

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

GIVING VOICE TO OUR CHILDREN



COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

WELCOME



Myron Labat, Sr.

Board President
Retired Educator,
Administrator, &
CASA Advocate

In the Spring of 2014, just a couple of months shy of retiring from the Bay-Waveland School District, I learned about CASA during a school leadership training. Being a parent myself, I knew that CASA would be a good fit for me in retirement. My educational background was an asset to me, but I could not be an effective advocate without the additional training and support of the CASA staff. ***Being a CASA is a truly unique volunteer position.***

I advocated for five children over the next five years before being asked to serve on CASA's volunteer Board of Directors. Now during my final board term, I welcome the opportunity to serve as CASA's Board President. I most appreciate my fellow CASA volunteers who visit children regularly, write court reports, and testify in court hearings to ensure that our children's voices are heard and that they are safe. Our community has endured much over the past nine years, and CASA has come along for this journey. ***This community is the reason that our program exists.*** As an educator & CASA volunteer, I offer my deep gratitude & invite you to read more about our work.

CASA's **mission** is to advocate for Hancock County's abused and neglected children by supporting volunteers who promote safety, permanency, and resilience. Our **vision** is a community where all children thrive in safe and nurturing families.

STAFF



Cynthia Chauvin
Executive Director



Lauren Saucier
Lead Advocate Supervisor



Tanisha Lamb
Advocate Supervisor



Naomi Strawhorn
Victim Services Coordinator



Remi III
Courthouse Facility Dog
Canine Companions®



Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Lori Curia
Fiscal/Program Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE BOARD



Myron Labat, Sr.
Board President
Retired Educator,
Administrator, & CASA
Advocate



Andy Orzalli
Vice President
Player Services Manager
Silver Slipper Hotel
& Casino



Mary Ann Pucheu
Treasurer
Community Volunteer
& Retired Banker



Erin Lee
Secretary
Vice President &
Branch Manager
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David Buckley
Department of
Homeland Security



April Parker
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Parker Contracting, LLC



Margaret Payment
Area Director
Mississippi Power



Huey Stockstill, III
Construction Division
Operations Manager
Huey P. Stockstill, LLC



Ty Wiltz
Director of Public Works
City of Diamondhead &
Retired Law Enforcement
Officer



Haley Wing
International & Drayage
Account
Representative
Total Quality Logistics
Former Foster Youth

CASA & THE COURT

The Honorable S. Trent Favre



Collaboration is key to our court improvement efforts in Hancock County. As national and state trends have centered around safely reducing the number of children in custody, Hancock County has created an in-home case process to stabilize families, thus eliminating unnecessary removals. We intend for these new, family-centered practices to be shared with other courts. The CASA program has continued to lend its valued insight, expertise and leadership, becoming an invaluable partner in the development of these in-home case procedures. Notably, CASA obtained approval from the National CASA organization to pilot the appointment of volunteers to these in-home cases. This change in practice means more work for more volunteers. It should come as no surprise that our local CASA program is effective in this jurisdiction and beyond!

Additionally, CASA is leading the charge with the implementation of Trust-Based Relational Intervention®. What started in 2019 as a vision to better meet the complex needs of vulnerable children in custody has given way to a more pervasive implementation plan—TBRI® provides a platform for us to effectively address generational trauma not only for the children we serve, but also for their caregivers. Already, we have seen a proliferation in the number of TBRI® practitioners in our area as well as an increase in the number of trainings and support groups. TBRI® will be a centerpiece to the systemic change we all envision. As more stakeholders come on board, CASA will continue to steer the ship in this collaborative effort.

Many thanks to the Cynthia, her staff, and all the CASA volunteers for focusing on court improvement. I am honored to be a part of such a meaningful collaboration.

Hon. S. Trent Favre
Hancock County Court Judge

HALEY WING

A Voice of Change



Haley was in state custody from 2015 to 2021. As a child, she requested a CASA in 2016 and now as an adult, she serves on CASA's Board of Directors

When I first requested a CASA, children were not allowed in court. When I lived at the shelter, we would eagerly await visitors that often would not show up. I began to notice that another child had a visitor who would keep coming back. I found out that he was a CASA, so I said, "**How do I get one?**" It took me another year to be assigned a CASA because of the shortage of volunteers.

My CASA volunteer taught me appropriate ways to communicate. My CASA was the one person who didn't expect me to change my behavior *before really listening to me*.

"My relationship with my CASA was the closest thing I had to a mother."

Children in foster care understand hardship. We know how to deal with conflict--we thrive in it. My advice to adults working with families in the system is to treat children in foster care as human--like they're your kid or your niece.

After leaving custody in 2021, I joined the CASA Board of Directors because I wanted to raise awareness & help change the system for the better. Children in foster care are often labeled as "bad," but many times it's because they're treated more like a rescue dog and not like a real human.

"My CASA taught me to use my voice."

She always made me feel like I was heard. She helped me stand my ground when something needed to change. Now, **when I don't like something, I am very assertive** to set boundaries that I'm comfortable with. To those who are curious about becoming a CASA volunteer, I would tell you: **It only takes that one person to change someone's life.**

Today, I still talk to the people who changed my life for the better. I found a forever home and a family that would be with me for the rest of my life.

-
Haley is currently working in logistics in the customs field. She is happily married & has a dog named Honey. She is pictured below with Judge Favre & her advocate Kellie Necaie.



2022 AT A GLANCE

JAN

January

- CASA hosts 2022 Krewe of CASA Mardi Gras Gala



FEB

February

- CASA participates in collaborative training by Attorney General Office for Victim Advocates

MAR

March

- Pre-Service Training Class #1
- 7 New Advocates Sworn In
- CASA hosts CPS Appreciation Luncheon



APR

April

- Touch A Truck
- Light of Hope Ceremony
- Collaborative meeting of CASA staff on Gulf Coast



MAY

May

- CASA trains Hancock County Library Staff in child abuse prevention
- Advocate Appreciation Crawfish Boil at The Blind Tiger



JUN

June

- CASA participates in Reunification Day Ceremony honoring the families who have been reunified

July

- Poker Run Fundraiser
- CASA helps coordinate TBRI® Practitioner Training in Biloxi



JUL

August

- Pre-Service Training Class #2
- CASA trains 50 community professionals in sexual abuse prevention

AUG



September

- First reactivation training class of former advocates
- 10 Advocates Sworn In

SEP

October

- Red Bean Cook Off Fundraiser
- Cruising the Coast in Diamondhead
- Movie Night sponsored by Church of the King

OCT

November

- Grateful for You Banquet at Hollywood Casino
- Peer Support In-Service at Christy Van Stelle's Home

NOV

December

- Pancakes & Pajamas Foster Care Christmas Event
- CASA hosts First Santa's Workshop Event for Parents of CASA children
- The Blind Tiger BSL hosts Raffle Fundraiser
- End of Year Match Campaign



DEC

OUR CHILDREN

CHILDREN WITH ASSIGNED ADVOCATES

262 children were appointed to CASA during the year

110 children were maintained in foster care

105 of these children were assigned an advocate

Additionally, CASA served **117 children** in alternate custody (guardianship, durable legal custody) or in-home cases.

CHILD DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

130 Male

132 Female

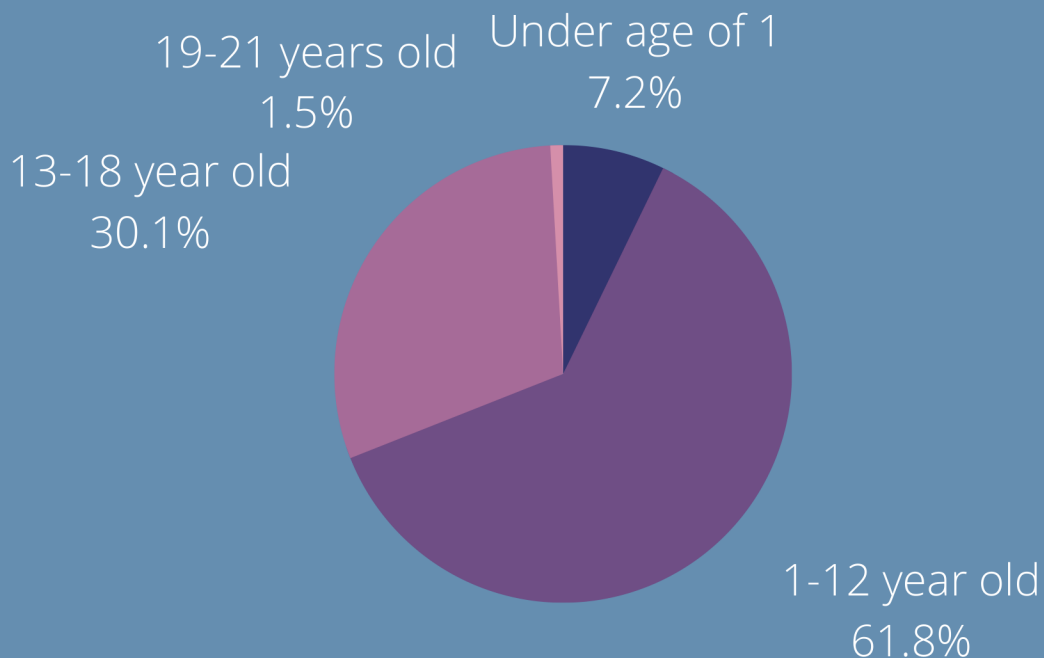
Race

Caucasian 84%

African American 13%

Bi-Racial 3%

Hispanic/Latino 0%



PERMANENCY: CASE OUTCOMES

130 children's cases closed

97% of these children achieved permanent homes:

- **107** Reunification
- **17** Adoption
- **3** Another custody arrangement

3 of the **130** Children Aged Out of Foster Care, which is not considered a desirable permanency outcome.

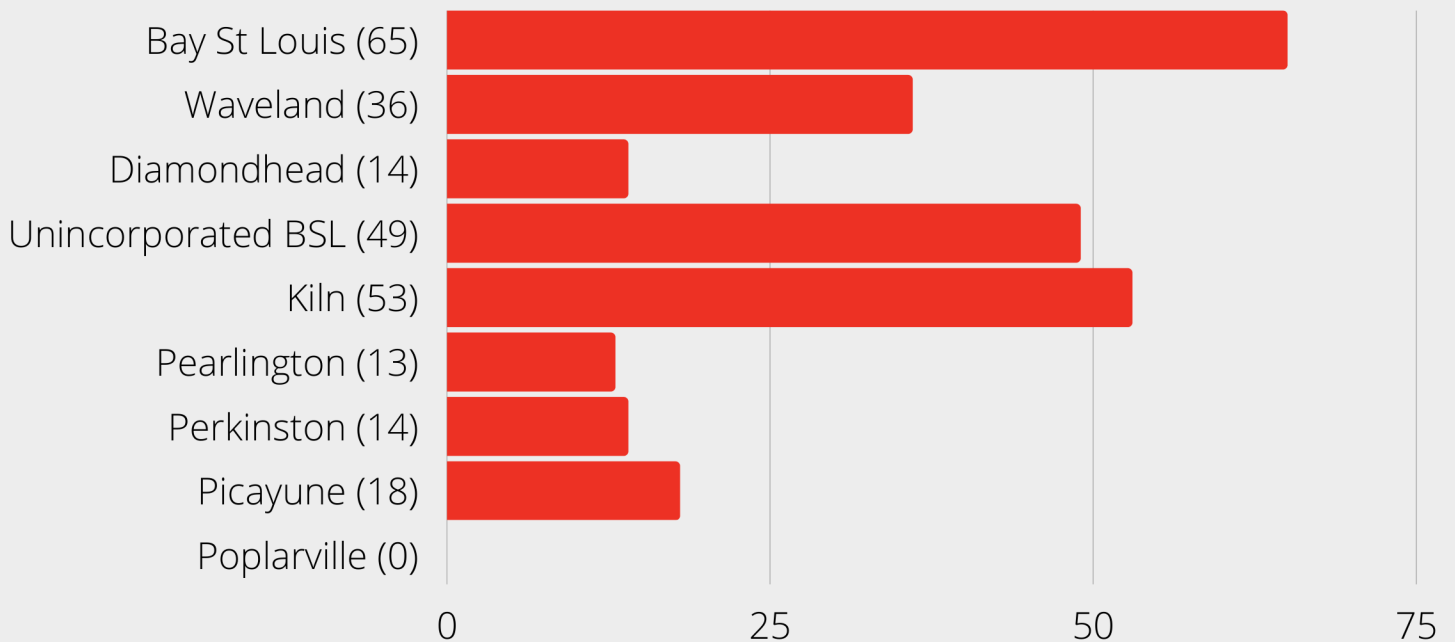
130

children's cases
closed

97%

achieved safe &
permanent homes

Location of Abuse & Neglect



ADVOCATE STATISTICS

In 2022, CASA had 87 Total Advocates



Gender

Female 89%

Male 11%

Race/Ethnicity

Caucasian 91%

African American 8%

Hispanic/Latino 1%

Employment Status

45 Advocates Employed

44% of these individuals
work full-time

COURTROOM ADVOCACY

208

Reports written by
CASA volunteers

3268

Hours of activity recorded by
CASA volunteers

77

Assigned volunteers within
the year

**"CASA of Hancock County continues to be
an invaluable partner of the Court."**

JUDGE S. TRENT FAVRE

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

ADVOCATES IN 2022

VOLUNTEER ROSTER [YEARS SERVED]

Adam, Margaret (7)	Fitzpatrick, Emily	Mumme, Susan (7)
Altsman, Diane (5)	Foreman, Chloe (3)	Murphy, Candy
Bailey, Sarah (10)	Fortmayer, Brittany (3)	Murray, Joseph (5)
Baughman, Jackie (5)	Fulwiler, Madeleine (4)	Necaise, Angela (4)
Berry, Julie	Fulwiler, John (4)	Newman, Denise (5)
Bloom, Cheryl (6)	Gamboa, Laura (5)	Nichols, Lylie (6)
Bounds, Susan (2)	Garcia, Errol "Mike"	Reilly, Kim (3)
Bourgeois, Brooke	Gibbons, Barbara (3)	Richardson, Joy (7)
Brdecka, Brittni	Grapusa, Christine (5)	Riviere, George (3)
Brooks, Shari (9)	Gray, Sandra (7)	Riviere, Robin (4)
Butler, Cynthia	Haberman, Victoria (1)	Salaun, Linda (3)
Cannon, Julie (12)	Hansell, Amy	Samayoa, Nicole (3)
Carbone, Angelle	Hebert, Amanda	Savage, Lauren (5)
Casano, Laurie (1)	Herring, Rhonda (4)	Sawyer, Robert (1)
Chargois, Victoria	Hess, Allison (1)	Searles, Judith (4)
Clark, Nancy (9)	Joyce, Susan (4)	Shiyou, Carol (8)
Coatney, Barbara (7)	Kearney, William (6)	Taylor, Marilene (3)
Coleman, Joan (2)	Labat, Myron (8)	Tent, Stefani
Craig, Mary (5)	Ladner, Christine (6)	Trant, Leslie (1)
Critchfield, Lisa (4)	Ladner, Katelyn	Van Stelle, Christy (5)
Cuevas, Janine (6)	Lawler, Robinette (7)	Vogel, Michael (4)
Dehaan, Laura (1)	Lemoine, Tina (4)	Wallace, Susan
Demarest, Judy (8)	Lynch, Felicia (3)	Warran, Alisha (4)
Dollar, Beverly (6)	Manko, Rodney (1)	Whavers, Barbara (2)
Dudenhefer, Carol (5)	Marks, Allison (2)	Williams, Pamela (2)
Duhon, Cathy (1)	Maronge, Charlotte (1)	Woods, Tammy (5)
Ehrich, Alan	McKenzie, Nancy (6)	
Ehrich, Trudy	Melby-Codling,	
Farrar, Lee (4)	Mary Christine (7)	
Favre, Vanessa (4)	Meyer, Vilmer "Marcella"	
Ferry, Jude	Montjoy, Elizabeth (1)	

79%

RETENTION
RATE

NEW ADVOCATES

Prior to being sworn-in as officers of the court in their role as a *Court Appointed Special Advocates*, individuals have gone through an extensive screening and training process, including:

- Orientation,
- Application,
- Interview,
- Reference check,
- Background check,
- 30 hours of training,
- Court observation, &
- Post-training interview.



18

new advocates

525

hours of training



Advocate Recruitment, Training, & Retention is made possible by the Members of Coast Electric through their Operation Round Up program in partnership with the Gulf Coast Community Foundation



CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

LEARNING TO LISTEN

TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION®

In 2017, after hearing TBRI® for the first time, I **realized my need** for a deeper understanding of trauma's effects on the brain and body of a child. Some children have uncontrolled behaviors. Understanding this behavior led me to compassion. TBRI® empowered & inspired me to respond to problematic behavior with *creativity* instead of fear or anger.

"My own parenting changed as a result of TBRI®. I learned to meet my children's needs, & in the process, I discovered my own needs."

One of these needs was to share this training with others. In 2019, my director Cynthia Chauvin **heard my voice** & sent me to TBRI® Practitioner Training in Fort Worth. In 2020 when the world paused, I hosted my first TBRI® training from my closet via Zoom. That class had over 40 participants, & the response was big.

In 2021, Judge Favre & Judge Dickinson of Hancock & Harrison County Youth Courts **saw the need for TBRI® & responded** with a 2-day training for 150 child welfare professionals. Daren Jones & Amanda Purvis from the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development (KPIDC) led this training.

In July 2022, KPIDC **heard our voice**, traveled to Biloxi, & hosted TBRI® Practitioner Training in our state **to meet this need**. Today, over 50 child welfare professionals across the state are TBRI® Practitioners as a result.



CASA's TBRI® work is supported by the Velkas Child Welfare Endowed Fund in partnership with the Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Our CASA advocates bring the voice of the child into the courtroom. TBRI® is all about **hearing those voices & meeting those needs**. This pattern of meeting needs builds trust & connection.

"CONNECTION is both the prevention & the cure for trauma's negative effects--in children, families, & ourselves."

Because we care deeply about children & families, *all professionals*--CPS, courts, mental health, schools, nonprofit agencies, & yes, even CASAs--feel the impact of **secondary trauma**. We have our own needs.

"The work is hard, so we must go together."

With over 50 practitioners statewide, we are learning to listen & respond to the voices & needs of children & families **together**. We must also listen & respond to each others' needs. Together. Because the work is hard.



Naomi Strawhorn
Victim Services Coordinator

LIGHT OF HOPE

2022 AWARDS

Each year, CASA recognizes individuals who go above and beyond the call of duty to serve the abused and neglected children of the community.

Jackie Baughman CASA Advocate of the Year



Jackie Baughman was sworn in as a CASA volunteer in May 2017 and has served twelve children since that time, many of whom were often placed out of the region in foster homes and residential settings. Despite the distance Jackie visited and developed incredibly meaningful relationships with each child she advocated for. CASA staff know that having Ms. Jackie on a case means that the child would have a strong ally in their corner and someone who will always speak up for them.

Michael Reso Outstanding Community Professional



Michael Reso currently works as the City Manager for Bay St. Louis. During the pandemic, he reached out to CASA to help fill the void in funding and graciously invited CASA to host the first Red Bean Cookoff in Diamondhead. Michael volunteers to serve & assist others in need. Outside of his role with the city he currently serves as a board member for Goodwill Gulf Coast, on the steering committee for the Hancock County Library System, and the Diamondhead Community Church.

Stephanie Hawkins Outstanding Work in Child Protection



Stephanie Hawkins obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Tulane University. She has over seventeen years' experience working with special needs youth and adults and five years with the Harrison County School District. In March 2017 she began her employment with Child Protection Services and has worked with numerous families many of which have resulted in successful reunifications. Stephanie loves "meeting people where they are and helping to provide support in lieu of judgement."

JULIE CANNON CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN AWARD

CASA's longest serving advocate, Julie Cannon was a member of the first training class conducted over 12 years ago. To date Julie has advocated for thirty-seven children, served under three judicial administrations, and has recruited countless volunteers and donors to the program. In 2020 CASA created the Julie Cannon Champion for Children Award and tonight we will bestow this honor to a worthy recipient.

Cheryl Bloom

Julie Cannon Champion for Children Award



Cheryl Bloom was sworn in as a CASA advocate in October 2016. Since that time, she has advocated for eleven children with most of them being adolescents. Many of her children have experienced significant trauma and they present with high behavioral needs. She listens deeply to what her kids have to say and works to say yes to their needs. Cheryl is intuitive and compassionate. She is an experienced navigator of systems and fact finder. Cheryl is credible in court, an excellent relayer of information.

IN MEMORY

Kathryn "Kathy" Norton, 1948-2022

Michael Ray Carson, 1953-2022

Camille Irene Tate, 1936-2022

George Harris Lipscomb, Jr., 1931-2022

Myrtle Oliver Moran, 1930-2022

Eleanor Lee, 1948-2022

Lizzy Chauvin, 2005-2022

Loislyn Susan Blanchard Scardino, 1939-2022

Sergeant Steven Robin, 1988-2022

Officer Branden Estorffe, 1999-2022

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

CHILD PROJECTS

Thanks to the generous support of the **Misfits Car Club**, CASA is able to implement special projects for the children we serve.



CANDLES OF HOPE

The Candles of Hope project allowed CASA to deliver **58 birthday cakes** to children in 2022. In partnership with Claiborne Hill Supermarket, CASA volunteers bring a personalized birthday cake to their assigned children to celebrate their special day, whether they live locally or out of the area.



SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Each summer, CASA collects and purchases school supplies for all school-aged children we serve. Advocates filled a new backpack with the needed school supplies based on the child's grade level and delivered the supplies to **72 children** in 2022.



PANCAKES & PAJAMAS

In December, Hancock County foster children and their foster families are invited to a Christmas Party to remember! This year's party featured three bouncy houses, games and prizes, cookie decorating, and of course Santa himself was on-hand for pictures and taking note of Christmas wishes.

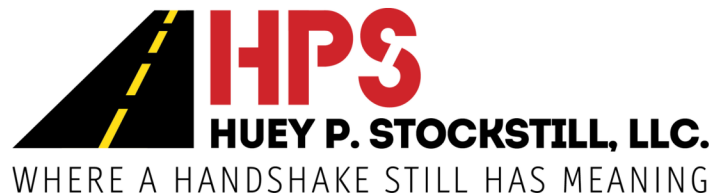


SANTA'S WORKSHOP

CASA organized Santa's Workshop for parents and caregivers of CASA children to have a day to shop for gifts for their children at Youth Court. During this event, CASA staff assisted **26 parents** in shopping for their children.

CASA'S MISSION PARTNERS

Mission Partners provide a deeper level of year-round support to the CASA mission by making an annual financial contribution.



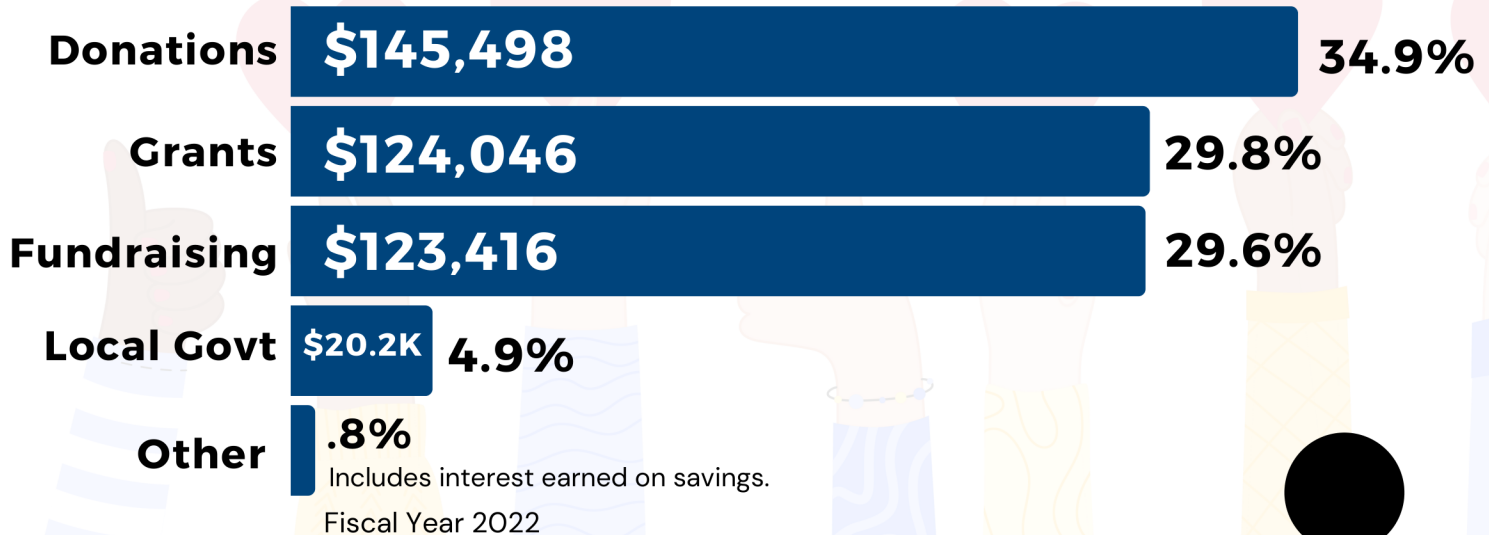
Special thanks to our
2022 End of Year Match Campaign sponsors
Patrick O'Connor and Margaret McMullan

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

DIVERSE FUNDING

CASA of Hancock County intentionally seeks funding from diverse sources. The core components of our funding are **Donations**, **Grants**, **Fundraising** including **Mission Partners**, and **Local Government Contributions**. By diversifying our funding and not relying too much on one or two sources or strategies, we can adapt to changes and be in a better position to recover from potential setbacks.



DONATIONS

Our donations come from businesses, faith-based organizations, foundations, and individuals. We are fortunate to have recurring donors who give on a monthly, quarterly or semi-annual basis in addition to those who give large, one-time gifts.

GRANTS

Thank you to the organizations who donated/awarded **\$10,000 or more** in 2022.

Coast Electric | Gulf Coast Community Foundation | Hancock County Board of Supervisors | His Way Foundation | MS Dept of Health - Office Against Interpersonal Violence | Mississippi Power | National CASA Association | Jack A. & Gertrude W. Wilson Animal Welfare Fund | United Way

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

FUNDRAISING

CASA seeks sponsors for fundraising events to offset the costs of the event. This past year we received a total of 122 sponsorships from local businesses, individuals, organizations and groups.

Because of sponsorships and in-kind donations, only 9% of the funds raised are used to cover event costs - 91% of the money earned through fundraisers is invested directly back into support of the CASA program.



EFFICIENT + EFFECTIVE

122

total sponsorships

REMI THE COURTHOUSE FACILITY DOG

A CHILD WELLBEING PROJECT



Remi is Mississippi's only Courthouse Facility Dog. She was intentionally bred, professionally trained, & certified as a facility dog with her handler Naomi Strawhorn by Companions®. **Facility dogs** like Remi are screened for their ability to support clients in a high-stress environment. Remi has written permission to work in a variety of professional settings including court proceedings, CPS conferences, inter-agency meetings, & multidisciplinary training events.



This project is supported by the Jack A. & Gertrude W. Wilson Animal Welfare Fund, a Fund of the Gulf Coast Community Foundation.

IN-KIND DONORS

Special thanks to the following partners for donating their time and services throughout 2022 in support of the CASA program

**Dr. West and Pet Haven
Edrington Landscaping**

How You Can Help

DONATE, VOLUNTEER, MAKE A DIFFERENCE



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF HANCOCK COUNTY

VOLUNTEER

Interested in becoming a CASA Advocate?
Join an informational session and learn more
about becoming an advocate.

The CASA Volunteer Pre-Service training
curriculum is facilitated throughout the year.
The curriculum consists of (30) thirty hours of
training, court observation, and background
screening.

INVITE CASA TO TRAIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

CASA of Hancock County offers Darkness to Light
training, a child sexual abuse prevention
curriculum. Schedule a training session for your
workplace, church, or other organization by
emailing cynthia@casahancockcounty.org

The funding for this publication
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HisWay, Inc.

DONATE

CASA is a 501c3 charitable
organization and relies on community
support. Your gift is tax deductible
and helps abused and neglected
children have a voice.

www.casahancockcounty.org

paypal.me/CASAHancockCountyMS

venmo.com/u/CASAHancockCounty

Donations can be made by cash,
check, our website, PayPal, or Venmo:

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venmo