

THE FORSYTH VOICE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- *What would you do?*
- *National Child Abuse Prevention Month*

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Wednesday, April 22nd

CASA Corner

CASA Office | 10AM

Friday, May 1st

Lunch with the Judges & CASA Training on

Motivational Interviewing

Juvenile Courthouse | 12PM

Tuesday, May 5th

DFCS & CASA Social

DFCS Office | 12PM

Friday, July 10th

Lunch with the Judges

Juvenile Courthouse | 12PM



On April 1st, we planted Pinwheels of Possibility for Child Abuse Prevention Month!



377 advocacy hours



32 hearings attended



3,530 miles driven

MARCH BY THE NUMBERS

March Monthly Recap

Last month, CASA of Forsyth County continued building strong partnerships and celebrating meaningful milestones:

- Participated in the **DFCS Region 2 Stakeholders Meeting**, collaborating with community partners to better serve children and families.
- Swore in **four new CASA volunteers**, expanding our ability to advocate for children.
- Celebrated **two children achieving permanency** through reunification with their families.



What Would You Do?

Real-Life Advocacy Scenarios

Last month, we asked you how you would respond in the following situation:

A 6-year-old child on your case has experienced chronic neglect and exposure to domestic violence. In the foster home, the child struggles with emotional regulation, has frequent nightmares, and becomes distressed during raised voices or conflict. The foster parent is supportive but unsure how to respond to these behaviors. The birth parent has had inconsistent participation in services and reports that the child “doesn’t remember anything.” The case is progressing, but the child has begun expressing fear about going back home.

What would you do?

Next month’s scenario:

A 9-year-old child on your case has a history of trauma and multiple placement changes. In the current foster home, the child is showing frequent mood swings, impulsive behavior, and increasing aggression at home and school. The caregiver and school report ongoing concerns, and progress in therapy has been limited.

No psychological or psychiatric evaluation has been completed to further assess the child’s needs. As the case moves forward, there are questions about what additional supports may be necessary to help the child stabilize and succeed.

What would you do?

Look to next month’s newsletter to see what the most effective course of action might be!



Here’s how we recommend responding:

- **Center the child’s sense of safety and emotional regulation**, recognizing that nightmares, distress during conflict, and behavioral outbursts are trauma responses linked to chronic neglect and exposure to domestic violence.
- **Support the foster parent with trauma-informed strategies**, including maintaining calm, predictable responses, identifying triggers, and using co-regulation techniques to help the child feel secure rather than punished for behaviors rooted in fear.
- **Advocate for appropriate therapeutic services**, such as trauma-focused therapy, and ensure consistency across environments so the child receives cohesive support in both the home and school settings.
- **Take the child’s expressed fear of returning home seriously** by documenting and elevating their voice, while also monitoring the birth parent’s engagement in services and looking for demonstrated behavioral change, not just verbal reassurance.

Sample court report recommendation: “CASA recommends prioritizing the child’s emotional safety and stability as the case progresses. Given the child’s trauma history and recent expressions of fear regarding reunification, CASA recommends continued placement stability and engagement in trauma-focused therapeutic services. CASA further recommends that caregivers utilize trauma-informed parenting strategies to support emotional regulation and reduce distress. CASA encourages the Court to consider the child’s expressed fears and the birth parent’s level of consistent participation and demonstrated progress in services when making permanency decisions. Continued collaboration among all parties is recommended to support the child’s long-term safety and well-being.”

Protecting Children, Strengthening Families: Child Abuse Prevention Month

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of protecting children and strengthening families. In the United States, child maltreatment remains a significant concern, with approximately **532,000 children identified as victims of abuse or neglect in 2024**, representing about **7 children per 1,000**.

Neglect continues to be the most common form of maltreatment, and the majority of abuse is perpetrated by a parent or caregiver. These experiences can have lasting impacts on a child's development, increasing the risk of emotional, behavioral, and long-term health challenges.

Prevention begins with supporting families before crises occur. Access to basic needs, parenting education, and strong community connections can significantly reduce the risk of abuse and neglect. When families are equipped with the tools and stability they need, children are more likely to remain safe and thrive.

CASA volunteers play a vital role in both prevention and intervention by:

- Advocating for safe, stable, and nurturing environments for children.
- Identifying unmet needs and connecting families to supportive resources.
- Promoting consistency and permanency to reduce further trauma.
- Ensuring that each child's voice is heard and their best interests remain the focus.



Did you know?

- **109,236 Children in Georgia were subject of an investigated report alleging child maltreatment in 2024**
- **104 child fatalities in Georgia as a result of child abuse in 2024**



Anniversaries & Birthdays

April 4 - Steven Castelein

April 7 - Kelly Weeks (1 year at FoCo CASA!)

April 8 - Ed Jones

April 8 - Ashli Siddall

April 11 - Jennifer Camarco

April 12 - Dana Gunsallus (2 years!)

April 13 - Jean Cain (11 years!)

April 15 - Heather McKeldin

April 15 - Carly Pace

April 16 - Mary "Hope" Thatcher (2 years!)

April 17 - Cathy Carlton (1 year!)

April 17 - Natalia Micheloud (1 year!)

April 17 - Rebecca Hammond (1 year!)

April 20 - Barb Taylor (17 years!)

April 20 - Mary Kenealy

April 21 - Sylvia Anderson

April 21 - Linda Carrier

April 21 - Gaby Chavarria-Cespedes

Susan Lancaster, a recent graduate of the University of North Georgia counseling program and former CASA volunteer with Enotah CASA, is offering free counseling support to volunteers through CASA of Forsyth County. She understands firsthand the emotional impact of advocacy work, including secondary trauma, and provides a supportive space to process experiences and build resilience.

CASAs are encouraged to reach out if they would benefit from confidential counseling support at any point in their advocacy journey.

Susanlancaster.pc@gmail.com

CASA volunteers! Did you know that one of your fellow advocates serves as a liaison to the Board, helping bring your feedback and experiences straight to leadership?! If you have feedback, suggestions, or concerns you'd like elevated, **Diana Arnold** is a great resource and connection point!

dianaarmold1.casa@gmail.com

Learning & Growth *In-Person, Virtual, & Self-Guided Training Opportunities*

Pre-Recorded Trainings

What Happens After the Report

- Pre-recorded

PCA Georgia

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Understanding a Child's Trauma and Survival Habits

- Pre-recorded

GA Center for Resources and Support

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Films and Documentaries

'Escape from a House of Horror' - A Diane Sawyer Special Event

ABC 20/20

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Rewind

Film Rise True Crime

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Let's Talk About Prevention Webinar: Science of Preventing Child Maltreatment

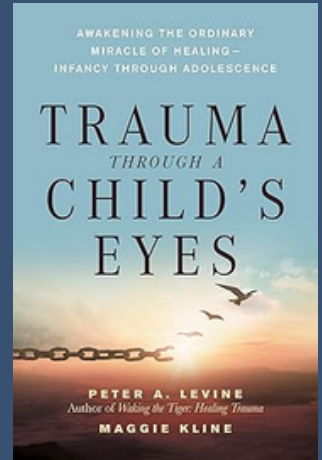
- Pre-recorded

Monique Burr Foundation

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Please remember to log your training in the tab marked "Training" on the main page in Optima- you need to log 12 hours of continuing education each year.

Reading along with Book Club is now worth 4 CE hours!



Trauma Through a Child's Eyes by Peter A. Levine and Maggie Kline

Trauma can result not only from catastrophic events such as abuse, violence, or loss of loved ones, but from natural disasters and everyday incidents like auto accidents, medical procedures, divorce, or even falling off a bicycle. At the core of this book is the understanding of how trauma is imprinted on the body, brain, and spirit—often resulting in anxiety, nightmares, depression, physical illnesses, addictions, hyperactivity, and aggression.

Rich with case studies and hands-on activities, *Trauma Through a Child's Eyes* gives insight into children's innate ability to rebound with the appropriate support, and provides their caregivers with tools to overcome and prevent trauma.

The Book Club is meeting May 26th both virtually and in-person at the CASA office!

Thank You to Our Donors!



Jay Kirchoff

Bettina Hammond



Paula Gault

Marybeth Leamer



United Way of Forsyth County



The Walker Group



Danny Bennett

VALUZZIA

Keller Williams Community Partners - North Forsyth Rotary Club - Jack & Becky Damico

Susan Kaufman - Steve Kirby - The Ledbetter Family - Alyssa Baskam

Fitzgibbons Family Charitable Foundation - Weaver Capital Management

Deer Creek Shores Presbyterian Church - George Lipsey - Hampton Family Charitable Fund Teleios Ministry -

Richard Warner - Georgia CASA Eggs Up Grill - Horizon Christian Academy Silvia Anderson - LEJ Capital -

Vanguard Management Group - Northpoint Mortgage

Unity Class of First Baptist Church - Bald Ridge Chapel Trustees

CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY

