

Ocmulgee Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)
CASA CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2017

7 New CASA Volunteers Sworn In

Ocmulgee CASA swore in 7 new volunteer advocates on Thursday, September 14. Pictured with Juvenile Court Judge Phil Spivey are (L-R): Kathy Woods (Baldwin), Sharon Golden

(Wilkinson), Linda Franklin (Baldwin), Niccole Chicca (Putnam and Jasper), Jackie McDowell (Baldwin), Miki-sha Hordens (Baldwin) and Lucindia Monday (Putnam).

These volunteers will serve as the voice of the child for abused and neglected children who are in foster care. Welcome aboard, ladies!

Tell your friends and family:

New Volunteer Training begins in January at the CASA Office, 100 S. ABC Street Milledgeville

Please call us at 478-452-9170 or visit ocmulgeecasa.org for details.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**OCMULGEE COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATES**

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Executive Director's Message

Child Abuse Increases When School Starts

The beginning of the school year can be an exciting time for most children, but it can also lead to more reports of abuse and neglect as faculty, staff and other parents notice signs of maltreatment children may have endured during their time away.

In 2016, schools were the most common source of child abuse or neglect reports made to the Department of Family and Children's Services.

During the summer, it is likely that signs of abuse or neglect will go unnoticed due to fewer interactions with adults outside their family. Fortunately, teachers and school officials are required to report any signs of abuse, so it is quite common for there to be a rise in reports when school starts again.

The increase in DFCS re-

ports during the new school year frequently leads to more children entering the overburdened child welfare system, creating an urgent need for more CASA volunteers to speak up for the best interests of these children.

In addition to the abuse or neglect they've already suffered, it is traumatizing for children to be placed in foster care, because they are taken away from their home, family, friends and everything they have ever known, due to no fault of their own. Our committed volunteers at Ocmulgee CASA work hard to ensure that they provide a voice for them and protect their best interests.

Our CASA volunteers make an effort to form a relationship with these children individually, while gathering important information about their unique physical, emotional and educational needs. In 2016, Ocmulgee CASA served 203 children, but that

means that there are still many children without a CASA volunteer to advocate for their needs, a number that is likely to grow as the school year begins.

Ocmulgee CASA needs more advocates that can make a difference in the lives of these children, especially now that back-to-school season has begun.

Our next training is planned for January 2018. Please refer anyone to us who might be interested. Becoming a volunteer ensures that all children get the support they deserve, both in school and beyond, giving them a chance at a brighter future.

Source: Athens Daily Review

- Lori M. Muggridge,

Executive Director

Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.

- Mohammad Ali

Do You Have a Kroger Plus Card?

Kroger customers are eligible to re-enroll in the Kroger Community Rewards program. Customers can designate reward points you earn to Ocmulgee CASA by using your Kroger Plus Card. **Each Kroger shopper is required to re-enroll his or her Kroger Plus Card on an annual basis.** Re-enrollment is now ongoing, and dollars accumulate for your choice of charity beginning Sept. 1, 2017. Please visit www.krogercommunityrewards.com. **Our organization is listed in**

Kroger's system as Ocmulgee Court Ap-



pointed Special Advocates.

The Atlanta Kroger Division launched the program in September 1, 2013. This

year, Kroger is proud to donate \$600,000 to local schools and nonprofits through this Kroger Plus Card based fundraiser. Past programs of this nature tend to lose their impact over long periods of time. If you have any questions, feel free to contact one of the team members in Kroger's Public Affairs at 770.496.7538 or 496.7466.

Save the Date —

Join us on Monday, October 30, for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet at Rock Eagle 4-H Center, Hwy 441, Eatonton.

Invitations will be sent to each volunteer as the date gets closer. We hope everyone can join us!

Cause I Ain't Got a Pencil

I woke myself up because we ain't got an alarm clock
Dug in the dirty clothes pile cause ain't nobody washed my school uniform
Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark cause the lights ain't on
Even got my little sister ready, cause my Mama wasn't home
Got us both to school on time, to eat us a good breakfast
Then when I got to class, the teacher fussed cause I ain't got a pencil.

- Joshua T. Dickerson



Volunteers do

not

necessarily

have the time;

they just have

the heart .

- Elizabeth

Andrew



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* Bookmark **smile.amazon.com** and use it each time you need Amazon. It is the same Amazon you know (products, prices, and service).

Volunteer Spotlight: Gribben, Hedrick & LaClaire

CASA volunteers, Jane Gribbin, Terri Hedrick and Sandy LaClaire, are more than just neighbors at Del Webb in Greensboro. This dynamic trio has tackled several difficult CASA cases, one of which resulted in 3 children being adopted together.

Jane (pictured on the right) grew up in Illinois and earned a BS in Early Education. After teaching 1st grade for 5 years, she left the field after the birth of her first child. She later worked in retail management and loss prevention before retiring on Lake Oconee. "I volunteered as a Guardian ad Litem (GAL) in Florida, so becoming a CASA in Georgia seemed like a natural thing to do, as the programs are quite similar. The happy outcome of our case's

recent adoption is so rewarding! It helps cement the fact that we do make a difference in children's lives," Jane adds. She and her husband have a daughter, son and two grandchildren. Jane enjoys playing bridge and golf, serves as the Del Webb Golf League treasurer, and is a Family Mentoring Manager with Habitat for Humanity.



Terri (pictured on the left) was born and grew up in Georgia. She holds Bachelors and Masters degrees in Early Childhood Education. She taught young children for 30 years and worked with CASAs on several occasions. "I felt that CASAs really made a difference in the lives of children, and I had an interest that 'someday' I would be a CASA. After a friend invited me to an informational meeting, I was hooked! I believe that a CASA, focusing on an individual child or sibling group, can really know a child's needs and desires," she says. She has been married for 43 years and has 3 handsome sons and an adorable Bichon Frise!

Sandy (middle) was born in New York and has an Associates degree in Business Management. She worked part-time in retail while her children were young and as an Executive Assistant for several companies. She and her husband of 53 years have 4 children and 4 grandchildren, and they retired to Greensboro 9 years ago. Sandy has also volunteered with the Alzheimer's Association, Atlas Ministry and Christian Outreach Thrift Store. "Jane once mentioned her involvement as a GAL, and it sparked my interest in CASA. Since Jane, Terri and I trained together, we took our first case as a group and it had such a happy ending! It has been such a great experience to see the physical and personality changes in these children from when we first met them to now when they are happy and stronger individuals. The goal is to have them in a loving home to help them feel good about themselves. This gives me great pleasure," Sandy adds.