

2026

QUARTER 3 PROGRAM REPORT

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

www.casasouthms.org
Phone: 228-344-0419
Fax: 228-344-3209

Harrison County Office
11975 Seaway Rd., A140
Gulfport, MS 39503

Hancock County Office
644 Dunbar Ave.
Bay St. Louis, MS 39520

CASA OF SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

STAFF

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Executive Director

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Program Director

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Linda Perkes
Ashley Tribble
Tyree McDonald
Melinda Borja
Shannon Dumitrescu
Advocate Supervisors

Lori Curia
Finance Director

Jordan Evans
Finance Clerk

Naomi Strawhorn
Victim Services Coordinator

Kelly Blackmon
Community Outreach Coordinator

Joellen Williams
Administrative Assistant

Remi III
Courthouse Facility Dog

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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OUR MISSION

To advocate for South Mississippi's abused and neglected children by supporting volunteers who promote safety, permanency, and resilience.

OUR VISION

A community where all children thrive in safe and nurturing families.



FOLLOW US:

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Instagram: @CASAsouthMS

www.CASAsouthMS.org

QUARTER OVERVIEW



414
Total Children in CPS Custody

67%
Were served by a volunteer CASA Advocate

OUR CHILDREN

- Of the **414** children, **277** children in custody were assigned a volunteer advocate during this quarter.
- **7** additional children were assigned a volunteer advocate and maintained in their home of origin during this quarter.
- **137 children in Harrison & Stone Counties are still in need of a volunteer advocate.**

ADVOCATE SERVICE

- **139** Assigned Advocates
- **113** Court Reports Written by Advocates
  - **440** Recommendations were made
  - **95%** Became Orders of the Court
- **20** New Advocates Sworn In
- **690** Hours of Training Completed



139
Advocates Provided

2,756
Hours of Service to Children



33
Children's Cases Closed in the Reporting Period

OUTCOMES

During this quarter, **33 children's** cases closed. Of these children, **100%** achieved permanent homes through:

- **20** Reunification
- **11** Adoption
- **2** Durable Legal Custody

OF THE CASES APPOINTED TO CASA WITHIN THE QUARTER, THERE WERE

447 Allegations of Neglect

49 Allegations of Abuse:
1 Emotional
7 Sexual
41 Physical

HANCOCK COUNTY

OUR CHILDREN



- **43** children were in CPS custody
- **43** children in CPS custody were assigned to an advocate

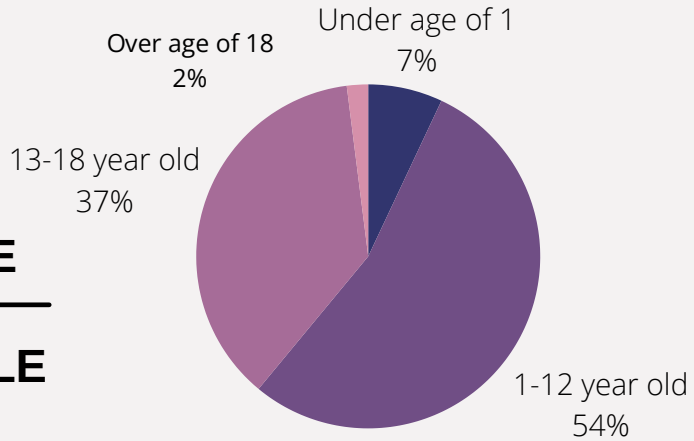


CASA served 100% of the children in CPS custody

DEMOGRAPHICS

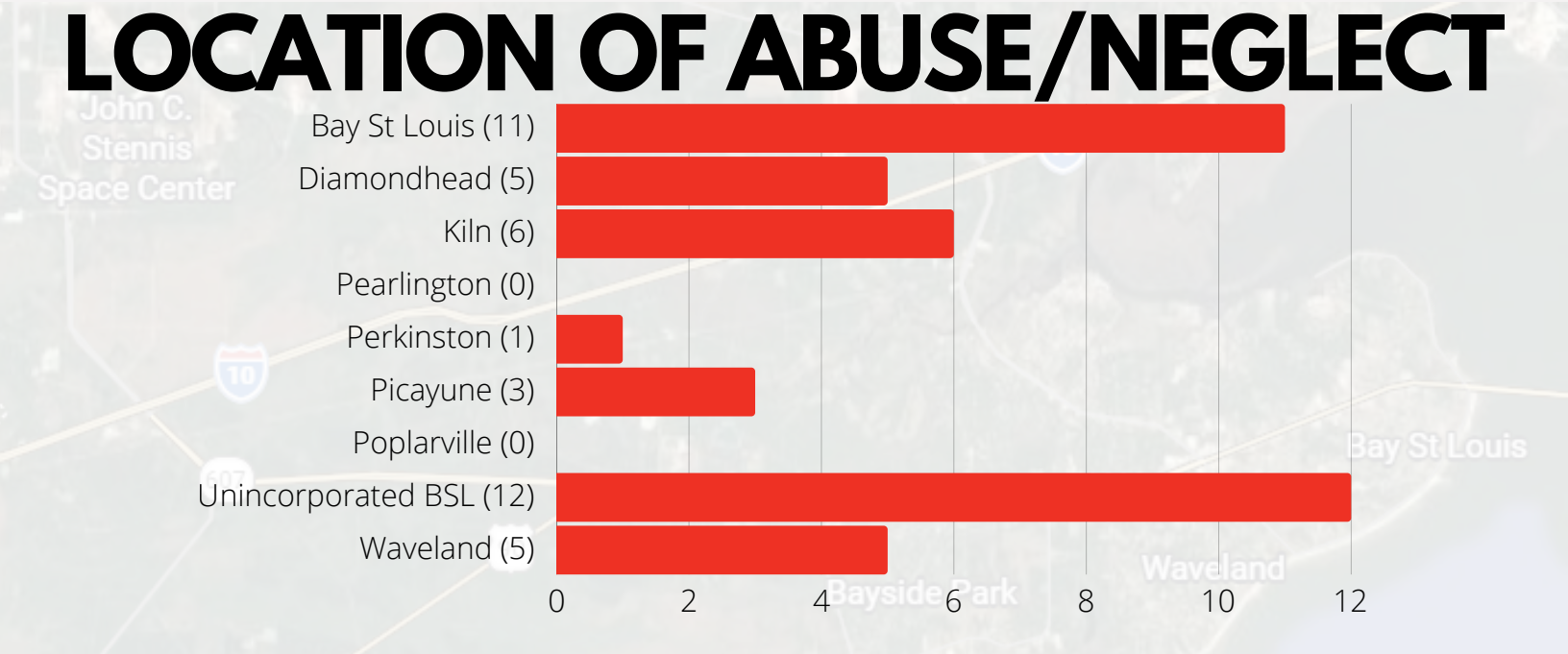
20 MALE

23 FEMALE



CAUCASIAN 93%
AFRICAN AMERICAN 7%
BI-RACIAL 0%
HISPANIC/LATINO 0%
ASIAN 0%

LOCATION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT



HARRISON COUNTY

OUR CHILDREN

- **287** children were in CPS custody
- **193** children in CPS custody were assigned to an advocate
- **7** additional children assigned to an advocate were maintained in their home of origin.
- **94** children were unserved

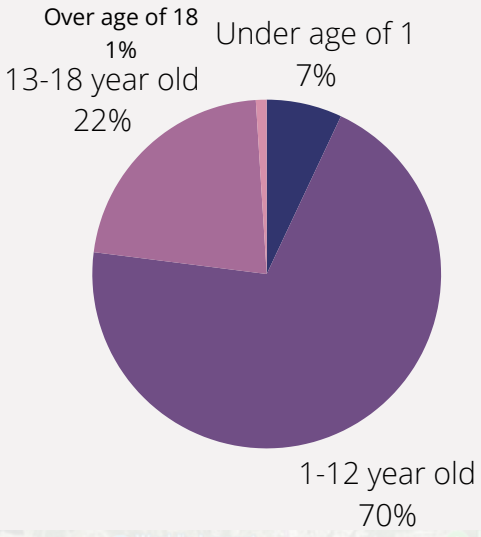


CASA served 67% of the children in CPS custody

DEMOGRAPHICS

92 MALE

108 FEMALE



CAUCASIAN 48%

AFRICAN AMERICAN 45%

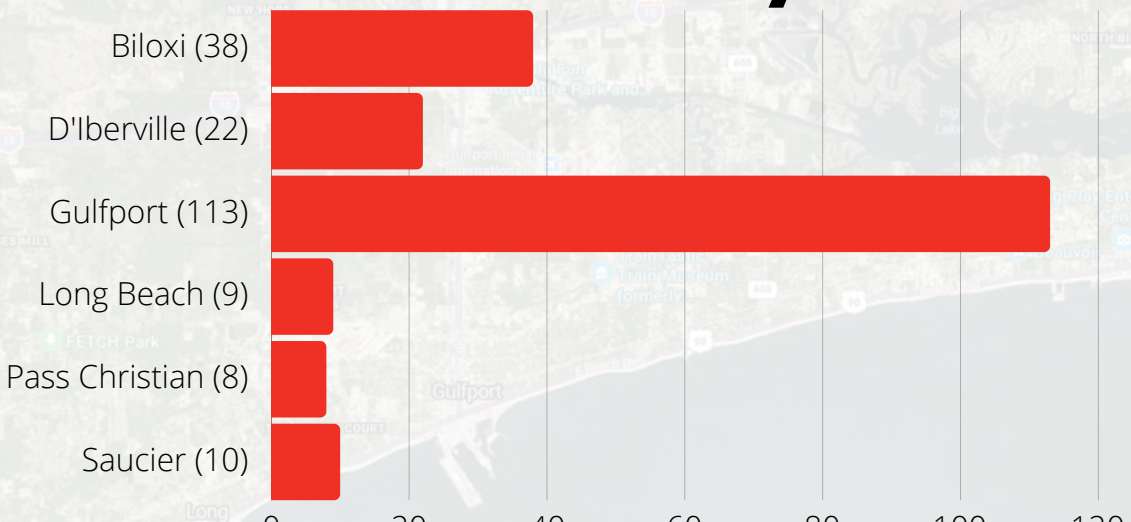
BI-RACIAL 6%

HISPANIC/LATINO < 1%

ASIAN < 1%

NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER 0%

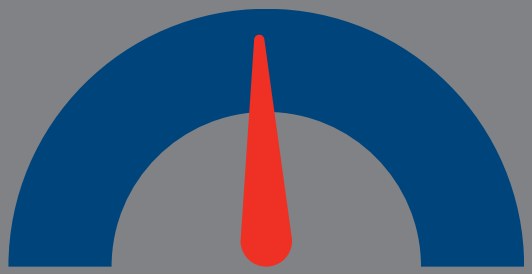
LOCATION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT



STONE COUNTY

OUR CHILDREN

- **84** children were in CPS Custody
- **41** children were assigned to an advocate
- **43** children were unserved

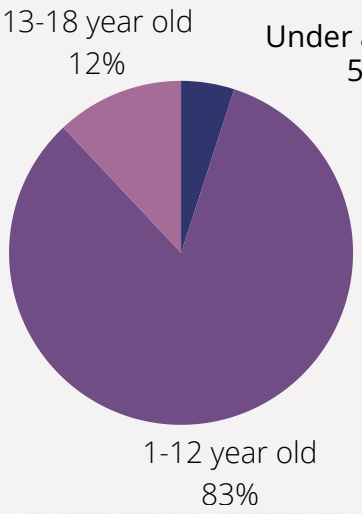


CASA served 49% of the children in CPS custody

DEMOGRAPHICS

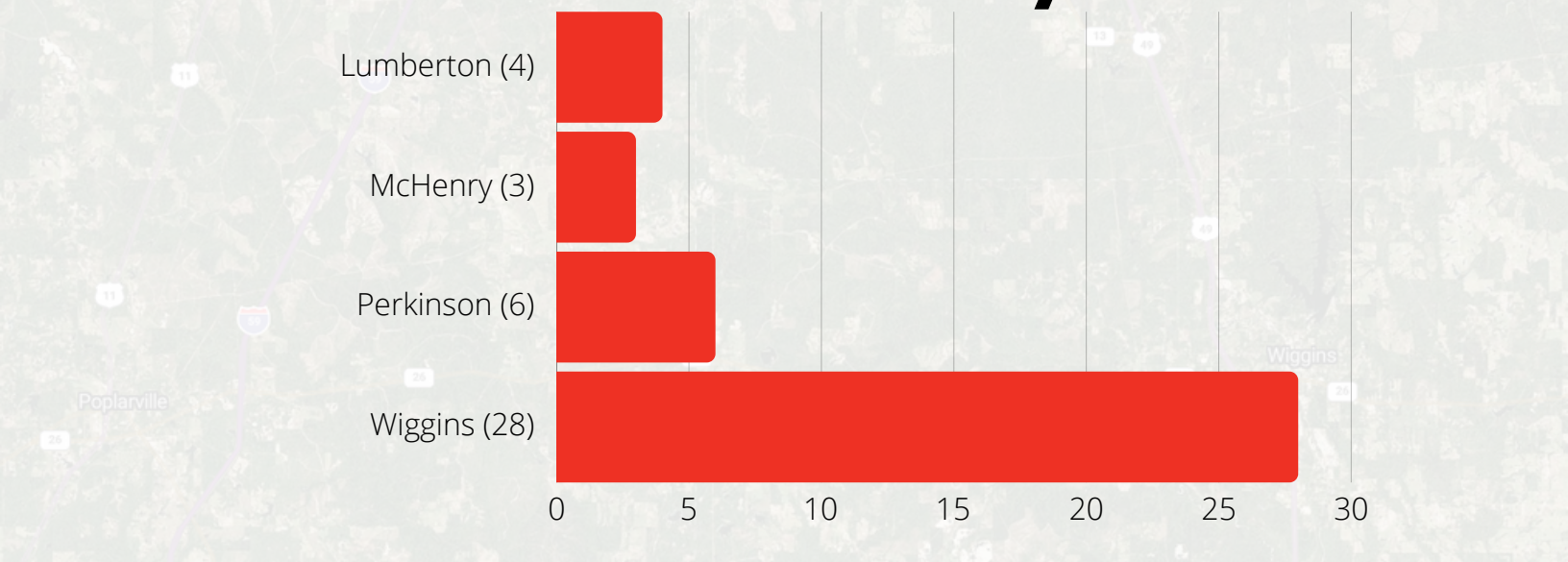
18 MALE

23 FEMALE



CAUCASIAN 85%
AFRICAN AMERICAN 0%
BI-RACIAL 15%
HISPANIC/LATINO 0%
ASIAN 0%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER 0%

LOCATION OF ABUSE/NEGLECT



HOW TO HELP



1 Become a CASA Volunteer

In 2026, 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

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.

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:

CASA
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FOR CHILDREN
SOUTH MISSISSIPPI

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

OUR ADVOCATES

Hancock County

Adam, Margaret (11)
Alexander, Marybeth (2)
Altsman, Diane (9)
Bailey, Sarah (13)
Bair, Anne (2)
Berry, Julie (7)
Bloom, Cheryl (10)
Bourgeois, Brooke (4)
Brdecka, Brittni (4)
Brdecka, John (3)
Breeze, Stacie (2)
Cannon, Julie (16)
Chargois, Victoria (4)
Coleman, Joan (6)
Cuevas, Janine (10)
DeHaan, Laura-Michel (5)
Dollar, Beverly (10)
Ehrich, Trudy (4)
Ferry, Jude (4)
Fulwiler, John (8)
Fulwiler, Madeleine (8)
Grapusa, Christine (9)
Hamil, Cynthia (2)
Hess, Allison (5)
Hilliard, Larry (3)
Hilliard, Terry (3)
Hutchison, Michael (1)
Jackson, Jessica (3)
Jackson, Lorenzo (3)
Keller, Kathi (2)
Lawler, Robinette (11)
Manko, Rodney (5)
Meyer, Marcella (10)
Montjoy, Betsy (5)
Mumme, Susan (11)
Murana, Kimberly (3)
Murray, Joseph (9)
Necaise, Kimberly (2)
Nichols, Lylie (11)
Ortiz, Tish (2)
Parker, Andy (1)
Shiyou, Carol (12)
Taylor, Griselda (3)
Taylor, Marilene (7)
Taylor, Vickie (1)
Van Stelle, Christy (9)
Wallace, Susan (6)
Young, Anne (3)

Harrison County

Acosta, Deborah *
Anderson, Chalissa*
Ashley-Williams, Lavette*
Barnes, Rebecca (2)
Bates, Ryan*
Beck, Bridget (1)
Beck, Maria (1)
Benefield, Debbie (8)
Bignoli, Joan (5)
Bonck, Patrick (12)
Borecki, Henry*
Brooks, Valerie*
Brown, Demetria (1)
Buck, Neilly*
Calloway, Emily*
Colby, Jaime*
Conner, Heather (1)
Corley, Charles*
Corley, Sara*
Davis, Adrienne (1)
Davis, Jeremiah*
Dismuke, Tabitha (1)
Dosch, Day (1)
Dunbar, Rochelle*
Eades, Amanda*

(#) indicates years of service
*New Advocates in 2026



OUR ADVOCATES

Eady, Melissa (2)
Ellingson, Sherry (1)
Ezell, Rebecca (2)
Fennell, James (1)
Footman, Pamela*
Gatewood, Carol (1)
Graves, Artina (2)
Hart, Meshayonia*
Hegwood, Regina*
Horton, Karen (1)
Howard, Sandi (2)
Jenkins, Veronica (1)
Jenkins Prudhomme, Ivy*
Jennings, Valaresia (1)
Kaiser, Elizabeth (4)
Keeney, Sharon (8)
Koenenn, Heather (1)
LaCour, Louis*
Langham, Hannah (4)
Langham, Mark (4)
Leatherman, Isabel (1)
Lewis, Anita (13)
Lewis, Jesse*
Maisonneuve, Caryn (1)
Matthews, Donna (5)
McCulloch,Tirzah*
McMullen, Veronica*
Moore, Diane (6)
Perez, Laura*
Rafferty, Jimmy (1)
Reaver, Anne (3)
Reilly, Kim (7)
Relaford, Jenee (5)
Renner, Melissa (2)
Reno, Skylar*
Rosemond, Champaigne*
Rush, Cathleen*
Rush, Diane (2)
Ryan, Elizabeth*
Sanderson, April
Shaw, Cindy (14)
Shirk, Linda (4)
Shull, Scott (1)
Simpkins, Amber (3)
Smith, Crysta*
Smith-Pierce, Geraldlynn*
Taylor, Daniel*
Thames, Andrea*
Thomas, Kaycee (4)
Tilquit, Taylor (1)
Tubertini, Kathy (1)
Vann, Theresa (1)
Vennon, Amy (1)
Vitale, Bernadette (2)
Waller, Patricia*
Waltman, Jeff (1)
Waltman, Leann (1)
Ward, Thersa (1)
Wilder, Ruthie (14)
Williams, Jenny (5)
Wilson, Nicole*
Yarbrough, Pamela*
Yates, Bryan*
Yates, Suzanne*
Young, Corinne (1)

Stone County

Cater, Kiersten (5)
Cobb, Cynthia (4)
Forrest, Brad*
Forrest, Brandy*
Gaworski, Alicia*
Harrell, Allan (2)
Hildestad, Lawrence (2)
Hildestad, Lori (2)
Murphy, Lynn (1)
Overstreet, Emily (1)
Shelton, Taryn (2)
Smith, Monica (1)
Thames, Johnene (1)
Thompson, Ashley*
Walters, Heather (1)

(#) indicates years of service
*New Advocates in 2026



CHILD WELLBEING PROJECTS

REMI THE COURTHOUSE FACILITY DOG

Remi, the Courthouse Facility Dog, received extensive training from Canine Companions®. Facility dogs like Remi are selected for their ability to calmly interact with people in a high stress environment. Remi goes to work daily alongside her primary handler Naomi Strawhorn & secondary handler Linda Perkes at CASA of South Mississippi. While Remi primarily attends Youth Court with child victims, she may also accompany children to meetings with prosecutors or forensic interviews to enhance the fact-finding process. Off hours, Remi goes home with her handler and is a normal pet.

Visit www.casasouthms.org/remi for more information about Remi, the Courthouse Facility Dog. Visit www.canine.org to find out more about the Canine Companions program.

"Remi made a real difference with the victim and I could tell the calming influence she had during a very difficult conversation."

District Attorney



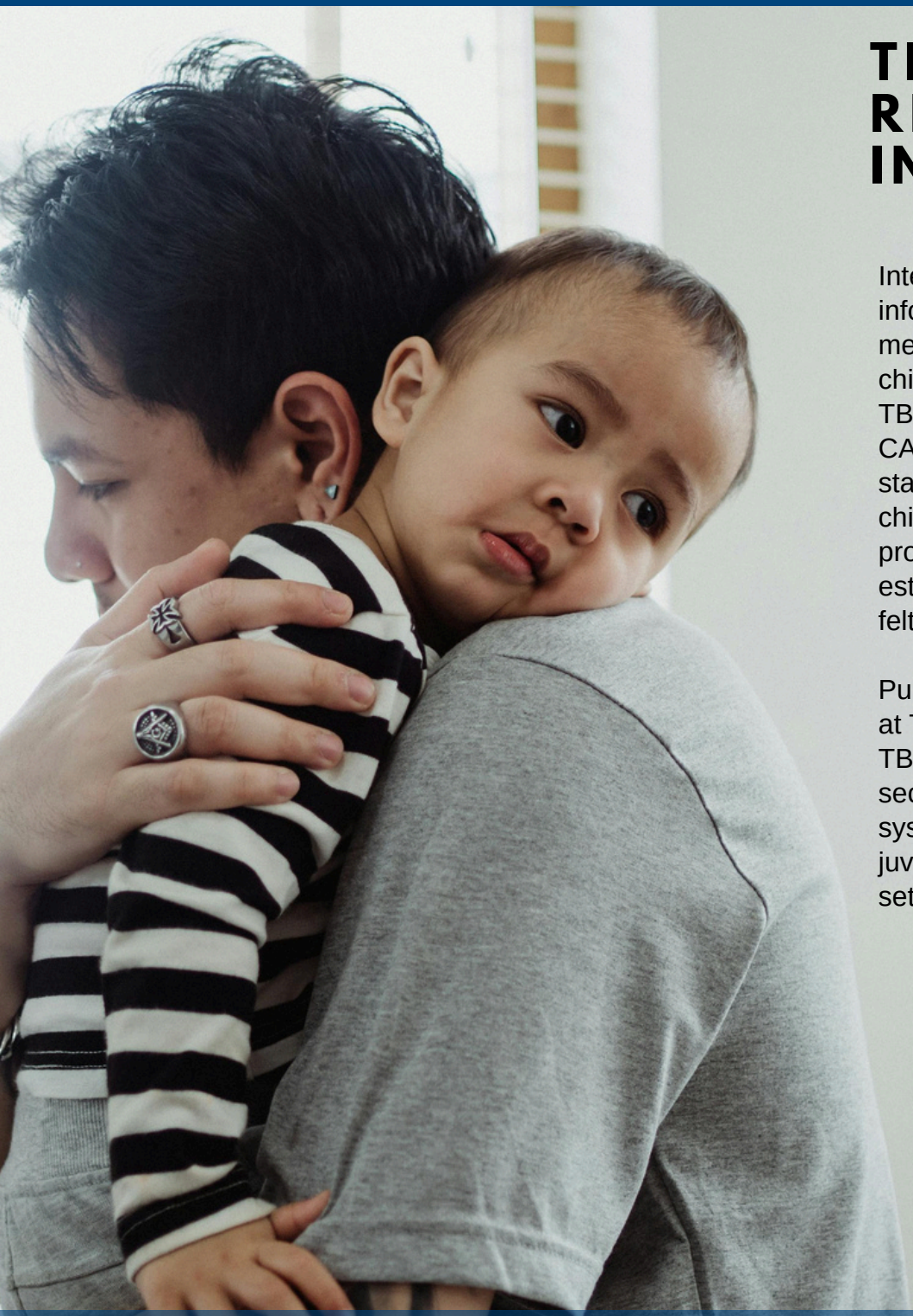
38

Number of child victims served by Remi YTD

33

Hours of direct service to child victims YTD

CHILD WELLBEING PROJECTS



TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION®

Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI) is a trauma-informed intervention designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. As Mississippi's designated TBRI Ambassador Organization, CASA continues to coordinate statewide TBRI efforts to assist children, families, and organizations in providing trauma-responsive care by establishing high levels of connection, felt safety, & regulation.

In consultation with the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development at TCU, CASA supports a network of TBRI Practitioners who serve in sectors including the child welfare system, mental health, schools, courts, juvenile justice, caregivers, residential settings, and more.

TBRI® AMBASSADOR

547

Professionals Trained in TBRI® YTD

23

Caregivers trained in TBRI Caregiver class YTD

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



Kimberly Murana
3 Years of Service
3 Children Served



Heather Conner
1 Year of Service
9 Children Served



Susan Mumme
11 Years of Service
24 Children Served

CASA IN THE COMMUNITY



07/17/26: Community Outreach Coordinator Kelly Blackmon is with Advocate Joe Murray, Supervisor Linda Perkes, & Board Member Haley Wing representing CASA at a series of Biloxi Shuckers games.



08/04/26: CASA Staff & Advocates with Judge Favre and Judge Carr at the multidisplinary training on Implicit Bias hosted by Hancock County Youth Court.

In this Quarter, CASA Conducted

- 14 Presentations
- 2 Newsprint Articles
- 17 Booth Events
- 5 Television Appearances



09/12/26: CASA Supervisor Melinda Borja with Advocates Heather Walters, Sissy Leatherman, and Amy Vennon at the Biloxi Seafood Festival.

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

CASA GRANTS

United Way of South Mississippi

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

HisWay, Inc.

CASA MS, Inc.
Growth Initiative
Grant
Administered via
State of Mississippi Judiciary
Administrative Office of Courts

Made Possible by
The Members of Coast Electric
Coast Electric Community Trust
Making Life Better
Operation Round Up
In Partnership with the
Gulf Coast Community Foundation

Gulf Coast Community Foundation
Wilson Animal Fund

danos

LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Stone County

Mississippi's Hancock County

Board of Supervisors Harrison County

Gulfport Mississippi

Biloxi established 1699

Where living is easy. Diamondhead Mississippi

City of D'Iberville

IN-KIND DONORS

Special thanks to these partners for donating time & services:
Butler Snow
Edrington Landscaping

MISSION PARTNERS

FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

Mississippi Power Foundation

CHILDREN'S CHAMPIONS

Specialty Contractors & Associates, Inc.

Butler Snow

Chiniche Engineering & Surveying, Established 1971

Hancock Whitney

KeeslerFederal

Scarlet Pearl cares

Landmark Contracting, Inc., Gulfport, MS, Established 1985

Golden Nugget Biloxi

CHILDREN'S PROTECTORS

Coast Electric

HPS Huey P. Stockstill, LLC. Where a handshake still has meaning



CHILDREN'S ADVOCATES

Watters Architecture

Mitchell Distributing Mississippi Gulf Coast

HOW YOU CAN HELP

DONATE & CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY

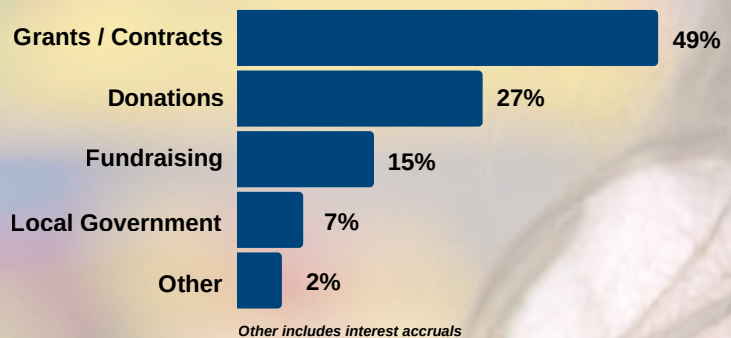
CASA is a 501c3 charitable organization and relies on community support. Your gift is tax deductible and makes a big difference in the life of an abused or neglect child. Donations can be made by check, online through our website, Venmo, or PayPal for a one-time donation or to become a CASA Anchor with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

Visit www.casasouthms.org/donate or use the QR codes below:

PayPal

venmo

CASA'S DIVERSE FUNDING



Percentages based upon Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Estimates

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.

This project is supported by federal grant number 15POVC-22-GG-00770-ASSI, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this product are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

This project is also supported by the MS State Department of Health, Office Against Interpersonal Violence, state administering agency for the MS State Victim Service Grant. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the state.