



In June 2018, CASA welcomed over 30 local children in foster care to the first ever Camp CASA event held at Camp Warren. Throughout the three day camp, children had the

opportunity to meet and interact with their lawyer, GAL Brian Finney, and with renowned author of Garbage Bag

Suitcase and fellow foster care alum, Shenandoah Chefalo. Children participated in small group sessions, conducted workshops, played in camp activities, and enjoyed being kids at camp! CASA is planning year two of this camp, but we need your help! Volunteers, financial donations, and in kind donations needed. To find out how you can help, call Julia at 217-428-8424.



#### Tax-wise ways to help CASA:

- Bunch your donations to itemize every other year. You can give a lot more in the years you itemize.
- Donate Appreciated Assets. We can accept gifts of assets other than cash. You can make a sizable donation without spending cash.
- Use Charitable Rollovers from traditional IRAs if you are over 70½. This reduces the RMD you receive but also reduces your AGI and therefore your tax liability.

#### Top five reasons CASA needs your gift:

1. After receiving a large grant from the Howard G. Buffett foundation, CASA's board decided the best use of these funds was to invest in people, so we could advocate for more children.
2. We have used these funds to grow from four to nine staff. That allowed us to be successful in recruiting and training over 100 new volunteers in the past two years.
3. With these new volunteers, we have been able to more than double the number of new children your Macon County CASA community volunteers and staff advocate for.
4. It costs \$2,200 to support a volunteer for a year. (It costs \$5,698 per month for each child in foster care).
5. Your gift ensures we can continue even as our budget has climbed proportionately, reflecting our new capacities.

#### Condensed Financial Statement Year ended June 30, 2018 & 2017

	2018	2017
Total Public support and revenue	\$319,617	\$202,870
Total program services	\$275,653	\$202,219
Operations	\$ 27,310	\$ 27,946
Fundraising	\$ 73,554	\$ 70,948
Increase/decrease in assets	(56,901)	(98,244)

Note to condensed statement: Deficits are funded from current assets

#### Macon County CASA Mission Statement:

To provide court appointed volunteers to advocate for the abused, neglected, and/or dependent children who are involved in the juvenile court system. It shall further be the purpose of this corporation to educate the community regarding its responsibility for children who have been abused or neglected, and found to be dependent.



**CASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

## 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

### CASA in the Community: Giving Children a Voice Collectively

For 20 years, Macon County CASA has provided court appointed volunteers to advocate for our community's abused and neglected children. Our volunteer advocates look out for the best interests of these children in court. CASA volunteers, with our organizational support, become real heroes to our children by establishing a personal relationship with the children assigned to them and by helping the kids to re-build a sense of trust in adults. Because of their in depth involvement with the child and his or her case, the CASA advocate is able to make recommendations to the juvenile advocacy judge as to the best interests of each child.

As a Decatur native, I have always valued our community's ability to care for one another. Macon County CASA is one of the many organizations who call for action from our community's citizens. Over the past two years, CASA has sounded the alarms that our children NEED your help. With 587 current children in foster care, the time is now to make a commitment to support the welfare of our own community's children.

Now that you understand the need, how exactly can you help?

Volunteer. You can become a Court Appointed Special Advocate. You can shepherd these children to a safe place, and hopefully to a permanent home, where they can thrive again. This volunteer role is one of the most rewarding jobs available and more

community members are becoming attuned with the great number of local foster children. No need to have child welfare experience. In a six-week training, CASA prepares you to advocate for our children.

Make a financial donation. In Macon County, it takes \$2,200 annually to recruit, train, and maintain one CASA advocate who can advocate for many children in the court's care. With your help, CASA can increase our capacity to advocate for a larger percentage of the current local children in foster care.



As the new Executive Director of CASA, it is my hope that the entire community feels a collective responsibility for CASA's abused and neglected children. Due to the constantly changing lives of these children, they

ultimately need the stability in knowing that someone will be their voice. Macon County CASA offers child victim advocacy that you can support.

To volunteer or to donate, use the envelope provided or go online at [www.maconcountycasa.org](http://www.maconcountycasa.org). Thank you for your support.

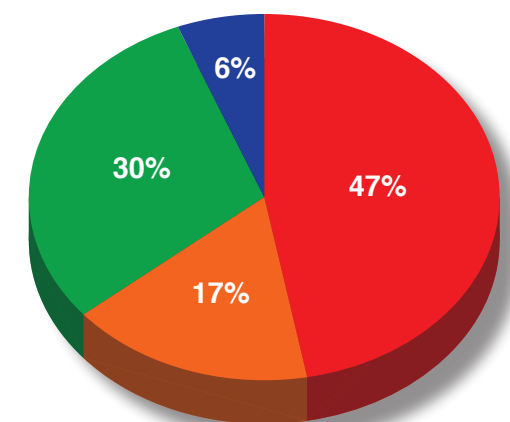
Julia Roundtree Livingston  
Incoming Executive Director

#### CASE STORY #1

##### Older children in care: A special need we must address!

Thalia is a 16 year-old girl living in a traditional foster care home. Because of school issues with bullying and her own anxieties, she was put in the Homebound program through DPS #61 Special Ed. She was meeting 2 hours/day with a tutor at the library, but her grades started slipping in her honors courses. Our CASA volunteer, Trudy, got the grade report at the end of March. *Continued page 2*

#### Where our funds come from



- United Way - 6%
- Foundations, Businesses & Community Organizations - 47%
- County & Government - 17%
- Individuals, Misc. - 30%





**INITIATIVE WITH OLDER CHILDREN:**

CASA must continue to support our community's abused and neglected children in ways that provide love, support, trust, and direction. In October 2018, CASA received a \$5,000 Young Philanthropist Giving Circle grant to launch a Youth in Care Empowerment Initiative; with this new program, CASA will continue to provide enhanced advocacy to the community's older children in care by educating them on available resources in foster care regarding education and healthcare. CASA also secured a matching grant donation, but we are still seeking an additional \$10,000 for this new program to operate for its first year. If you or your business can help, call 217-428-8424.

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The case worker suggested a new program, because the tutoring wasn't working. The tutor wasn't able to hold Thalia accountable. Our CASA, Trudy, then made the rounds of the school principal, social worker, the school nurse and the tutor and asked for an educational team meeting to attempt to reverse the slide in grades.

The agency's case worker was supposed to come but got called away to something else; nevertheless, our volunteer got everyone on the same page, so that Thalia got one single message and help with organization, structure and accountability. This was important, because Thalia was quickly losing interest in school and even in any positive future for herself.

Trudy has been instrumental in moving Thalia from a bad path and away from substance abuse. Although Thalia's future is still unknown, she is very bright and Trudy along with her Advocate Supervisor on staff at CASA continue to work on empowering Thalia to succeed in life.

We currently advocate for 60 children ages 12 and over. These children are less likely to be adopted, have had multiple placements and need help as they begin to age out of the system or stay in the child welfare system to take advantage of the benefits offered. You can help. Please call or send your financial support.

**CASE STORY #2**

Rhonda is just turning 18 and wants the freedom of deciding on her own who she wants to live with. She has made some good choices and some poor choices, but with the help of her new CASA volunteer, she is now living with a former counselor. Although we hope she will be at that stage of her life soon, Rhonda is still immature and not ready to live on her own, be emancipated or even avail herself of the opportunities DCFS offers for school and independent living. She is a child victim whose sexual



In November 2017, Macon County CASA began our male recruitment initiative, CASA Quarterbacks. In the first year, we have more than tripled the number of our male volunteer advocates from 3 to 14.

abuse at an early age still haunts her and very often prevents trust and open communication with adults. Even though she could age out of the system, we actually introduced her and her sister to a new CASA, because she had such good support from her first CASA who advocated for her best interests for 8 years as she was growing up. We continue to work with Rhonda on her maturity level, discourage her from making the poor choices she often wants to make, and we work with her on her dream to become a nurse.

**VOCA grant—what it does, how it works (money in, money out)**

Due to the high number of children in Macon County's foster care, CASA applied and was awarded a federal VOCA (Victim of Crime Acts) grant to hire additional organizational support to advocate for a higher percentage of children in the court's care. With CASA's reporting, we are able to continue to provide significant outcomes with the children for whom we advocate. CASA is grateful for this funding, especially during this time of great need for our community's abused and neglected children.

**MACON COUNTY CASA BOARD MEMBERS**

- Dick Dechert, *President*
- Marlo Butler-Jones, *Vice President*
- Annette Belue, *Secretary*
- Dave White, *Treasurer*
- Lee Morthland
- Gussie Reed
- Rae Stoner
- Anthony Chapple
- Kyle Risby
- Amy Brammer
- Norma Fathauer

**ACTIVE CASA VOLUNTEERS**

<b>12 years or more:</b> Carol Steele Cheryl Thompson	Christa Trump
<b>8-11 years:</b> Susan Davis Ann Lograsso Jane Mescher	Monica Reynolds Linda Sollis
<b>4-7 years:</b> Bob Bolin Stacey Corzine Sandy Dunn Michelle Econie Linda Latham Jenny Littrell	Tim Littrell Lucinda McClain Helen Miller Mary Morrow Carla Sloan Linda Sollis
<b>0-3 years:</b> Rick Abernathy Christen Armour Lacey Avioli Michelle Bailey James Baird Linda Baltimore Michelle Barbee Nicole Barrette Sarah Biehl Bernadette Birkholtz Kimberly Bretz Crystal Brockway Neidra Burries Scott Busboom Lisa Campbell Rachel Cassella Michael Coley Teresa Dillard Kathryn Edgar Crystal Eilers Rida Ellis Debbie England Crystal Evans Tamara Farison Sylvia Florian Shavon Francis Tenia Fryer Rhonda Gregory Teresa Gregory Christina Grimm Byron Hansbro Brooke Harris Michael Heger Betsy Hoffman Stacey Hubbard Laury Hubrich Christopher Hunter Melanie Ishmael Timery Jackson Sam James Tracey Jerger Calli Johnson Shelley Jordan Tena Karas	Donna Knop Jeanelle Keck Jessica Keller Tracie Lewis Julia Livingston Deanna MacFarland Lisa MacIntosh Jeri Marshall Margaret McCabe Carol Metcalfe Rachel Miller Steve Miller Jeremy Morris Mary Morrow Jane Morthland Judi Morville Diana Myers Aissa Norris Ada Owens Scott Parks Carol Peters Candy Petersen Sue Pilling Raphaella Prange Ya'Shika Reed Jessica Renfro Tara Robinson Lois Rupert Al Schelling Sarah Schrishuhn Linda Shaffer Lori Shimizu Trudy Smith Vicki Smith Christine Snow Craig Stevens Melissa Tallent Julie Thomas Bonnie Virden Nikki Walker Christina Weemer Jessica Whitlock Marquette Windfield Rebecca Wittmer Andrea Young

**Rising Star Awards:**

recognizing first year advocates who have gone above and beyond their volunteer roles to provide children with a consistent and supporting voice in the courts.

- J.R. Baird
- Scott Parks
- Dianna Myers
- Bonnie Virden



Bonnie Virden (a volunteer advocate since April 2018) was the recipient of a 2018 CASA Rising Star Award



Jane Mescher (a long-standing volunteer advocate since Oct. 2009) was the recipient of a 2018 CASA Optima Award.

**Optima Awards:**

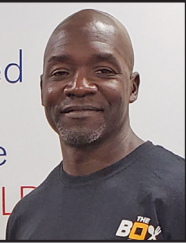
recognizing advocates who diligently and accurately enter their case information into CASA's online database.

- Jane Mescher
- Candy Peterson
- Shelley Gregory
- Linda Latham

**CASA Quarterback Male Advocate Award:**

recognizing the male advocate who has provided consistency and support to CASA children.

- Jeremy Morris



Jeremy Morris (a volunteer advocate since Nov. 2017) was the recipient of the 2018 CASA Quarterback Male Advocate Award.

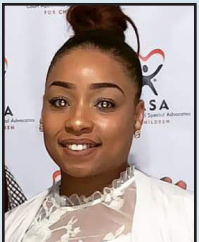
**Unsung Hero Awards:**

recognizing experienced advocates who provide enhanced advocacy to their CASA children in regards to education, healthcare, family relationships, and much more.

- Neidra Burries
- Nikki Walker
- Lucinda McClain
- Ada Owens
- Stacey Corzine
- Sandy Dunn
- Michelle Econie



Ada Owens (a volunteer advocate since Feb. 2017) was the recipient of a 2018 CASA Unsung Hero Award.



Ya'Shika Reed (a volunteer advocate since Nov. 2017) was the recipient of the newly named 2018 CASA Bill & Brenda Turner Award.

**Bill & Brenda Turner Award (CASA of the Year):**

recognizing the advocate who has risen above the others, maintaining a strong presence in the CASA children's lives and ensuring that the child's best interest is always the first priority.

- Ya'Shika Reed

**CASE QUOTES:** "Grandma is very concerned about the children going home. She relayed to me that she previously kept the children one entire summer and that the parents never called one time to check on the children."

**Meet Our Volunteer, Aissa:**

Aissa Norris's ability to build relationships is the epitome of why the juvenile advocacy court values CASA's involvement in cases with our community's abused and neglected children. Aissa is kind, yet stern in her expectations; giving, calm under pressure and empathetic in all situations. Can you imagine anyone better to rely on for an 18 year old child who has needed support and advocacy in navigating motherhood and continuing her education? With Aissa by her side, this child knows that someone cares even as she feels that the world around her often fails her.



Our Aissa is Aissa Norris who has been a volunteer for 2 years and has successfully advocated for Jasmine in the Macon County courts. Here, Aissa celebrates with Jasmine as she graduated with her high school diploma in October. Jasmine's two children and our CASA Advocate Supervisor, Melanie Ishmael, celebrated with her as well.

**Kids in system vs. CASA children by year**

- Number of new children in Macon County court's care
- Number of new children with CASA advocates

