



The CASA Voice

July 2014

CASA For the Highland Lakes Area: Serving Blanco, Burnet, Lampasas, Llano and San Saba Counties
1719 Ridgeview
Kingsland, TX 78639

Headline Story: National CASA Conference: A Better Life for EVERY CHILD! (Page 2)

The CASA Campaign Slogan is up for a Vote. Do not forget to cast your vote by completing the survey that was emailed. Voting will close July 11th !!!!!

Upcoming Events

- July 17, 2014: "Coffee with CASA" in Lampasas from 4:30-6:30pm at the "Common Grounds" Building at 1502 Central Texas Expressway.



Pictured Above: CASA Staff with Big Tex at the National CASA Conference that was held July 8th-10th in Grapevine, Texas. In attendance from our local CASA office were - from left to right, Michele Boshears (top left); Karon Justice (bottom left); Kristen Harris; and Glenda Hartman. Big Tex, himself, was there and was declaring his support for our CASA kids (far right)!


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- **July 17, 2014: Open House has been postponed due to the flood at the office. New date is to be determined. We are doing "Coffee with CASA" this day instead. Details above.**
- **August 20, 2014: Fingerprinting at the CASA Office for advocates who could not attend in May.**

Interested in Sharing CASA With Your Group or Organization?

Contact the CASA office and we will be happy to come and share what we do. We have spoken to church groups, civic organizations, bible study groups and social groups and we would LOVE to do more! No group is too small!!!! Call us today!!!!

Advocates, please complete the CASA survey and vote for your favorite campaign slogan! The advocate who created the winning slogan will be awarded with a trip to our Texas CASA Conference in October 2014!

National CASA Conference:

A Better Life for EVERY CHLD!

National CASA Conference is held annually, but this year we were lucky enough that it came to us! The 2014 National Conference was held in Grapevine, Texas and our National Association did an excellent job of locating very interesting, inspiring and informative speakers for this event! This year, we were fortunate enough to send 4 staff members to the National Conference and what a learning experience it was! The conference theme was “A Better Life for EVERY child” and the workshops helped us learn how to make a “better life” for all of our CASA kids. Workshop trainings that we were able to attend included topics such as working with traumatized children; advocating for permanency; equipping and engaging advocates to promote awareness about issues our CASA kids face; growing our CASA program; and maintaining perspective while working very challenging cases. The highlight of the conference was listening to several former CASA youth share their story about the challenges that they have faced in life and how their advocates helped them to rise above those challenges to become successful members of today’s society! Ashley Rhodes-Courter, a former CASA kid and author of the book “Three Little Words” was one of these presenters. She wowed the audience with her inspirational story, a story that spreads hope for children in foster care and a story that exemplifies what CASA is all about. Her story included her thoughts about how she might have lingered in the Florida foster care system, had it not been for her CASA volunteer. Ashley credits her advocate volunteer, in a large part, to challenging the foster care system and relentlessly advocating for Ashley’s placement with an adoptive family. Ashley was successfully adopted by a loving family because of what her CASA volunteer did! How is that for inspiration?!?!?! If you are interested in reading her book, we have it in our CASA library at the office. You can come and borrow it any time!

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet our Rookie of the Year, Paula McGregor!!!!

Paula has served a total of 13 children through our CASA program since she began volunteering just 10 months ago! She is a trooper and a TRUE Rookie of the Year!

Paula says that since becoming a volunteer advocate through CASA, she has been most surprised by the volume of cases in this area and the numbers of children that we serve!

Some little known tidbits about Paula - after a personal tragedy, she became a Peer Mentor for the TAPS grief program --- just another way that she gives back!!! She is a mother of 3 - ages 27, 24 and 15. Paula is a self-proclaimed “military brat” and she attended high school while in Germany. She is a cattle rancher, property manager and grandmother, as well. She loves to cook and she and her husband teach CHL classes!



When asked about the reason that she chose to volunteer with CASA, Paula had trouble choosing just one reason. However, her stated that she really had a strong desire to give back and then heard of CASA while fulfilling her civic duty as a juror for a CPS termination trial. During this trial, a CASA volunteer testified and she was intrigued by the opportunity to advocate for a child. Shortly after, Paula states that she was blessed to be able to quit working full-time and she began looking more deeply for a way to give back. Then, one day, she saw a CASA ad and knew that CASA was what she wanted to do. Now, CASA is the BLESSED one because we just don’t know what we’d do without her!

Thank you, Paula, and to all of our advocates, for the difference that you make each day in the lives of our CASA kids!

Sincerely, Your CASA Staff

CASA For the Highland Lakes Area



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

**CASA FOR THE
HIGHLAND LAKES AREA**

Help us Spread the CASA word!!!

Recruitment is always underway at CASA and we could use your help in getting the word out about CASA. Please invite us to speak at any group you are involved with! Also, Like us on [Facebook](#) and invite your [Facebook](#) friends to Like our page too! You can search for our [Facebook](#) Page by entering "CASA for the Highland Lakes Area".

CASA Happenings

New volunteer advocates are sworn in.

Pictured at Right: Left to Right - Judge Mabray; Executive Director, Kristen Harris; Debbie Kane; Sherri Peacock and Susan Bundrick.

Below: Advocates taking the Pledge.



Below: Judge Mabray recites the oath as the new volunteer advocates are sworn in!



Below: The new advocates sport their CASA gear!



May 29, 2014 - Judge Mabray swears in the new volunteers!

CASA CORNER

You may be seeing "CASA Corner" in some of our newsletters. This section of the newsletter is intended to highlight an activity that you can do with the children in your life! These highlighted activities are fun for all kids, including your CASA kid or your own children and grandchildren! If you have any ideas for a CASA Corner activity, please send it to our CASA office!



It's FLAG-tastic!!!!

Supplies: Red and Blue Paint; A large piece of paper (butcher paper would work well); and a frame of the same size (if desired).

How to Make it: The picture pretty much says it all, but kids will have a blast using their feet and hands to make this craft! If there is more than one kid helping, it would even be cute to put their name or initials by the handprints and footprints that belong to each child!

Happy 4th of July!

Applause to Advocates!!!!!!!



Our Advocates do amazing things each and every day through their volunteer work at CASA. Here are just a few things that we have been amazed about over the past month!!!!!!! Let's give each of these Advocates a great BIG round of APPLAUSE!!!!!!!

Happy Birthday to Our Advocates!

Betty Knowles
July 14th

Carrie Spradley
July 15th

Mance Bowden
July 18th

Helen Odell
July 26th

Jay Carey
July 29th

CASA Needs

Interested in donating items for children? Consider making an in-kind donation to CASA. We can always put the following items to good use!

- Gift Cards - we use these as birthday gifts for teens so that they can pick out their own clothing or gift items. Many times this is the first opportunity that our CASA kids have to go and purchase items that they like and have picked out themselves.
- New children's clothing or toys - we want our kids to have new things, so please do not donate any used or even gently used items.
- Hygiene products for the kids.

- Let's give a huge round of applause to **Bill and Chris Bussell** who had the joy of witnessing one of their CASA kids become adopted by her forever family! This child, now 12 years old and after nearly 2 and a half years in the foster care system, finally reached permanency through adoption by a loving family! All-the-while Bill and Chris were by her side and advocating for what was best for this 12 year-old girl. Thank you to the Bussell's for continuing along with this child and fulfilling your commitment as her advocate until permanency!
- Let's give a great, big round of applause to **Jay Carey**, who went above and beyond to gather information about and research a potential foster home placement for one of his CASA kids! Upon hearing about a potential housing option for this youth, Jay made a home visit to the potential foster home and determined that the facility would not be appropriate. Jay then provided CPS with information that led all parties to making a more educated and informed decision about the future of his CASA kid. Because of Jay's advocacy for the best possible forever home, a more appropriate home for this youth is being sought. There is no doubt that when another foster home is suggested Jay will ensure that it is a great place before his CASA kid is moved to his new home!
- One more huge round of applause is in order! This one goes to **Amy Perkins**. Amy has been a volunteer advocate for many years and has made a difference in the lives of many children. Just recently, one of Amy's CASA kids graduated from high school. Amy was by his side all the way and visited this CASA youth at 20 different placements while she was assigned as his advocate! She visited with him one last time in his placement and attended his graduation. Amy is one proud advocate because this young man successfully achieved his diploma!

Special Announcements

- **Our next Pre-service Training for new volunteers will be offered in August and is scheduled to be held in Lampasas. We need your help filling this class, so please tell your friends and family members about CASA and refer them to us if they are interested in becoming a volunteer advocate!**
- **The Open House that was originally scheduled to occur on July 17th at our office is being postponed. Due to the broken water pipe that occurred at CASA, we will be in the middle of some reconstructive work. We will let you know when another date and time is solidified and we hope that you will plan to attend at the new date and time! Join us in Lampasas for Coffee with CASA on this date instead! See below.**
- **On July 17th we will be having a "Coffee with CASA" event in Lampasas from 4:30-6:30pm at the "Common Grounds" building at 1502 Central Texas Expressway. Mark your calendars and bring a friend who might be interested in hearing about CASA!!!!!!**
- **A survey was sent to each advocate. Please complete the survey by July 11th. This annual survey helps us know what we can do differently in order to support our advocates. Also, the campaign slogan is in vote and is included in this survey!**



CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

Our Mission:

The mission of CASA For the Highland Lakes Area is to recruit, train and supervisor court appointed volunteers to advocate for children who come into the court system as a result of abuse and neglect. Those volunteers, who serve as

Guardians *ad Litem*, will make recommendations to the court, based on fact finding and investigation, in the best interest of the child.

Our Goal:

That every child that enters into foster care in our 5-County Area continue to be able to be served by our CASA Program. No child should go without a CASA to advocate for their needs!!

Become a CASA today!!!!

Thank You to All of Our Donors!!!!

With Special Thanks to the Following:

Daybreak Rotary Club of Marble Falls Church of Horseshoe Bay
Sunrise Reach Federated Church Robert and Nadene Hudson
St. Paul the Apostle Church, Horseshoe Bay Lions Club of Kingsland
The Darla Ferguson Family for Memorial Funds
Christ Redeemer Fellowship - Granite Shoals
Flat Creek Enoteca - Marble Falls

A special thanks to Iron Star Plumbing, who has assisted CASA multiple times in the past few months. James Engbarth, owner of Iron Star Plumbing, came out immediately when our office was flooding and fixed the issue free of charge! He said that it was his way of paying CASA back for helping the kids. He also got our plumbing up to code at the CASA office in order to ensure we do not have another incident. Thanks, James!!!!

Be In The Know: Get the CASA Voice Newsletter!!!!

We are pleased to provide this CASA newsletter each month to all of our CASA Volunteers, Board Members, CASA Friends and supporters!

If at any time you decide that you want to be removed from our email list, please send an email to the following email address and you will be removed from our list:

kristen@highlandlakescasa.com

If you or someone you know would like to be added to our email list, please send a request to the same email address.

We have every respect for your privacy, and we will not share your information with any person on business.