

HEARTLAND CASA NEWSLETTER



Executive Director's Note



AS WE MOVE INTO THE HOLIDAY SEASON, I AM REMINDED JUST HOW STRONG AND GENEROUS OUR COMMUNITY TRULY IS. THIS MONTH, OUR TEAM HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO GROW, LEARN, AND CONNECT IN POWERFUL WAYS—ATTENDING THE PREVENT CHILD ABUSE CONFERENCE, DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE THROUGH TBRI TRAINING, AND CELEBRATING OUR PRESENCE IN CHRISTIAN COUNTY WITH A RIBBON CUTTING HOSTED BY THE CHRISTIAN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. WE ALSO HAD A BLAST PARTNERING WITH THE TAYLORVILLE FIRE DEPARTMENT AND POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THE MONSTER BASH, CREATING A FUN, SAFE SPACE FOR FAMILIES WHILE SHARING THE MISSION OF CASA. ONE OF MY FAVORITE MOMENTS, AS ALWAYS, WAS OUR SWEARING-IN CEREMONY, WHERE NEW VOLUNTEERS TOOK AN OATH TO STAND UP FOR CHILDREN IN CARE. EACH OF THESE EXPERIENCES REINFORCES WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO: EVERY CONNECTION, EVERY TRAINING, AND EVERY COMMUNITY EVENT ULTIMATELY HELPS US BETTER SERVE CHILDREN WHO NEED A CONSISTENT, CARING ADVOCATE BY THEIR SIDE. THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF THIS IMPORTANT WORK. - BLAINE SMITH

"THE MAGIC OF THE HOLIDAYS ISN'T IN THE GIFTS—IT'S IN THE HEARTS THAT GIVE."

HAPPY 1 YEAR 'CASA'VERSARY STEPHENI HALL

⭐ Happy 1-Year CASA'versary, Stepheni! ⭐

Thank you for an incredible year of dedication, love, and advocacy for the children we serve. Your passion shines through in everything you do, and your humor and bright smile bring so much fun and warmth to our team. We're grateful for you and all the heart you bring to Heartland CASA! ❤️



November 2025



24

25

26 CASA office
closes at
1230pm

27 Thanksgiving
CASA office
closed

28 CASA office
closed



DECEMBER 2025



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

1

#GVING
2 TUESDAY

3 Lori's
Birthday

4

5

Home for the
6 Holidays
GALA

21

22

23

CASA Office
Closed
24 Christmas
Eve

CASA Office
25 Closed
Christmas

26

27

28

29 Olivia's
Birthday

30

New Year's
31 Eve - CASA
office closes
at 1230pm



#GIVINGTUESDAY



This GivingTuesday, you can bring hope to a child in foster care who feels alone in a system filled with uncertainty. Last year, nearly 900 children in Macon, DeWitt, Christian, and Moultrie Counties entered the child welfare system — each facing new homes, new schools, and the trauma of instability.

At Heartland CASA, our 80+ volunteers and staff stand beside more than 550 children each year, offering the steady, caring presence every child deserves. But many more children still need an advocate.

Your gift today helps us recruit and train more CASA volunteers, ensuring no child faces the system alone. Please consider a GivingTuesday contribution of \$25, \$50, \$100, or any amount meaningful to you.





We are grateful for these new advocates who have stepped up to be a steady, trusted voice for children in foster care. Their commitment ensures every child feels seen, heard, and supported.



Please join us in welcoming Haleigh Ornduff to the Heartland CASA team! Haleigh brings strength, intelligence, and a true passion for advocacy — and we're thrilled to have her talents (and her amazing baking skills!) supporting our mission. We're so glad you're here, Haleigh!



Use your voice to lift theirs.
Become a CASA.



We were honored to celebrate our ribbon cutting with the Greater Taylorville Chamber of Commerce and are so grateful for the warm welcome into the community. Their support means so much as we continue expanding our mission to serve children in foster care. Thank you for embracing Heartland CASA with such kindness and enthusiasm!





Impact Story: The Power of Showing Up

Shared by: LeAnne Whitsel

This month, we are proud to highlight the extraordinary advocacy of CASA Volunteer Melissa Hendricks, whose commitment and consistency made a meaningful difference in the life of a teenager navigating her first year of high school. Melissa was appointed to this youth's case only a few months ago. Yet, she made an immediate impact by doing what CASA advocates do best—showing up, listening deeply, and building trust. In that short time, Melissa became a steady and reliable adult in her youth's life, someone she could talk to and feel genuinely heard by. That bond proved invaluable when the youth experienced a frightening situation and was unable to reach her caseworker.

The first person she turned to was Melissa. Because of Melissa's presence and responsiveness, she quickly contacted her Advocate Supervisor, filed a hotline report, and ensured the youth's safety until formal support could step in. As a result, the agency was able to move the youth to a safer placement the very next day. This story is a powerful reminder of why CASA matters. Sometimes, the most transformational thing we can offer a child is simply being a consistent, caring adult they can depend on. Melissa's dedication provided safety, stability, and reassurance in a moment when it was needed most.



Thank you, Melissa, for embodying what it means to advocate with heart.



HEARTLAND CASA INVITES YOU

Home for the Holidays

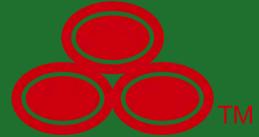
Gala

Saturday, December 6th

Thank You to our hosts, Osbern Acres & Our Gingerbread Sponsors, Jerger Pediatric Dentistry and Melanie and Al Schelling State Farm Insurance! Your commitment helps create a magical event and makes a lasting impact on the children we serve through Heartland CASA. Thank you for helping bring hope to our community! ❤️



Melanie and Al Schelling
State Farm



🎄 Don't Miss the Home for the Holidays Gala!

Join us on December 6th at Osbern Acres for an unforgettable evening filled with holiday magic, incredible food, music, and community—all in support of children in foster care. Last year's gala helped raise critical funds to recruit and support CASA volunteers, and this year's event promises to be even more meaningful. Your ticket does more than reserve your seat—it helps give a child a voice, stability, and hope.

Buy your tickets today at www.iheartcasa.org/gala

**GET
YOUR *Today*
TICKETS**

