



February 2023 CASA Connection

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Jackson County Youth Court Judge Stacie Zorn



CASA of Southeast Mississippi is excited to officially welcome the **Honorable Stacie Zorn** as the newly elected Jackson County Youth Court Judge (County Court Judge, Place 1). **Judge Zorn**, along with returning Youth Court **Judge Darryl Hurt, Jr.** of George County and **Judge Cheryl K. Pierce** of Greene County, both of whom serve as Special Family Masters for the 16th Chancery District, were officially sworn in for their respective duties on January 3 by Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice Honorable **James W. Kitchens**. Pictured above is **Judge Zorn** as she took the oath of office in the Main Courtroom at the Jackson County Courthouse.

After her first weeks in office, **Judge Zorn** says one of the biggest challenges is becoming familiar with all of the rules and regulations of the law and how they specifically apply to the youth court system. She finds the work exciting and really enjoys all of the people who have been on hand to support and assist her in her new job. She has gained a wealth of knowledge from visiting in other courts and developing a positive dialogue with other youth court judges from the other Coast counties.

Judge Zorn gave special thanks to the CASA volunteers who have appeared in her court and have been able to provide significant information regarding the children on their individual cases. She appreciates all of the volunteers and their dedication to serving the children of Jackson County. **Judge Zorn** also realizes the importance of having a CASA on a case in particular situations to help supply additional critical information to help guide the child and the case through the court process.

She cites her husband, **Tristan Armer**, and her family as her greatest support-

2023 Changes in the CASA Staff

Teresa Jaye started the new job of **Outreach Coordinator** on January 23. **Teresa** and her husband **John** have a blended family which includes 6 children and 8 grandchildren, who range in age from 1 to 18. She brings to this position a wealth of experience in community work and business activities. She was employed as a registered nurse for 18 years and most recently as a realtor. She is a native of George County and has many friends and family members in this new area of CASA service. She now will take on the expanded role of planning events in Jackson, George, and Greene Counties aimed to increase program awareness, facilitate recruitment, and develop new fundraising events. **Teresa** is excited to use various outlets such as local broadcast media and social networking to make more members of the communities we serve aware of the CASA program and its mission. She knows from her own work and experience the difference a CASA volunteer can make in a child's journey through the court system. She will also be available to provide invaluable assistance to the Executive Director as the job demands of expansion have placed increased demands of Frances' time. Her hobbies include painting, doing crafts, and sewing.

Teresa has hit the ground running handling the details of planning the 8th annual CASA Blues event set for March 10. She has been a very busy lady on the phone and out and about speaking with potential sponsors, but her door is always open to answer any questions you might have.



Beverly Goff will continue to serve as Advocate Supervisor for some of the volunteers in Jackson County, but beginning in January of 2023 she will also supervise volunteers as they are added in George and Greene Counties. **Beverly** welcomes the many challenges expansion into these two new service areas will bring. She has recently spent several days observing in their courts, posting informational flyers, and making a number of business and community connections. **Beverly** is also eager to build a strong working relationship with the CPS staff in both counties and has spent some time visiting in their offices. She is eager to undertake the task of making more members of both communities aware of the CASA program and its mission and begin the task of recruiting community volunteers who will then be trained to serve the children in these areas. You might see **Beverly** in Leakesville for some of the 3rd Saturday events, in Lucedale for the 2nd Saturday events, and look for her and other CASA staff members in May at the Cinco de Mayo celebration.

For volunteers and visitors who frequent the CASA office, you will notice that a familiar face is no longer there. **Mark Roberts** left his position with the program effective December 30th. **Mark** has been a faithful supporter of the CASA mission and program for the past several years. He has been a big force behind the success of the **CASA Blues**, **Taters for Tots**, and **5D Barrel Run** fundraisers. **Mark** and his wife **Pam** have assisted with many events and their presence will be greatly missed. We wish them every success in the new year. He has promised he would drop in on occasion just to aggravate Brenda. We are going to hold him to his word.



FYI



At the February **CASA of Southeast Mississippi** Governing Board meeting, **Matthew Fall** was on hand and officially thanked by the organization for the very generous \$7,500 donation received from the **Mississippi Power Company Foundation** in December 2022. Pictured following the meeting are board members **Rene' Shaw**, **Brandon Riches**, **Mollie Hillburn**, **Matthew Fall**, Mississippi Power area manager, board secretary, **Samantha Bignell**, board president, **Jeff Pierce**, **Derek McCoy**, board member, and CASA Executive Director, **Frances Allsup**. Not pictured, but serving as group photographer, board member **Doug Adams**.

On January 24th Advocate Manager **Angela Lynn**, Program Manager **Jonathan Mills**, and CASA volunteer **Brianna Ricks** spoke to the MGCCC Jackson County campus Human Services class of instructor **Raila Baker**. They shared the CASA mission, news on the program's expansion into George and Greene Counties, and how the students in the Human Services field can become advocate volunteers. Each gave personal examples of what it is like to work in the Human Services field. **Jonathan** explained how he started out right in the same classrooms they are in and went on to become a CASA volunteer and is now a part of the CASA staff - illustrating how the job you begin as a volunteer can lead in the long run to a career in that field. Both **Angela** and **Jonathan** represent **CASA of Southeast Mississippi, Inc.** as board members for the Jackson County MGCCC Human Services De-



SAVE THE DATE
8TH ANNUAL CASA BLUES
FRIDAY MARCH 10, 2023 (6–10 PM)
JACKSON COUNTY CIVIC CENTER
FEATURING MUSIC BY N2 BLUE

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



Continuing Education Opportunities

Reminder— to maintain your active 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 re-

Two in-service opportunities hosted by the Jackson County Youth Court staff are available in February. Both trainings are being done in the Youth Court. Please give your advocate supervisor a call if you would like to attend one or both since **space is very limited**.

Thursday, February 2nd at 11:00 am – Coastal Family Health – They have a grant to help parents get into treatment, and they do all the leg work. Anyone who deals with neglect and abuse victims would benefit and anyone else who wants to learn more about their services.

Friday, February 3rd at 9:00 am – The Modification Behavior Services – They offer anger management classes for adults and teens, parenting classes, and other services. Everyone working with clients (youth or adults) needs to attend this training and anyone else who wants to learn about the information is invited to attend.

Many independent opportunities for continuing education can be found on our webpage, jccasa.net. Go to **VOLUNTEERS** and then the drop-down menu to **CONTINUING EDUCATION**. These links provide an easy way to gain your **required** in-service hours. The in-service completion form is available to complete and email or hand deliver to your CASA supervisor. Check out the variety of materials and topics. The National CASA Podcasts offer a wide-range of items such as: permanency, outcomes for older youth, meeting emotional needs, poverty, bullying, autism, and parental incarceration, just to name a few. Most are short (30 minutes or less) and are a wonderful way to maintain your status as an active volunteer.

February Birthdays

February 1

Jonathan Mills

February 21

Vicki Applewhite

February 10

Sherita Knowles

February 25

Jane Hicks

February 14

Danny Le Batard

February 27

Lisa Hayward

Angela Lynn

February 16

Katie Allsup



Volunteers Are Needed

Latest Program Statistics

As of December 2022, 100 CASA volunteers served 196 children with 3,321 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. As the number of children in custody continues to grow, we are in need of additional advocate volunteers to serve in 2023!

February



February 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.



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CHILD'S STORY.™**