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Georgia CASA Announces Nominees for 2026 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year Award

ATLANTA, July 13, 2026 — [Georgia Court Appointed Special Advocates](#) (Georgia CASA) is proud to announce the nominees for the 2026 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year Award, honoring outstanding CASA volunteers whose dedication, compassion, and advocacy create meaningful change for children experiencing foster care across Georgia.

Each year, Georgia CASA's Awards of Excellence recognize individuals who go above and beyond to support children and families navigating the child welfare system. The Volunteer of the Year Award celebrates advocates who demonstrate exceptional commitment, build trusted relationships with children, and ensure their voices are heard in court and throughout their journey toward safety and permanency.

This year's nominees represent the strength and diversity of Georgia's CASA network, with volunteers serving children in communities across the state. Together, these advocates have spent countless hours visiting children, attending hearings and meetings, collaborating with families and professionals, identifying resources, and providing the consistency and encouragement every child deserves.

The 2026 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year nominees are:

Dawn Carter McDonald, Gwinnett County CASA
Brenda Gray, Advo-Kids CASA, Inc.
Johanne Higdon, Henry County CASA, Inc.
Patricia Johnson, Coastal Plain CASA, Inc.
Susan McCullough, Juvenile Court of Cobb County/CASA
Jack McLaughlin, Northeast Georgia CASA, Inc.
Mark Najjar, CASA of Forsyth, Inc.
Heather Radforc, CASA of Paulding County, Inc.
Liliana Rivera, Murray/Whitfield CASA Program
Dr. Eve R. Sauer, CASA of the Appalachian Judicial Circuit
Betty Stewart, Atlanta CASA, Inc.

Chrissy Denmark, Enotah CASA, Inc.
Sally Helm, Savannah/Chatham County CASA
Jane Johnson, Rockdale CASA, Inc.
Allison Lee, Hall-Dawson CASA Program, Inc.
Laelah McEntire, Chattahoochee CASA
Lori Mims, Floyd County CASA
Max & Cheryl Parrott, CASA of Northwest Georgia
Tina Rhodes, CASA of Polk & Haralson, Inc.
Mary Starck, DeKalb County CASA Program
Gary Stevenson, Alcovy CASA Inc.
Wendy Whiddon, Piedmont CASA, Inc.

"These volunteers represent the very best of CASA advocacy," said Angela Tyner, Advocacy Director of Georgia CASA. "They show up consistently, build relationships rooted in trust, and remind children who are experiencing foster care that they are not alone. Their service demonstrates the extraordinary impact one dedicated volunteer can have in a child's life."

The 2026 Karen N. Sibley CASA Volunteer of the Year will be announced during Georgia CASA's annual Awards of Excellence celebration at the annual Georgia CASA Conference on August 22. The award is named in honor of Karen N. Sibley, whose lifelong commitment to children and advocacy helped strengthen the CASA movement throughout Georgia.

About Georgia CASA: Forty-seven affiliate CASA programs have been established throughout the state since Georgia CASA was founded nearly 37 years ago. In 2023, Georgia CASA's final geographic expansion reached children in foster care in all 159 counties across the state. Each CASA affiliate program engages the community to train volunteer advocates. Volunteers are everyday citizens who offer individualized attention and best-interest advocacy for children in foster care. The CASA organization is the only model of this kind, built around one child and one compassionate, highly trained adult advocate. For more information about Georgia CASA or to find an affiliate program near you, visit <https://www.gacasa.org/grow>.