

**WE
SHINE
BRIGHTER
TOGETHER**



BRIGHTSIDE
CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



BRIGHTSIDE
CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

CREATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

ADVOCACY

EVERY CHILD DESERVES TO THRIVE

This year began a new chapter of our organization. Under the new name of Brightside Child & Family Advocacy, we expanded our services to better support children and families in crisis. We were restricted to the CASA program with the name Savannah/Chatham CASA. Over the last four years, every child that entered foster care was matched with a CASA volunteer. Our program has grown from 58 volunteers in 2018 to nearly 200. We serve every eligible child in foster care. The CASA team has expanded their knowledge to provide better advocacy – each advocacy coordinator specializes in a specific population – dually involved youth, commercially trafficked youth, families with substance use disorder, and older youth. While our CASA program will always be the heart of our organization, we believed it was time to do more.

This year, 50% of the children we served were reunified with their parents. We recognized that we could not just focus on the children without focusing on their families. After thirty years of providing advocacy for children in foster care, we expanded our services and became Brightside Child & Family Advocacy. Under our new mission, we will not only advocate for children in foster care, but we will provide families with the support they need to reunify and heal.

With input from our juvenile court judges and the Department of Child & Family Services (DFCS), we identified that the greatest need in our community was a supervised visitation center. On February 14th, we opened The Bright House, our supervised visitation and family support center. Under the leadership of the program manager, Ja’Nae Brown, the Bright House was quickly filled with families visiting one another in a welcoming, home environment. By July, we realized we needed a second location to serve more families. On October 6, we celebrated the opening of Bright House II. With this addition, The Bright House will provide nine visitations a day. With all this change, we thought, “Why not add one more?” Therefore, to better align with our largest funders, we changed from a calendar fiscal year to a federal fiscal year of 10/1 to 9/30. For this reason, the 2021 fiscal year was only nine months. As you review the year-to-year comparisons in this report, you will notice the reduced numbers for 2021.

As we expanded to serve more families, we acknowledged the need to work on the prevention of child abuse as well. As the local council of Prevent Child Abuse Georgia, Brightside Advocacy will prevent the abuse and neglect of Chatham County’s children through education, advocacy, and the promotion of evidence-based strategies.

So now the question is, where do we go from here?

The future continues to be bright for Brightside Child & Family Advocacy. Our staff, board of directors, and community partners set six strategic priorities for our 2023 to 2025 Strategic Plan:

1. Become the premier organization for foster care services.
2. Effectively engage and support CASA volunteers to maximize the quality of services provided.
3. Expand staff support and improve board engagement.
4. Increase & diversify funding to meet the organization’s growing needs and reduce reliance on government funding.
5. Create and sustain strong community relationships.
6. Be a well-known and respected organization in Chatham County.

With the continued support of the Juvenile Court, DFCS, community partners, and our donors, Brightside Advocacy will continue to reach our goals and create a community where every child is given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

Holly Holdsworth, Board Chair
Kate Blair, Executive Director



TEAM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Steve Candler, Savannah Board of Realtors
Chris Collins, Treasurer, Wet Willie's
Andy Conn, Harris Lowry Manton, LLC
Kim Gusby, WSAV
Holly Holdsworth, Chair, Chatham County Parks & Recreation
Jackie Jackson, Vice Chair, Chatham County
Bradley Jones, Newfront
Antwan Lang, Business Dev/Government Affairs
Kathy Ledvina, Preservation Associates
David Bobo Mullens, III, Oliver Maner, LLP
Thomas Odom, Jr., Sterling Seacrest Pritchard
Debra Powell, Retired Nurse
Rodney Rawls, Rawls Realty
Courtney Reich, Past Chair, GMC

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Cole Eberle, CASA Volunteer, PPG Aerospace
Eula Parker, Secretary, CASA Volunteer, South State Bank
Chatham County Juvenile Court Judges:
Honorable Thomas L. Cole
Honorable Lindretta Grindle Kramer
Honorable Roxanne Formey

STAFF

Kate Blair, Executive Director
Jennifer Graham, Communications Manager
Julia Haddick, Director of Development
Hollyn Green, AmeriCorps VISTA
Jenny McCord, Operations Manager
Melissa Sharp, Administrative Assistant

BRIGHT HOUSE

Ja'Nae Brown, Bright House Manager
Carole Fireall, Family Support Specialist
Teresa MacBride, Family Support Specialist
Tolejala Marsh, Family Support Specialist
Seren Gunter, Family Support Specialist
Keandrea Sykes, Family Support Specialist

CASA

Mandy Roberts, Advocacy Director
Sharon Newman, Lead Advocacy Coordinator
Susan Ryncavage, Lead Advocacy Coordinator
Karen Allen, Advocacy Coordinator
Maggie Smith, Advocacy Coordinator
Alicia Wilson, Advocacy Coordinator
Tim Wright, Advocacy Coordinator
Eric Hornfeld, Pre-Service Trainer



214

CASA VOLUNTEERS

Adams-Edwards, Danny
Arner, Faith
Atkinson, Malley Clemones
Bailey, Cecily
Barlow, Lori
Barney-DiCianno, Christina
Bath, Sandra
Baxter, Aimee
Beckley, Karen
Bellamy, Annette
Bohall, Sarah
Bonaccolta, Julia
Braun, Oliver
Breese, Megan
Brickner Nye, Christine
Brister, Tammy
Brush, Cynthia
Bryant, Leslie
Buck, Chelsey
Burton, Ashton
Camarillo, Cammie
Campbell, Abigail
Caputo, Laura
Carper, Donald
Carr, Olivia
Chadwick, Hunter
Chisholm, Ayesha
Clarke, Simone
Clemm, Timothy
Cole-Grimes, Pam
Coleman, Deborah
Crimian, Bob
D'Angio, Sandra
Danhof, Terry
Daniel, Ken
Daugherty, Donna
Davis, Kristi
Davis, Sarah
Dawson, Shed
Deich, Elle
DeMarco, Lisa

DeMolto, Debra
Denny, Mike
Dickerson, Terrell
Dix, Katy
Dixon, Jackie
Donahoo, Omelia
Donovan, Elizabeth
Donovan, Matt
Dubois, Kim
Early, Jasmine
Ebanks, Heather
Eberle, Cole
Ellison Sr., Rick
Ellison, Danielle
England, Amanda
Eubank, Lois
Faul, Skylar
Feal, Allie
Fitzhugh, Katie
Flanagan, Beverly
Fletcher, Mary
Foreman, Les
Forrest, Betty
Frazier, Angel
Frazier, Desharon
Fryman, Liz
Galegor, Anna
Gaynor, Howie
Gerrin, Carol
Gire, Crystal
Gire, Daniel
Glynn, Rosey
Goedtel, Ann Marie
Gomez, Lilia
Graham-Bailey, Malika
Granado, Summer
Grant, Tia
Gratias, Eric
Griffin, Alexander
Griffith, Katie
Grimes, Valarie
Gunter, Seren
Habib, Mike
Hafer, Yvonne
Hamlin, Cerise
Hanna, Hilary
Harkins, Allison
Harlan, Glenna

Harris, Lori
Harris, Mary Jane "MJ"
Hartley, Diane
Hassett, Tom
Helm, Sally
Hernandez, Veronica
Hilleary, Peggy
Hintz, Crystal
Hinze, Heather
Hohnerlein, Elyse
Holbach, Sarah
Hostettler, Laura
Hubbard, Nozpho
Jackman, Kathryn
Jackson, Lucille
Janocha, Erica
Johnson, Christy
Johnson, Linda
Johnston, Emily
Jones, Alma Rita
Jones, Kendra
Jones, Mary
Jones, Vernon
Kabanda Mihigo, Abigail
Kaplan, Shelley
Karnes, Michele
Kennedy, Angelina
Kettler, Nicole
King, Megan
King, Paralee
Kommel, Kelly
Krajec, Tandy
Lehmann, Katlyn
Levy, Jane
Lillard, Christie
Linville, Genevieve
Lodato, Anastasiya
Lovato, Natalie
Lovewine, Shenika
MacBride, Teresa
Martin, Jessica
Mauger, Cynthia
McCarthy, Jennifer
McDonald, Kari
McKay, Patricia
Melendez, Nikisha
Merchan Alvarez, Lina
Messinger, Katie

Meyers, Michelle
Mills, Skye
Mills, Yolanda
Miracle, Ashley
Mitchell, Sara
Montgomery, Montisha
Moore, Natalie
Morse, Deborah
Moss, Margarette
Mulherin, Lisa
Nash, Daphne
Navarro, Julisa
Oliver, Linda
Padgett, Glory
Padgett, Pria
Page, Meridith
Parker, Eula
Patel, Laukik
Penton, JoLeigh
Peterson, John
Pickett, Shannon
Poole, Sandra
Postell, Gamu
Potter, Amy
Printup, Blair
Quinley, Christine
Quiroz, Carlos
Raehn, Jennifer
Raley, Alex
Randolph, Taveyus
Reeves, Queen
Reeves, Valerie
King, Pam
Ritter, Denise
Roberts, Geneva
Rogers, Cheryl
Rogers, Kathy
Roncone, Kayleigh
Rooney, Mary
Sayyar, Christi
Schoenwald, Carolyn
Scott, Evelyn
Scott, Tanya
Sheppard, Lorraine
Shuman, Marly
Sinclair Yon, Janet
Smith, DeShay
Smith, Nikki

Smith, Shelley
Smith-Garvin, Katrina
Sparks, Wendi
Stacy, Tiffany
Stafford, Kristina
Stowers, Liwandra
Sywassink, Julie
Szabo, Elliot
Taylor, Mildred
Taylor, Tinika
Thomas, Dr. Kimberly
Thomas, Michelle
Thomas, Teorna
Thompson, Amanda
Thompson, Naima
Trappio, Brandy
Voelker, Kayla
Waddell, Amy
Walker, Bet
Wallace, Dale
Waltz, Ann
Washington, Gabby
White, Karen
Williams, Tia
Wilson, Amber
Wilson, Andrea
Woods, Cu'Quivia
Wright, Terry
Ziegler, Christine

ADVOCATES



SAVANNAH COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES (CASA)



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CHILDREN SERVED	165	162	194	240	345	374	425
ASSIGNED VOLUNTEERS	17	29	51	93	152	170	195

STATS

Currently serving 96% of children in foster care.

44,121 miles driven
7,231 hours volunteered
49 new volunteers

Race/Ethnicity

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 1%
Black/African American: 28%
Multiracial: 5%
Asian: 1%
White: 65%
Hispanic - 3%

Education

College: 58%
High School: 8%
Post Graduate: 21%
Some College: 10%

Gender

Male: 12%
Female: 88%

Age

21-29 - 15%
30-39 - 23%
40 -49- 19%
50-59 - 18%
60+- 24%

85% Volunteer Retention
28 volunteers discharged

2021 CASA Awards

Most Miles Driven By A CASA

Valerie Reeves (2306 miles)

Most Hours of Advocacy By A CASA

Cynthia Mauger (226.45 hours)

Judges Choice

Amy Potter, Cynthia Mauger, Amber Wilson

CASA Spirit Award

Peggy Hilleary and Terry Wright

DFCS Case Manager of the Year

Christara Solomon

Juvenile Court Staff of the Year

Djamila "DJ" Acklin

425 Children Served

195 CASA volunteers served 425 children. 102 cases closed.

Of those cases:
50% were reunified with parents
20% were adopted
18% achieved guardianship
6% aged out of foster care

Child Demographics

Gender: Male: 215, Female: 201

Age:
0-5 - 36%
6-11- 33%
12-18 - 29%
Over 18 - 2%

Race/Ethnicity

Hispanic/Latino -6%
Black/AA- 54%
White - 33%
Native Hawaiian -1%
Two or more races - 6%

CASA VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR: MARIA MOSS

Maria Moss has been a CASA volunteer since December 2020 and has advocated for four children. What makes Maria extraordinary is her ability to develop rapport with her youth. Even when other stakeholders struggle to connect with the child, Maria always finds a way.

Maria is currently assigned to a child in Hope Court, an accountability court that serves victims of human trafficking. Due to the nature of this court and the experiences of the young people, HOPE Court cases require additional communication and research. Maria not only fulfills all the necessary obligations, but she has also developed a meaningful relationship with her child. In fact, when her child was on run-away status, she would not communicate with anyone but Maria.

Maria's support and advocacy go beyond a life of a court case. At the youth's request, Maria remains in touch with her last case. After a grandmother was granted custody, Maria continued to assist the grandmother in navigating the school system. Recently, when Maria attended the memorial service of one child's father the family requested she sit with them because they see her as family.

In addition to all of this, she has facilitated Brightside's DEI Committee, which is not only meaningful to the staff but an important focus of our strategic plan. We don't know how Maria does it all, between her CASA case, work with the DEI committee, her own family, and a full-time job, Maria makes it look easy. She even finds time to deliver furniture to another CASA case.

We can sum all of this up with one short text message from Maria's CASA kiddo to her:



“I wanna say thank u SO MUCH for everything that u are doing for me. You’re like a second Mama to me! It’s like u watching me grow up. Thank u for that!”



**THE
BRIGHT
HOUSE**

A PROGRAM OF
BRIGHTSIDE
CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY



THE BRIGHT HOUSE

While the child is in foster care, quality supervised visitation is crucial to strengthening parent-child attachments and decreasing the sense of abandonment that children experience. Family visitation is linked to positive outcomes, including improving a child's well-being, less time in out-of-home care, and faster reunification.

Brightside Advocacy opened The Bright House – a supervised visitation and family support center – in February 2022. Parents develop healthy relationships with their children in a warm, home-like environment while participating in court-mandated supervised visitations. Bright House staff also provides parental coaching, referrals to community services, and case management assistance.

Transporter of the Year

Olivia Butler with Helping Hands, LLC

Most Referrals to Bright House

Saquana Rhodes with Chatham Co. DFCS

Statistics

(2/14 to 9/30)

Number of families served: 28

Number of children served: 50

Number of parental coaching sessions: 282

Number of referrals: 47





BRIGHTSIDE
CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

Reasons for Entering Foster Care in 2022

Abandonment: 1%
Caretaker Inability to Cope: 7%
Child Behavior Problem: 12%
Inadequate Housing: 30%
Incarceration of Parent: 9%
Neglect: 50%
Substance Use: 45%
Physical/Sexual Abuse: 12%

CREATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

FUNDERS





DFCS Partnership

Brightside Advocacy continued to improve our relationship with the Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS). COVID-19 prevented our usual in-person celebrations last year, but this year Brightside Advocacy was able to implement more to help the partnership with DFCS:

- Monthly DFCS supervisor/CASA Coordinator staffings
- Coordinated and delivered Christmas gifts to foster children
- Assisted with case research
- Assistance with children who have to spend time at the DFCS office
- Joint Training Opportunities
- Celebrated a Caseworker of the Month each month
- Stakeholder event in September at Starland Yard

Juvenile Court Partnership

Brightside Advocacy is only as strong as our relationship with our Juvenile Court Judges. Our advocates can only serve on a case if appointed by one of our Judges. Brightside Advocacy staff works closely with the Juvenile Court to ensure that we are responsive and proactive in supporting their work. In addition to providing CASA volunteers to be appointed to dependency cases, Brightside Advocacy:

- Provides additional advocacy to Family Treatment Court (families impacted by substance use disorder), HOPE Court (youth who have been trafficked) and SPARC (youth with significant mental health concerns)
- Participates in quarterly stakeholder meetings
- Participates in truancy stakeholder meetings
- Participates in Court Improvement Initiatives
- Meets regularly with Judges and Juvenile Court leadership
- Participates in joint trainings
- Participates in Work Group to increase foster parent recruitment

PARTNERSHIPS

DONORS

FRIENDS OF BRIGHTSIDE

Kate & Andy Blair
Chris Boswell
Aldreka Campbell
Chris Collins
Karen Cooper
Quincy Culver
D. Morgan Derst
Howie & Maribeth Gaynor
Tasha Hall
Allyson Harvin
Melvin Haysman
Holly Holdsworth & Katie Ban
Thomas Hollis
Averil & Jeremiah Hull
Ron Isriel
Kevin & Libby Jackson
Jackie Jackson
Christy Johnson
Linda Johnson
Brandy Lee
Sarah McCoy
Travis Padgett
Carole Paul
David Pence
Stephanie Pendleton
Bevin Pike
Carol Pine
Penny Rafferty
Carol Riddick
Ira & Sue Ruby
Vira Salzburn
Tripp Sheppard
Marly Shuman
Sabriya Scott
Philip Solomons, Jr.
Anne Taryn
Brianna Welch
Shirley Wright
Amy Zettle

CHAMPION

Sandra Bath
John Beam
Susan Brinkley
Leroy Burke III
Matt Byrd
Steve Candler
Sean Carter
Martha Chapman
Lori & Neil Dawson
Chris & Janis Dieringer
Staci Donegan
Toby Friedman
Glenda Ganem
Tanya Glaize
Gillian Karatassos
Lindsay Kiefer
Jeff & Leann Kole
Kelly Kommel
Ann Lytle
Amanda Montford
David Paddison
Sujee Ray
Krista Ready-Weeks
Courtney Reich
Annie Rockwell
Jerry & Mary Rooney
Ryan Sewell
Marge Wester
Chris & Cori Williams
Candler Wilson
Stephanie Wood-Garnett

INNOVATOR

Marianne & Rob Poppell
Rodney & Nicole Rawls
COL Terry & Janet Sinclair-Yon
Sabriya Scott

VISIONARY

Kent Gregory
Rick & Regina Roney
Anonymous

MONTHLY

Jackie Jackson
Amy Zettle & Harrison Kreisberg
Debra Powell
Dan Tanner
Holly Holdsworth & Katie Ban
Cheryl Wiemero
Gillian Karatassos



Angela Lightsey:
\$10,405

Kierstin Graham:
\$6,177

Nicole Rawls:
\$32,116

Cissy Smith:
\$22,889

Marianne Ganem-Poppell:
\$25,435

Pria Padgett:
\$19,646

Gillian Karatassos:
\$17,816

Marvette Wilkerson:
\$11,729

Rick Ellison:
\$14,897

Jonathan Jefferson:
\$13,418

Moncello Stewart:
\$13,841

Sabriya Scott:
\$33,047

Total: \$225,711

DANCING WITH SAVANNAH STARS

FINANCES

REVENUE BREAKDOWN

Event Fundraising	27.90%
National & Georgia CASA	12.70%
Local Government	13.40%
Foundations	5.20%
United Way of the Coastal Empire	5.20%
Federal & State Government Funding	24.20%
Business Contributions	1.90%
Individual Donations	7.30%
In-Kind Donations	2.20%

	FY22**	FY21*	FY20	FY19	FY18	FY17	FY16
INCOME	\$979,928.03	\$628,297.49	\$576,858	\$498,568	\$385,814	\$443,481	\$377,508
EXPENSE	\$987,358.08	\$512,279.77	\$552,765	\$494,887	\$388,916	\$429,659	\$375,811

*9 Month Fiscal Year

** Unaudited

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR SUPPORT!**



**WE
SHINE
BRIGHTER
TOGETHER**



BRIGHTSIDE
CHILD AND FAMILY ADVOCACY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT