



2022 ANNUAL
IMPACT REPORT

“ *Perhaps strength doesn't reside in having never been broken, but in the courage required to grow strong in the broken places.*”

– Carine McCandless



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

HALL-DAWSON
CASA PROGRAM, INC.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Chris Hollifield and Janet Walden



A few weeks ago, members of our Board of Directors were reviewing the 2022 successes and challenges. It was an interesting discussion about permanency, a word we use a lot in CASA to talk about the outcome of a child's juvenile court case. Was the child able to return home, reunified with his or her family? If reunification with his or her family was not possible, was the child adopted into another family, or placed in a guardianship with caregivers? These are all considered successful outcomes, permanency, for a child who has experienced foster care.

Successes in child welfare, though, are not so easily defined. We know the outcome of a court case is not the lone indicator; sometimes those little victories along the way have a greater impact on the child as he or she grows in years and independence.

With gratitude, we celebrate 105 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 and give children the best opportunity to thrive.

Flip through the pages to see a snapshot of those who have helped us change the stories for children and families. Whether as a volunteer or a financial supporter, your gift to our children is added to others' gifts to make a tremendous difference for our communities.

Pediatric neurosurgeon and author Dr. Fred Epstein asserted, ***"The question, 'Why do children suffer?' has no answer, unless it's simply, 'To break our hearts.' Once our hearts get broken, they never fully heal. They always ache. But perhaps a broken heart is a more loving instrument. Perhaps only after our hearts have cracked wide open, have finally and totally unclenched, can we truly know love without boundaries."***

We count ourselves fortunate to work in a field with amazing people who are drawn to be a part of this work, and are willing to risk having their hearts break in ways that open them to a greater capacity for empathy and caring and compassion. You are, after all, the heart of our success.



CHRIS HOLLIFIELD
2022 Board Chair



JANET WALDEN
Executive Director, Hall-Dawson CASA



A BRIGHT FUTURE

*“How is mom doing? When will we be able to go home?” These questions and so many more distracted the boys from their school work as their mom struggled to stay clean and begin the journey of reuniting her family. It was the CASA Volunteer who recognized mom needed encouragement and a cheerleader in her corner. **Sometimes advocating for youth experiencing foster care includes becoming the encouragement for the parent in her journey.** What a joy to celebrate the reunification of this family and the two years of sobriety for mom, such a dramatic turnaround for a family that was so close to a permanent separation.*

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Reflects active staff as of 12/31/2022.

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.

A PROMISE KEPT

*For second-grader Liam, the fall concert was his favorite performance, one he still talks about. While his friends pointed and waved at their parents, this time Liam had someone to wave to: his CASA Volunteer. She came, just as she had promised. So many things have changed for Liam over the past several months, it has been difficult to know what to believe, who to trust. **Finding that familiar face in the crowd was a small victory for Liam that will last a lifetime.***

“

*“I had a few important people in my life who took the time to go out of their way and let me know that I was cared for and that I had value. This made all the difference to me growing up. I am thankful every day for these people and feel that without them, my life could have gone in a very different path. **It just takes ONE person to help!** There are children in our community who need to know that they are valued, that they are worthy and that someone is looking out for them. I am honored and humbled every day to be able to be this person for them.”*

– Beth Arends, CASA Volunteer

“NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP OF COMMITTED CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD; INDEED, IT’S THE ONLY THING THAT CAN.” – MARGARET MEAD

CASA
VOLUNTEERS
 2022

- | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Marie Allan | Jerry Gauerke | Lisa McCulloch | Al Smith |
| Barbara Allen | Mike Giuliano | Kaycee McElveen | Carol Smith |
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| Dana Cleveland | Justin Kennedy | Dee Payton | Seth Vining |
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| Tina de Waart | Doug Langman | Lindsey Reid | Janice Young |
| Elena Espy | Wendy Lavergne | Gertrude Rhein | Dana Zhun |
| Kim Everhart | Stefani Lesser | Shanni Roberts | <i>*scribe</i> |
| Maureen Files | Gail Lombardo | Ann Ryan* | |
| Jane Fischer | Ashley Mann | Kylee Schacht | |
| Victoria Fortson | Susanna Mann | Kim Seastrom | |
| Debbie Fox | Jean Mason | Addrienne Session | |
| Wanda Fuller | Robbie McCormac | Robin Session | |

Scan here to hear from our CASA volunteers or call 770-531-1964



“

*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 and **making a difference in the life of a child.***

– Barb Mistarz, CASA Volunteer



Gail Lombardo, CASA Volunteer

2022 CASA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: GAIL LOMBARDO

Gail has been a CASA Volunteer since 2017. During this time, Gail has served 32 children on 20 different cases. Gail also serves weekly in our CAT (Clothing and Toy) Center. Gail is a strong advocate who partners with the placements, families and other agencies involved in the case to ensure children's needs are met.

"I've had the pleasure of working directly with Ms. Lombardo and have witnessed her consistently go above and beyond in her advocacy for the families she serves. I know a family has a greater chance of success in their case plan, their child's well-being, partnership and support when Ms. Lombardo is appointed to the case." - DFCS Supervisor Sarah Swann

Gail's skills are so well respected that when a case to which she is appointed closes, our judges often have another case in mind and request she be appointed. With her unflinching professionalism, critical eye and the familiarity she has with the family and all others in the case, she provides the information and the best interest recommendations for the judge to make good decisions for the future of the children and families.

Scan here if you'd like to learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer, or call 770-531-1964



COMMUNITY COLLABORATION THROUGH OUR CAT (CLOTHING AND TOY) CENTER

Throughout the year, community members, civic groups and businesses donate items to our CAT Center to ensure our kids have what they need – particularly school supplies and holiday toys. During the summer, generous donations provided school supplies for 122 children experiencing foster care. During December, the toy drive gave our volunteers the chance to “shop” for the kids they serve, providing toys and gifts for 175 children, ranging in age from two weeks old to college students.

Local organizations that contributed to these generous efforts include America's Home Place employees, Hall County Sheriff's Office, Gainesville Newcomers Club, The Norton Agency, Junior League of Gainesville/Hall County, Books-A-Million, Rushton, residents of Village at Deaton Creek. Many thanks to these and others

CELEBRATING SUCCESSSES



CONNECTIONS MATTER

Advocate is both a noun and a verb. Part of the advocacy work for one CASA Volunteer included helping to mediate the relationship between the youth and her grandmother. She made best interest recommendations for the child to be placed with a family friend, who would work to maintain family relationships as the youth's parents worked toward reunifying the family.

THE POWER OF PRESENCE

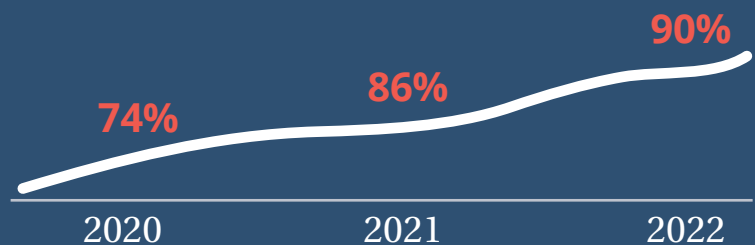
Just before the Thanksgiving holiday, Christopher received some tough news from his attorney. After a year moving between several foster homes and now living in a group home, Christopher's parents surrendered their parental rights. Knowing the meeting between attorney and youth was happening, the CASA Volunteer planned a visit to see Christopher shortly afterward. He was crushed, and had so many questions: "What will happen to me? Will I ever have a family?" Christopher's CASA listened, and assured him that while she did not have all the answers, what she did know is this: She is his CASA and she would be there for him to advocate for him and help him navigate the next steps, whatever those would be. Her presence, and her promise was the assurance he needed that day, and in the days ahead.

RELENTLESS ADVOCACY

It is impossible to overestimate the severity of the affordable housing shortage – especially for disadvantaged families in our area. This is often the final and most cruel barrier to our parents completing their case plans to bring their children home. We are so grateful for the creative and relentless work of our CASA Volunteers, who have helped locate funding sources and resources for families who just need that last boost for the family to be restored, and the encouragement given to parents to continue in the journey.

PERMANENCY

90% OF CHILDREN
WHOSE CASES CLOSED
IN 2022 **ACHIEVED
PERMANENCY**



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

We are pleased to share our 2022 statistics. We are reminded that these are not just numbers on a page, but they represent children, families and hope for a bright future. They represent a CASA Volunteer who has chosen to make child advocacy a priority – to advocate for the best interest of a child – in the Juvenile Courtroom, in the schools and in the community.

132 children who experienced juvenile court intervention because of abuse or neglect achieved permanency in 2022.



56

Reunified with their families



41

Adopted into a forever family



31

Placed in the legal guardianship of a caregiver



4

Remained with parent while receiving services



CASA'S REACH IN 2022

11

paid staff supporting

105

volunteers providing advocacy services for

362

children in the Hall and Dawson counties child welfare system



“

*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

2022 DONORS



As we work to create light for others, we light our own way.”

– Mary Anne Radmacher

Hall-Dawson CASA is pleased to recognize those whose support enables the work of advocating for children experiencing foster care in Hall and Dawson counties. Every effort is made to accurately reflect donor name and contribution between January 1 – December 31, 2022. Please contact us at 770-531-1964 to make us aware of any inaccuracies.

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(\$25,000 & up)

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* at the North GA Community Foundation

Scan here to donate or
 call 770-531-1964.



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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 MEMORY

Individuals being remembered are listed in bold followed by the name of the donor(s)

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		Gerry and Cynthia Sobel Georgia Rowe	



IN MEMORY OF LINDA WAGNER

With great sadness, we mourn the loss of Linda Wagner. Linda was what we affectionately called a “triple threat” for our CASA program. Serving on the Board of Directors since 2011, she was also a CASA Volunteer, and served as a leader in our Women Working Wonders program. She truly lived her values – she believed every child deserves a safe, loving and permanent home, and was quick to tell the story of CASA and connect people to CASA in meaningful ways. She was an Advocate for our children, and she was often found behind the scenes gathering auction items for fundraisers, bringing food for our training classes and offering encouragement for our team.

Linda was all heart and gave so much of her time, her talent and her gifts to benefit the kids we serve and the program she loved so well. She believed everyone has the capacity to make a difference and she modeled this for us in so many ways. The warmth of her smile, the laughter that typically entered a room with her and her fierce advocacy for children is sorely missed by so many.

INSPIRING SUCCESS

When a youth experiences foster care, safety and risk are the primary concerns addressed. It is often the CASA Volunteer who brings the child's overall well-being to the forefront. How can we support the youth in his or her education? How can we support the youth in their ability to participate in extracurricular activities in the school and in the community? When Lily qualified to compete in a regional DECA competition, it was the CASA Volunteer linking her need for professional clothing to our Women Working Wonders, who were able to meet this need. Lily competed with a boost of confidence.

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WOMEN WORKING WONDERS

Women Working Wonders (WWW) is a group of dynamic women focused on improving the lives of children experiencing foster care because of abuse or neglect. WWW supports the work of Hall-Dawson CASA by sharing our story with their families, friends and business associates, and their \$100 annual dues fill the gap for our kids where there are no other resources available. Started in 2010, many WWW members have a long association with CASA. They have a renewed goal of having 100 active members.

Scan here to learn more or to join WWW, or call 770-531-1964.





THE GIVING TREE

Each year in early December, our community gathers around The Giving Tree at The Little House, providing a unique opportunity to honor friends and family through a tribute gift. The \$10,000 raised in 2022 will help provide for maintenance and upkeep of The Little House, home of Hall-Dawson CASA & Edmondson Telford Child Advocacy Center (ETCAC). This support is vital to our operations, and we are grateful to those who made the choice to partner with us through a gift or sponsorship.

Thanks to our Sponsors!

Sam Couvillon, Mayor of Gainesville
First Baptist Church, Gainesville
Gainesville First United
Methodist Church
Grace Episcopal Church
Hasty Pope
Matthews Printing
Neat Eats
New Leaf Landscape Services
S&S Trucking
Smith, Gilliam, Williams & Miles

OUR CHILDREN, OUR COMMUNITY

As we express our gratitude for our volunteers and donors listed on these pages, we look also at the many children we have yet to serve. Our generous community will make the difference to kids who are our community's most vulnerable. We need YOU!

- **Ongoing support:** Will you set up a recurring donation on a monthly basis? These gifts support our needs throughout the year. They make a huge difference.
- **Legacy gift:** Consider extending your support after you are gone. Will you name Hall-Dawson CASA as a beneficiary in your will or life insurance? Consider other opportunities of giving assets such as real estate, stock, IRAs and donor-advised funds.
- **Share our story:** Invite us to speak to your book or wine club, civic group or church family. Be sure to "like" us on social media and share our content. Also, subscribe to our newsletter and share it with your contacts.

Scan to email Joy Green
770-531-1964 or
joy@halldawsoncasa.org



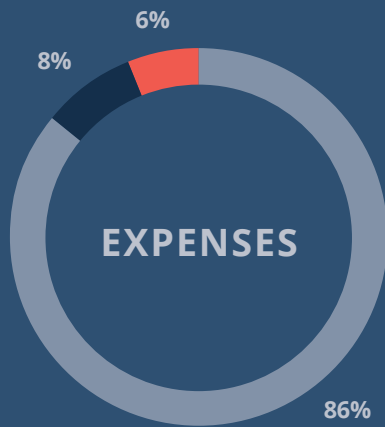
“

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 for 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.”

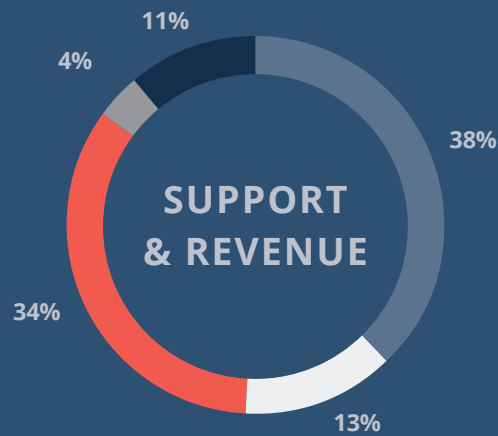
– Erwin Bligen, Legacy Donor

2022 FINANCIALS

The condensed statement of activities is reflective of the fiscal year ending December 2022. 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 in the lives of the children and families we serve.



- Direct Services
- Fundraising
- General Operating



- Federal and State Grants
- Local Grants
- Foundations
- Corporate and Individual Giving
- In-kind Program Support

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$1,125,277

TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE

\$1,082,559

6,837 Total Volunteer hours given

55,883 Total Volunteer miles driven

\$212,592 Financial Impact for community

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

HALL-DAWSON CASA
P.O. Box 907471
Gainesville, GA 30501

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“

I find inspiration and hope in the CASA Volunteer's relentless advocacy and the compassion shown under extreme circumstances. The selfless giving of the CASA Volunteer helps me leave the bench inspired. Their efforts give me strength to confront and address the difficult issues raised in each case, rather than feeling helpless. By drawing on the strength and dedication of the CASA Volunteers, I improve my ability to maintain optimism in seeking solutions.

*“It is true that it is easy to find and focus on trauma in the cases we hear. However, it is equally true that it is easy to find hope and inspiration by the kindness and persistence of the CASA Volunteers serving our children. **I choose to focus on hope, and I feel that I am a better judge as a result.** I thank all of the volunteers in the CASA program for what they do for the children.”*

– Juvenile Court Judge Joe Diaz



HALL-DAWSON CASA

603 Washington Street SW
P.O. Box 907471
Gainesville, GA 30501

Scan here for more info
or call 770-531-1964.



Website
www.halldawsoncasa.org