



# JUNE 2023

Volume 10: Issue 6

June 2023

**CASA OF SOUTHEAST MISSISSIPPI, Inc.**  
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## Staff

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Karen Horn  
Training Coordinator

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## Governing Board Members:

Doug Adams  
Samantha Bignell  
Lisa Cannon  
Eric Collum  
Greg Cronier  
Mollie Hillburn  
Shawn Landrum  
Mark Maples  
Ashley McLeod  
Derek McCoy  
Jeffrey Pierce  
Brandon Riches  
Rene' Shaw  
Sherri Hodges-Thornton

## Honorary Board Members

Ken Rice  
Troy Ross

## Inside this issue:

FYI	2
Continuing Education	6
June Birthdays	6
Summer Training	7
Court Dates	8

## CASA BLUES

**CASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN  
SOUTHEAST MISSISSIPPI

**CASA BLUES**  
PRESENTED BY  
CASA OF SOUTHEAST MISSISSIPPI, INC.

**THE GRAND MAGNOLIA BALLROOM**  
3604 MAGNOLIA STREET  
PASCAGOULA, MS 39567

Go online today and get your tickets.  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/8th-annual-casa-blues-tickets-598043402917>

**JUNE 23, 2023**  
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

Presenting Sponsor  
**BOB BOYTE**  
Honda  
MOSS POINT

Featuring music by  
**N2 BLUE BAND**

Call our office at 228.762.7370 to get your tickets or come by 4903 Telephone Rd. Pascagoula, MS

Putting the music back in little lives!

The program's 8th annual **CASA Blues—Putting the music back in little lives** fundraiser is set for **Friday, June 23**, at the **Grand Magnolia Ballroom** in Pascagoula, from **6—10 pm**.

The evening event will again feature a wonderful silent auction with a fantastic assortment of items to bid on from many local and coast vendors.

Please mark your calendar for this evening of food and fun to support **CASA of Southeast Mississippi**, now proudly serving the children of Jackson, George, and Greene Counties.

Again, music will be provided by **N2 BLUE Band**.

The recipient of **CASA's Champion for Children Award (Operation Candy Cane)** will be honored during the program.

Order your tickets today!

## Outstanding Volunteer



Each month we will feature one dedicated volunteer who has done outstanding work with the children he/she represents. This month, we are proud to recognize **Lee Ann Aguilar**. She is a busy wife, mom, and Gigi who lives in Helena where she is an active member of Full Life Church. **Lee Ann** was in the foster care system as a teen and had a wonderful couple who served her as **CASA** volunteers. She willingly shares her past experiences in order to help the youth she serves. She assures them they can share with her what they are going through. In court, she makes sure each one's voice is clearly heard. Her goal is to change each child's story and make sure each understands they are not defined by their past. Her love and care for the children, her unique ability to listen and encourage, and her genuine desire to make a difference sets **Lee Ann** apart as an outstanding volunteer.

## FYI



Thank you to the all of the wonderful folks from **Caswell Springs United Methodist Church** for preparing the **My BELONGings** bags for the boys and girls! Each individual bag was filled with clothes, books, hygiene products, socks and underwear for sizes ranging from 2-14. Thank you to the young men from the church who dropped by to deliver these items to the **CASA** of-



Following the morning photo session for staff pictures with **Jen & Chuck Photography** at **Citizens Bank** in Pascagoula, the entire **CASA** staff enjoyed a wonderful Dutch treat breakfast and some great fellowship at **Cracker Barrel**. Thank you to everyone involved who allowed this team building opportunity happen.



**CASA of Southeast Mississippi** Executive Director, **Frances Allsup**, and Advocate Supervisor, **Beverly Goff**, recently traveled to State Line where the city's mayor, **Willie Miller**, presented the proclamation designating Child Abuse and Prevention Month to them on behalf of the town council. We thank them for helping with the efforts to make more community members aware of the **CASA** mission.





Thank you to everyone who supported the **Blue Hope** fundraiser and community awareness promotion by purchasing the specialty drink or making a donation at one of the sixteen participating nutrition stores. A total of **\$727** was raised during the week-long event to aid in the recruitment and training of additional **CASA** volunteers.



Saturday, May 6, the Cinco de Mayo celebration held in downtown Leakesville's Green Park was an excellent opportunity to help spread awareness about **CASA of Southeast Mississippi**. Many visitors dropped by the colorful display and gave **Teresa Jaye**, Outreach Coordinator, and **Beverly Goff**, Advocate Supervisor, an opportunity to "taco 'bout **CASA**". Pictured above is **Jarma Farmer** who won the four-piece jewelry set which **CASA** gave away and Leakesville's Miss Hospitality **Taylor Garretson** who drew the winning name.



Thank you to **Jen** and **Chuck Miestchovich**, doing business as **Jen & Chuck Photography**, for everything they do to assist **CASA of Southeast Mississippi**. They recently made new board member and staff pictures to update the **CASA** website. They will be on hand at **CASA Blues** making photos of the event as well as taking individual shots.



The 2023 **Jackson County Trade Show** on May 9 provided an excellent opportunity to share with other community members the **CASA** mission and recruit potential volunteers. On hand to provide information were **Brianna Ricks**, Advocate Supervisor, and **Angela Lynn**, Advocate Manager, as they encouraged all of those who dropped by to "Add volunteering to your toolbox".



Congratulations to our newest volunteer, **Zack Hollon**, who was sworn in by Honorable Judge **Stacie Zorn** on May 3. **Zack** has been highly visible and so helpful at several **CASA** events, and we are excited to officially welcome him to the **CASA** team.





Pictured above, members of the **Lucedale Rotary Club** welcomed members of the **CASA of Southeast Mississippi, Inc.** staff to the May meeting where **Frances Allsup** spoke to spread the word about the program's emerging presence in the area and stress the critical need for volunteers to serve the children presently in CPS custody.

Pictured at right are **Ashley McLeod** and **Mark Maples**, **CASA** Governing Board members from George County, along with **Frances Allsup**, the program's executive director, and **Karen Horn**, training coordinator.



Pictured at left, **Bridney Lake** foster care specialist with **Health Connect America** dropped by the **CASA** office recently with a sweet treat to make the staff better aware of **HCA** and its new regional office, which is now available to provide services to children and families living in Jackson and George Counties.



Spring pre-service training is off to a great start! Pictured at right are **Tara Claffey**, **Kathy Smith**, and **Teresa Tanner** who are part of the Tuesday night in-person sessions. Also in training are **Theresa Blair**, **Joana Swadick**, **Brenda Debose-Mosley**, **Jennifer Howell**, **Brandie Hawthorne**, **Courtney Weatherford**, and **Linda Acuri**. Want to find out how you too can join the **CASA** team? Call **Karen Horn** at 228-762-7370.







Pictured at right: **Frances Allsup** and **Karen Horn** spent a very early Friday morning at Tato Nuts in Ocean Springs spreading the word about the **CASA** mission.

Pictured at left: Governing board member **Brandon Riches** and his children stopped by that morning to support the group and possibly pick up some sweet, tasty treats for breakfast.



Pictured below: Greene County social workers **Kennedy Clark** and **Lashonda Blackston** along with supervisor **Kirby Downs** display some of the puzzles and games CASA provided for their visitation room.



At the May meeting of Kiwanis International in Lucedale, the local group welcomed **CASA** board member **Doug Adams** and staff members **Teresa Jaye** and **Beverly Goff** to share program information in this new area.



Pictured at right: **Karen Horn**, Training Coordinator, and **Doug Adams**, governing board member, represented **CASA of Southeast Mississippi** at the Civic Action Center in Lucedale and provided great information on the program in an effort to recruit new volunteers.



**Beverly Goff** dropped off a tote of donated toys, coloring books, and games with George County CPS for their visitation room. Pictured above are social workers **Thomas Cain** and **Destiny Sanders**.



Pictured at left: a huge "thank you" goes out to the congregation of **Rocky Creek Baptist Church** for providing the generous donation of 24 backpacks filled with school supplies and other goodies.

Pictured at right: **Linda Arcuri**, volunteer in training, and her great granddaughter stopped by and helped at the Leakesville **Shop the Ville**



## 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 requests.

**ASSESSING OUR COURAGE**—Courage is contagious and learning to **Access Our Courage** presented by **Frances Cutshaw** certified facilitator with **Brene Brown Dare to Lead**. The **Summer Learning Summit** will be presented at Singing River Academy Auditorium at 4106 Gautier-Vancleave Road on Thursday, June 15 from 1:30 - 4:30 pm. Topics to be discussed include: what daily habits build courage, how we can know which "inner voices" to trust, working with our anxiety instead of against it, and patience and gratitude for all our inner "parts" and personalities

**Continuing Education — Wednesday, June 14, at 1 pm at Citizens Bank in Pascagoula** (corner of Market Street and Jackson Avenue) **Katy Frazier**, intake officer with the Jackson County Youth Court, will be the presenter to discuss the investigation process, the order of court hearings, and how cases proceed through the system. The presentation will be one hour. Please call your advocate supervisor to reserve your spot by Monday, June 12.

**Many independent opportunities** for continuing education can be found on our webpage, **[casasoutheast-mississippi.org](http://casasoutheast-mississippi.org)**. 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.

## June Birthdays

### June 1

Beth Keenan  
Lisa Cannon  
Stacey Dugger

### June 3

Pat Busby

### June 7

Shanterrica Armstrong  
Karen Horn

### June 10

Reagan Bridley

### June 11

Melanie Holden

### June 28

Beverly Goff



## Latest Program Statistics

**As of April 30, 2023, 102 CASA volunteers served 141 children with 1,055 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!**





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

## **2023 SUMMER VOLUNTEER TRAINING**

**Using National CASA Association  
Guided Learning Curriculum**

**Overview: Part 1 and 2 and Interviews**

**June 29 5:30 p.m. — 7 p.m.**

**The Bleux Case**

**July 6 5:30 p.m. — 7 p.m.**

**The Green Case**

**July 13 5:30 p.m. — 7 p.m.**

**The Amarillo Case**

**July 20 5:30 p.m. — 7 p.m.**

**The Redd Case**

**July 27 5:30 p.m. — 7 p.m.**

**August 3 Wrap-Up and Handbook**

**5:30 p.m. — 7 p.m.**

**Optima Training, Court Observations, and Induction**

**To be scheduled\***

## June Court Dates



## June 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.**



## Volunteers Are Needed



*You can make a difference! Call 228-762-7370*

*and ask for Karen Horn and join our next training class which is scheduled to begin on Thursday June 29.*