



# The CASA Voice

## CASA: Putting Children First July 2016 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:

**239**

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

**61**

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

Blanco - 20

Burnet - 107

Lampasas - 40

Llano - 51

San Saba - 21

### Headline Story: Adoptive Mom Finds A Creative Way to Thank CASA

### Calendar of Events

- July 12th: Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Training offered by the Kingsland Library from 3:30-4:30PM. Free to the public and CASA training hours will be given to participants. Contact the library for more information.
- July 28th: CASA Book Club Meets at 9AM. Contact Galyn for more information. See pg. 4
- August 1st: Training begins for new volunteers. Contact us to register.
- October 20th: In-service training on child mental health.



The mosaic pictured above was created by a woman who adopted one of our local CASA kids. This art work is on display at Wild About Music on 6th and Congress in Austin and is open for bids by prospective buyers. Bidding starts at \$1500 and 10% of the sales will be donated to Texas CASA in appreciation for CASA's hard work and dedication to the artists adoptive daughter! Read more about this on page 2!

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## Adoptive Mom Finds A Creative Way to Thank CASA

When Aly Winningham and her spouse decided to adopt a child from foster care they did not realize just how much of a difference a CASA volunteer could make for their growing family. A girl from our area was placed with the family during the summer of 2014 and one of our local CASA advocates, Cindy Lomicka, was assigned as the advocate for this 5 year old.

Such a young, little girl, already experienced so trouble adjusting to the are still difficult for her. express her feelings in a something that is very been victimized the way Today though, this angel adoptive parents have loving home, one that is safe.

When asked about their become a forever family experience would not without our CASA gaps, so to speak, where connections may have organization and we are Because of her belief in decided to give back in a very talented mosaic enjoyed in many notable might see her work while along the sidewalks of

shopping area of The Domain or in the Downtown area too! You can also catch a glimpse of some of her pieces in other towns across Texas, including Fort Worth and San Antonio! Her artwork truly is beautiful and her popularity is growing. Aly has been participating in Austin's Armadillo Christmas Bazaar for the past several years. The Bazaar features artists and musicians and creates a fun and eclectic atmosphere to enjoy some Holiday shopping. This year, Aly was hired to create a promotional piece for the Bazaar and her mosaic, pictured above and on page 1, can be seen around Austin on promotional materials. This piece will be auctioned live at the Bazaar, but bids are already being placed at a store on 6th and Congress called Wild About Music. Bidding starts at \$1,500 and increases in \$100 increments. The exciting part of all of this for CASA is that The Armadillo Christmas Bazaar company has asked that Aly choose a nonprofit to donate 10% of the final sale price to and she chose Texas CASA. What an honor it is for Aly to have chosen Texas CASA because of her own personal experiences with a CASA volunteer, especially with a volunteer from our Highland Lakes Area program!!! Aly stated "I chose CASA because as a foster to adopt Texas citizen it was a very near and dear to my heart organization. I know that they are volunteers and if there weren't people willing to volunteer it wouldn't happen. I wish I could take them all in", referring to abused and neglected children. "CASA made the process of creating our forever family much easier and added a personal touch that CPS, foster care agencies and lawyers can't always do so well because their job description gets in the way". Again, this is such an honor! From the bottom of our hearts we wish this family lasting love and happiness!!!

Now, I am sure that you all are interested in learning more about the volunteer who made such an impact on this family and did such an amazing job advocating for this CASA kid... well, as stated above, she is our very own, Cindy Lomicka! Thank you so much, Cindy, for all of your hard work and dedication to your CASA kids! Cindy advocated tirelessly for this young girl and we know that it was not an easy road. However, it is truly evident that she made a huge difference for a child in need! We are forever grateful for your service to CASA, but most importantly, to little Texans, such as this one, who succeed because you cared enough to get involved!!!! See page 3 to meet Cindy Lomicka, an advocate with CASA for the Highland Lakes Area!



but in her short life she had much. She initially had some home and changes of any kind Emotionally, she struggled to healthy and positive way, common for children who have that this precious girl had been. is doing much better. Her provided her with a stable and predictable and one that feels

experiences during the journey to Aly stated "I do believe that our have been nearly as smooth volunteer. She really filled in the communication was lacking or been lost. It's just a wonderful grateful!" the CASA organization she creative way. You see, Aly is a artist and her work can be places throughout Austin! You visiting Whole Foods or strolling East Austin, the popular



### CASA for the Highland Lakes Area

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# CASA For the Highland Lakes Area



## Volunteer Advocate Spotlight

**Meet Cindy Lomicka, a Volunteer Advocate with our CASA program!**

Cindy has been a volunteer Highland Lakes Area for almost 2 our training program in August of served 3 families with a total of 5



advocate with CASA for the years now, as she graduated from 2014. Since that time Cindy has CASA kids.

When asked why she chose to Cindy shared a story about her system, working with children who 14 years of her life to these took her role very seriously. Cindy time in her life when she learned of child while he was at school. This defend or speak up for himself, so relentless in ensuring his safety, even when it meant that her job and the career she loved was at stake. She was his guardian angel and she continues to be that for all of her CASA kids. Cindy has a strong desire to make a difference and she has a true heart for children!

initially become a CASA advocate career in the California school had special needs. She dedicated children and it is evident that she discussed a particularly difficult some abuse that was occurring to a child was nonverbal and could not Cindy became his voice. She was

When speaking of her CASA experience, Cindy states that CASA has done more for her, personally, than she could ever give. She feels that the volunteer opportunity has given her more confidence and the honor of working with and on behalf of children again. Cindy reports that this experience has really touched her soul and healed her from a tough situation created because she worked in a school system where she was not supported for blowing the whistle on behalf of a child. She thought she may never have the opportunity to truly work for what is best for a child in need, but then came CASA. Cindy's story is inspiring because it is a great example of how our CASA volunteers are willing to risk everything for the children that they serve and that is what we mean when we speak about "fierce advocacy". Thank you, Cindy, for advocating fiercely for the children who have been fortunate enough to know you!

We asked Cindy what, if anything, has surprised her about her experiences as a CASA and she told us that she is always surprised by how many kids are in need of our care and representation. Cindy said that she feels that this tells us a bit about how we are doing as a society and she added that her fear is that if our society were being graded we may not fare so well because children are suffering and there are not enough people standing up for them.

A little-known tidbit about Cindy: When she's not rescuing children, she enjoys rescuing dogs! Before moving back home to Texas she even ran a Miniature Schnauzer rescue in California!!

## CASA Wish List

Funds specifically to address the drainage issue in our building which is causing our toy room to flood.

Paper Products for the Office.

Snack Items for Training Classes: nuts, chips, candy, drinks, etc.

Table Top Podium

Visa Cards for teens in foster care.

## CASA Happenings

Garage Sale Photos: The garage sale was a success and we appreciate everyone who donated items and came out to the sale! We made over \$3,000 during this event and spoke to countless people who attended the sale and learned about

CASA while shopping our deals!!! Thanks again to everyone who participated!



We hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable 4th of July!!!!

# 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!!!!!!**

- Our first round of applause goes out to **Cindy Lomicka**. If you read pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter you will understand exactly why **Cindy** deserves a huge round of applause! Thank you, **Cindy**, for working so hard for all of your CASA kids! You have done an excellent job and we are so blessed to have you as part of our team!!!
- Our next applause goes out to all advocates and volunteers who found time during the busy 4th of July weekend to help us with our charity yard sale. Special thanks to the following folks: **Susan Potts, Janelle and Leo Boutte, Dave Johnson, Faye and Jim Payne and Vicki Strevey!** We could not have done it without all of you! Our first charity yard sale was a HUGE success because you were willing to jump in and work hard when we needed it!
- Another big round of applause has been earned by 2 advocates for stepping up for a child that they weren't even assigned to. This week our office received a call from the local CPS office. They had a situation that required a teenage boy to stay in their office for 2 days. The boy was removed from Coryell County, which is outside of our coverage area, so our CASA program is not assigned to his case. However, **Derek Fortin** and **Mike Lubawski** stepped in because they were available and it was the right thing to do. This boy was faced with sitting up at the Burnet CPS office for 2 days with nothing really to do. The CPS workers needed to get their own work done, so really couldn't take time to entertain him. **Derek** and **Mike** each volunteered to take this boy out to lunch and entertain him for several hours so that he would have something to do! Thank you both for finding time to do this! I know that CPS appreciates your willingness to help as much as we do and you seriously saved a young man from hours of boredom!
- Our last applause for this month goes out to **Emily Johnson!** **Emily**, according to her advocate supervisor, really knows how to shake things up for the good! She advocates for 2 little boys and 1 teenage boy and she gives her whole heart to them. She is not afraid to speak up and keep everyone involved accountable and even though her CASA kids are currently living some distance away, she always takes time to go and see them. She is ALWAYS in step with the needs of her CASA kids and she makes a mean snickerdoodle cookie too! Also, recently **Emily** was at an event where I spoke on behalf of CASA. She did an excellent job of really speaking to some of the people there about her role as a CASA volunteer and helping to spread the CASA message! Thank you, **Emily**, for being such a great CASA advocate for your CASA kids and for our program!

## Happy Birthday To Our Volunteers!



**Betty Knowles**  
July 14th

**Alexis Saint**  
July 14th

**Gail McMillan**  
July 25th

**Jay Carey**  
July 29th

**Michelle Petty**  
July 30th

## Special Announcements

- **CASA Book Club has officially begun!** We met in June and will meet again on July 28th at 9:00AM. It's not too late to join this group and its open to CASA volunteers and the general public. The first book we are reading is [Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others](#) by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky. This book is a self-help book for people who deal with trauma through their work and/or volunteer experiences. We hope to see you all there! Contact Galyn at our office for more details.
- **Can you CASA?** Curious about what our organization actually does?! Feel free to drop by our office at any time to take a tour and visit with our staff. We are also ready and willing to speak to any group of people, large or small. Contact us today if you have a group of people who is interested in hearing more about our program and how we meet the needs of children from our local communities!
- **Like us on Facebook!** We update Facebook regularly, so if you like our page you will be able to stay informed about what is happening with CASA for the Highland Lakes Area!!!!!!

# CASA For the Highland Lakes Area



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

Christ Redeemer Fellowship - Marble Falls  
The Church at Horseshoe Bay  
Episcopal Church Women of Lampasas  
Hill Country Fellowship Church - Burnet  
Chatella Worley  
Dean and Marjorie Dearmont  
Ravelle and Tom Kundinger  
Lori Hosea  
Gene and Charlotte Broadway  
Cheryll Mabray  
Flat Creek Enoteca

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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!

### 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](mailto: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.