



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

FORSYTH COUNTY

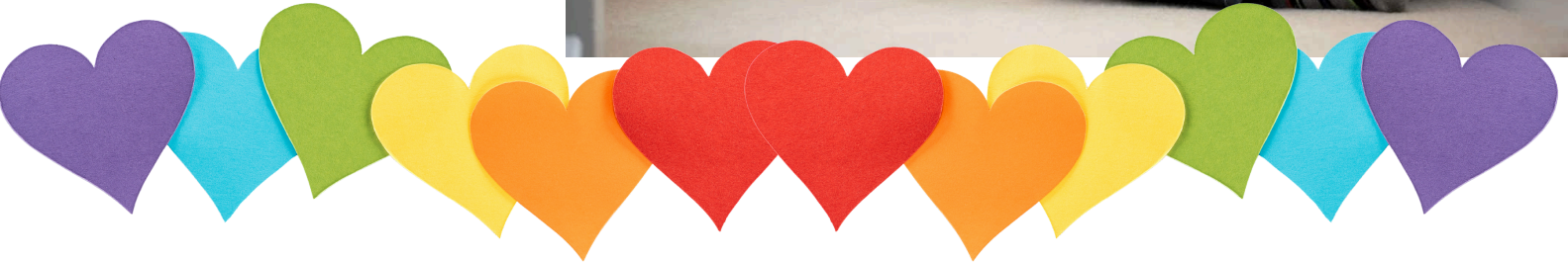
JUNE 2026

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FORSYTH COUNTY CASA

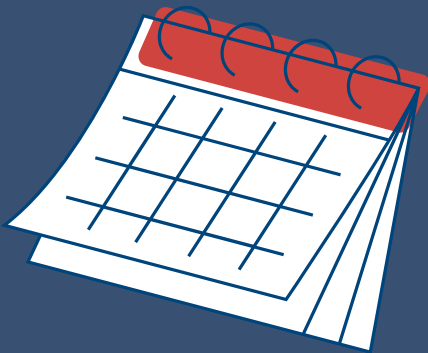
THE FORSYTH VOICE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- *What would you do?*
- *Pride Month*
- *National PTSD Awareness Month*



UPCOMING EVENTS:



JULY

Friday, July 10th
Lunch with the Judges
 Juvenile Courthouse | 12PM

Friday, July 24th
Back to School Bash
 Cumming First UMC | 11:30AM

Tuesday, July 28th
CASA Book Club
 CASA Office | 5:30PM

AUGUST

Saturday, August 22nd
GA CASA Conference
 Atlanta | 8:30AM





286 advocacy hours



18 hearings attended



3,458 miles driven

MAY BY THE NUMBERS

May Monthly Recap

This May, CASA of Forsyth County welcomed **8 new CASA volunteers** who were sworn in and joined our advocacy community.

We also celebrate a meaningful milestone — **2 children achieved permanency through reunification**, bringing them stability and lasting family connections.



Congratulations to all of our new CASAs!

What Would You Do?

Real-Life Advocacy Scenarios

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

A 12-year-old child on your case has recently begun engaging in behaviors that appear intended to disrupt the current foster placement, including lying about the caregiver, refusing household rules, damaging property, and telling others they want to be moved. When spoken to privately, the child shares that they do not believe placements ever last and would “rather leave first” before getting attached. The caregiver feels overwhelmed and is considering requesting the child’s removal from the home. The child has a significant history of trauma and multiple prior placement disruptions.

What would you do?



Next month’s scenario:

What would you do?

A 12-year-old youth on your case has begun refusing scheduled family visits, becoming upset before visits and withdrawn afterward. The caregiver reports increased emotional distress around visitation days.

When spoken with privately, the youth says visits feel “too hard” and disappointing, especially when promises from family members are not kept. The youth has a history of multiple placement changes and inconsistent family contact.

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

Here’s how we recommend responding:

- Recognize that the child's lying, rule-breaking, property destruction, and desire to leave the placement may be trauma responses rooted in fear of attachment, abandonment, and repeated placement disruptions rather than simply defiant behavior.
- Advocate for therapeutic services that address attachment, loss, grief, and trauma, and ensure the child has opportunities to process fears surrounding placement stability and relationships with caregivers.
- Explore whether additional supports for the caregiver, such as respite care, counseling, or trauma-informed parenting resources, may help prevent placement disruption and strengthen placement stability.
- Maintain regular communication with the child, caregiver, and case team to monitor the situation closely and identify concerns before they escalate to a placement removal request.

Sample court report recommendation: *“CASA recommends continued efforts to maintain placement stability while addressing the child's underlying trauma and attachment-related concerns. CASA further recommends ongoing trauma-informed therapeutic services for the child, additional support and resources for the caregiver, and continued collaboration among the caregiver, therapist, DFCS, and other service providers to strengthen the placement and support the child's emotional well-being.”*

Pride Month Spotlight: Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth in Foster Care

June is Pride Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the diversity of the LGBTQ+ community. It is also an opportunity to raise awareness about the unique challenges many LGBTQ+ youth face within the child welfare system.

LGBTQ+ youth are overrepresented in foster care and often face additional layers of trauma, including family rejection, placement instability, discrimination, and lack of affirming supports.

What CASA volunteers can do:

- Ensure the youth feels safe, respected, and heard in all interactions
- Use the youth's preferred name and pronouns, when appropriate and confirmed
- Advocate for affirming placements and providers
- Address concerns about bullying, discrimination, or rejection in school or placement settings
- Encourage access to trauma-informed and identity-affirming mental health services
- Focus on stability, belonging, and permanency as core advocacy goals

Remember, a CASA volunteer does not need to be an expert on LGBTQ+ issues to make a difference. One of the most powerful things an advocate can do is provide a consistent, caring adult relationship and ensure that every child feels heard, respected, and valued.



Did you know?

- **Research estimates that 20–34% of youth in foster care identify as LGBTQ+, compared to just 10% of the general youth population.**
- **LGBTQ+ youth are 2–3 times more likely to experience foster care or unstable housing compared to their peers.**

PTSD Awareness Month: Trauma and Foster Youth

June is also Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Awareness Month, a time to recognize the impact of trauma and the importance of early identification and treatment, especially for children in foster care.

A significant mental health concern among foster youth is PTSD. Research has found that approximately **20% of abused children in foster care experienced symptoms of PTSD**, compared to **11% of children who remained in their original home** (Bartlett & Rushovich, 2018).

These findings highlight the profound impact of abuse, neglect, and placement disruption on a child's emotional and psychological well-being. For many children in care, symptoms of trauma may present as:

- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Aggression or withdrawal
- Sleep disturbances or anxiety
- Challenges with trust and attachment
- Behavioral responses that may be misunderstood as “defiance”

Why This Matters for CASAs

For CASA advocates, understanding trauma is essential to effective advocacy. Behaviors are often communication of unmet emotional needs or unresolved trauma rather than intentional defiance.

PTSD in Children: What It Can Look Like

Ages 1-5

- *Temper tantrums*
- *Regression (bedwetting, thumb sucking, baby-like behaviors)*
- *Clinginess or separation anxiety*

Ages 5-12

- *Re-experiencing trauma through play or repetitive themes*
- *Nightmares & sleep disruption*
- *Difficulty concentrating*
- *Physical complaints (stomach aches)*

Ages 12-18

- *Risky, impulsive, or self-destructive behaviors*
- *Withdrawal, anxiety, irritability*
- *Expressing distress through actions more than words*

CASA-versaries

Lori Gillman & Bert Boudet are both celebrating 8 years with CASA!

Thank you
FOR YOUR
Hardwork

Birthdays

June 7 - Sandy Hughes

June 8 - Cathy O'Neil

June 11 - Cathy Carlton

June 17 - Kelly Weeks

June 25 - Christina Daniels

June 26 - Dana Gunsallus

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

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

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



LGBTQ+ Trainings and Films

LGBTQ+ 101

- Pre-recorded

GA Center for Resources and Support

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Breaking down barriers and facilitating connection with your LGBTQ foster children

- Pre-recorded

GA Center for Resources and Support

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Supporting LGBTQIA+ Youth to Thrive

- Pre-recorded

Illinois CASA

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

PTSD Trainings and Films

Connecting the Dots of PTSD

- Pre-recorded

GA Center for Resources and Support

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Trauma is irreversible. How it shapes us is our choice.

TEDx Talks

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

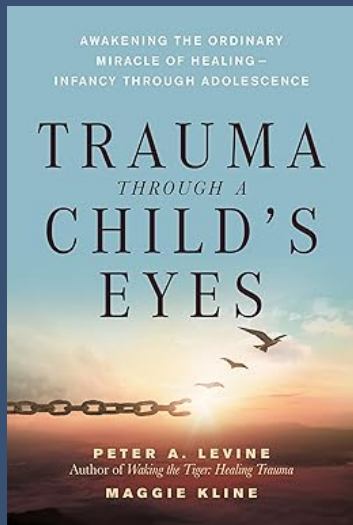
TraumaInSight

NAMI

[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS](#)

Stay tuned for an email from Ellie with more details and to RSVP!

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.



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.

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CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY

