



# The CASA Voice

## CASA: Putting Children First

September 2014 Issue

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

### Headline Story: A Letter from the Executive Director - Empowering our Communities

*The CASA Office could always use in-kind donations! If you are interested in offering some assistance in this way, please check out our "CASA Wish List" on page 4! This list will give you up to date information about what CASA is in need of this month!*

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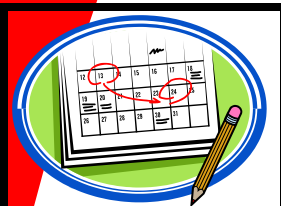
#### Upcoming Events

- Sept. 17, 2014: Charity Day at Doublehorn Brewing Company in Marble Falls! 10% of the sales go to CASA, so enjoy good food for a good cause all day!!!
- Sept. 23, 2014: Cheers for CASA – A CASA Meet and Greet at the Dabbs Hotel in Llano – 112 E. Burnet St., Llano, TX – Open to the Public from 4–6PM
- Oct. 23rd–25th: Texas CASA Conference in Galveston. Contact the office if you are interested in attending!
- Nov. 8th: Boots and BBQ: – CASA Fundraiser at Cadillac Dance Hall in Marble Falls. Contact the office for tickets to the event and for raffle tickets as well.



**CASA for the Highland Lakes Area is focusing on empowering communities to take care of OUR kids!**

In the Top Photo, Beverly Bowmaster, CASA staff, explains to local media why volunteering is so important. Middle: Executive Director, Kristen Harris, meets with a local women's group to discuss organizing everyday people to address the issue of child abuse. Bottom: Galyn Woerner, CASA Staff, is interviewed by media to explain the need for volunteers in our area and how volunteers make a difference in the lives of children we serve!



### Save the Date!

On November 8th we will be having a Boots and BBQ Fundraiser! There will be BBQ, Entertainment and a raffle! It's sure to be a lot of fun, so mark your calendars now and contact our office if you would like to purchase tickets to the event. More information soon!

### 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!!!!

## A Letter From the Executive Director: Empowering Communities, by Kristen Harris



It's hard to believe that I've already been at CASA for the Highland Lakes Area for 5 months! What a whirlwind it has been and what an amazing learning experience as well! Beverly Bowmaster wrote a wonderful letter for our issue of "The CASA Voice" last month about what our volunteers have taught her since she began working at CASA, and it is so true that we learn so much from all of our volunteers and supporters! Her letter got me to thinking about all of the things that I've learned since taking on the role as your executive director, and while the list is quite lengthy, the overall message is this: What we are doing here at CASA truly is grass roots organizing. We are EMPOWERING our communities to make a difference and tackle the issue of child abuse and neglect through our volunteer program. This kind of work is not easy, but it is necessary, for without communities of people getting together, our work becomes impossible. Afterall, "No one can do everything, but everyone can do something" (unknown author) and with everyone joining together we are bound to make a positive difference!

Most of you are aware that my background is in child welfare and that I spent the 8 years prior to coming over to CASA working for the CPS system in many areas throughout our great State of Texas. During those 8 years I had the pleasure of working with many different CASA programs and the reality is, I did not give a lot of thought to how much CASA really does help shed light on the issue of child abuse and neglect. I had no idea what a gold mine CASA is for the children that you serve, because not only are you reaching out to the children and families that are a part of the system, but you are reaching out to community members as a whole and asking them to join the cause. As a state worker I wore many hats, but approaching community members and asking them to help address the worthy issue of ending child abuse was not one of them. I am so happy today that I get to be a part of something bigger and I am honored to be spreading the mission and vision of CASA to our home communities.

Every day my staff and I are out in the communities that we serve talking to people about what CASA does and why we do it, and I know that our volunteers and supporters are also out there backing us up! You all are helping us to spread the CASA word and for that I am so appreciative, but even more importantly, the children in foster care are benefitting from your hard work and dedication to addressing this issue that is worthy of the attention of all of society. So, for that reason, we will not stand silent! We will continue to be the voice for these children! We will continue to advocate for a positive transformation in the lives of OUR children.

Thank you all for the many ways that you support CASA!

Sincerely,

Kristen K. Harris, MSSW

# CASA For the Highland Lakes Area



Advocates, don't forget that we need your timesheets and mileage each month so that we can get credit for your hard work through our grants!!! If you have questions about how to submit these items, please contact the office for help.

**Make a Difference!  
Support your local CASA program!**

## CASA Happenings



Pictured to the Left: Judge Mabray swears in the new volunteers as members of our attorney panel look on. Pictures from left to right are Judge Cheryll Mabray and Attorneys, Natalie Bennett and Eddie Arredondo.



Pictured to the Right: Our newly sworn in volunteers pose for a photo opportunity with their trainers! Congratulations to our new advocates! We just know that you all are going to be great!



Left: Galyn Woerner is all smiles at the adoption hearing for her CASA kid!!!



Pictured Above: Jimmie Rushing, Paula McGregor and Dave Johnson, all volunteer advocates with CASA, helped train our newest advocates by being on the volunteer panel.



## CASA Boots and BBQ Fundraiser!

November 8th at the Cadillac Dance Hall in Marble Falls

You can show your support by becoming a

SPONSOR or DONOR of a Raffle Item!

Sponsorships are available now! This is a good opportunity to advertise your support or your company's support for CASA.

Ticket sales for this event are available by contacting our office.  
More information to come!





# Applause to Advocates!!!!!!!



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

## Happy Birthday to Our Advocates and Staff!

Robbie Hawkins  
September 3rd

Charlotte Hays  
September 4th

Michael Lubawski  
September 8th

Dusty Durst  
September 10th

Shelly Yelvington  
September 11th

Amy Masuda  
September 21st

Dave Johnson  
September 22nd

Robert Landstrom  
September 25th

Paula McGregor  
September 27th

- Let's give a great big round of applause to our newest advocates who graduated from pre-service training and were sworn in on 8/28/14! Congratulations to **Cindy Lomicka, Evelin Martinez-Valdez, Debbie Massey, Natalie Shannon, Theresa Sivells and Deena Weems!** Welcome to the CASA Team, we are so lucky to have you all!!!!!!
- We are excited to be able to recognize that in the past month we've been a part of some MAJOR success stories. One of these success stories that brings a huge smile to all of our faces is that a young man, age 17, has been adopted by a forever family after 11 years in the foster care system. We would like to give a HUGE shout-out and round of applause to **Karon Justice and Sue Wieland!** **Karon** started out as this young man's volunteer advocate in May of 2003, before she was even a staff member at CASA. **Karon** has been so dedicated to this young man and she continued to advocate for him after becoming a CASA staff member. In 2010, **Sue Wieland** took over as his volunteer, and **Sue and Karon** both never gave up on the possibility that a forever family would be located for this CASA youth. On 8/11/14 this dream became a reality! Congratulations to this young man and his forever family, and congratulations to **Karon Justice and Sue Wieland** for never giving up on a youth's right to be part of a safe and loving family!!!!
- Congratulations are also in order for **Christa Collins and Galyn Woerner.** Both of these ladies were advocates on cases that had a positive outcome! Each of their CASA kids were adopted recently! Thank you both, for all that you did to help make the outcomes for these children such a success!!!!

## Special Announcements

- Charity Day at Double Horn Brewing Company will be on September 17th. 10% of all food and drink sales on that day will be donated to CASA, so plan to come and eat lunch or dinner for a good cause! The Double Horn is located at 208 Ave. H in Marble Falls!
- Cheers for CASA is a social event that we've been doing in many of the counties that we serve. It is an opportunity for community members to come and meet the CASA staff and learn a little about the CASA program while also visiting with community members and enjoying snacks and beverages, free of charge. The next Cheers for CASA event will be at the Dabbs Hotel in Llano on Tuesday, September 23rd from 4-6pm. The address to the Dabbs Hotel is 112 E. Burnet St. in Llano.
- Texas CASA Conference will occur at the Moody Gardens in Galveston October 23rd through October 25th. If you are interested in attending, please contact the CASA office or go to [texascasaconference.org](http://texascasaconference.org) to register.
- Boots and BBQ Fundraiser for CASA will be held on November 8, 2014, so mark your calendars! More information to come very soon!
- Adoption Day in Burnet County was a big hit last year and is a lot of fun! Adoption Day this year is scheduled for November 15th, so mark your calendars!

## CASA WISH LIST

Gift Cards for Teens in Care

Hand Soap for the Office

Paper Products for the Office, including plates, plastic cutlery, and paper towels

Snack Items for our Training Classes



## CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

### **Thank You to All of Our Donors!!!! With Special Thanks to the Following:**

Trinity Lutheran Church, Blanco, TX

Michael Villa

Anonymous

Hal and Sue Harton

Christ Redeemer Fellowship, Granite Shoals, TX

Church at Horseshoe Bay, Horseshoe Bay, TX

St. Paul the Apostle Church, Horseshoe Bay, TX

Kathy Kasperek

#### **Our Mission:**

The mission of CASA For the Highland Lakes Area is to recruit, train and supervise 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!!!!**

### **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.