

COMMUNITY IMPACT

CASA of South Mississippi



Hope in
Motion:
A Year of
Advocacy

CASA STAFF

CASA's **mission** is to advocate for South Mississippi'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.



Cynthia Chauvin
Executive Director



Lauren Saucier
Program Director



Lori Curia
Finance Director



Tanisha Lamb
Advocate Supervisor



Linda Perkes
Advocate Supervisor



Ashley Tribble
Advocate Supervisor



Tyree McDonald
Advocate Supervisor



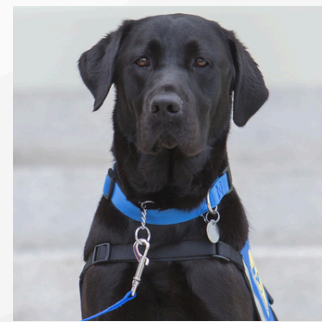
Melinda Borja
Advocate Supervisor



Joellen Williams
Administrative
Assistant



Naomi Strawhorn
Victim Services
Coordinator



Remi III
Courthouse Facility Dog
Canine Companions®

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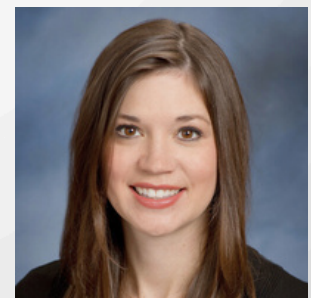
Anna Grace Tanner

Communications Manager
Mitchell Companies



Haley Wing

International & Drayage
Account Representative
Total Quality Logistics
Former Foster Youth



Heather Smith

Pro Bono Legal
Counsel
Butler Snow

ANNUAL REVIEW

Reflecting on 2024: A Year in Numbers

423

Total Children Appointed to the
CASA Program

OUR CHILDREN

- Of the **423** children, **307** new children were appointed during 2024
- **352** children assigned an advocate
- **71** children were unserved in 2024

ADVOCATE SERVICE

- **261** Court Reports written by Advocates
 - **946** Recommendations were made
 - **95%** became Orders of the Court
- **133** Assigned Advocates
- **34** New Advocates Sworn In
- **2,891** Hours of Training Completed

133

Advocates provided

7,057

Hours of Service to Children

153

Children's cases closed
in the reporting period

OUTCOMES

During this year, **153 children's** cases closed. Of these children, 94% achieved permanent homes through:

- 101 Reunification
- 35 Adoption
- 8 Durable Legal Custody

Outcomes of the remaining 6% of children:

- 8 Children Turned 18/21 & were released from custody
- 1 Child Ran Away

ANNUAL GOALS

Goal 1

45 New Advocates

CASA will recruit, screen, train, & swear in 45 new advocates

Goal 2

Serve 80% Children in Foster Care

CASA will serve 80% of children in foster care in Hancock, Harrison, & Stone Counties

Goal 3

80% Recommendations Become Orders of the Court

Advocates who make fact-based recommendations will have at least 80% become court orders

Goal 4

80% of Children Achieve Safe & Permanent Homes

Safe, permanent homes are achieved through reunification, adoption, & durable legal custody. Negative outcomes include aging out of foster care or running away.

Goal 5

80% Volunteer Retention Rate

The average CASA volunteer retention rate across the country is 65%. CASA of South Mississippi seeks to retain 80% of volunteers through ongoing staff support & engagement.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

HOW TO HELP



1 Become a CASA Volunteer

In 2025, CASA is committed to recruiting **45 new volunteers to serve children in foster care**. The need for volunteers is urgent. We need you! Schedule an hour-long informational session now to find out more by visiting www.casasouthms.org/info or sending an email to lauren@casasouthms.org

3 Support Our Program Financially

Become a CASA Anchor--an individual who believes in CASA's mission & contributes monthly as a sustaining donor for as little as \$10/month. Scan the QR code below to donate as a CASA Anchor:



2 Connect Us to Your Organization

Connect us to your community organization, club, or church to let a CASA staff member come and share about our program in order to raise awareness about the needs of children from your community.

4 Report Child Abuse or Neglect

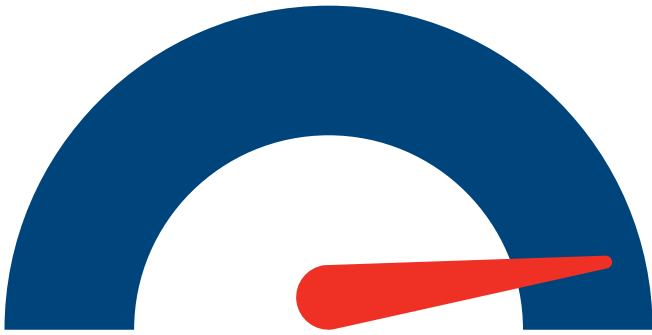
In accordance with Section 43-21-353 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, "any other person having reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a neglected child or an abused child" shall make a CPS report as soon as possible.

The number to make a report is

1-800-222-8000

or you may file an online report here:
reportabuse.mdcps.ms.gov

HANCOCK COUNTY

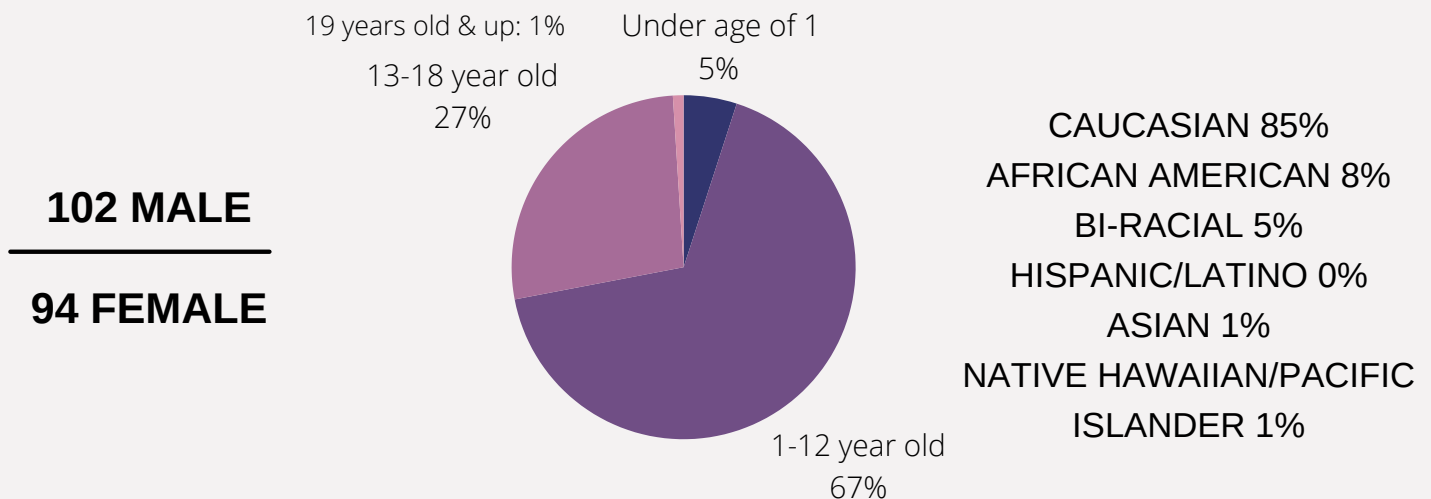


OUR CHILDREN

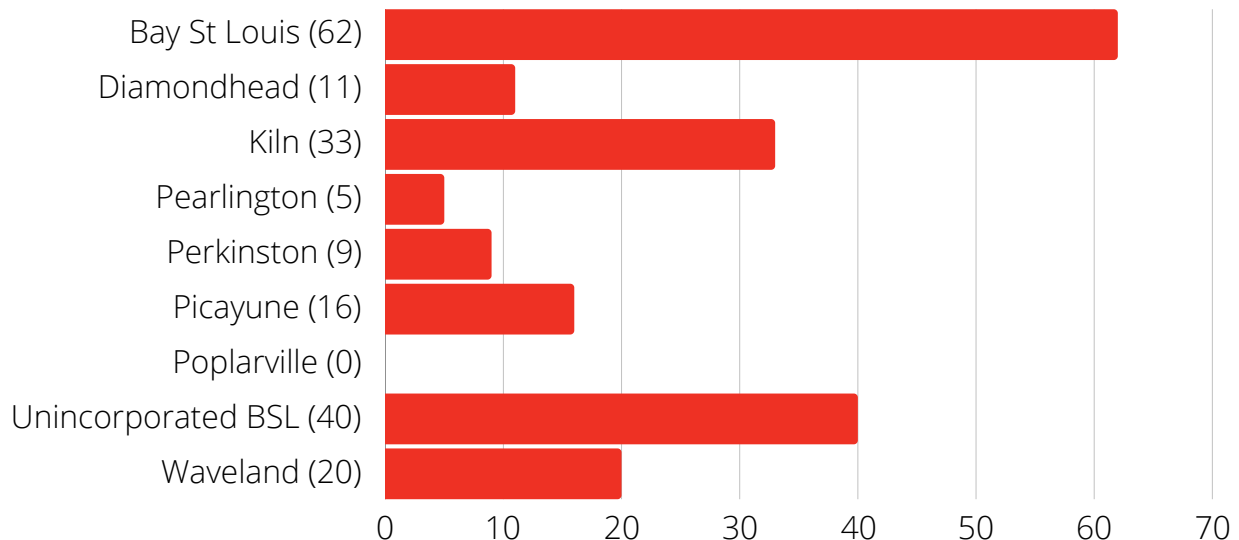
83 children assigned to an advocate were maintained in their homes of origin

196 children appointed to the CASA program
185 children were assigned to an advocate
11 children were unserved

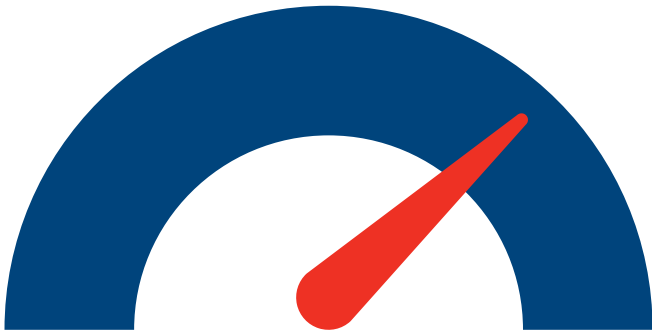
DEMOGRAPHICS



LOCATION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT



HARRISON COUNTY



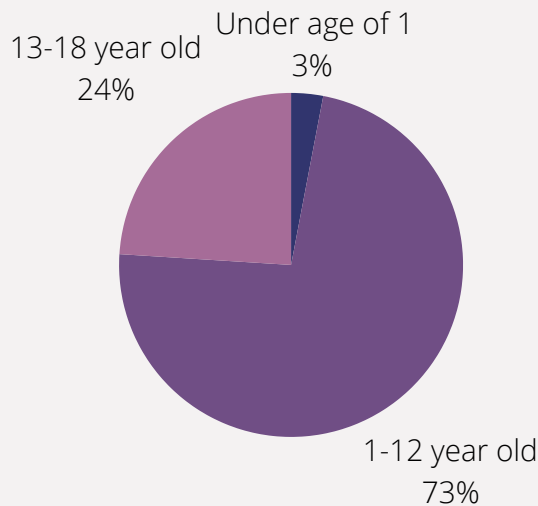
OUR CHILDREN

180 children appointed to the CASA program
133 children assigned to an advocate
47 children were unserved

DEMOGRAPHICS

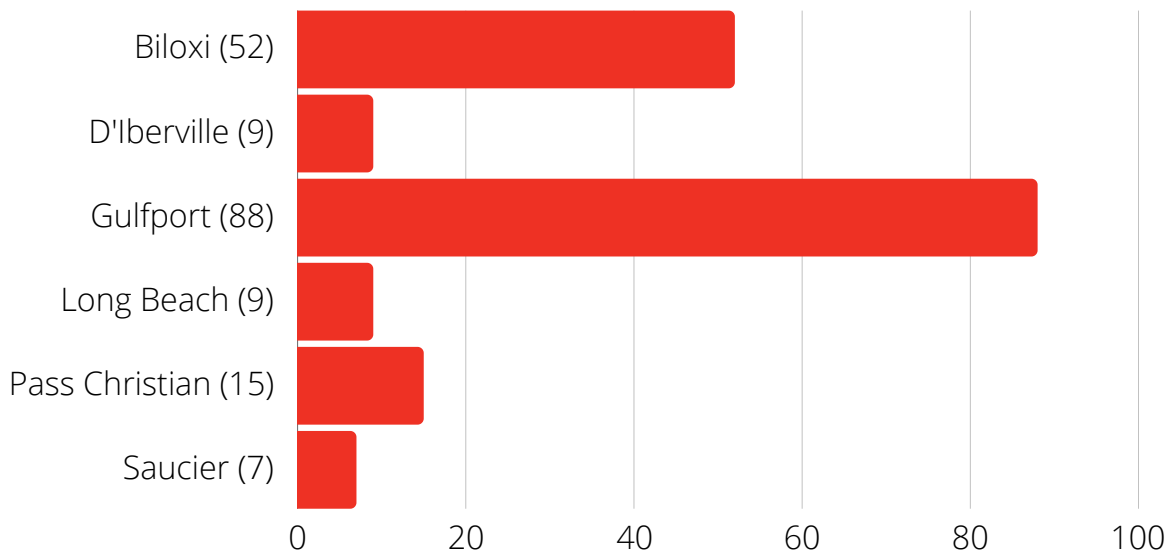
103 MALE

77 FEMALE

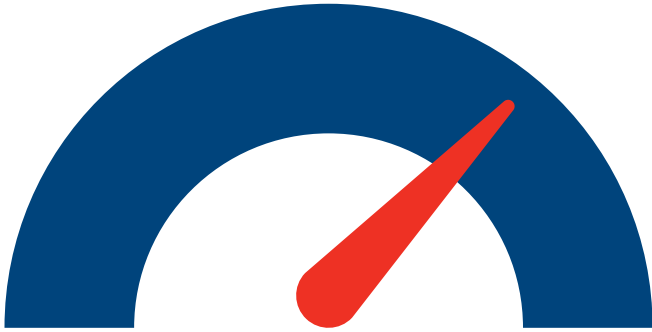


CAUCASIAN 58%
AFRICAN AMERICAN 35%
BI-RACIAL 5%
HISPANIC/LATINO 1%
ASIAN 0%
NATIVE AMERICAN 1%

LOCATION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT



STONE COUNTY



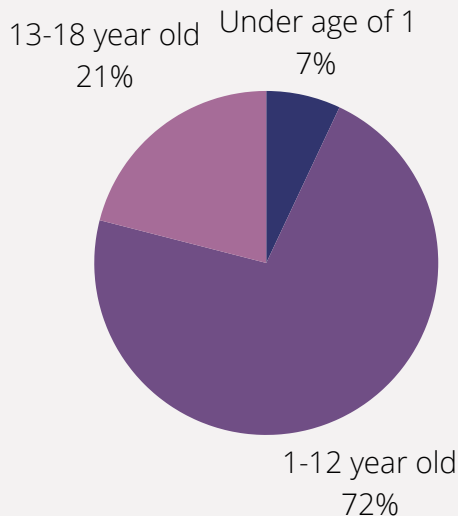
OUR CHILDREN

47 children were appointed to the CASA program
34 children were assigned to an advocate
13 children were unserved

DEMOGRAPHICS

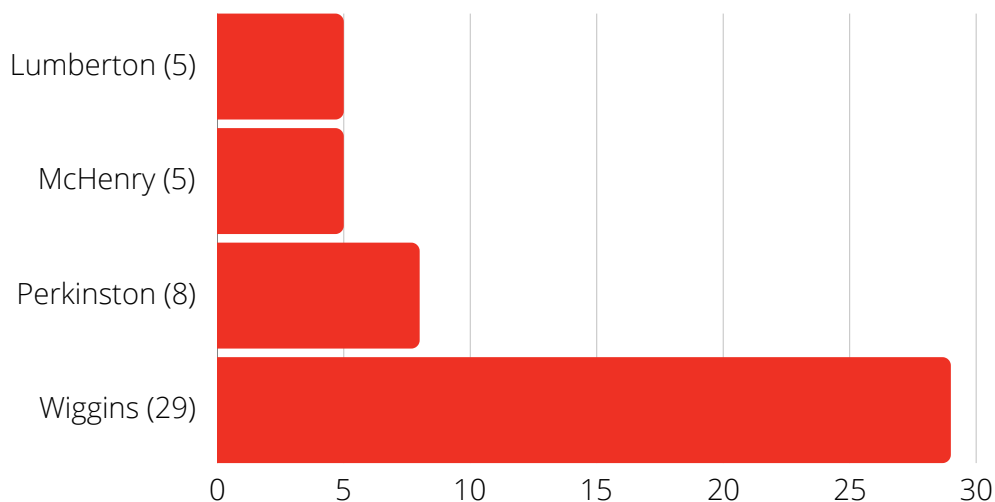
22 MALE

25 FEMALE



CAUCASIAN 81%
AFRICAN AMERICAN 17%
BI-RACIAL 0%
HISPANIC/LATINO 0%
ASIAN 0%
NATIVE AMERICAN 2%

LOCATION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT



OUR ADVOCATES

Hancock County

Adam, Margaret (9)
Alexander, Marybeth*
Altsman, Diane (7)
Bailey, Sarah (10)
Bair, Anne*
Baughman, Jackie (7)
Berry, Julie (2)
Bloom, Cheryl (8)
Bourgeois, Brooke (2)
Brdecka, Brittni (2)
Brdecka, John (1)
Breeze, Stacie*
Casano, Laurie (3)
Cannon, Julie (14)
Chargois, Victoria (2)
Coatney, Barbara (9)
Coleman, Joan (4)
Cuevas, Janine (8)
DeBardeleben, Evelyn (1)
DeHaan, Laura-Michel (3)
Demarest, Judy (10)
Dollar, Beverly (8)
Dubuisson, Heather (1)
Dudenhefer, Carol (7)
Ehrich, Alan (2)
Ehrich, Trudy (2)
Farrar, Lee (6)

Ferry, Jude (2)
Fulwiler, John (6)
Fulwiler, Madeleine (6)
Gibbons, Barbara (5)
Grapusa, Christine (7)
Gray, Christi (1)
Haberman, Victoria (3)
Hamil, Cynthia*
Hebert, Amanda (2)
Herring, Rhonda (6)
Hess, Allison (3)
Hilliard, Larry (1)
Hilliard, Terry (1)
Hubbs, Devin*
Jackson, Jessica (1)
Jackson, Lorenzo (1)
Joyce, Susan (6)
Keller, Kathi*
Ladner, Christine (8)
Ladner, Katelyn (2)
Lawler, Robinette (9)
Legeuax, Lisa (1)
Manko, Rodney (3)
Maronge, Charlotte (3)
McKenzie, Nancy (8)
Melby-Codling, Chris (9)
Meyer, Marcella (2)
Montjoy, Betsy (3)

Mumme, Susan (9)
Murana, Kimberly (1)
Murphy, Candy (2)
Murray, Joseph (7)
Necaise, Kimberly*
Nichols, Lylie (8)
Ortiz, Tish*
Reaver, Anne (1)
Reilly, Kim (5)
Richardson, Joy (9)
Riviere, George (5)
Riviere, Robin (6)
Salaun, Linda (5)
Sawyer, Robert (3)
Searles, Judith (6)
Shiyou, Carol (10)
Taylor, Griselda (1)
Taylore, Marilene (5)
Tent, Stefani (2)
Thompson, Tabitha*
Trentman, Lily*
Van Stelle, Christy (7)
Vogel, Michael (6)
Walker, Sharon*
Wallace, Susan (2)
Warran, Alisha (6)
Woods, Tammy (7)
Young, Anne (1)
Yovandich, Carol (1)

(#) indicates years of service
*New Advocates in 2024



OUR ADVOCATES

Harrison County

Allen, Andria (5)
Barnes, Rebecca*
Benefield, Debbie (6)
Bignoli, Joan (3)
Bodden, Katina (1)
Bonck, Patrick (11)
Chambers, Linda (4)
Charron, Moncheri (1)
Conner, Tasha (2)
Davis, Betty (2)
Eady, Melissa*
Ezell, Rebecca*
Foles, Rhonda*
Fowler, Bria (2)
Fulton, Denise (4)
Gingerella, April (2)
Godbolt, Loretta (1)
Graves, Artina*
Hall, Felicia*
Hodge, Sharon (2)
Howard, Sandi*
Hoying, Jim*
Hubbard, Christine (1)
Kaiser, Elizabeth (2)
Keeney, Sharon (6)

Langham, Hannah (2)
Langham, Mark (2)
LeRoy, Amy (2)
Lewis, Anita (10)
Lind, Donna*
Matthews, Donna (3)
McGuire, Trace (1)
Mitchell, Gerolyn (3)
Moore, Diane (4)
Murphy, Candy (2)
Parkman, Nikesha (1)
Peranich, Linda (6)
Rafferty, Jimmy*
Relaford, Jenee (3)
Renner, Melissa*
Richards, Brooke (1)
Robinson, Stephanie (1)
Rush, Diane*
Saldana, Maria (1)
Shaw, Cindy (12)
Shipton, Melanie*
Shirk, Linda (2)
Simpkins, Amber (1)
Smith, Diana (1)
Smith, Melinda (1)

Thomas, Kaycee (2)
Vitale, Bernadette*
Walker, Ronni*
White, Linda (4)
Whitlock-Spivey, Jehlani*
Wilder, Ruthie (13)
Williams, Erin (1)
Williams, Glaudette (2)
Williams, Jenny (4)

Stone County

Cater, Kiersten*
Cobb, Cynthia (2)
Gilbert, Teri*
Harrell, Allan*
Harvey, Charles*
Heyer, Rebekah
Hildestad, Lawrence*
Hildestad, Lori*
Loose, Allison (2)
Roberts, Stephanie (1)
Shelton, Taryn*
Thames, Johnene*
Thomas, Alex (1)

(#) indicates years of service
*New Advocates in 2024



2024: A YEAR



January 2024

- Mardi Gras Gala Fundraiser
- CASA onboards Harrison & Stone advocates & staff



February 2024

- Pre-Service Training
- Church of the King highlights CASA recruitment during "Sisterhood" event



March 2024

- CoastCon sponsors CASA as charity
- Hancock County Multidisciplinary Training



April 2024

- Touch-A-Truck
- Light of Hope Ceremony
- Chandeaur Brewery Fundraiser
- CASA presented with Above & Beyond the Call of Duty Award by District Attorney



May 2024

- Swearing In
- Advocate Appreciation
- ChandyFest



June 2024

- CASA Poker Run Fundraiser
- Trust-Based Relational Intervention Practitioner Training
- TBRI Law Enforcement Training Event



IN PHOTOS



July 2024

- School Supply Drive & Distribution
- CASA Staff Development



August 2024

- Pre-Service Training in Pass Christian
- CASA recruits advocates at Stone County's Pine Hills Social



September 2024

- First Stone County Pre-Service Training



October 2024

- Hosted statewide CASA Conference Bridging the Gap at Michael Memorial Baptist Church
- Building Bridges TBRI Conference
- Kaiden's Candles of Hope Project



November 2024

- CASA hosts Grateful for You Advocate Appreciation
- Pre-Service Training



December 2024

- Foster Care Christmas Parties
- CASA Wish List Project
- Advocate Christmas Party



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Grateful for You



Above: CASA Staff recognized advocates Christy Van Stelle, Sharon Keeney, Mark Langham, Karen Lewis, & Christi Gray for excellence in advocacy in 2024.

Left: Ashley Rhodes-Courter spoke about her own experience in foster care



In November 2024, CASA of South Mississippi hosted its annual “Grateful for You” Volunteer Appreciation Dinner at the Golden Nugget Biloxi, recognizing the remarkable efforts of advocates who serve children across Harrison, Hancock, and Stone Counties. The evening was sponsored by **Golden Nugget, Volunteer Mississippi, His Way, Inc., Padrick & Mary Dennis, Keesler Federal Credit Union, Neco’s Family Market, and Trustmark Bank**. This night of gratitude also featured bestselling author Ashley Rhodes-Courter as keynote speaker. The event was a heartfelt celebration of community, advocacy, and the life-changing impact of volunteer service.

The Blind Tiger Supports CASA

In May 2024 CASA of South Mississippi’s volunteer advocates were treated to an unforgettable evening of gratitude at The Blind Tiger in Bay St. Louis. Sponsored by owner Thomas Genin, the annual appreciation event featured an incredible crawfish boil and top-tier service from the TBT team. The evening was filled with laughter, fellowship, and heartfelt thanks for the volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to supporting children in foster care. Special recognition went to the staff at TBT for going above and beyond in making our advocates truly feel celebrated.



THE IMPACT OF AN ADVOCATE

"My advocate has been our armor and shield from the start. She is someone that can walk into any room at any given moment and brighten it up. No matter how tough the obstacle is, she'll do all that she can to ensure that I don't give up and keep going."

14 year old youth in foster care

"My CASA worker was hard as nails with a heart of gold for my children."

Mother reunified with her children

"I really like him. He listens to me and makes sure the Judge knows what I want. He has made it to where I can see my little brother and know he is safe."

17 year old youth in foster care



"She helped us figure out ways to get the things we needed for the kids, our home, and all sorts of things. She was really heaven sent."

Mother reunified with her children

"I believe she is literally the most important person on our team because she has the time to be more involved."

CASA advocates are a Godsend to these children."

Foster Parent

CHILDREN'S PROJECTS

Remi the Courthouse Facility Dog

Remi, the Courthouse Facility Dog, accompanies child victims to court hearings in order to enhance the fact-finding process. Remi also supports child welfare system staff to decrease secondary trauma & prevent burnout.

This project is supported by The Gulf Coast Community Foundation through the Jack A. & Gertrude W. Wilson Animal Welfare Fund, The Rotary Club of Bay St. Louis, and Mississippi Power. Remi's medical care is donated by Dr. West of Pet Haven Veterinary Hospital.



Trust-Based Relational Intervention®

In partnership with the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, CASA of South Mississippi coordinates the statewide implementation of TBRI® across multiple sectors including Youth Courts, juvenile justice, mental health professionals, educators, and child welfare.

These efforts include hosting monthly collaborative meetings, coordinating training for courts, hosting training events for practitioners, supporting ongoing modeling for partner organizations, and providing technical support for TBRI Practitioners.



TBRI® Partners with Mississippi Leaders, June 2024

CHILDREN'S PROJECTS

Candles of Hope



Claiborne's first Candles of Hope Cake from August 3, 2015



Quality Baker owner Danielle White & Rachel, Kaiden's mother



Since 2015, CASA has partnered with **Claiborne Hills Supermarket** to provide personalized birthday cakes at to children served by CASA volunteers in Hancock County. This Candles of Hope Birthday Project has been co-funded by the Misfit Street Krewzers, who have been supporters of CASA for years.

Many thanks to Claiborne Hills Supermarket and Misfit Street Krewzers for providing birthday cakes since 2015 to CASA children in Hancock County.



In 2024, as CASA expanded to Harrison and Stone Counties, Program Director Lauren Saucier connected with **Quality Bakery** in Wiggins. Inspired by a heartfelt call from Rachel McGill honoring her late son Kaiden, bakery owners Danielle & Gordon White agreed to partner with CASA & Rachel to create the **Kaiden's Candles of Hope** project. The official start date for this project was October 9, 2024, what would have been Kaiden's 18th birthday.

Thanks to Quality Bakery in Wiggins & Gulfport, the K. Ryder Foundation, & Community Connection for providing birthday cakes to children served by CASA in Harrison & Stone Counties!



CHILDREN'S PROJECTS

School Supplies

In an incredible display of generosity, the community stepped up in July 2024 to meet the back-to-school needs of all 157 school-aged children served by CASA of South Mississippi across Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties. Within just a few weeks of calling for help, every child was matched with school supplies, thanks to the overwhelming response of donors near and far. CASA expressed deep gratitude for every like, share, and contribution, reminding supporters that their kindness has made a lasting impact on each child's first day of school.



CASA Volunteers in Hancock, Harrison, & Stone Counties picked up backpacks full of school supplies & delivered them to their children

CASA Christmas



In November & December 2024, CASA of South Mississippi once again witnessed the incredible generosity of the Gulf Coast community through its annual **Christmas Wish List Sponsor Drive**. Thanks to the compassion of local individuals, businesses, and organizations, every CASA child across Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties received personalized gifts tailored to their wishes. The drive brought joy and hope to children navigating the foster care system during the holiday season—a time that can be especially difficult. The effort served as a powerful reminder that even small acts of kindness can make a lasting impact.



In December 2024, CASA spread holiday cheer by hosting **Christmas parties for children in foster care across Hancock, Harrison, and Stone Counties**. The events were filled with festive fun, holiday treats, and meaningful interactions with Santa—bringing joy to children who need it most. With the help of generous volunteers and community partners, each party created a safe, joyful space where kids could simply be kids and feel celebrated during the season. CASA extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who made these special gatherings possible.

ANNUAL EVENTS

Krewe of CASA Mardi Gras Gala



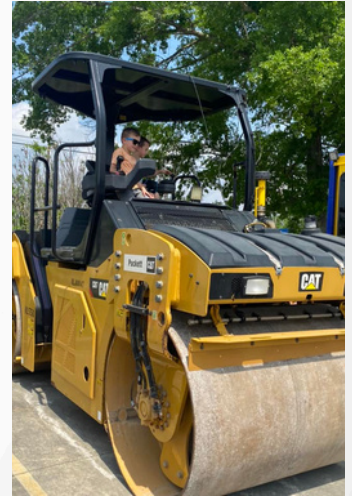
The 12th Annual Krewe of CASA Mardi Gras Gala was a night to remember! Presented by Parker Contracting and Warran Automotive, the event celebrated CASA's mission in true Casino Royale style. CASA advocate Alisha Warran and her husband, supporter Lewis Warran, reigned as Queen and King of the evening. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal from the CASA Cooks, danced to live music by D Play Band, and bid on exciting auction items.



Touch-A-Truck



In April 2024, CASA of South Mississippi hosted its annual Touch-A-Truck event at the Hancock County Governmental Annex in Bay St. Louis. This free event provided an interactive experience for children and adults alike, offering the opportunity to explore a variety of vehicles, including public service, emergency, utility, and construction vehicles. Attendees engaged with the "heroes" who operate these vehicles, learning about their functions and safety features through hands-on activities. As CASA's community give-back free event, there was free food, drinks, & giveaways for the children!



Light of Hope



L to R: Advocate Cindy Shaw, Supervisor Tyree McDonald, Advocate Cindy Cobb, & Supervisor Linda Perkes

Light of Hope 2024 was a memorable and impactful evening, held annually during Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month in April. This special event gave us the opportunity to honor and remember those who have made a significant difference in the lives of vulnerable children in our community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Judges, Special Guests, Speakers, Award Recipients, Advocates, Community Supporters, Friends, and Family who joined us for this powerful gathering. Your presence and dedication continue to inspire and drive change, making a lasting impact on those who need it most. Thank you for being a part of Light of Hope and for your unwavering support of CASA's mission.

MISSION PARTNERS

Mission Partners are businesses that have committed to year-round financial support of the CASA mission. Email cynthia@casasouthms.org to find out more.

Founder's Circle



Children's Champions

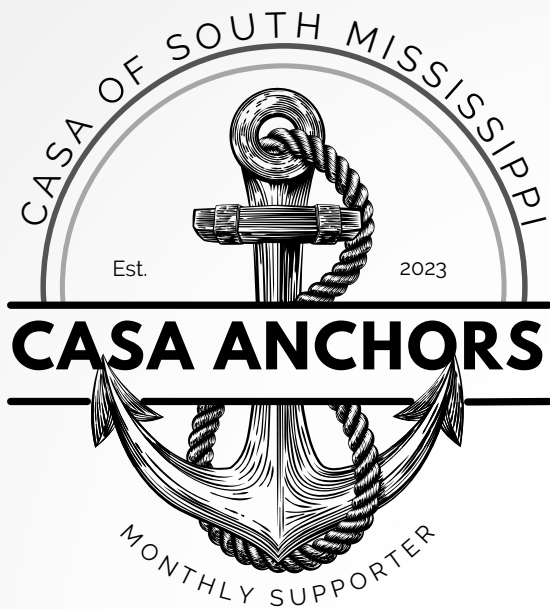


Children's Protectors



Children's Advocates





CASA ANCHORS

The definition of an **anchor** is “a reliable or principal support--a mainstay.” The coastal Mississippi community has rallied around CASA to support the most vulnerable children in extraordinary ways.

In 2023, CASA’s Board of Directors launched the Anchors Campaign, which empowered individuals from the community to contribute in a meaningful and sustainable way. For ten dollars a month--**the price of a cup of specialty coffee**--our supporters can make a lifelong difference in the lives of the children that we serve.

Not everyone has the ability to become a CASA, but **everyone can help somehow**. CASA Anchors believe in the CASA mission & vision, and they have committed to supporting the program through their monthly contributions.

“Thank
you for
giving
me
a hand
to hold.”
-CASA Child



Jackie Baughman
Cheryl Bloom
John & Brittnei Brdecka
David Buckley
Cynthia Chauvin
Caitlin Cruthird
Mike & Kim Curia
Lori Curia
Micky Evans
Rebecca Ezell
David & Janis Fite
John & Madeleine Fulwiler
Natalie Guess
John Heflin
Mark & Leslie Henderson
John Hightower
Mamie Hillery
Glenn Hood
Lisa Judice

Elizabeth Kaiser
Myron Labat, Sr.
Rhonda Labat
Erin Lee
Lizzie Mae Leonard
Jennifer Milligan
Candy Murphy
Bernie & Judy Ostervold
Heather Smith
April Parker
Joy Peacock
Cathy Pitalo
Cheryl Ramseyer
Jo Ann Reed
George & Robin Riviere
Chris & Connie Roth
Donna Schmidt
Jack & Glenda Schornick
Carol Shiyou

Shelley Stocker
Huey Stockstill, III
Rocky Stockstill
Gene & Margaret Taylor
Jane Thompson
Chris & Becky Trapani
Katherine Troendle
Bernadette Vitale
Rodger & Ruthie Wilder
Ty Wiltz
John & Mary Lou Zimmerman

Rushing & Guice PLLC
Church of the King
Harbor City Church
Lutheran Church of the Pines
Main Street United Methodist
Patrick O'Connor and Margaret McMullan



Scan the QR Code
above to join the
CASA Anchor team

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

CASA Grants



United Way
of South Mississippi



STONE
COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP



HisWay, Inc.



Mississippi State Department of Health
Office Against Interpersonal Violence
Victims of Crime Act Grant | State Victim Services Grant

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Gulf Coast Community Foundation



GULF COAST
COMMUNITY
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In-Kind Donors

Special thanks to these partners for donating time & services:

Butler Snow

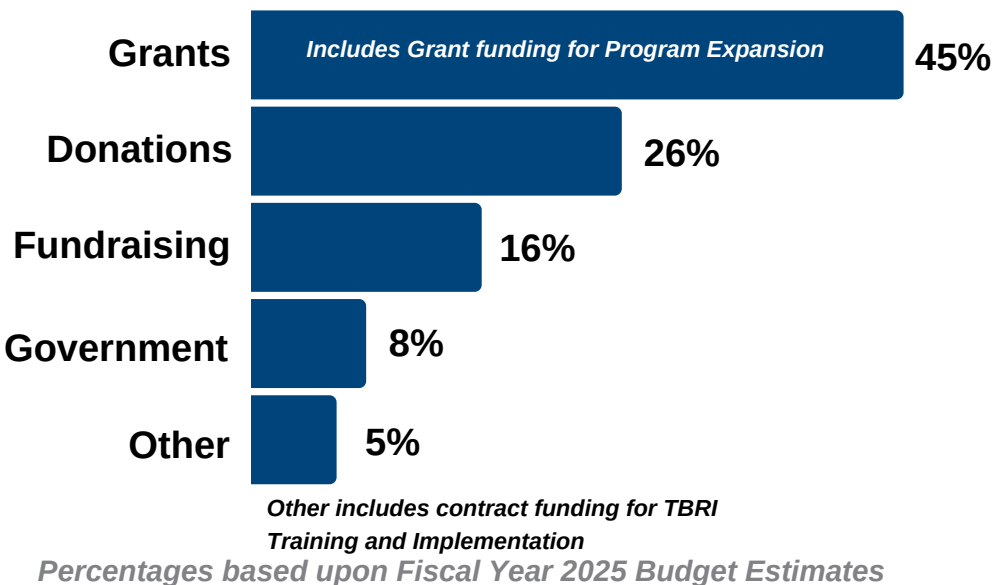
Dr. West & Pet Haven Veterinary Hospital

Edrington Landscaping

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

Diverse Funding

CASA of South MS actively pursues funding from a variety of sources to enhance financial resilience. Through diversification of funding streams and a strategic approach that avoids overdependence on one specific source or tactic, we can better navigate fluctuations and recover from any unforeseen challenges.



Donations

CASA is a 501c3 charitable organization and relies on community support. Your gift is tax deductible and makes a big difference in the life of an abused or neglect child. Donations can be made by check, online through our website, Venmo, or PayPal for a one-time donation or to become a CASA Anchor with recurring donations.

www.casasouthms.org

**One-Time or
Recurring Donations**



One-Time Donations





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