

Ocmulgee Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) CASA CONNECTION

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2019

Five New CASAs Sworn In

Ocmulgee CASA swore in five new volunteers in October. Pictured on October 10 with Judge Phil Spivey are (L-R): Molly Walker, Stefanee Stigall, Susan McGill and Marisa Abbott.



Marshea Williams is pictured with Judge Spivey on her swear in day (October 17).



Upcoming Events:

New Volunteer Training begins at the CASA Office January 2020

Bash at the Briarpatch
Friday, March 27, 2020



Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

OCMULGEE COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL ADVOCATES

Bash at the Briarpatch, March 27, 2020

This year's Bash at the Briarpatch will feature the Swingin' Medallions on **Friday, March 27, 2020** at Briarpatch Farm, 725 Pea Ridge Road in Eatonton. Details are currently being finalized and will be released at a later date. Mark your calendars — this is definitely an event that you will want to put on your calendar for the spring.



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Executive Director's Message

Relative Placement

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) identifies a safe and appropriate placement resource for children requiring out-of-home placement. Research has determined that children thrive best in their families. For many years, relatives have parented related children when the children's parents cannot. If placement with a non-custodial parent is not an option – then the agency seeks to place children with an identified relative or kinship caregiver.

DFCS is committed to advocating and implementing a stronger partnership with extended family to better serve the needs of children who are placed in foster care. Supportive services are provided to the family to establish and achieve a permanency plan for the child.

What must happen prior to a relative being approved for placement:

- * Completion of a comprehensive home assessment, including all required background checks – unless an emergency placement is made.

- * If an emergency placement is made, the relative/kinship caregiver

assessment must be completed and submitted for approval within 30 days of the emergency placement.

To facilitate the approval of placement with a relative/kinship caregiver DFCS considers:

- * The age, desires, and needs of the child
 - * Any special needs the child may have and the relatives ability to meet those needs
 - * The impact the abuse/neglect may have had on the child
 - * The extent to which the relative was or should have been aware of the child's circumstances and what was done to intervene
 - * The extent of the relationship between the child and relative
 - * The level of cooperation between the relative (s) and parents towards the goal of reunification
 - * The relative is notified of the requirements for becoming a foster parent
 - * The relative has an understanding of the financial and non-financial supports available to assist in caring for the child
 - * The court is notified of the plan to place the child with a relative.
- Relatives caring for children in foster care may be eligible for various types of financial/non-financial supports. The foster care case manager of the child will determine, in conjunction

with the relative caregiver, which form of support is the most appropriate to ensure the child's overall needs are met. *The financial support for relatives are as follows:*

- * Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- * Foster Care per diem – for relatives who become a foster parent
- * Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR) – for relatives who decide not to become a foster parent
- * Prevention of Unnecessary Placement (PUP), Parent Aide or Homestead services i.e. Wrap-Around Services;
- * Initial and/or Annual Clothing Allowance;
- * Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS);
- * Supplemental Supervision;
- * Mental and/or Behavioral Health services;
- * Medicaid;
- * Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Retirement, Survivors, Disability Insurance (RSDI).
- * Adoption Assistance -- eligibility determined by the agency.

Source: Fostergeorgia.com

*Lori Muggridge,
Executive Director*

**Children
are likely
to live up
to what
you
believe of
them.**

**- Lady Bird
Johnson**

Swing A Club for CASA Tournament

Ocmulgee CASA was the beneficiary of Hathaway Construction's Swing A Club for CASA Tournament on September 26th, 2019. With temperatures reaching over 100 degrees that day, it was HOT to say the least. We appreciate Hathaway's continued commitment to CASA and the children we serve. The winning team is pictured (right).

CASA staff with members of the Hathaway team



Children are
like wet
cement;
whatever falls
on them
makes an
impression.

- Haim Ginott



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Volunteer Spotlight: Laurie Baker Parisian



As a retired attorney and judge, **Laurie Baker Parisian** wanted to stay in the legal field and take advantage of her family law background. She found CASA was just what she was looking for.

Laurie spent several years working as a computer engineer before she decided to go to law school. She holds a Bachelor's in Computer Science and Math (LaGrange College), a Master's degree in Computer Engineering (Auburn University) and a Juris Doctorate (Florida Coastal School of Law). After graduating from law school, she worked as a child support en-

forcement attorney and then General Magistrate for 12th Judicial Circuit until 2004. Laurie started her own law firm: Baker, Paul, Dorman, and McKay until she retired in 2017. She specialized in Family Law and still maintains her Florida license, as she handles a few cases for prior clients, provided she can do so remotely.

Laurie says, "In family law, one of the primary goals is to insulate the children from all legal actions. So professionally, I intentionally had very little contact with my client's children. I guided the parents on what to say to their children, but more importantly what not to say to their children. It is rewarding now to be able to work with the children and help them sort through their questions and find their new normal when they are in foster care. It is also incredible to see the children begin to heal. Children enter foster care with a variety of emotional issues. Some of the children dramatically improve as they become more stabilized and begin to live more normalized lives. It is also rewarding to see the parents who take advantage of services while their children are in foster care, to see the family functioning with more normalcy, and the pride that parents and children take in their achievements."

Laurie and her husband Steve moved from Florida to Georgia when they retired. They have with two very spoiled border collies and are anxiously waiting March 2020 when their daughter, son-in-law and 1-month-old granddaughter will also move to Georgia.

Thanks, Laurie, for all you do for CASA and the children we serve!