2021 ANNUAL

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Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says 'I'll try again tomorrow.'"

– Mary Anne Radmacher



HALL-DAWSON CASA PROGRAM, INC.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Hollifield and Janet Walden





Every day at Hall-Dawson CASA, we have the privilege and responsibility of working with volunteers to advocate for children experiencing foster care because of abuse or neglect here in our community. Our CASA Volunteers step into the lives of children and families at a critical time. They stand in the gap so the children we serve can develop into their full potential. Helping change a child's uncertain present into a promising future is the work of our CASA Volunteers – it is both routine and extraordinary.

As we take a moment to reflect on 2021, we celebrate 103 CASA Volunteers who have chosen to make child advocacy a priority in their lives. Our Volunteers cultivate relationships with children who are experiencing foster care; engage in important conversations with biological and foster parents; advocate for needed services for children and families in the school and community; and make recommendations to the Juvenile Court Judge in the best interest of the child. All these things, and many more, make a huge difference in the lives and futures of our children; children who feel safe, loved and supported have the best opportunity to thrive.

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

On the pages of this Impact Report, you'll see a snapshot of those who have helped us change the stories for children and families. Because of these successes – both big and small – our community is stronger. As our CASA program continues to provide innovative ways to address the needs of our children, we are filled with gratitude for those who support our work in so many ways. Whether as a CASA Volunteer or a financial supporter, your gift to our children is added to others' gifts to make a tremendous difference.

Fred Rogers of Mr. Rogers Neighborhood shared with his television neighbors, "When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, *Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.*" You – our CASA family – are the helpers for children experiencing foster care in our community. Because of your support, little things that add up to the big successes are happening every day in the lives of our children. For this, we are grateful.

Clin Horifield

CHRIS HOLLIFIELD
2021 Board Chair

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There is nothing more important, nor anything more rewarding than making a difference in the life of a child. CASA Volunteers are the only ones in the courtroom advocating for the best interest of the child. These children desperately need someone to be there for them, to look at the whole big picture and to advocate for what is best for them; not necessarily what they want or what their parents want. Time is the most important resource we have and there is never enough of it these days, so we must decide where we want to use our volunteer time. It is hard to find a better use of your volunteer time than being a CASA Volunteer and making a difference in the life of a child." – CASA Volunteer

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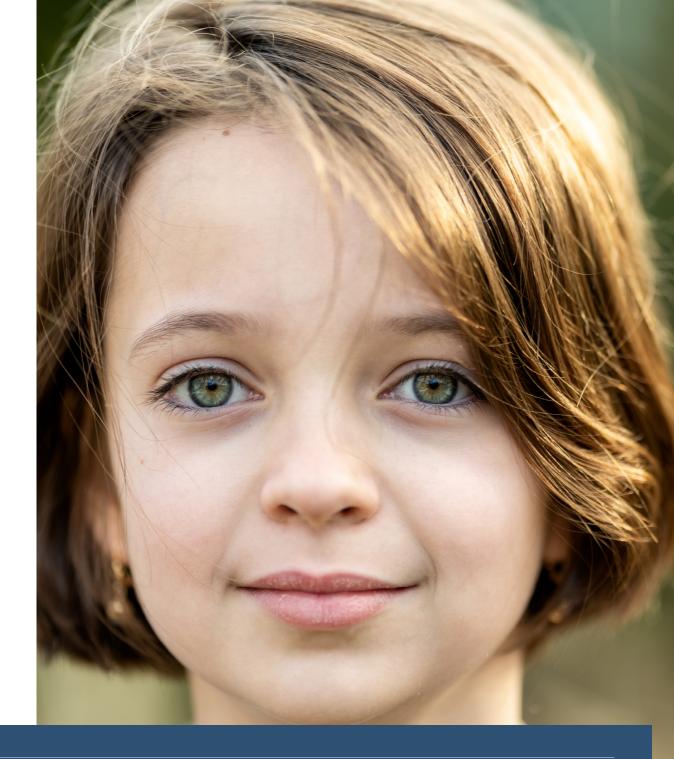
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OUR MISSION



To ensure children who have experienced abuse or neglect have the right to a safe placement and permanent home. CASA provides trained, screened and supervised volunteers to advocate for the best interest of children requiring court intervention as a result of abuse or neglect.

"HISTORY WILL JUDGE US BY THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE IN THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF CHILDREN." – NELSON MANDELA

CASA VOLUNTEERS 2021

Marie Allan Barbara Allen Patricia Allen **Beth Arends Kelly Atkinson** Leah "Robin" Brown **Tony Burnham** Pat Bursten Katie Carswell Dawn Chapman Dana Cleveland Jennifer Cleveland **Cynthia Cooley Connie Daniels Tina DeWaart** Henricus Dijsselbloem Elena Espy **Kim Everhart Gale Farlow Maureen Files** Victoria Fortson Deborah Ann Fox Wanda Fuller Jerry Gauerke Mike Giulano Ellie Gravitt

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Michele Pulley Jean Rector Lindsey Reid Gert Rhein Shanni Roberts **Kim Seastrom** Addrienne Session Al Smith **Carol Smith** Laura Smith Jill Taylor Sharon "Sherry" Taylor **Daphaney Teaver Claire Thurber** Constanza Tironi Vernal Anna Tobolski Laurie Vakili Marie Varner **Cathy Vining** Seth Vining **Kaitlynne Waits** Susan Walker **Michelle Wills** Alexander "Alex" Wisnoski III Janice Young Dana Zhun

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I'm excited to serve CASA because I believe that we aren't meant to struggle alone – we all need a support system! CASA Volunteers work hard to affirm and protect the dignity and worth of the children and families they serve. I'm honored to serve the board as they work toward whole and healthy lives for the children and families of our community."

- Board Member Ginny Early



Photo CASA Volunteer Dian Hatfield

CASA VOLUNTEER DIAN HATFIELD CELEBRATES MILESTONE

For 20 years, Dian Hatfield has been a CASA Volunteer, first in Austin, Texas, and with Hall-Dawson CASA since

2013. Apart from helping a child and family, Dian is creative and collaborate with those involved in child welfare cases. There is no cookie cutter answer to solving child trauma, abuse, neglect, substance abuse, or any of the issues a CASA Volunteer will encounter. However, Dian is adept at asking questions, being persistent, gathering information, and ultimately equipping the Court to make decisions focusing on a child's best interest. Dian is still in contact with the first children for whom she advocated in 2001. Dian represents the best of CASA Volunteers. Thank you, Dian, for the difference you've made in countless children's lives.

*** IN MEMORY OF TABITHA MCJUNKIN**

With great sadness we mourn the loss of CASA Volunteer Tabitha McJunkin. Tabitha was sworn in as a CASA Volunteer in September, 2018 and advocated in five cases for 11 children. Tabitha was gifted in building relationships with the children for whom she advocated, and so often stayed connected with them long after their juvenile court case closed and her appointment to them ended. We celebrate Tabitha's life, her willingness to give of herself to others, and for the impact she had on the lives of the children she served.

TOY/SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVES

Each year, members and groups in our community partner with us to provide school supplies at the beginning of the school year and new toys during the holidays, which are distributed through our Clothing and Toy (CAT) Center. In 2021, generous donations provided school supplies for 124 children. The holiday toy drive enabled more than 60 Advocates to "shop" for 175 children; and because of the wide variety of toys that were donated, all of our CASA Volunteers were able to select age and gender appropriate gifts for the children, including bikes.

Local organizations which contributed include America's Home Place employees, Hall County Sheriff's Office, The Norton Agency, Junior League of Gainesville/Hall County, Books-A-Million, Prince of Peace Knights of Columbus Council, Keller Williams Atlanta Partners, Salem Baptist Church, Adventure Bags and residents of Village at Deaton Creek.

TRANSFORMATION: FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING



She was a tough kid. She had to be. She had so much thrown at her at a young age. So many adults in her life let her down. She ran away, she fought. She was the epitome of the statement, those who need love most show it in the most unloving ways.

The last time she ran away was just before her 18th birthday, and when her birthday came and went, and she was nowhere to be found, the juvenile court case was closed. Both DFCS and Hall-Dawson CASA were relieved of the duty of finding her (again), caring for her needs, advocating for her best interest.

Several months later this tough kid did something surprising and important. She stopped running. She reached out to a place she once lived while experiencing foster care. She was pregnant and she didn't want for her child this life she was living. She was scared. She didn't know what to do, how to make things better for her child. She needed help, and she remembered the last place she felt safe.

2021 was a tremendous year of growth for this young woman who became a mom a few months ago. She is no longer fighting others, she is fighting for herself and her child. She found a soft landing and has leaned into those, especially her CASA Volunteer, for guidance in finishing her education, budgeting, and learning independent living skills that will help her succeed. Though the road ahead will likely have bumps along the way, she knows her CASA Volunteer is by her side, cheering her on. She has taught us so much about courage and resilience along the way.

A FAMILY'S STORY OF HEALING THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

The grieving process can be exhausting, consuming, difficult. What happens when the person you go to when you are struggling is one of those you have lost? That is what happened when the young woman, barely in her twenties faced the tragic loss of both parents and found herself caring for her younger siblings.

Often times, the CASA Volunteer's work of advocating for what is in a child's best interest is about building the relationships and helping to find resources for the parents, or in this case, the young caregiver. Imagine unexpectedly having to juggle your schooling, your job, parenting your four siblings, all while managing your own overwhelming grief. The children and families we serve carry so much. What this young woman has discovered is she is not alone. The CASA Volunteer, through her encouragement and resourcefulness, has walked with her in her courageous journey, and continues to be an important part of this family's story of healing and resilience.



CASA ADVOCACY IN ACTION

These are our statistics – our numbers – for 2021. Behind each number is a child, a family, a promising future. And a CASA Volunteer who sees, hears, and advocates for what is in the best interest of that child -- in the juvenile courtroom, in the schools and in the community.



children who experienced juvenile court intervention because of abuse or neglect achieved permanency in 2021.





36

Adopted into Reunified with their a new, forever family family



Placed in the legal guardianship of a caregiver



Remained with parent while receiving services

86% OF CHILDREN WHOSE CASES CLOSED IN 2021 ACHIEVED PERMANENCY

For a child to experience permanency, this is more than finding a place to lay their head at night. Permanency means having the key to the house, having their picture on the wall in someone's house. It is knowing there is a seat at the Thanksgiving table. Every child deserves a family. Not just a family in which to grow and develop, but a family to leave when the time is right, a family to come home to when the need demands, and a family to be a part of when childhood is a distant memory."

> – Excerpts from The Promise of Permanency training, facilitated by Jerry Bruce and Angela Tyner





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2021 Donors

Hall-Dawson CASA is pleased to recognize those whose support enables the work of advocating for children in foster care in Hall and Dawson Counties. Every effort is made to accurately reflect donor name and contribution between January 1 – December 31, 2021. Please contact us at 770-531-1964 to make us aware of any inaccuracies.

CHAMPIONS FOR CHILDREN

(\$25,000 & up)

North GA Community Foundation Mar-Jac Poultry, Inc. Bob and Wanda Swoszowski

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(\$2,500-\$4,500)

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FRIEND OF CHILDREN (\$1,000-\$1,499)

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MEMORIAL & HONORARIUM GIFTS

Memorial and honorarium gifts are listed in alphabetical order by the name of the honoree. Donors are listed after the name of the person in whose honor they contributed.

In honor of Herve Aklotsoe & Lucy Green Mark and Joy Green
In honor of Jordan Allen
In honor of Janice Birchem
In memory of Jane Dollar
In memory of Ruth Frommer
In memory of Frank Jackson Green
In memory of Frank Jackson Green Mark and Joy Green
In memory of Judge Sam Harben
In honor of Lauren Hayes
In honor of Rita Johnson
In memory of Mike Kaplan
In honor of Kristin Lesutis
In honor of Scott Lippman
In honor of Carol Smith
In honor of Carol Smith
In memory of Martha Strickland
In memory of Robbie Swenson Stephanie Copeland
In memory of Linda Verrigni Mike and Tracy Verrigni
In honor of Seth & Cathy Vining
In honor of Ohlen & Martha Wilson Mary Wilson
In honor of Parker Lawrence Wilson-Fields Dana Glaze



THE GIVING TREE

Each year, Hall-Dawson CASA partners with Edmondson-Telford Child Advocacy Center (ETCAC) in hosting The Giving Tree, which provides a unique opportunity to celebrate friends and family during the holidays through a tribute gift. The proceeds from this event are used for needed repairs and maintenance of The Little House, home to Hall-Dawson CASA and ETCAC. Hall and Dawson County's Division of Family & Children Services (DFCS) were the honored guests at the tree lighting ceremony, recognizing their vital partnership in protecting our community's children. We are grateful to our donors for their support of this event.

GIVING CHILDREN A BRIGHTER FUTURE

As we reflect on the names listed on these pages, and give thanks for all you have made possible, we also look ahead at the children we have yet to serve. YOU can make a difference to children who are the most vulnerable in our community.

- Ongoing support: Set up a recurring gift on a monthly basis.
 These gifts support our ongoing needs throughout the year, and can add up to substantial giving.
- Legacy gift: Consider naming Hall-Dawson CASA as a beneficiary in your will, insurance policy or estate plan. As Erwin Bligen did (see below), you can designate "Hall-Dawson CASA" as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy, or a specific percentage or amount in your will.
- Gift of assets: Opportunities to give assets like real estate, stock, IRAs, and a donor-advised fund are wonderful ways to support the work of serving children, and often provide a tax benefit to the donor.



ERWIN BLIGEN served as a CASA Volunteer for five years and recently returned after a work-related hiatus from his role. Erwin recently named Hall-Dawson CASA as the sole beneficiary of his life insurance policy. Erwin says, "I know what CASA does in supporting the community and advocating for the children of Hall and Dawson counties. What better way for me

to know that when I'm gone, my money is going to be used in such a wonderful cause. I have a heart for children who need a voice. If I can help protect and support them through my donation after I'm gone, what better way – you can't take it with you. It took me less than five minutes to consider and make the decision. Sometimes you just know when it is the right time to make a bold move...this is that moment in time".

We are grateful to Erwin for helping to ensure that the work of Hall-Dawson CASA continues. We hope others will join him in making a Legacy Gift. Give us a call and we can help you set this up.

2021 FINANCIALS

The condensed statement of activities is reflective of the fiscal year ending December 2021. Hall-Dawson CASA prides itself on prudent financial practices, diversity of funding sources and the highest level of transparency. Our funding uses are reflective of all costs to operate our programs and include recruiting, training and empowering volunteer advocates who make a meaningful impact on the lives of the children we serve.



Full financial statements provided upon request. A complete copy of the audited financial statements is available at www.halldawsoncasa.org.

Nancy Nash, Chair

WWW MEMBERS

Sandy Adams Jordan Allen Lynda Askew Jayne Berry Amy Boone Jane Bradley Tamar Brown Wynelle Butts **Rosemary Carter** Kirsten Coleman Lora Coolev Julia Cromartie Laura Crouse **Charlotte Crowe** Darla Eden Regina Edmondson **Debbie Fox Betty Frayser** Kathy Gailey **Dorothy Gilbert** Joy Green **Kristen Green Carol Hanlon** lean Harris Lauren Hayes Jane C. Hollingsworth Marion Jewett Asden Johnson Starlet Jones Beth Kaufman **Robin Ketchem** Friends of Tennis, Inc. Patsy Kilmartin Susan Lambert Debbie Lasher Patricia Louko Linda Loye Deborah Mack Megan Martin Linda Melvin Teri Briskman Miller Barbara Mitchell Mandy Nash Nancy Nash Joan Nickels **Betty Nix** Mazie Ostervold Deborah Ostrowski Jill Pair Judy Pannell Fern Patterson Sara Ann Pierson **Dorothy Pirkle** Kathy Proterra Amy Reed **Carol Reed** Kathryn S. Reis Susan Rodrigues Georgia Rowe Jody Sanders **Reneigh Satterfield** Sherrie Schrage Cathey C. Sexton Amy J. Smith Carol C. Smith Angela Spear Linda Spencer Lvdia Starke **Connie Stephens Margaret Stewart** Harriette Taylor Lynnda Thomas **Claire Thurber** Dana Vandiver Sharron Jean Volante Janet Walden Betsy E. Wigington Janie Wolf-Smith

WOMEN WORKING WONDERS

Women Working Wonders (WWW) is a group of exceptional women who are committed to improving the lives of abused or neglected children in their communities. This group of women support CASA and the children they serve by sharing with their families, friends and neighbors information about the CASA program and the good work being done in our communities. WWW stood in the gap for children experiencing foster care by providing:

- Chromebooks, ink and paper to ensure academic success in a remote learning environment
- Afterschool activities and fees
- Football, cheer and basketball camps
- A class ring
- Help with orthodontics

If you'd like to join this group of women in making an impact, please contact us.

2021 AWARDS OF **EXCELLENCE**



2021 Georgia CASA Champion

CASA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Robbie McCormac

Robbie has been a CASA Volunteer since 2014, serving dozens of children during that time. Robbie has numerous strengths and skills, but Judge Alison Toller believes "her biggest strength is her problem solving!" Further, Judge Lindsay Burton "appreciate[s her] advocacy because she will take cases that so many others will not" and gave a specific example that she "provided information to the Court that no other party presented." Robbie is an incredible human being who is "fiercely independent, tenacious, caring, giving, thoughtful, kind, insightful, and has a gracious heart" according to Marisa Sullens of Family Treatment Court (FTC). Both FTC and Judge Burton have specifically requested Robbie to be the CASA Volunteer on specific cases "because we know what an impact she will have on the family."

In addition to her advocacy, Robbie also volunteers in the Clothing and Toy Center (CAT Center) located in the lower level at the CASA Office. One of three volunteers, she is known as the Head Elf.

GEORGIA CASA CHAMPION FOR CHILDREN

Mar-Jac Poultry

In 2015, Mar-Jac began its partnership with Hall-Dawson CASA and each subsequent year has increased its support, donating more than \$125,000 to date. The leadership team at Mar-lac encourages employees to develop philanthropic attitudes and has been instrumental in sharing information and engagement opportunities with Hall-Dawson CASA. Joel L. Williams, Mar-Jac's Vice President of Operations/CEO, is often heard saying, "Money should never be the barrier for a child to benefit from having a CASA Volunteer's advocacy." Mar-Jac's community involvement and philanthropy, modeled by its company leadership and supported across its employees, are outstanding examples of corporate responsibility and community investment. We are grateful for Mar-Jac's support and proud of this state-wide recognition of their commitment to our children.

Jennifer Wren



66

I have never had to walk this alone. **The CASA Volunteer has been there all along.** From getting school records to finding an orthodontist who could remove neglected braces which were causing harm, to taking the initiative to bring Valentines for a child to share at the new school she began on Valentine's Day. The CASA Volunteer has been a champion for these kids since day one. I cannot imagine how foster parents do this without a CASA Volunteer."

-A Foster Mom

HALL-DAWSON CASA

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CASA serves a great need in our community. We rely so heavily on our CASA Volunteers to give us a recommendation about the best interest of the child, as sometimes that is different than what the child wants. Not only do they provide a recommendation, but they also bring lots of information to the table that sometimes our other stakeholders aren't able to obtain. The CASA Volunteers develop relationships with our parents, children, and caregivers, and that personal relationship sometimes lasts well beyond permanency. Serving as a CASA Volunteer can make a significant impact on the lives of many and we look forward to the time when we have enough volunteers to serve every family with an open dependency case in Juvenile Court."

– Juvenile Court Judge Allison Toller

HALL-DAWSON CASA

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HALL-DAWSON CASA PROGRAM, INC.