



The CASA Voice

CASA: Putting Children First May 2015 Issue

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

CASA Quick Stats

Number of children
being served by our
CASA program today:

200

Number of Active
Volunteers at CASA for
the Highland Lakes
Area:

77

Number of children
currently being served
from each of our
counties:

Blanco - 12

Burnet - 77

Lampasas - 41

Llano - 40

San Saba - 30

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Headline Story: CASA is Raising Awareness about Child Abuse!!!

Upcoming Events

- All of May: Marble Falls Massage Therapy Center is holding their "Stand Up for CASA" Fundraiser. Schedule an Ashiatsu Massage with them and they will donate \$20 back to CASA!!!! See more info on pg. 4.
- May 30th: CASA CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT - Lighthouse Country Club, Kingsland, TX. Contact the CASA office with questions!

DATE: MAY 30, 2015
TIME: SHOTGUN START AT 12 P.M.
FORMAT: FOUR PERSON SCRAMBLE

HOSTED BY
Lighthouse
118 Club Circle, Kingsland, TX

TITLE SPONSOR
AMERICAN BANK OF TEXAS
Great Texas People - Great Texas Bank

HOLE-IN-ONE PRIZE SPONSORS
Johnson Sewell NEW FORD F150 \$10,000 CASH
PEBBLE BEACH GOLF VACATION FOR TWO (VALUED UP TO \$7,500)
SET OF GOLF IRONS Golf Ranch

Register at:
LighthouseCountryClub.com/CASA
or call 325.388.6660

Help us "Drive" out Child Abuse at our
CASA CLASSIC Golf Tournament on May 30th at the Lighthouse Country Club in Kingsland, TX. Tee time is at 12:00 Noon.
For more information visit
lighthousecountryclub.com/CASA.



Interested in helping CASA, but can't be an advocate???

Here are some more ways you can help our organization:

1. Help us spread the word about our volunteer program.
2. Donate items from our wish list, or make a monetary donation to CASA.
3. Help us with a fundraiser.
4. Consider serving on our board of directors. Contact the office for more information.

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!!!! We can also help you plan a "Party with a Purpose"! Contact us!

Raising Awareness in the Communities We Serve!

The month of April was full of awareness events, particularly since April is Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month. The article below was written by Judge Gil Jones following an awareness event in Marble Falls that was sponsored by our CASA program and the Marble Falls Daybreak Rotary Club. Photos from this awareness event are on the next page!

Daybreak and CASA Event Recognizing Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month a Huge Success! - Gil Jones

Daybreak and CASA teamed up to host an event in Johnson Park honoring child victims of abuse and neglect. The ceremony began after the Colors were posted by local Boy Scouts from Troop 284 and Cub Scout Packs 2338 and 196 led by Garrett and Marshall Jett, with the audience pledging allegiance to our flag.

Kristen Harris, CASA's Executive Director led the ceremony with quiet moments of thought and prayer, punctuated by single taps of the Rotary bell by Judge Garrett, CPS worker Teresa Greenburg and CASA volunteer Faye Payne. The audience then took long-stem red roses to the waters of Backbone Creek, a tributary of Lake Marble Falls, and placed them on the water -- one rose for each of the children currently being served by CASA for the Highland Lakes.

CASA serves Burnet, Blanco, Llano, San Saba and Lampasas counties and is currently advocating for 198 children across those counties, 77 in Burnet County alone.

A moving talk was given regarding a small child who herself was the victim of abuse and neglect, whose siblings turned to drugs and crime, but who overcame that start to become a beautiful, professional woman with a happy family. She credits a CASA volunteer and foster parents for showing her a way to stop what is often a multi-generational cycle of neglect.

This writer was pleased to be asked share a few thoughts about how "ordinary" people can fill the gap -- the gap between the plight of an abused or neglected child and a normal, healthy and happy life.

The event was custom designed by the planners and is thought to be unique. "The idea for the bell-ringing ceremony actually originated from a candlelight ceremony script that many CASA programs use. We wanted to make the program fit our community though, and felt that a ceremony during the daylight hours would be more feasible for attendees. We developed a committee to work on a plan for this ceremony and after some discussion it was decided that a Bell Ringing Ceremony would be perfect. The rest of the ceremony just fell into place after that and people from CASA, Rotary and the County Attorneys Office all stepped up and made the event happen! The ceremony itself went great and it was a success because of the collaboration of these groups" according to Kristen Harris. A balloon release was considered originally but the flowers on the water was felt to be ecologically more appropriate, and safer for wildlife. The ducks in the creek were ecstatic!

Sponsoring this event is part of the Daybreak Rotary mission to help spread the word about the need for foster homes in Burnet and contiguous rural counties. (continued on the next page).

CASA For the Highland Lakes Area



Thank you, Volunteers!!!!

Not all of you were able to make it to our volunteer appreciation luncheon, but please know that we appreciate you all, more than we can ever express!!!!

We have a free t-shirt waiting for each of you at the office, so if you haven't gotten your t-shirt contact us and let us know your size so that we can reserve a shirt for you!!!!!!

Thanks again! You are all AMAZING!!

Continued from page 2:

The solemn, and sobering, event drew area dignitaries including District Judge (and Rotarian) Allan Garrett, Burnet County Judge James Oakley, Andi Ball representing Congressman Williams, District Attorney Sonny McAfee, Burnet County Attorney (and Rotarian) Eddie Arredondo, Llano County Attorney (and Rotarian) Becky Lange, Mayors George Russell from Marble Falls and Gary Wideman from Burnet, Constable Chris Jett, Burnet County Commissioner Joe Don Dockery, Sheriff W.T. Smith of Burnet County, Judge Don Adams, and Granite Shoals Police Chief (and CASA board of Directors member) JP Wilson.

Photos from the Event

Right: The bell rang 3 times in recognition of child victims. Pictured left to right are: Kristen Harris (CASA); Faye Payne (CASA); Teresa Greenburg (CPS) and Judge Allen Garrett (Rotarian and District Court Judge).



Bottom Left: Bell-Ringing photo

Bottom Right: Over 70 community members, including local dignitaries, attended the ceremony in Johnson Park!



Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Jay Carey, our Volunteer of the Year!!!!

CASA Involvement: Jay has been a volunteer with us for almost 5 years and has worked with 4 CASA kids during this time. Currently Jay is serving as a volunteer advocate to 2 CASA kids, one of whom has been in foster care since 2010. Jay is particularly good at working with teenage boys and both of his current CASA kids are in the permanent managing conservatorship of CPS. Jay has become very good at navigating the foster care system and ensuring that these young men have what they need.

What made Jay decide to volunteer with CASA? Jay reports that he has a daughter and son-in-law who adopted two brothers six years ago and he saw the hassle with the process and



Above: Jay Carey receiving the "Volunteer of the Year" Award at the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

wanted to try to help other couples figure it out. This is what led him to CASA!

What is the most surprising thing that Jay has encountered as a CASA? Jay states that he has been most surprised to learn how difficult it is for teenagers who have been raised in a poor

economic situation to change their mindset and to realize that they can accomplish goals that will help them provide a better life for themselves. Jay has worked hard to show the youth that he deals with through CASA that there are options and that they can have a better life than they have known.

Something you might not know about Jay? Jay was an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War and he continued to fly in the reserves for 22 years! Now Jay flies radio control model airplanes at the Kingsland RC field. Thank you, Jay, for your service to this country and your service to CASA!!!! We are so appreciative of all you do!!!!

CASA For the Highland Lakes Area



CASA Wish List

Visa Gift Cards for Teens in Care - teens love to shop for themselves, so a Visa Gift Card gives them the option to shop where they want to and pick out their own items.

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

Snack Items for training classes, such as nuts, chips, candy, drinks, etc.

Table Top Podium for training room.

Conference Table for training room.

Used Jet Ski Trailers - 2 trailers in good condition for mobile billboards that we plan to have



Other CASA Happenings During April!

Below: Blanco County Awareness Event.



Left: Llano County Balloon Release

Below: Beautiful scenery at the Appreciation Luncheon.



Left: San Saba County Balloon Release for Child Abuse Awareness.



Left: KVUE interview for Child Abuse Awareness
Right: Luncheon

Above: Vicki Spriggs, TX CASA CEO, inspiring our wonderful volunteers!!!!



Stand Up for CASA MESSAGE FUNDRAISER

Ashiatsu Massage is a unique form of massage therapy where expertly trained therapists stand on their clients, comfortably distributing medium to deep pressure, releasing stubborn knots and tight muscles.

Fans of Deep Tissue Massage- This Is For You!

During the month of May, the Ashiatsu Therapists of the Marble Falls Massage Therapy Center are going to donate \$20 from every 30, 60, or 90 minute Ashiatsu massage service they perform to help give back to an organization that does so much to stand up for the abused and neglected children in our community.

Hosting:
Marble Falls
massage therapy center

2108-A US HWY 281 North
512-289-0219

Benefiting:



Help Us Raise
\$2,000

30 min
\$50
60 min
\$80
90 min
\$120



Left: Schedule your Ashiatsu Massage for the month of May with Marble Falls Massage Therapy Center and \$20 will be donated to CASA for the Highland Lakes Area!!!!

We Are Looking for CASA Superheroes!

Will you join our team of Superheroes? Children who have been victims of abuse and neglect need a volunteer to step up and be their hero. Call us if you are interested in supporting a child in need by advocating for them in Court.



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!



Barbie Ott
May 2nd

Carol Leighton
May 3rd

Soc Gonzalez
May 8th

April Bergstrom
May 9th

Glenda Hartman
May 25th

- Our first Applause goes to **Paula McGregor** who has been advocating fiercely for a sibling group of 5. These children were removed due to drug use and domestic violence in the home and the parents have not been able to complete services and rectify the situation. The case ended up in a jury trial and, largely because of **Paula's** hard work, dedication and excellent testimony, the jury agreed that the parents' rights should be terminated and the children should be adopted by nonrelatives. This was a very tough case for many reasons, but **Paula** saw it through and it is evident that these children trust **Paula** and are in a much better situation because of her!!!! Thank you, **Paula**, for working so hard for the best interest of these sweet and deserving children! We are so sorry that you missed the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon because of this trial, but we are so lucky to have you as part of our team of Advocates!!!
- Our next Applause goes out to **Debbie Kane** who is not only a great advocate for her CASA kids, but she also graciously opened her home to us for the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon! It is always nice to offer a change of scenery for events like this and what a beautiful scene it was! Thank you, **Debbie**, for your hospitality and for your commitment to CASA!
- Our last Applause goes out to our newest advocates, who graduated from training on May 6th! Congratulations to **Terri Berhmann, Cathy Howard, Emily Johnson** and **LeeAnn Johnson** for completing pre-service training! Each of these ladies have now been sworn in as advocates and are ready to take their first CASA case! If you meet them, please give them a warm welcome!!!!

Special Announcements

- Looking for a way to support CASA?! Come golf with us on May 30th at the Lighthouse Country Club in Kingsland. Registration is open and is \$75 per player. This includes dinner and a possibility of winning great prizes! Go to www.lighthousecountryclub.com/CASA to learn more! Sponsorships for this event are also still available and can be secured by contacting our office.
- Don't forget to schedule your Ashiatsu Massage at the Marble Falls Massage Therapy Center during the month of May. Every Ashiatsu Massage completed in May will ensure a \$20 donation back to CASA for the Highland Lakes Area. More information is available on our website and on page 4 of this newsletter.
- **CASA Advocates**, we have several new cases where the children are placed out of the area and there is no volunteer assigned to these cases at this time. If you are interested in taking a new case, or even if you normally travel to the locations listed below and can help us cover visits with these CASA kids, please let us know! The case information is as follows for these cases:
 - Blanco Case** - 1 girl, age 4 - placed in Dickinson, TX
 - Burnet Case** - 3 girls, ages 6, 10 and 12 - placed in Corpus Christi, TX
 - Burnet Case** - 2 children, 3 year old girl and 6 month old boy - placed in Joshua, TX
 - San Saba Case** - 1 girl, age 1 month - placed in Luling, TX
 - Lampasas Case** - 1 girl, age 13 - placed in Garland, TX



CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

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

**Richard Rantzow; Kerry Spradley; Debra Mitchell; Julie Davis;
Colleen Davis; Robert Hudson; Juli Gilson; Julie Biggs
Christ Redeemer Fellowship - Marble Falls; Anonymous;
Church at Horseshoe Bay; First Presbyterian Church - Lampasas;
Hal and Sue Harton; Kingsland Community Church;
The Family of Jean Willoughby;
Robert Ruff and The Sovern Group, Inc - Marble Falls;
Richard Ridenour; Barbie and Gary Ott; David and Linda Hartig;
April Bergstrom; Dave Johnson;
Trinity Lutheran Church - Marble Falls**

Thank you to **Marble Falls Massage Therapy Center** for donating a portion of their proceeds for every Ashiatsu Massage scheduled in May. Call to schedule yours today at 512-289-0219.

Thank you also to **James Engbarth with Iron Star Plumbing**, who donated his time to install a new garbage disposal in the kitchen of our office! Any time we have plumbing issues James and his team come through for us! Help us support those who support CASA - Call James if you need a plumber at 512-426-0050.

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.