



The CASA Voice

CASA: Putting Children First November 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:

206

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

74

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

Blanco - 12

Burnet - 68

Lampasas - 42

Llano - 51

San Saba - 33

Headline Story: November is National Adoption Awareness Month!!!

Calendar of Events

- **November 14th:**
Adoption Day in
Burnet, TX.
- **November 17th:**
Legacy Fund
Celebration of Giving
- **December 1st:** Giving Tuesday – consider supporting CASA, which can be done electronically on our website!
- **December 5th:**
Christmas Party for
the CASA kids.
- **December 10th:** Open House at CASA for the Highland Lakes Area.
4-6PM, all are welcome!



Two photos of real foster children who found happiness in their forever families! Look at those smiles!!!!



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November is National Adoption Awareness Month!!!



Did you know that if one family in one out of every three churches adopted a child from foster care, there would be no more orphans in the United States? That statement is so empowering to me because it shows that as a Nation we CAN address the issue of children lingering in the foster care system! It gives us hope that ALL children can find a forever home and that awareness is one step in reaching our goal of finding a forever home for ALL children who need one.

November is National Adoption Awareness Month and CASA for the Highland Lakes Area has again partnered with several local agencies and organizations including Child Protective Services, area Child Welfare Boards and The Marble Falls Daybreak Rotary Club to name a few, in spreading the word about opportunities for adoption. This year we are hoping that folks from the area who are interested in learning more will join us on November 14th at the Courthouse Annex in Burnet, TX. November 14th is the day that the counties of Blanco, Burnet, Llano, San Saba and Lampasas will all be celebrating National Adoption Month and on this day many children will be adopted out of the child welfare system and into their forever home! This is such a joyous occasion for the children and their families and it is one that will be celebrated in the biggest of ways! Superheroes will be the theme for the event, as all of the people helping the adoptions to occur are superheroes for these children! There will be refreshments, games, gifts and all of the things that a celebration always has and this event is open to the public. We will also have informational sessions for people interested in learning more about the adoption process and how to become licensed to adopt. The day will begin at 9:00AM and we hope to have a great turn-out! For more information about our Adoption Day on November 14th, please feel free to contact our office. The Burnet County Annex is located at 1701 E. Polk St., Burnet, TX.

CASA HAPPENINGS

Both photos show our visit to the KVUE studios in Austin where Kirk Noaker with Marble Falls Daybreak Rotary and Kristen Harris, Executive Director, were interviewed about a CASA fundraiser and about Adoption Day, which is occurring November 14th in Burnet. Thank you, KVUE, for always helping us to promote CASA and our Adoption Events in the Hill Country!!!!!!



Above: The interview, in progress, with news anchor, Bryan Mays.



Above: Kirk and Kristen get a photo in the studio with news anchor, Bryan Mays.

CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

MORE CASA HAPPENINGS



CASA Wish List

Visa Gift Cards for
Teens in Care

Paper Products

Snack Items

Table Top Podium

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

See full wish list on
our website!



Giving Tuesday is a global day dedicated to giving back! This year is the 4th annual Giving Tuesday and it will be held on December 1st. We will be celebrating generosity on this day, so if you are in the mood to be generous, we encourage you to consider giving to CASA for the Highland Lakes Area.



Above: Volunteers, Dave Hartig and Derek Fortin, pose for a picture at the CASA Conference Gala Celebration after receiving their advocate appreciation awards!



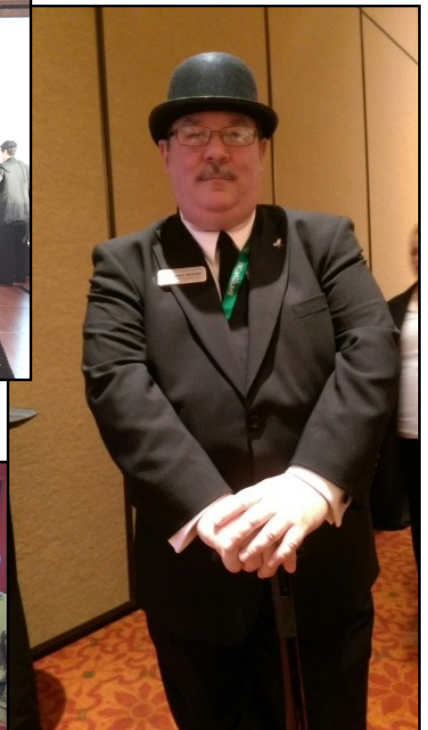
Above: Louise Hancock with Trinity Episcopal presents a generous donation to CASA on behalf of the church
Left: CASA staff enjoying the Gala at Conference



Above: Texas CASA CEO, Vicki Spriggs, poses for a photo with Galyn Woerner, CASA staff.



CASA staff and volunteers enjoyed the Texas CASA Conference, entitled "Imagine", which occurred Nov. 5-7 in San Marcos.



Above: Mance Bowden, former volunteer and staff with CASA for the Highland Lakes and current Executive Director at CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties, enjoys the Gala.



CASA Fact

Children who have a CASA volunteer assigned to their child protection court case are half as likely to re-enter the foster care system and they are more likely to succeed in school. These children do better, academically, in elementary through high school and are also more likely to attend higher education than their peers who are in the system without a CASA advocate. **CASA Advocates make a difference!!!!**

Happy Thanksgiving



Thanksgiving is a time to reflect over all that we've been blessed with. We feel that we've been blessed with SO much and we wanted to share with you all, our volunteers and supporters, just a small bit of what we are thankful for this year at the CASA office!!

- "I'm thankful for the close relationships built with our advocates." ~Michele Boshears
- "I am thankful for the obvious... our volunteers! But I am also thankful for a talented and dedicated legal community." ~Beverly Bowmaster
- "I'm thankful for the great foster parents who open their homes to our kids." ~Karon Justice
- "I'm thankful for amazing training sessions that are led by dedicated, excited professionals who guide and energize us with their knowledge." ~Glenda Hartman
- "I am thankful for the dedication of all people who have committed themselves to making the world a better place for the children in our society. Child welfare is not an easy calling, but those who are called are those to be celebrated!" ~Kristen Harris
- "I'm thankful that I work with some of the most interesting board members, advocates, staff and eclectic people in the world." ~Galyn Woerner
- "I am so very thankful to be back at CASA and to be surrounded by strong, positive and loving advocates." ~Kim Singleton
- "So thankful for our amazing advocates, our staff, and the great caseworkers and other professionals we work with on a daily basis!" ~Amy Masuda

Volunteer Spotlight

Meet Derek Fortin, one of our Burnet County Volunteer Advocates!!!!

CASA Involvement:

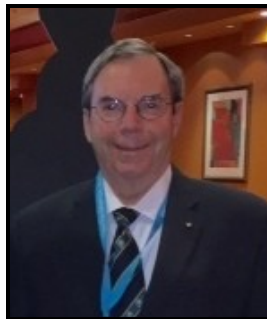
Derek has been a volunteer advocate with our CASA program for 2 years now and has worked with 7 youth on 5 different cases during this time. Derek is currently serving 3 boys as their CASA advocate and he enjoys working with young boys, especially those who are part of a sibling group. Derek recently helped one of his CASA youth to get a part-time job and he is also helping another, who is involved in Scouting, plan for his trip to Philmont this summer! We are so lucky to have Derek as one of our CASA advocates!!!!

What Made Derek Decide to Volunteer with CASA?

Derek reported that he decided to join CASA because he wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of youth! Derek is definitely doing this through his work with CASA for the Highland Lakes Area!

The Most Surprising Thing for Derek Since Serving as a CASA Advocate:

Derek reported that the most surprising thing that he's encountered as a CASA Advocate is when he received a text message from one of



From the Staff at CASA for the Highland Lakes, thank you, Derek, for your service to our youth!!!! The world is a better place because of folks like you!



his CASA youth at 5:00AM one morning requesting permission to skip school ☺!!! We can all see the humor in such a situation, but what this teaches us is that kids in foster care, in many ways, are just like other kids! I am sure we can all think of a youth in our own lives that has at one time or another wanted to skip school. At least this one was polite enough to ask for permission and I am sure that Derek did a great job of explaining to this youth why skipping school would not be in his best interest!

More Interesting Things About Derek:

Derek was a Junior Police Officer, a.k.a. Crossing Guard, when he was in the 4th, 5th and 6th grades at Gateway Elementary School in West Seattle, Washington. He also is a certified nonprofit professional and a certified camp director. He worked for Boy Scouts of America for 42 years and during that time he served the Boy Scouts in Hawaii, American Samoa, Eastern Washington, Southeast Alaska, Okinawa Japan and Southern California! He's also visited Cuba for educational purposes! He's a world traveler!

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 Volunteers!



Charlotte Broadway
November 1st

Keva Weir
November 26th

Jim Payne
November 27th

- Our first applause goes to **April Bergstrom**. **April** is currently working with 6 CASA kids on 4 different cases. One of her CASA kids is a 5 year-old who is living with his grandmother in Lampasas. **April** is driving to Lampasas 2 times each week for the next 4 weeks to transport this young boy to swimming lessons at the YMCA in Burnet! Thank you, **April**, for helping to ensure that this young boy gets to participate in some positive activities!!!
- Another applause is in order for **Cindy Turner**. **Cindy** is currently advocating for 3 children on 2 different CASA cases and she's doing a great job! The reason for this applause though is because **Cindy** is in the process of organizing a giving drive through her church for CASA. The "CASA Cases Project" is what we are calling it and church members will be asked to donate new items to fill a suitcase for a child who has been removed from their home and placed in foster care. These "CASA Cases" will then be given to the children so that they do not have to tote their belongings around in trash bags. Thank you, **Cindy**, for organizing this important project for our kids!
- Our last applause for the month goes to **Barbie Ott**, who is currently working with 5 CASA kids on 3 different cases. One of **Barbie's** CASA kids is a teen mom and **Barbie** has been a fierce advocate for this young lady, helping to ensure that she and her baby remain together while this teen is in foster care. **Barbie** recently became listed as this young lady's "surrogate parent" for the educational system, which enables **Barbie** to play a more active role in meetings regarding this young lady's education. Thank you, **Barbie**, for all that you do for all of your CASA kids!!!!

Special Announcements

- Our new advocate training class will be starting after the New Year, so if you know anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer advocate, please have them contact our office so that we can get them the initial paperwork and class information.
- We will be having a Holiday Open House on December 10th from 4-6pm. All are welcome, so please mark your calendars and plan to attend the Open House at our office at 1719 Ridgeview Dr. in Kingsland. See you there!!!!
- Advocates, due to the Holidays, we will not have an in-service training again until January. However, be on the lookout for information about a movie day. We will send out more information once the plans are finalized, but we are looking at scheduling a day where we show informational films throughout the day at our office, which can count towards your in-service training hours. Topics will include Trust-Based Relational Intervention, Childhood Trauma and more!
- Angel Trees are already going up around our service area! Security State Bank in Marble Falls will be doing Angels for CASA again this year, so stop by to get your Angel. Contact our office if you are interested in dropping off Christmas donations or having them picked up!
- If you wish to support CASA for the Highland Lakes, monetarily, it is now easier than ever! You can simply make a donation with your credit or debit card on our website at <http://highlandlakescasa.com/ways-help/donate/>. If every person in our 5 county service area donated just \$10 to CASA we could provide advocacy for over 800 children in foster care!!!!!! Check out our website for other ways to get involved with CASA for the Highland Lakes Area as well!
- For more updates and information about what is going on in our program, find us on Facebook and Like our Facebook page! Our Facebook link is <https://www.facebook.com/CASAHighlandLakes/>



CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

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

**Central Christian Church - Lampasas, TX
The Church at Horseshoe Bay
Christ Redeemer Fellowship - Marble Falls, TX
Trinity Lutheran Church - Blanco, TX
Kathy Carriker
Barbara Mullican
3G Foundation
The Sovren Group - Marble Falls, TX
Flat Creek Enoteca - Marble Falls, TX
Double Horn Brewery - Marble Falls, TX
Hal and Sue Harton
C.G. Kepner**

One-time and recurring donations can also be made on our website at
<http://highlandlakescasa.com/ways-help/donate/>

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.