



MARCH 2024

Volume 11: Issue 3

MARCH 2024

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Get ready for the most exciting event of the year! **CASA of Southeast Mississippi** will proudly present the 9th annual **CASA BLUES**. Originally the date was set for March 15, but due to unforeseen circumstances it was decided to move the event to **Saturday, June 22**. Please reserve the date. Things will get under way at **6 pm** at the **Ocean Springs Civic Center** in **Ocean Springs**. The incredible evening will be filled with delicious food, refreshing drinks, toe-tapping music, and an awesome selection of silent auction items for bidding. It promises to be an evening that you will not want to miss!

We have various sponsorship levels still available. Your continued support helps us recruit and train new **CASA** volunteers who will serve as the voices for abused and neglected children in the Youth Court systems in Jackson, George, and Greene Counties. All sponsorships must be received by **April 16** to ensure recognition in the printed program. No donation is too small! Please call the **CASA** office at 228-762-7370 or email frances_allsup@co.jackson.ms.us to find out how you or your business can become a sponsor. Your generosity will help make a difference in the life of a child.

With the community's dedicated support of the **CASA** mission and its program, we will successfully be able to "Change a Child's Story" forever and put the music back in little lives.



If you or your business have an item or service that you would like to donate for the **Silent Auction**, this would be greatly appreciated.

Please help make this fund-raising event a success so we can continue to serve even more children in 2024!

FYI



Pictured above: **CASA of Southeast Mississippi** governing board president, **Doug Adams**, executive director, **Frances Allsup**, along with representatives of other **CASA** programs spent *A Day on the Hill* meeting in Jackson with members of the state House of Representatives.



Pictured above: Part of the Coast **CASA** delegation in attendance included **Mindy Brown**, State Growth Coordinator, **Laura Gee**, executive director with Hinds County **CASA**, **Cynthia Chauvin**, executive director with **CASA of South Mississippi**, **Doug Adams**, **Manly Barton**, Speaker pro-tempore of the Mississippi House of Representatives, and **Frances Allsup**. During the day's proceedings, **Rep. Jimmy Fondren** recognized representatives of the **CASA** programs in attendance from the House floor.

Pictured below: (back row) **Rep. Hank Zuber**, **Doug Adams**, **CASA** governing board president, **Rep. Elliot Burch**, **Rep. Steve Lott**, **Rep. Jimmy Fondren**, and **CASA of Southeast Mississippi** board member **Brandon Riches**, (front row) **Frances Allsup**, executive director, and **Samantha Bignell**, **CASA** board member, gathered later in the evening at Shapley's Restaurant to discuss pending legislation that would create state funding for **CASA**. Special thanks to **Rep. Jimmy Fondren** for sponsoring HB 1624.



FYI



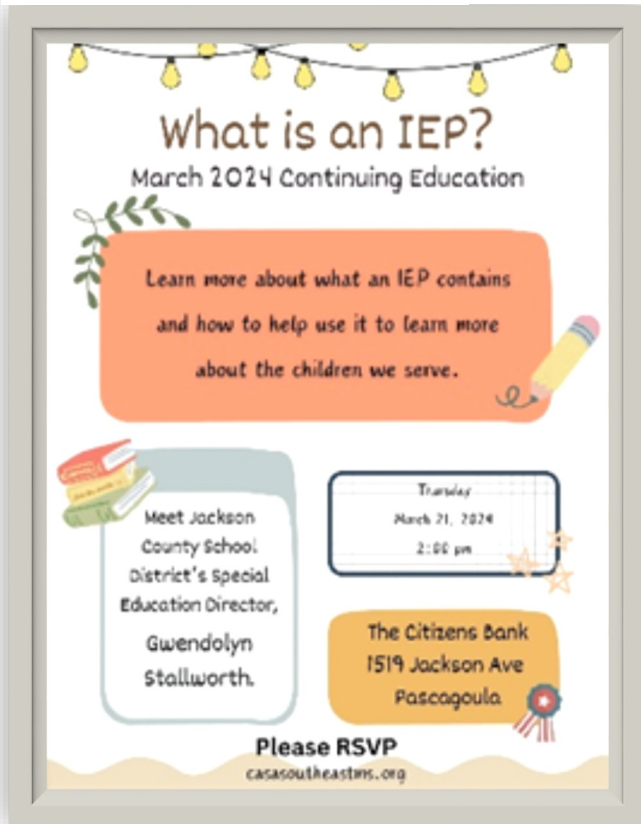
Thank you to our volunteers - **Carrie Graham, Florence Motes, Lindsey O'Connell,** and **Teresa Tanner** for attending this continuing education opportunity. These monthly sessions are planned to help volunteers earn the annual required 12 CE hours. See the flyer on page 4 for information on the next opportunity to help volunteers, staff, and foster parents learn more about their students' individual education plans.

Pictured above: Members of the **CASA** staff and a number of **CASA** volunteers gathered in Pascagoula in the conference room of **Citizens Bank** on February 16 to take part in a continuing education program on *Human Trafficking* presented by **Capt. Patrick Brandle** with the **Pascagoula Police Department**. A career officer, **Capt. Brandle** discussed with participants his first-hand knowledge of the many aspects involved in human trafficking. He presented practical advice on what volunteers can do to assist current victims and suggested practical steps that families can take to prevent more youth from becoming victims of human trafficking. He also shared information on a new local program being instituted in Pascagoula to pair officer volunteers with teens in an effort to better establish positive relationships between the groups within the local community. The session closed with time for individual questions to be answered.

Pictured below: (front row) **Florenciana Abney**, Jackson County Youth Court Case Manager, **Jeremy Moore**, Transitional Living Coordinator, and **Charlotte Mc Clendon**, CASA volunteer; (back row) **Patty Waters, Abby Clark, Florence Motes, Teresa Landrum, Zoey Lamkin, Elizabeth Mullins, Bobbie Lankford,** and **Beverly Goff**, **CASA** staff and volunteers, took part in an informative continuing education presentation on *Victim Assistance* held in the Jackson Count Youth Court Courtroom. **Florenciana** told about her role in the local youth court process and explained some of the ways she is able to help the older youth in CPS custody obtain information on services available to them regarding education, employment opportunities, and financial assistance. She provided information on the upcoming *College Tour* to be held from 2-4 pm on March 28 at the MS Gulf Coast Community College Jackson County Campus where youth in foster care ages 16 and up will be able to learn about the different Career and Technical Pathways & Programs. See the flyer on page 4 for additional information. Other volunteers joining the presentation online were **Laura Hasty** and **Teresa Tanner**. **Amber Ehlers** attended and volunteered to act as photographer for the group photo.

Jeremy Moore gave a very broad overview of Youth Transitional Services available to older youth in CPS custody. This might include doing annual credit reports, helping them receive various types of financial aid to help with college scholarships and housing, assisting them with financial management and transportation, and connecting them with local job programs such as Job Corps. It is truly important to learn how much assistance is available to help with education, housing, and insurance needs for older youth who are aging out of foster care. Both presenters stressed the need for concerned adults to listen to and communicate with our older youth.





Additional volunteers are needed to serve children in the youth court system in Jackson, George and Greene Counties!

Contact Karen Horn, CASA of Southeast Mississippi Training Coordinator, today to learn more about beginning the 30 hour required pre-service training to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate!



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.

Are you curious about the contents of an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** and how the information it contains can be utilized to better understand the needs of the children we serve? In this continuing education opportunity, participants will delve into an IEP and explore its significance in the educational journey of a child. To shed more light on this topic and share with us the additional resources that schools can provide in this process, we have the pleasure of introducing **Gwendolyn Stallworth**, the esteemed **Special Education Director** of the **Jackson County School District**. Please join us **Thursday, March 21** at **2 pm** at **Citizens Bank** located at 2915 Jackson Avenue in Pascagoula. Please call your advocate supervisor today to reserve your spot. If you have specific questions for the presenter about a child on your case, please share with your supervisor so we can pass these on to **Ms. Stallworth** before the meeting starts. We want to ensure the material covered will be useful to you, the children, and the families that you serve.



All Rise: For the Good of the Children is an outstanding documentary showing TBRI being used in practice in the Texas youth court system. The video lasts 1 hour and 15 minutes and will count as 1 hour CEU. This is the link: Allriseforchildren.com

Many independent opportunities for continuing education can be found on our webpage, casasoutheastmississippi.org. Go to **VOLUNTEERS** and then the drop-down menu to **CONTINUING EDUCATION**. These links provide an easy way to gain your required 12 in-service hours. The in-service completion form is available to complete and email or hand deliver to your **CASA** supervisor. Check out the wide variety of materials and topics offered.

March Birthdays

March 1

Ashley McLeod

March 2

Billy McCasland

March 7

Casey Bridley

March 9

Aunderia Johnson

March 14

Larry Fowler

March 15

Abby Clark

March 21

Teresa Tanner

March 22

Craig Guy

March 28

Greg Cronier

March 29

Bobbie Lankford



Latest Program Statistics

As of January 31, 2024, CASA 92 volunteers served 100 children with 189 donated hours of service for the calendar year. Thank you to each dedicated volunteer who 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 2024!