



MACON/BIBB CITIZEN  
ADVOCACY, INC.

# COMMUNITY CURRENTS

FALL 2019

## Sisters for Life

Joi and Tamika met over ten years ago when the Citizen Advocacy Coordinator introduced them. “Tamika was not what I expected,” said Joi. “She is full of life and never meets a stranger. Meeting her was just like meeting one of the girls.”

Over the years, the two have become like sisters, weathering the storms of life and the good times together. Shortly after they met, the two traveled to Jones County so that Tamika could register to vote. “She wanted to vote for Obama in the presidential election,” said Joi. “She wanted to be a part of that history-making event, so we did it together.” The two enjoy eating out (Applebee’s, Red Lobster and Olive Garden are favorites) and going to the movies. They even attended a Vegas party at Joi’s home, learning the ins and outs of gambling at the card tables and slots. The two are thinking about a music concert they can attend soon and are looking around to see what’s coming up in Macon.

Most recently, Tamika has decided that she would like her own apartment. After searching various places in Macon, the two have found the perfect spot and are making plans for the move to take place next month. Tamika is excited about all the things that go with getting one’s own place – new furniture and décor, new friends and especially setting up her new home.

“Tamika has opened my eyes to a greater set of values for my life,” said Joi. “Being connected to Tamika and to Citizen Advocacy has enriched my life and grown my experiences. Our relationship means a lot to me and my family – we are sisters for life.”



Dana Lloyd of the Georgia Advocacy Office in Atlanta, traveled to Macon on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 to share her expertise regarding the loss of control experienced by those under state guardianship and to offer a much better way: Supported Decision Making, an alternative that allows those who experience disability to keep their rights and ability to make decisions for themselves and their lives. Advocates attending the training had their questions answered and learned tips for expanding the number of people involved in a person’s life. Thanks Dana!

## Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of At-Risk Adults in Georgia

Adapted from Division of Aging Services article – Please read entire article at <https://aging.georgia.gov/abuse-neglect-and-exploitation-risk-adults-georgia>

Abuse of older and disabled adults (at-risk adults) is one of the most undetected and underreported problems in the U.S. and is usually intentional. It can involve physically harming or distressing the at-risk adult or not doing something that a person has a duty to do, such as a caregiver not providing medications to an at-risk adult who needs them. The definitions, indicators and types of abuse apply to both older adults and adults 18 and older with any disability. Abuse can occur in a person's own home or in a community living arrangement such as assisted living settings, personal care homes or nursing homes.

### Types of abuse

Abuse of at-risk adults occurs when someone intentionally causes harm or puts someone at risk for harm. Neglect occurs when someone intentionally or unknowingly withholds basic necessities or care. Self-neglect refers to a person's inability to provide care and support to him or herself. At-risk adult abuse can take several forms, including:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse or exploitation
- Neglect
- Self-neglect

### Warning signs

If you are concerned that an at-risk adult might be the victim of abuse, knowing the possible signs and indicators can help. Changes in the adult's behavior or emotional state may suggest a problem. Examples are behaviors suggesting agitation, apathy, withdrawal, fear or anxiety. Additionally, adult's comments about being mistreated, or the refusal of the caregiver to allow you to visit the adult alone could be indicators of abuse.

Some indicators of neglect and exploitation include:

Failure to provide or purposely withholding shelter, clothing, food, water, medical care, or other basic needs

Malnourishment, dehydration, or weight loss inconsistent with medical diagnosis

Ignoring, leaving the person alone for long periods of time

Unsanitary or unsafe living conditions: rats, roaches, human or animal waste on floors or furniture; house filled with trash, rotting floors, falling ceiling, no toilet

Untreated medical conditions or injuries

Lack of clothing or inappropriate clothing for weather

Extreme dirtiness of bedding or lying in own waste

Decayed teeth or lack of needed false teeth

Lack of needed glasses or hearing aids

Bed sores or rashes

### Helpful Services

Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD),

Georgia Crisis & Access Line: 1-800-715-4225 (24/7 mental health, substance abuse & emergency services). Or visit [www.mygcal.com](http://www.mygcal.com). For non-emergency mental health, developmental disabilities and addictive disease services, call 1-888-785-6954.

## Macon Bibb Citizen Advocacy Celebrates the Power of Two

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Macon Bibb Citizen Advocacy celebrated 41 years of relationships and the Power of Two standing together as one with its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Gospel Benefit Concert. Four tremendous church choirs came together with gospel group Soul's Desire to bring uplifting music and praise for this annual fundraiser that featured mass choirs from Lizzie Chapel, Union, Mount Vernon and Center Hill Baptist churches. Hosted at Lizzie Chapel, the event was emceed by Herbert Dennard and was attended by church goers, the citizen advocacy board, the public, and relationships that are providing protection and advocacy for those who experience disability. Featured speaker Verda Colvin talked about her relationship with Matthew, the young man whom she now considers "family." What a wonderful way to spend a Saturday afternoon!

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- Jodi Palmer
- Rabbi Aaron Rubinstein

### STAFF

- Amanda Smith, Coordinator
- Cindy Tengelsen, Office Manager



*"I refuse to allow a disability to determine how I live my life. There is only one way to go in life and that's forward."*

Christopher Reeve

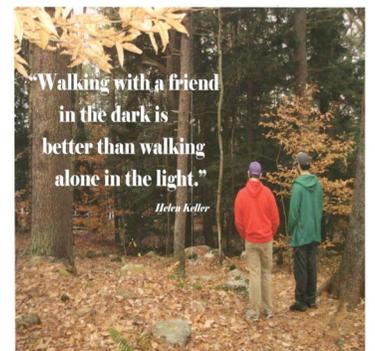
*Watch our Video*



Matthew & Verda

*"This is some of the best gospel performances I've seen." said Herbert Dennard, Emcee of the event.*

*"We support Citizen Advocacy and our doors are always open to events that further their mission," said Rev. Ronald Toney, Lizzie Chapel Baptist Church.*



**MACON/BIBB CITIZEN ADVOCACY, INC.**

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**An Invitation to Action**

Citizen Advocacy is an opportunity to stand by, for and with another person, taking action to ensure a better life and an enrichment of opportunity for a person who may, because they have a disability, have been subject to isolation and segregation, rejection and abuse, poverty and injustice.

**CITIZEN ADVOCACY**

A Valued Citizen, unpaid and independent of human services, creates a relationship with a person who has a developmental disability and is at risk of social exclusion.

The citizen advocate represents and responds to that person's interests, and brings the gifts and concerns of the person into circles of ordinary community life.

Donate online at:

[maconbibbcitizenadvocacy.org](http://maconbibbcitizenadvocacy.org)

or by mail to:

Macon/Bibb Citizen Advocacy

613 Cherry Street

Macon, Georgia 31201

We welcome and depend on your support!

**Thank You**

Citizen Advocacy is a community-strengthening endeavor that depends on the support of local citizens. All investments directly benefit the Macon/Bibb County community. Our thanks to these folks who have invested from January 2017 through October 2019.

INDIVIDUALS

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High Street Unitarian Universalist Church

Lizzie Chapel Baptist Church

Mt. Vernon Baptist Church

Soul's Desire

Union Baptist Church

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