

NORTHEAST GEORGIA CASA

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES



ANNUAL REPORT

OCTOBER 1, 2020 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Among the catchphrases used at Northeast Georgia CASA to describe our staff and volunteers is this: "ordinary people doing extraordinary things". It was over four years ago that I was approached by a close friend about joining the Board of Directors in support of these folks. I had finally retired at 70&1/2 a year before and was enjoying doing mostly nothing, but I was moved to learn more. I decided the best path for me was to complete the training required to become a CASA and see where I might fit. This led to both an eye-opening and heart-opening several weeks.



Each potential CASA, over a 6 week plus period, completes a combination of class time, case studies, on-line follow-up discussions and courtroom observation. This more than 40+ hours of training qualifies one to be matched with a child experiencing foster care who needs an advocate. Standing up in court to be sworn in with the six in my group who made it through made me wonder what led to this level of commitment from these "ordinary" people. What was their motivation?

Now, after asking them and dozens of other CASAs that question, I've found the answers to be two-fold. The initial impetus is usually some experience they've had which has led them to want to "give back". Secondly, and I feel more significantly, is what motivates them to keep giving so much of themselves and the answer is simply this: knowing that what they are doing is important, valued, appreciated and matters in the life of each child they touch. What our CASAs accomplish is simply yet truly extraordinary.

The Board of Directors knows these truths and pledges to continue to vigorously support our CASA volunteers and professional staff as together we strive to reach out with love to every child in need in the eight North Georgia counties we serve.



Whitney Hutchinson

Board Chair

NORTHEAST GEORGIA CASA STAFF



L-R: Jessica Kole, Stacie Johnson, Kim Bass,
Melissa Mitchell Barrett, Chuck Taylor



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Georgia Criminal Justice Coordinating Council
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Christopher Curran
Sam Johnson
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Gus Arrendale
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*Tributes and Contributions
In Honor and Memory of those that inspire and connect
others to the mission of CASA:*

*In Honor of Alan White
Tom & Becky Callahan*

*In Honor of Ann & Denny Webb
Steve & Carole Raeber*

*In Honor of Ann Pickett
Matt Skilling*

*In Memory of Carrie
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*In Honor of Randy & Ruth Daniels
Hartwell First United Methodist Church*



Rev Dr. Martin Platzer
CASA of the Year 2016

*In Honor of Ruth Daniels
James Daniel*

*In Memory of Ray Bridges
Ann Sharp*

*In Memory of Rev. Dr. Martin Platzer
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*In Memory of Saylor
Ann Sharp*

*In Memory of Milton Spratlin
Ann Sharp*

*In Honor of Tradd Raizes
Beth Raizes*

*In Honor of Wayne Miller
Wanda Miller*

*In Honor of Whitney Hutchinson
Lauren Hildebrand*

*In Memory of William Sharp
Susan & Ed Carman*

*In Honor of Wyatt's 1st Birthday
Terry Purcell*

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES



**MOUNTAIN CIRCUIT CASA, INC.
D/B/A NORTHEAST GEORGIA CASA
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
For the Year Ended September 30, 2021**

REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT:

State, Federal and Local Assistance	\$	353,620	
Donations-Unrestricted		75,485	
United Way		26,750	
Fund Raisers		32,215	
TOTAL REVENUE, GAIN, AND SUPPORT		488,070	\$ 488,070

EXPENSES:

Salaries	\$	252,061	
Payroll Taxes		18,123	
Volunteer Recognition		4,301	
Staff Benefits		50,438	
Rent		18,480	
Victim Assistance		780	
Telephone		2,722	
Office Supplies and Equipment		3,659	
Printing and Publication		416	
Postage		1,045	
Fund Raising		10,684	
Travel and Training		7,132	
Legal and Accounting		2,100	
Occupancy		2,842	
Depreciation and Amortization		1,083	
Other Expenses		1,566	
Insurance		6,445	
TOTAL EXPENSES		383,877	383,877

Revenues Over Expenditures \$ 104,193

Interest Income 2,113

Change in Net Assets \$ 106,306

Net Assets October 1, 2020 249,105

Net Assets September 30, 2021 **\$ 355,411**



A Message from the Executive Director:

Fiscal year 2021 felt like a big relief from the previous year as we eased slowly to being together much more often with less discussion of the pandemic. We started the year with our holiday appreciation open house. CASAs dropped by the office to socialize and pick up stockings filled with goodies for their children. There was a gnome scavenger hunt and a chance to make s'mores over the fire pit outside. The generous stockings were once again provided by St. Mathias Episcopal church members and friends via a project spearheaded by one of our CASAs and former board member.

Our commitment and focus with training was to provide as many opportunities as possible, with options for both virtual and in-person learning to accommodate the needs and varying comfort levels of our current and prospective volunteers. Nineteen new CASA volunteers were sworn in either after virtual or a combination of virtual and in-person training classes. And we offered more than a dozen in-service training opportunities, including a full day session on court reporting and testifying designed by one of our judges.

Our financial supporters were very generous. We exceeded our Friends of CASA Campaign goal. Our Tee off for CASA golf tournament was once again held at The Orchard after a year's hiatus. It was our most successful golf tournament in many years! We were fortunate to be awarded additional Victim Assistance Funds from Rabun County and to be the recipient again of Northeast Georgia United Way funding. And we were pleased to be recognized by the Hart County Chamber of Commerce as one of their Organizations of the Year.

The number of children in foster care in Georgia began to drop slightly during the year. Unfortunately this was not true for our eight county service area. We continued to see large numbers of children coming into care in most of our counties. As we move into FY22 we are mindful that mental health, especially given our last two years of social distancing and virtual school, is an area that needs attention for the children and families we work with.

Our program has now been serving children for more than 17 years. We are so fortunate to have a competent and caring staff supported by a committed and passionate board of directors. Over the last year one of our highlights was increasing our number of active CASA volunteers by more than 10%. At any given time we now have 70-75 active volunteers and currently 21 of these CASAs have been serving for five or more years! Our CASA volunteers are ensuring the children experiencing foster care in our communities are receiving the services and support they need. As we continue to grow our volunteer base, we look forward to closing the gap and providing a strong advocate for every child in need.

Melissa Mitchell Barrett



LINDY HARRELL

*The Jeff Sprinkle Volunteer of
the Year Award Recipient*

Dr. Lindy Harrell is Northeast Georgia CASA's 2021 "Jeff Sprinkle Volunteer of the Year Award" winner! In just a little over three years as a CASA volunteer, Lindy has spoken up strongly for 15 children. She has been objective, professional and passionate in her representation of each child to whom she has been appointed.

In her first case, she was instrumental in having a large sibling group returned to their mother. The mother, an immigrant from Guatemala, struggled with English and did not understand what the judicial and social service system was asking her to do. Lindy found and engaged an interpreter who clearly communicated to the mother the requirements and explained the cultural differences. With this understanding, the mother quickly remedied the problems that brought her children into foster care and the children were soon reunified with her.

In another case, Lindy gracefully walked the fine line between supporting a mother with mental illness and advocating for her young son to be adopted rather than returned to her since she could not care for him.

In addition to being a strong CASA, Lindy is very active as a volunteer in many other ways in the community and promotes CASA whenever she is involved with her church family at St. Matthias, helping at Steadfast Farm, or working at the food pantry. Lindy is also always willing to assist with program PR efforts by speaking to groups, being in program videos and being interviewed by the media.



VOLUNTEERS

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Vinettia Barnes
Lynn Betz
Katrina Bowen
Diane Brown
Annette Bruce
Elizabeth Bryan
Brooke Buffington
Gail Bussard
Geraldine Chalk
Debi Childress
Megan Collins
Kathy Cothran
Teri Creighton
Nathaniel Cross
Kathy Crowe
Christopher Curran
Nannette Curran
Ruth Daniel
Renee Dann

Anthony DeFoor
Dennis Dodge
Sara Dodge
Nicole Dyer
Katherine Webb Evans
Christi Fordyce
Debra Furbish
Melodie Gentry
Pamela Gordon
Terry Griffin
Lindy Harrell
Cheryl Harris
Dana Hartley
Kristy Hattaway
Nancy Henry
Brooks Hogan
Coleen Hudgins
Kathy Keesee
Brenda Kelley
Donna Kelley

Sheila Kesler
Kate Kirby
Gay Knight
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John Lampe
Kelley Lampe
Dana Laprade
Angela Luke
Ann Lumley
Joel Lumley
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John Moore
Barbara Newman
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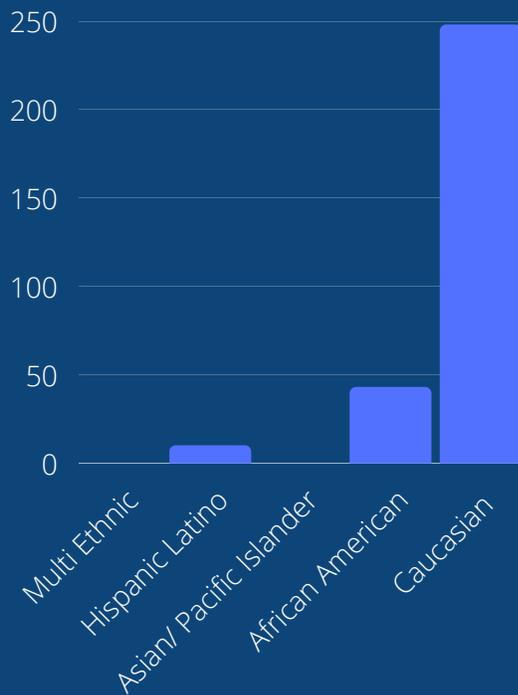
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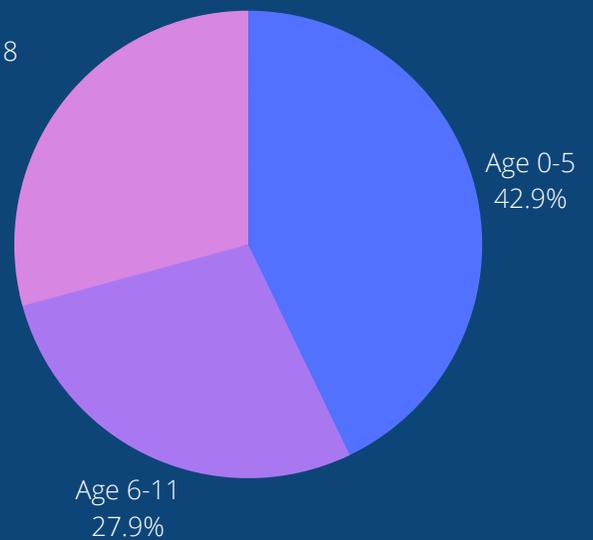
Demographics

RACE



AGE

Age 12-18
29.2%





OUR VISION

It is the Vision of Northeast Georgia CASA, that every child in foster care in our eight county service area have the support of a compassionate and well trained volunteer to advocate for their best interest in the courtroom and the community.

OUR MISSION

The Mission of Northeast Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is to provide training, supervision and resources for volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children within our communities.