



# CASA Connection

Volume 10: Issue 1

January 2023

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**CHANGE A  
CHILD'S STORY.™**



Board member Brandon Riches created custom throws for the Christmas parade to make the local community better aware of the need for CASA volunteers in the new area served.



With December 2022 now one for the books, it seems appropriate to give a tremendous thank you to the members of the governing board of CASA of Southeast Mississippi, Inc. The members continue to play a critical role in the program's successful expansion into George and Greene Counties. They have willingly stepped up when asked to spread the word and support the CASA mission throughout the year. Some were eager to play active roles in this year's Christmas festivities helping create and man the Lucedale parade float, gather and wrap some of the children's gifts, and work with gift distribution at the *Holiday Happening* event. We are truly blessed to have these awesome men and women serving as we move the CASA program forward. 2023 will see several new faces in the CASA office as the program continues to grow, and the expansion moves ahead with a satellite office opening in Lucedale.

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Thank you to everyone who helped make the 2022 *Holiday Happening* a huge success! Mother Nature did not want to cooperate this year and the threat of severe weather even made the event a bit iffy. The weather, however, held out until late afternoon, and a third of the gifts were gone by day's end. Thank you to the many volunteers who helped man the two buildings: Brianna Ricks, Larry Fowler, Lucy Hurst-Gordon, Sandy LeBatard, Teresa Landrum, Suzanne Delarosa, and board member Rene' Shaw. It was wonderful to see and have a chance to visit with all the volunteers who came by to pick up gifts. Thursday and Friday provided beautiful sunshine and with pick ups by CPS, foster parents, and other volunteers both buildings were essentially down to the last few gifts. Please enjoy on pages 4—6 some photos of the very special folks who made this December one to remember.

## Angels of CASA

Over 180 children in Jackson and Greene Counties had a wonderful Christmas this year! This would not have been possible without the kindness and generosity of you, our community supporters. Numerous local businesses, organizations, and individual citizens made contributions that ensured the holiday season would be extra special for the deserving children we serve. They are truly CASA Angels!

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to each of the following supporters for sponsoring the children. There is no way that you could ever know how much your gifts, no matter how large or small, have meant to the children and each of us at CASA of Southeast Mississippi, Inc. We wish we could show you the beautiful smiles on the children's faces as they opened their gifts, but we can't. So just know that your kindness and generosity is deeply appreciated. A special thank you goes out to the volunteers, foster parents, and dedicated CPS workers who helped deliver all of the gifts collected.

### SPECIAL CASA CHRISTMAS ANGELS

*Barnes & Noble, Gulfport*

*Samantha Bignell • Coldwell Bankers Smith Homes, Realtors of Ocean Springs*

*Chelsea Campbell, True Growth Strength & Conditioning*

*Chevron Refinery employees, Operation Candy Cane • Suzanne Delarosa and family*

*Dixie Dart Association • Duchess Club of Ocean Springs • Equal Sister and Brotherhood*

*The Golden Nugget staff and employees*

*Gulf Coast Association of Realtors • Hancock Whitney Banks (Gulfport—Alana Barnette-Woods,*

*Ocean Springs East-Sarah Bazzle & Ocean Springs Washington Avenue-Laurie Godfrey)*

*• Jackson County Bar Association*

*Jackson-George Regional Library System • Junior Auxiliary of Biloxi - Ocean Springs*

*Keesler Federal Credit Union • Carol & Steve Messer • Mississippi Business Women*

*Pascagoula Rotary Club members • Ocean Springs Carnival Association members*

*Jennifer Bates Presley • Sparklight • Cynthia & Larry Wilson*

*Zachry Care Team • Many Anonymous Donors*

### THANK YOU

## **CASA of Southeast Mississippi, Inc.**

### **2023 WINTER VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

#### **Overview: Part 1**

January 10          6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

#### **Overview: Part 2**

January 12          6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

#### **The Bleux Case**

January 17          6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

#### **The Green Case**

January 24          6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

#### **The Amarillo Case**

January 31          6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

#### **The Redd Case**

February 7          6:00 p.m. — 7:30 p.m.

#### **Wrap-up**

February 14          6:00 p.m.—8:00 p.m.

### **INDUCTION AND OPTIMA TRAINING**

**To Be Scheduled**



# Christmas with CASA



2022 Lucedale Christmas Parade family fun!



Ready for the parade to roll!



Barnes and Noble again provide three filled boxes of brand new books for readers.



Equal members eagerly provided gifts for some lucky younger children.



The members of the Ocean Springs Carnival Association sponsored 15 children and had a wonderful wrapping party and invited CASA to share in all the fun.



These ladies enjoyed shopping and wrapping the gifts for our wonderful children.



The Gulf Coast Association of Realtors generously provided stocking stuffer gift cards to several coast CASA groups.



These OSCA members eagerly took to the task of wrapping and tagging all of the group's amazing gifts.



As part of Chevron employees Operation Candy Cane Dustin McIntire and Eric Gunderson put together and delivered this awesome load of bikes.



Rotary Club toy donations were collected. For a few of the toys—some assembly was indeed required!

CHANGE A  
CHILD'S STORY.™



Christmas lunch and goodies were provided to our wonderful CASA governing board of directors.





Almost ready for the float to roll down Main Street.



The amazing crew from Sparklight showed up with the special gifts their employees provided for the children they sponsored this Christmas.



Kirby Downs with Greene County CPS made several trips to collect the holiday gifts and shop for other children that her staff serves.



True Growth Fitness was able to provide some wonderful toys and games donated just in time for Christmas.



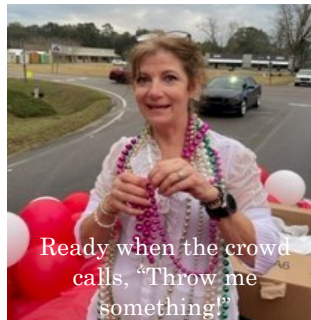
What a great way to celebrate the holidays — wrapping with friends!



Thank you goes out to Keesler Federal Credit Union for again collecting toys for our *CASA Holiday Happening*



Trey and his trusty band of elves made quick work of the toy deliveries



Ready when the crowd calls, "Throw me something!"



Special thanks to the *Care Team* from the Zachry Group for shopping and again providing stocking stuffers for the babies who are 4 and under.



Thank you to the many employees of Chevron and the efforts of *Operation Candy Cane* for selecting, wrapping, assembling and then delivering gifts for 90 children this year





Gifts filled nearly every inch of our CASA office space.  
Is this any way to run a business—only during Christmas!



Thank you to Golden Nugget and its employees for sponsoring  
24 of the children this Christmas.



These wonderful ladies from the MBW open their hearts  
and home every year to provide Christmas gifts.



Not a fire, thankfully, just Chevron personnel arriving with one  
of several loads of gifts for the children we serve.

## January Birthdays

### January 1

Paul Scheibel

### January 6

Cathy Wildschuetz

### January 4

Israel Briggs

### January 23

Alice Rainey



## Latest Program Statistics

**As of November 30, 2022, 101 CASA volunteers served 189 children with 3,053 donated hours of service for the calendar year. Thank you to each dedicated volunteer who has worked to provide a voice for a child who is journeying through the Youth Court process.**

## January Court Dates



## January Foster Care Review Dates

A Foster Care Review (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.**

