



CASA CONNECTION

Volume 4: Issue 9

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Abuse Hotline
1-800-222-8000

Judge Emily Baker

August 15, Judge Emily Baker, founder of Jackson County CASA, Inc., passed away. She lived an amazing life and had an impressive career, throughout which, she received many honors.

In 1985, Judge Emily Baker applied for a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services in hopes of creating a CASA program for Jackson County. The grant was awarded and Jackson County CASA, Inc. was formed, making it the first CASA program in our state.

Judge Baker began her career in law by getting her Undergraduate studies at Newcomb College of Tulane University and University of Southern Mississippi. She then received her Masters of Science in Criminal Justice, Cum Laude at the University of Southern Mississippi. For law school, she earned Juris Doctorate, Cum Laude at Mississippi College School of Law.

Judge Baker started as a practicing attorney in Pascagoula as a partner in the law firm of McRae and Baker. During this same period, she served as a Public Defender for Jackson County. Later, she was the Senior County Judge of Jackson County and presided over the Jackson County Youth Court. She was an Adjunct Faculty/Consultant for the University of Southern Mississippi, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, Institute for Court Management and National Resource Center on Child Sex Abuse. She also served as the Director of Applied Ethics Institute and Applied Ethics Program at St. Petersburg College.

She was a Guest Lecturer/Workshop Presenter on countless occasions, as well as being a part of numerous Professional Organizations in several different states. She had over twenty different Professional Appointments, and the same number of Publications under her belt. Throughout her endeavors, she remained very active within her community.

Our CASA family is forever grateful to Judge Baker for giving us the opportunity to provide a voice for the abused and neglected children of our county.



Above: Judge Emily Baker, founder of Jackson County CASA, Inc. with current Youth Court Judge, Sharon Sigalas

September Birthdays

September 1 Sherri Hodges-Thornton	September 18 Karen Whitford	September 29 Judy Colson Megan Rogers Miguel Saavedra
September 3 Liz Lassere	September 18 Candi Cripps	
September 4 Shana Lane	September 20 Pat Stockman	
September 9 Taylor Kirksey	September 21 John Braudis	
September 11 Shelby Guidry	September 25 Celena Hoover	



Court Dates

Your Court date is **very important**. Your **presence is needed** at all Court hearings. However, if you are unavailable to attend, please contact the CASA office and provide an update of your case. CASA staff will present your report to the Court. **Your input is essential. Your child/children are counting on you to provide their voice in Court. Please review the schedule carefully. If you have any questions contact Amy or any staff for assistance.**

Confidential

Information unavailable

County Conference's

County Conference's are held every six months to discuss and review the permanent plan of the child/children in foster care. Your attendance and input is requested. The review is **NOT** a court hearing, however, the testimony delivered during the conference will be provided to the Court to aid in making decisions about the Child's best interest. **Please contact the CASA staff if you are not able to attend.**

Confidential

Information unavailable

Latest Program Statistics

JC CASA is a volunteer-powered organization that advocates for the abused and neglected children of our county. We have an amazing group of dedicated volunteers that provide a voice for these children throughout their court process. As of July 31, 2017 we have **110 Volunteers** serving **171 children** from **96 families** with **14,401 donated hours of service**.

We want to thank our Volunteers for making a difference in the lives of children in need.

In-Service Dates for Volunteers

To maintain your CASA standing you are required to complete 12 hours of In-Service training each year. Be sure to include any completed In-Service hours on your monthly reports. We would like to discuss topics that would be beneficial to you. Please contact the CASA staff if you have special requests.

September Volunteer Training: Volunteer training will be held throughout the month, beginning September 7. You can earn In-Service hours by attending any part or all of the training. You can also earn hours by recruiting new volunteers to participate in the training. Contact any CASA staff for details. *See the complete schedule on page 4.*

GULF COAST CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE PRESENTATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: The Gulf Coast Center for Nonviolence will host a special session with Domestic Violence Motivational speaker Anisha Durve, at the IP Casino Resort Spa, 850 Bayview Avenue, Biloxi on September 14. This will be an awesome and free opportunity to hear a domestic violence survivor's personal journey. The one hour presentation will begin at 11:00 a.m. inside Studio A. **No fee required.**

Viva Pascagoula: The City of Pascagoula presents Viva Pascagoula, a festival connecting cultures and communities on September 23 at River Park, 4100 Clark Street, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. There will be music, food, arts and even a tamale cook-off. There will be something for the entire family. Come down to River Park and learn about the Hispanic and Latino cultures while you gain In-Service hours and have a lot of fun. For more information about this event, contact 228-938-2352.

FYI

The Friday Night Sewing Group from Ocean Springs has been very busy making more quilts for our children. August 8, Janet Bryant, a member of the group, met up with Adrian McCullum to deliver more than 40 quilts. These quilts will be special gifts for our children during upcoming events and Christmas. Thanks to this thoughtful and compassionate group for their kindness and generosity for our children.

We have been spending a lot of time and effort in seeking grant funding to help support our mission. August 10, Frances Allsup and Brenda Lancaster attended a public information session, hosted by Volunteer Mississippi, in an effort to obtain information on National Services resources, Volunteer Mississippi resources and fundraising strategies. Guest speaker, Rodger Wilder, president of Gulf Coast Community Foundation, presented guidelines on "How to Talk to Funders". Wish us luck!



Quilts by Friday Night Sewing Group



Eastlawn United Methodist Church, Deloris Engle Circle

Eastlawn United Methodist Church, Deloris Engle Circle, invited us to be the guest speaker for their August 28 meeting. Brenda Lancaster attended, speaking to more than 20 ladies about our CASA mission. It also provided an opportunity to thank this wonderful group for their support of our CASA children during the past few Christmas seasons. We are grateful for their support.

August 29, Cheryl Prassenos, owner of Karsyn Boutique in Escatawpa, donated clothing for our CASA children. These items are just in time for back-to-school. We are grateful for her continued support of our mission.

Frances Allsup, our Executive Director, celebrated her 55th birthday August 30. To celebrate this special birthday, she decided to raise funds for Jackson County CASA, Inc. Frances registered her birthday request with networkforgood.org and set a goal of raising \$200 for our program. Throughout the month, anybody wishing to donate could visit networkforgood.org and make a monetary donation of their choice. So far, she has exceeded that goal by \$30 and she still has a few hours to go.

We are excited about our upcoming fundraiser with Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty, CASA Draw-down for the CASA programs of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson counties, which will be held on October 25. The executive directors of each program have been meeting with the owners and agents of Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty to put the plans in motion. More details will be available in the next few weeks. *See page 4, Save the Dates, for more details.*



We hope that you had the opportunity to enjoy the Eclipse on August 21. The CASA staff, volunteers and friends from the Youth Court took time out to partake in the wonder of science. It was truly amazing. If only we had been in the path of totality!

Back row: Rosalind Thomas, I-Esha Laster, Patty Waters, Terry Holtz; Front Row: Amy Guidry, Brenda Lancaster and Frances Allsup watching the Eclipse



Cynthia Chauvin, Frances Allsup, Carlene Alfonso and Jeannie Herrin

Volunteer Training

Our final Volunteer training for this year is set to begin September 7. Classes will be held Monday, Tuesday and Thursday nights for three hours each. The complete schedule is provided below.

As you know, our Volunteer training is an intense process that provides the new Volunteer with the proper foundation and necessary skills needed for their role as an advocate for the abused and neglected child on their journey through the Youth Court system. To maintain compliance with National CASA Association, we follow their recommended training curriculum which is a minimum of 30 hours.

Our Volunteers are the backbone of our program. Without these trained and dedicated individuals, we would not be able to provide a voice for the deserving children we are tasked to serve. **We need volunteers** to help with our increasing case load and are asking for your help with our recruitment efforts. If you know someone that has expressed interest in getting involved with our program, please let them know about our upcoming training. It is recommended that the application be completed prior to the beginning of training. However, applicants can complete essential paperwork on the first night of training.

Anyone interested can drop by the CASA office to pick up an application, call us and we will mail them a copy or they can access the application on our website www.jccasa.net. Make a difference in the life of a child. Become a CASA Volunteer!

FALL VOLUNTEER TRAINING SCHEDULE

September 7: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Meet and Greet / Orientation

- Chapter 1 Introduction to the CASA role

September 11: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Chapter 2 Introducing the Law, the Child Protection System & the Courts

September 12: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Chapter 3 Developing Cultural Competence

- Chapter 4 Understanding Families, Part 1

September 14: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Chapter 5 Understanding Families, Part 2

- Chapter 6 Understanding Children

September 18: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Fostering Futures Curriculum

- Chapter 7 Communicating as a CASA volunteer

September 19: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Chapter 8 Practicing the CASA Role-Gathering Information

September 21: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Chapter 9 Practicing the CASA Role-Reporting and Monitoring

September 25: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Chapter 10 Putting it all together

September 26: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

- Volunteer Handbook: Issue and Review

September 28: 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

Induction Ceremony (*date subject to change*)

Save the Dates

The remaining months of 2017 will be very busy with two major fundraisers planned for October, our *Thankful for You* luncheon to celebrate our volunteers in November and our *Holiday Happening* in December. There will be a lot of other activities and events too, so be on the look out for announcements regarding these additions. Please mark your calendars for the following important events.

October 25 Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty of Gulfport is "Calling All Superheroes" as they host a Drawdown to support the CASA programs of Hancock, Harrison and Jackson Counties. Tickets to the \$10,000 drawdown will be \$100, which is good for 1 entry into the drawdown and admits 2; silent auction, music, beer and wine included. For tickets or sponsorship information contact Gabe Bush at Coldwell Banker Alfonso Realty, gabembush@gmail.com 228-284-6158. More details will be available in the next few weeks.

October 26 we will hold our fourth annual *Taters for Tots*, which offers a lunchbox meal that includes a loaded backed potato and a cup of chili. Once again, we will be selling a limited number of meals. Only 300 will be sold. Notices will be sent out to the volunteers and community later this month with complete details.

November 17 we will host a *Thankful for You* luncheon to celebrate our volunteers. We will also use this as a volunteer recruitment opportunity. A typical holiday meal will be provided for our guests and volunteers to enjoy.

December 13 is set for our annual *Holiday Happening*. This is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the holiday season with our CASA family and the volunteers can pick up their CASA children's Christmas gifts for delivery.