



CASA Impact

Court Appointed Special Advocate

PROGRAM Impact

In 2008, concerned citizens saw a need to begin the CASA program in Harrison County. The Judge at the time felt like he was not getting all the information needed and was beginning to see the next generation of parents come into his court. The children from his previous cases were now standing before him with their children. The Harrison County Youth Court administration and some concerned citizens began the process of implementing the CASA program. A Board was formed and a start-up grant was granted from National CASA to start the first CASA program in Harrison County, Mississippi. CASA of Harrison County opened the doors on September 3, 2010 and took its first case in January 2011.

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. CASA Advocates, advocate for neglected and abused children who have been removed from their home due to neglect and/or abuse. CASA of Harrison County is a volunteer driven program who advocate for children *IN* Harrison County, MS. The children CASA Advocates advocate, are living, playing and going to school in our neighborhoods – in our community.

Since accepting the very first case in January of 2011 through 2018, CASA Advocates, have advocated for 2005 children, logging over 35,159 hours, traveling over 264,160 miles making home visits, talking with schools, contacting agencies for resources, communicating with Foster Parents, advocating for the child in court, and simply being there for that child. CASA advocates *do not* receive any reimbursements for their time or gas; they reach deep into their own pockets because they know that it takes the entire community to build a stronger, healthy community.

CASA Advocates are another set of eyes and ears for the Harrison County Youth Court. When Judge Dickinson needs another set of eyes and ears on a case he calls upon CASA. CASA volunteers are in the home frequently, making sure the children are in a safe, healthy environment. Without CASA Advocates, who would have been there for these children?

In April of 2017, House Bill N.1213 was passed, authorizing the Youth Court to utilize trained volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in abuse and neglect cases. The new law, which amended section 43-21-121, Mississippi Code of 1972, legitimizes and provides consistency for our organization by clarifying CASA's work on behalf of child victims of abuse and neglect in Mississippi.

Harrison County CASA is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization. We are primarily funded by private donations, grants, and foundations.

Age	
0-11	12 6%
1	20 9%
2	13 6%
3	22 10%
4	18 8%
5	11 5%
6	11 5%
7	10 5%
8	13 6%
9	9 4%
10	6 3%
11	9 4%
12	14 7%
13	9 4%
14	6 3%
15	8 4%
16	4 2%
18	1 0%
Unknown	19 9%

Race & Ethnicity	
Hispanic	10 4.65%
African American	48 22.33%
Caucasian	135 62.79%
Multi-Race	19 8.84%
Asian	2 0.93%
Unknown	1 0.47%

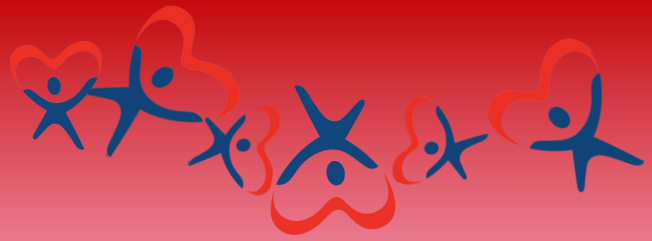
Petitions	
Abuse	53 17%
Sexual Abuse	3 1%
Neglect	165 52%
Substance Abuse	92 29%

Permanency	
Adoption	5 12%
Guardianship	10 24%
Reunification	27 64%

Gender	
Female	102 47%
Male	113 53%
	215 100%

Disability	
ADHD	1
ADHD/ADD	1
Autism	1
Bipolar	1
EMDD	1
Mental Health	4
ODD	1





VOLUNTEERimpact



CASA Volunteers are the heart of our organization.

In 2019 CASAs have logged over 2,100 hours and traveled over 23,000 miles visiting 215 children in placement, supporting parents, communicating with educators, participating in IEPs (individualized Educational Program), contacting health professionals, identifying resources for the children and parents, and simply being there for the child. They are the Heart of our organization!

Role of CASAs

Information Gathering—Objective examination of the situation including relevant history, environment, relationships, and needs of the child

Facilitation—Identify resources and services for the child and facilitate a collaborative relationship between all parties involved in the case, helping to create a situation in which the child's needs can be met

Advocacy—Speak up for the child by making fact-based recommendations regarding the child's best interest in a written report in Harrison County Youth Court

Monitoring—Keep track of whether the orders of the court and the plans of CPS (Child Protection Services) when any of the parties do not follow those orders and plans.



COMMUNITYimpact

Thank you for your continued financial support. In the last nine years CASA volunteers have impacted the lives of over 2,015 children in Harrison County. Research indicates that children with CASA volunteers are more likely to find a safe, permanent home, more likely to succeed in school, and half as likely to re-enter the foster care system. The work of our CASA volunteers not only improves children's lives—it also reduces the burden on courts and taxpayers.

Your continued financial support is so important to us to be able to reach our goal of 100 CASA volunteers by the end of 2021.—CASA 100. Together we can have a lasting impact on the children we serve.

Know that your support has impacted 215 lives of children in Harrison County in 2019—Children who live right here in our communities and attend our schools.

Renee Swoger
Board President



Board of Directors

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