



# CASA Connection

Volume 9: Issue 8

**Abuse Hotline**  
**1-800-222-8000**

August 2022

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## Welcome—Judge Keith Miller



First day on the job, **Judge Keith Miller** administers the CASA oath to **Lisa Hayward**.

In May, Governor Tate Reeves appointed **Judge R. Keith Miller** to the County Court of Jackson County, Place 1 (Youth Court) to fill the vacancy created by the retirement of long-serving County Court Judge Sharon W. Sigalas.

**Judge Miller** is a lifelong resident of Jackson County, except for brief periods in college, law school, and his early legal career. **Miller** has been practicing law for the past 30 years. He began his legal career in 1992 working at the law firm of Hopkins, Dodson, Wyatt, and Crawley, in Gulfport. In 1993, he became a Special Assistant District Attorney General and in 1994 became an Assistant District Attorney for Jackson, George, and Greene Counties. He has been a City Prosecutor for the cities of Ocean Springs and Moss Point and was elected to serve as the District Attorney for Jackson, George, and Greene Counties. For the past several years, **Miller** has served as the Municipal Judge for the City of Moss Point. He has also served as director of the Coastal Region Drug Prosecution unit and runs Miller Law Offices. In the November election, **Judge Miller** will be elected unopposed to the Circuit Court bench replacing Judge Robert Krebs who will be retiring in December. He and his wife Sherry have been married for 33 years and have 3 children and 4 grandchildren.

During his time of Youth Court service, **Judge Miller** has worked diligently to instill in the youth and the parents, the importance of setting high standards and holding them accountable for expected behaviors. He seeks to instill in them strong core beliefs of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and understands the court's important role to impose right restrictions to change children's lives. **Judge Miller** strives to ensure successful case closings holding all parties to set standards and rewarding them with positive outcomes.

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## FYI



For the past two summers, the youngsters at **St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church** in Ocean Springs have chosen CASA as the charity of choice for their week of VBS classes. This year the theme was **Monumental**, and the children did a monumental job in each of the five groups collecting change to support the children CASA serves. Excitement filled the room as the end of week total was posted on the big screen - \$612.75. CASA volunteer, Patty Waters, attended the closing and was on hand when the announcement was made to the group. It was so wonderful to again witness children doing their part to help other local children in need. A huge thank you to the VBS coordinator, **Lisa Greig**, and her outstanding group of parent and student volunteers for coordinating these efforts.

In addition to this donation, the VBS group from **Caswell Springs United Methodist Church** also made a very generous donation of \$716.74 to CASA. Thank you to **Pastor Kevin Trantham** and the staff and participants spent their week of **Discovery on Adventure Island** and chose CASA to receive this dona-



Thanks to **Amy Brandenstein** and the wonderful **Crew of Chevron** who made a huge donation of clothes, socks, pj's, stuffed animals, etc. to the children we serve. **Amy** dropped by with her vehicle filled to capacity on July 14 – just in time for the big back-to-school give away. These items are kept on hand and are always well received by the dedicated MDCPS workers who frequently drop by to help supply the immediate needs of children taken into custody. Mere words can never express the heartfelt thanks that go out to all the Chevron employees for their year-round support of children in foster

## Latest Program Statistics

**104—Volunteers**  
**172—Kids served**  
**96—Families served**





## FYI



Advocate Supervisor **Angela Lynn** applied for and was accepted to attend the TCU Institute of Child Development/Karyn Purvis institute Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) training held in Biloxi. This 5 day in-person training was a follow up to 10 weeks of online classes. This allows **Angela** to become a TBRI Practitioner and enables her to come back to train staff, volunteers, fosters, and others in the child's support system. TBRI is based on the sensible idea that effective interventions must focus on the *whole child* – their behaviors, emotions, thoughts, and relationships. She was part of a class of over 150 people from around the world who received this intensive in-person training that focuses on application and implementation of TBRI. We are so proud of **Angela** for being accepted into this program and receiving two scholarships, which covered the cost of the training. This intervention training will be useful with those children who have often been labeled as "bad kids" or have been moved many times because of "behavioral outbursts". We look forward to seeing the huge difference this specialized training can bring to staff, volunteers, and families working with the unique needs of some of the children CASA serves.

July 11<sup>th</sup> CASA hosted **CASA Cares** a continuing education opportunity with **Katy Frazier**, Jackson County Intake Officer and Permanence Coordinator, as the guest presenter. **Katy** shared with the volunteers the process of how CPS takes a child into custody, along with resources she and the court give to the parents at intake. She answered questions regarding issues volunteers were having regarding their individual cases. She stated, "We were all led here to serve the children for a reason. Share your reasons and let that impact on your advocacy. Your personal journey could be the key factor the child and family need to hear." **Katy** enjoyed speaking with the volunteers and thanked them for their CASA service to the community and to the children.

Pictures are volunteers who participated in the round table discussion - **Ollie Ruth Jefferson, Marsha Wilson, Jim Wilson, Teresa Landrum, and Michelle Wilson**



Pictured on the left is **Lindsay Roth** and Advocate Supervisor **Beverly Goff** with just a few of the filled backpacks the JABOS donated for our back to school event.

Thank you to the members of the Junior Auxiliary of Ocean Springs and Biloxi for providing the wonderful birthday gifts each month to the children we serve. Pictured on the right with one of the very special gift bags from JABOS for a July birthday are **Samantha** and **Madison Bignell**. Thank you also goes out to our dedicated volunteers who make sure these gifts are delivered in a timely fashion.





## FYI





## FYI



**Brooks Neill** with Edward Jones and CASA volunteer **Larry Fowler** are shown with some of the donated back-to-school supplies collected there.

Thank you to our wonderful governing board member, **Lisa Cannon**, for heading up a drive for back-to-school supplies and allowing CASA to use the Edward Jones offices in Gautier as a collection point. **Mark Roberts** and our dedicated volunteer **Larry Fowler** were able to collect all of the items donated and transport them to Youth Court Building C where they could be sorted and arranged. A special thank you to the members of the **Junior Auxiliary of Ocean Springs and Biloxi** for donating filled backpacks for the event which were prepared specifically for boys and girls in elementary, middle school, and high school. This awesome group of community volunteers also donated their time to assist CASA volunteers and foster parents who came by to pick up the school supplies and so much more!

We were truly overwhelmed to have the support of other community groups: **Reva Gayner, Brad Pearce, and Clay Lagrone** with **Ocean Springs Elks Lodge #2051**; **Melinda Baker** and the employees at **Superior Optical**; and members of the **Pascagoula Rotary Club**. We are thankful for these generous donations of additional school supplies and filled backpacks. A big shout out to the **Brass Hanger Cleaners** and its owner, **Carey Goff**, for allowing us to use the hanging clothes rack which allowed us to display and easily find some of the items made available to the children.

Please know how much receiving these back-to-school items means to the families and to the children in foster care as they look forward to the start of a new school year 2022!

## Welcome New CASA Volunteers!



**Judge Keith Miller** swears in our two newest volunteers: **Terri Acosta** and **Jeanne Coleman**. Both new advocates completed the pre-service training in July and are looking forward to working a case. **Terri and Jeanne** — welcome to team CASA!

## 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.

**Continuing Education Opportunity – *Darkness to Light, Stewards of Children***, presented by CASA of Hancock County, FIMR (Fetal & Infant Mortality Review) Quarterly Community Action Team Meeting, Wednesday, August 24, from 9 – 11 am at the Auditorium - MSDH District IX, 1141 Bayview, Biloxi. One in ten children will be sexually abused before the age of 18. ***Stewards of Children*** is a prevention training that teaches adults how to prevent, recognize, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse. This program is designed for organizations that serve youth and for individuals concerned about the safety of children. It is the only nationally distributed, evidence-informed program proven to increase knowledge, improve attitudes, and change child protective behaviors. Call the CASA office to register before **August 19** to reserve your spot. Certificates will be awarded after participation in this program. Please note that this will be a 3-hour meeting,

**Book Selection for the month: *Invisible Child: Poverty, Survival, and Hope in an American City*** by Andrea Elliot.

In her book, Pulitzer Prize winner Andrea Elliott follows eight dramatic years in the life of Dasani, a girl whose imagination is as soaring as the skyscrapers near her Brooklyn shelter. In this sweeping narrative, Elliott weaves the story of Dasani's childhood with the history of her ancestors, tracing their passage from slavery to the Great Migration north. As Dasani comes of age, New York City's homeless crisis has exploded, deepening the chasm between rich and poor. She must guide her siblings through a world riddled by hunger, violence, racism, drug addiction, and the threat of foster care. Out on the street, Dasani becomes a fierce fighter "to protect those who I love." When she finally escapes city life to enroll in a boarding school, she faces an impossible question: What if leaving poverty means abandoning your family, and yourself?

**Many independent opportunities** for continuing education can be found on our webpage, [jccasa.net](http://jccasa.net)



## Suicide Prevention

### 988 Launched in Mississippi for National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

- In Mississippi, suicide is the 12<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death and the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death among young adults.
- In 2020, the US had one death by suicide every 11 minutes.
- For people ages 10–34, suicide is a leading cause of death.
- From April 2020 through April 2021, over 100,000 people died from drug overdose.

Behind each of these data points, are people, families, and communities who have been impacted. Yet, in the face of these urgent realities, HOPE is still there.

On July 16, Mississippi joined the rest of the US in beginning to use the 988 dialing code. 988 will be the new three-digit number for calls (multiple languages), texts or chats (English only) that connect people to the existing **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**, where compassionate, accessible care and support are available for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress. The chat feature will be available through the Lifeline's [website](https://www.988lifeline.org). People can use 988 if they are having thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crises, or any other kind of emotional distress. Someone can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

It is clear the Lifeline works! Since it began in 2005, it has served as an invaluable resource, helping thousands of people overcome suicidal crisis or mental health-related distress every day. With the transition to 988, these life-saving services will be even easier to reach. In Mississippi, we have one of the top 10 highest answer rates for the Lifeline in the nation with more than 9,000 calls last fiscal year!



## August Birthdays

August 1  
Tess Mason

August 3  
Virginia Brink

August 4  
Lucy Hurst-Gordon

August 7  
Michelle Wilson

August 9  
Lenita Long

August 15  
David Lancaster  
Ruth Payton

August 13  
John Mosley

August 17  
Tommy Sessum

August 18  
Erin Kramer

August 23  
Florence Motes

August 26  
Karen Bradley  
Twaya Caples

August 28  
Tonya Fowler  
Patty Waters

August 30  
Frances Allsup  
Carolyn Gautier



Thank you to all who helped support our local CASA mission and the children we serve by shopping **Amazon Smile** on July 12 – 13. Amazon donates 0.5% of all eligible purchases made on these days to the designated agencies. A very special thank you goes out to our CASA governing board member Mollie Hillburn and her company Ad2, Inc. for creating the eye-catching super hero shopping graphics to encourage shoppers to choose CASA.

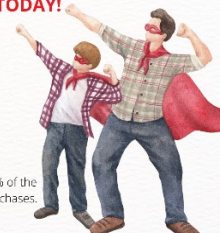
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Choose Jackson County Casa, Pascagoula and

**SHOP TODAY!**



Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases.



**Monday—August 15**  
**Glory Bound Gyros**  
**3 – 9 pm**

**Government Street, Ocean Springs**

The menu features a southern twist on Greek standards, Gyros and Humus. Enjoy a unique meal in a unique environment and 10% of all profits benefit United Way of Jackson and George Counties proud supporter of CASA of Jackson County

