

Monthly Email Letter from Jen King, Georgia CASA Executive Director



May 31, 2024

“If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be and what would you want to talk about?”

Ericka McClam, Gwinnett County CASA Director, posed this question to the group at our spring CASA directors’ meeting. One by one, affiliate CASA directors from all around the state introduced themselves along with their response to this question. Some answered with famous figures like Dolly Parton, philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, Issa Rae, or Tina Fey (my choice). But most responded with family members. Great-grandmothers who were never known, grandchildren yet to be born, grandparents and children at specific ages, and fathers and mothers, some with us and some who have passed on, filled our thoughts and hearts.

This opening exercise set the tone for our three days together. As each person shared, emotions, memories, and love filled the room. At the close of the session, Ericka left us with a powerful reminder and consideration, “For children experiencing foster care, their answer to this question would often be family, caregivers, or loved ones too.”

We first encounter children and families when their situation has reached a crisis. Yet, at the heart of our advocacy is a commitment and respect for the importance of maintaining permanent connections to family. The pursuit of timely reunification of parents and children, whenever possible, keeping siblings together or connected, advocating for kinship caregiver resources, and prioritizing regular and quality family time are a few of the ways CASA advocates bring attention and focus to these connections.

For some of us, our dinner partner of choice is out of reach (incredibly, despite being a contemporary, Tina Fey doesn’t even know my name!). But for the many children who long for quality time with their families, this is an outcome that is often attainable. Thank you for being a part of our continued effort to strengthen and preserve family connections for Georgia’s children.

Your friend,

Jen King
Executive Director
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“Children don’t want to be in a better family. They just want their own family to be better.”
Judge J. Russell Jackson, Ret., Forsyth County