month: *Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration* by Dr. Reuben Jonathan Miller

Each year more than half a million Americans are released from prison and join a population of twenty million people who live with a felony record. Dr. Miller, a chaplain at the Cook County Jail in Chicago and now a sociologist studying mass incarceration, spent years alongside prisoners, ex-prisoners, their friends and their families to understand the lifelong burden that even a single arrest can entail. What his work revealed is a simple, if overlooked truth: life after incarceration is its own form of prison. The idea that one can serve their time and return to their family and life as a full-fledged member of society is one of America's most shocking myths. Recently released individuals are faced with jobs that are off limits, apartments that cannot be occupied, and votes that cannot be cast. It pinpoints that the American justice system was not created to rehabilitate individuals. Parole is also structured to keep many individuals impoverished, unstable, and disenfranchised long after they have paid their debt to society. Dr. Miller combines persuasive data with clear prose, close engagement with his interview subjects, and stories from his own personal experience into a compelling blend that will easily keep readers absorbed. His findings are instructive and emotional without being too scholarly.

Many independent opportunities for continuing education can be found on our webpage, jccasa.net

Welcome New CASA Volunteers

Our number of CASA volunteers has grown by four over the past two months. We proudly welcome the new advocates pictured below to the CASA team **Terri Acosta, Lisa Hayward, Cynthia Lupton, and Kathy McDonald.** Kathy was the last CASA to be sworn in by Judge Sharon Sigalas in late May while Lisa was the first volunteer sworn in on June 1 by Judge Keith Miller. Terri and Cynthia have recently completed the summer pre-service training and will be sworn in in July. It is exciting to see our volunteer numbers continue to grow! Each of these ladies brings with her a wealth of gifts and talents to serve the children and support the CASA mission. If you know someone who might be interested in becoming a volunteer, please share the upcoming late summer training information with them.



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July Court Dates

Your Court date is **very important**. Your **presence is needed** at all Court hearings. However, if you are unavailable to attend, please contact the CASA office and provide an update of your case. CASA staff will present your report to the Court. **Your input is essential. Your child/children are counting on you to provide their voice in Court. Please review the schedule carefully. If you have any questions contact any staff for assistance.**

Confidential

Information unavailable

Foster Care Review Schedule

A Foster Care Reviews (aka County Conference) is held every six months to discuss and review the permanent plan of the child/children's in foster care. Your attendance and input is requested. The review is **NOT** a court hearing, however, the testimony delivered during the review will be provided to the Court to aid in making decisions about the child/children's best interests. **Please contact the CASA staff if you are not able to attend.**

Confidential

Information unavailable

School Supplies Distribution (July 19–21)

School supplies will be available for distribution for 3 days only, **July 19, 20, and 21!** Volunteers, **SAVE THE DATES.** Supplies are flooding in, and we want to get them into the hands of the CASA children and families so they will be prepared for the first day of school. Books, clothing, baby items, toys, hygiene products, and more will also be available for children of all ages. **VOLUNTEERS must pickup these items and get them into the hands of the children.** If the volunteer chooses to arrange for the FOSTER PARENT(S) to pickup supplies, he/she must contact his/her supervisor as soon as possible.

Remaining supplies will be available for distribution to other foster children in our area on July 22.

