



The CASA Voice

CASA: Putting Children First April 2015 Issue

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

DONATE to CASA for the Highland Lakes Area as part of Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month!!! If each person reading this newsletter donated just \$10 to our CASA program we would see more than \$2,000 in honor of child victims everywhere. Donate on our website or send in a check today!!!

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Upcoming Events

- April 7th: New Volunteer Training begins.
- April 10th: Go Blue Day – wear blue to help raise awareness about the issue of child abuse!
- April 23rd: Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon 11:30-2:00PM
- April 25th: Children’s Day, Marble Falls
- May 7th: CASA DE MAYO – Volunteer Retreat in Llano
- May 30th: The CASA CLASSIC – Inaugural Charity Golf Tournament.
See pg. 3 for more!

Headline News:

April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month!



The month of April is a time to draw attention to the issue of child abuse and neglect in our society. Last year there were over 66,000 child victims of abuse and neglect in Texas.

For more information about how you can help address the issue of child abuse, see page 2. Also, wear blue in support of child victims on April 10th, which is “NATIONAL GO BLUE DAY”!



CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month!

Every year in April, we observe National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month and National Volunteer Week. April is such a busy month for our CASA program because we are both a volunteer organization and an organization committed to the welfare of children who have been victimized by abuse and neglect. Year round, but especially during the month of April, we commit ourselves to raising awareness for the child victims we serve and appreciating the volunteers who make all of our efforts possible. We also recommit ourselves to ending the cycle of abuse and to standing up for every child too young to speak for themselves. CASA for the Highland Lakes Area encourages citizens of Blanco, Burnet, Lampasas, Llano and San Saba counties to come together during April to promote awareness of local child abuse and neglect.

CASA for the Highland Lakes Area is one of the 71 CASA programs across Texas that works to ensure all children placed in the foster care system due to abuse or neglect can have the safe, stable and nurturing environments they need to thrive. CASA programs recruit and train everyday members of the community to speak up for the best interests of children in court to ensure that they are placed into loving, permanent homes as quickly as possible. These extraordinary people are called CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteers.

Last year, more than 46,800 children were in the care and custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) due to abuse or neglect, and 389 of those 46,800 were from our service area. CASA for the Highland Lakes Area, along with our statewide CASA community, provided 8,066 CASA volunteers who served 24,742 children in 207 of Texas' 254 counties over the course of the past year.

In a time when so many are focusing on the problems, CASA programs are collaborating with stakeholders and contributing to the solution. On Feb. 12, hundreds of CASA volunteers, staff and board members joined people from our local program at the Texas State Capitol to bring attention to the challenges facing children in the child welfare system, and discuss policy priorities aimed at improving outcomes for these children. CASA was also honored with a resolution introduced by Rep. John Otto, along with the overwhelming support of many other elected officials in the House of Representatives.

The future of Texas relies on the healthy growth and development of all children. So this April, as we mark National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month, we call upon all citizens, community agencies, faith groups, schools, government agencies and businesses to increase their participation in efforts to support families and prevent child abuse, thereby strengthening our entire community. With National Volunteer Week coming up April 12-18, now would be the perfect time to get involved with the CASA cause. Contact our office to learn more about our volunteer opportunities and DONATE now by going to www.highlandlakescasa.com or sending in your donation to 1719 Ridgeview Dr., Kingsland, TX 78639.



THIS APRIL BECOME A CASA SUPERHERO FOR A CHILD IN NEED!

Volunteer with CASA or Donate Now by going to our website:

Volunteer: <http://highlandlakescasa.com/volunteer/> or call our office.

Donate Just \$10 and Make a Difference:

<http://highlandlakescasa.com/ways-help/>

or send a check to 1719 Ridgeview Dr., Kingsland, TX 78639



Get Ready for the Inaugural CASA CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT!

May 30th, 2015 12:00PM

Lighthouse Country Club
Kingsland, TX

GREAT PRIZES, including:

**New Ford F-150 donated by
Johnson Sewell Ford**

**\$10,000 Cash sponsored by
Wave Chasers**

**Pebble Beach Golf Vacation
sponsored by Highland Lakes
Watercraft**

**Set of Golf Iron donated by
The Golf Ranch in Georgetown, TX**

REGISTER TODAY:

www.lighthousecountryclub.com/CASA
or call
325-388-3440

It's Tee Time!!!!

Volunteer Spotlight:

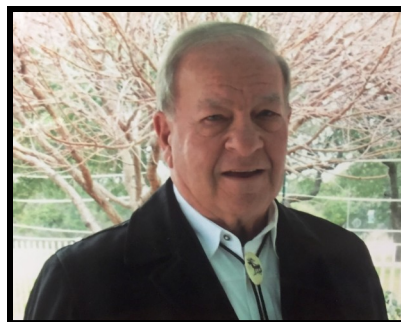
Meet Dave Hartig, one of our Burnet County Volunteers

CASA Involvement:

Dave has been a volunteer with our CASA program for 1.5 years now and has worked with 10 children during that time. Currently, Dave is serving as a CASA volunteer on 3 cases, representing 4 boys in total. Dave has a knack at working with all children, but does especially well with teenage boys. He is a great role model for these teenagers, and he takes pride in being their mentor and advocate! Thanks, Dave, for all you do!!!!

What Made Dave decide to Volunteer with CASA?

Dave states that about 3 years ago he had a "close call" and began to examine why his life was spared. He and his wife had been foster parents in the past, and he reports that he had always admired the CASA organization and the role that the volunteers play in the lives of the children that they serve. He reports that he made the decision at that point to recommit his life to helping abused and neglected children.



Pictured Above: Dave Hartig

Thank you, Dave, for all that you do for our CASA organization and for your CASA kids!!!!

Sincerely, Your CASA Staff



The Most Surprising Thing for Dave Since Serving as a Volunteer: Dave states that he has been most surprised to learn that there is such a huge need for CASA volunteers in our 5 county area. He states that he has also been pleasantly surprised by the respect that CASA has amongst the judges, attorneys and the parents that we work with in our area.

More Interesting Things About Dave?

Dave describes himself as a "former crusty Marine Corps Veteran" and he reports that he was concerned at first about relating to today's teenagers. He states, however, that what he's learned is that they are just like his own kids were as teens.

Dave wanted to give a special thanks to his wife and family for all of their support during his journey with CASA. He also added that the CASA supervisors are very helpful and that they make CASA a wonderful place to volunteer! From all of the CASA staff - Dave, you and the rest of our wonderful volunteers make CASA for the Highland Lakes Area what it is!!!! Thank you for all that you do!!!!

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

Derek Fortin
April 5th

Susan Gonzalez
April 6th

Kathryn Stephenson
April 10th

Mike Walton
April 15th

Beverly Bowmaster
April 21st

Natalie Shannon
April 28th



- We would like to give a big round of applause to all of our advocates who work with children in the permanent managing conservatorship of CPS. These cases are often the toughest because these children have been in the system for a long time. Many of these children end up being released from the foster care system only after they become adults and the volunteers on these cases often advocate for their CASA kids for years without having the satisfaction of finding a permanent and stable home for their CASA kid and closing a case. These cases can be overwhelming for volunteers for the reasons mentioned above, but also because youth who are in the permanent managing conservatorship of the State are often angry with their circumstances. Our volunteers currently covering these kinds of cases are: **Mary Benedict, Julie Biggs, Mance Bowden, Sandra Chapman, Jay Carey, Betty Dove, Louise Hancock, Dave Hartig, Dave Johnson, Betty Knowles, Mike Lubawski, Evelin Martinez-Valdez, Mayrean McDonough, Paula McGregor, Faye Payne, Jim Payne, Jimmie Rushing, Alexis Saint, John Saint and Carrie Spradley.** Thank you all for hanging in there with these children and youth through the good times and the bad! Please know that your efforts are greatly appreciated and very necessary to the welfare of the children you advocate for!!!!
- Thank you to all of the advocates who attended our Open House on March 31st. The Open House was a huge success! We want to especially thank **Mary Beth Read, Susan Gonzalez, Judith Williams and Gail McMillan** for bringing a friend to Open House and helping to expand our connections with others in the community!
- We have one more shout out to **Julie Biggs** who graciously took on a case in December that had already been open for over two years. **Julie** is now advocating for a 14 year old on this case and a potential relative caregiver was identified. Prior to the caregiver being approved, this young man's relationship with his foster mother began to deteriorate and **Julie** was so committed to ensuring that her CASA kid was okay that she went to check on him 2-3 times each week until she could get in front of a Judge and advocate that he be moved to the relative's home. CPS could not approve the caregiver's home at the time because the necessary paperwork had not been completed. However, because of **Julie's** hard work on this case, she was able to report to the Judge that she had seen this young man with his relative on multiple occasions and that she felt comfortable with the placement because of the interactions she had been able to observe. Because of **Julie's** thorough work with this youth and her advocacy for him in Court, the Judge agreed that the youth needed to be with his relative immediately. Thank you, **Julie**, for helping to expedite the move for this youth into a stable and permanent home!

CASA WISH LIST

Visa Gift Cards for Teens in Care

Paper Products for our training classes, including plates, plastic cutlery, and paper towels

Snack Items for our Training Classes, including nuts, chips, candy, etc.

Table Top Podium

Conference Table

CASA for the Highland Lakes Area also accepts monetary donations via our website or mailed to our office.

Special Announcements

- **National Go Blue Day is on April 10th, so remember to wear blue in support of child victims of abuse and neglect and contact our office about how to get more involved in the cause!!!!**
- **Volunteers, please mark your calendars for April 23rd at 11:30AM. We will be having our volunteer appreciation luncheon and the CEO of Texas CASA, Vicki Spriggs, will be our guest speaker! You don't want to miss this event, so plan to be there and email Galyn at Galyn@highlandlakescasa.com to reserve your spot!**
- **April 25th is Children's Day in Marble Falls. CASA will have a booth at the event and we will be hosting a coloring contest for the kids. Please contact our office if you want to help with this!**
- **Volunteers, please save the date of May 7th for our first Volunteer Retreat! The retreat theme is "CASA de Mayo" and there are a lot of fun and informational activities planned. More information to come!!!!**
- **We would like to welcome J.P. Wilson to the CASA Board of Directors. J.P. Wilson joined the board in March. He is currently the police chief at Granite Shoals Police Department and we are excited that he has joined our CASA program! Thank you, J.P., for joining our cause and committing to help our CASA program thrive!!!!!!**



CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

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

Hal and Sue Harton - Lampasas, TX

The Church at Horseshoe Bay

Kingsland Lions Club

Christ Redeemer Fellowship - Marble Falls, TX

Robert Ruff and The Sovern Group, Inc. - Marble Falls, TX

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!!!!

Board of Directors

Carol Leighton,
Board President

Charles Sugg, Vice President

Trudy Kelley, Treasurer

Jeffrey Bartz

Brenda Durst, Secretary

Cheryl O'Marley-Armstrong

Donald Cruver

Vicki Strevey

J.P. Wilson

Colleen Davis

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.