



The CASA Voice

CASA: Putting Children First

September 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:

243

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

70

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

Blanco - 21

Burnet - 114

Lampasas - 38

Llano - 51

San Saba - 19

Headline Story: CASA for the Highland Lakes Area Graduates New Volunteer Advocates - Biggest Class Yet!

Calendar of Events

- **September 19th: Child Exploitation Seminar, Belton. Open to advocates. More info on pg 4.**
- **October 3rd: New Volunteer Training Class Begins.**
- **October 8th: CASA Booth at the Herb and Art Fest in Lampasas**
- **October 20th: In-service training on child mental health.**
- **October 29th/30th: 2nd Annual CASA Offroad Zomboree at Hidden Falls Adventure Park**



The Team at CASA for the Highland Lakes Area was VERY busy during the month of August. Galyn Woerner - Volunteer Coordinator, Karon Justice - Program Director and Amy Masuda - Advocate Supervisor did everything that they could to ensure that 17 new advocates were properly trained! The new advocates pictured above all completed at least 30 hours of classroom training and our staff trained 4 nights per week for the entire month of August. Training classes were offered twice per week in Marble Falls and twice per week in Johnson City. Trainees could choose which location to attend classes in, as staff worked diligently to accommodate the needs of our new volunteers! We are excited to say that offering training in two locations at once allowed our organization to increase our number of volunteers by over 13%!!!! This translates to more children in the Highland Lakes Area receiving one-on-one attention from a volunteer, which is what our organization is all about! Best of luck to our newest team members!!!! See more about recruitment and training on page 2 of this issue!

In This Issue

New Volunteer Advocates	2
Welcome to the Team	3
CASA Happenings	3
Applause to Advocates	4
Special Announcements	4
Thank you, Donors	5
CASA Mission/Vision	5
Our mailing list	5



CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

CASA for the Highland Lakes Area Graduates New Volunteer Advocates - Biggest Class Yet!

CASA for the Highland Lakes Area recently completed our quarterly volunteer pre-service training class. We are ecstatic that 17 new volunteers completed this training and are now part of our wonderful CASA team!!! This is a HUGE accomplishment for our program, as it is the largest training class we have ever been able to hold and this translates to positive outcomes for more child victims of abuse and neglect.

Over the past 5 years the number of children needing our services locally has increased by over 35%, yet our volunteer numbers have remained stagnant. This means that fewer children are being served by volunteers and CASA staff are covering more children, directly. This issue is one that we have recommitted ourselves to attacking because we know that the kids deserve the best advocacy that we can possibly offer.

As an organization, we are aware of the fact that children with a volunteer advocate receive more one-on-one attention because volunteers generally handle just 1 or 2 cases and are able to commit more time to each individual child. Volunteers make a HUGE difference in the life of a child! Just ask, *Jack*, a youth in foster care from our service area who attributes his CASA volunteer to some of his success.

Jack was a young teen when he came into care. He had been abused and neglected by his parents and then bounced around between various family members before CPS became involved because family members were no longer able to meet his needs. Jack had not had much stability in his life and so it was difficult for him to truly trust many people. He was making poor choices because of his life experiences and those choices were making life even more difficult for him. Essentially, life had set this kid up for absolute failure! However, Jack was able to turn it around and his CASA volunteer certainly played a part in Jack's ability to do this!

Jack's volunteer advocate provided a trusting and positive relationship for this boy. He mentored him, advocated for him and directed him in ways that nobody had ever done before and Jack slowly, but surely, began to make better choices and improve in many ways. Today Jack is 17. He holds a job, he graduated from high school early, he is attending college this fall and he is finally able to see what stability really feels like. In a year he would be aging out of foster care, but we are excited to say that this young man has met a family who loves him and desires to adopt him!

Jack's CASA volunteer acted as a change-agent, helping to make a fulfilling life attainable for him. Don't believe, us??? Take Jack's word for it! Here is what he had to say about his CASA volunteer "You have been a great role model in my life. You have taught me many things, from how to set up a bank account to the true values of a man. You have been there for me when no one else has... I would like you to know how thankful I am for you. Your kindness has given me the strength that only family can give. The advice and guidance you have given me will live in my memory for years to come. As the present becomes the past, I hope that memories come from the future".

I share this story to help you all, our wonderful CASA supporters, to see just how much of a difference a CASA volunteer can make. As we add 17 new volunteer advocates to our roster, I hope everyone who sees this newsletter is encouraged about that number... 17...Wow!!!! I honestly cannot wait to see how many lives are changed because of these additional (and wonderful) 17 people.

Thank you to these 17 advocates and to all of our advocates who have committed themselves to making life a little easier for our CASA kids!

*Name was changed for confidentiality purposes.



CASA for the Highland Lakes Area

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CASA For the Highland Lakes Area

Welcome Mance Bowden Back As Part Of Our CASA Team!

Mance Bowden returns to CASA for the Highland Lakes Area

We are excited to announce that CASA for the Highland Lakes Area as of you may know Mance, as he years ago on a part-time basis. At volunteers and organize trainings. because he helped to ensure that we well-trained and equipped to handle part-time position was no longer with us as a CASA Advocate. children with our program, but he various roles with the CASA network.



Mance Bowden will be returning to our newest Advocate Supervisor! Many worked with our organization a few that time he helped to recruit new He was a vital part of our organization had enough quality advocates who were their role as an advocate. Even after his available, Mance continued to volunteer Mance has been a direct advocate for 18 has touched countless lives in his

Mance is returning to the Highland Lakes Area after having worked for a while with another CASA program. He brings a wealth of experience to our organization, as he has fulfilled the role as both volunteer and a staff member. We are excited that he is returning to our program and we know that all of our volunteers will love working with him!

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.

Donations to our children's designated fund, which is used specifically to meet the physical needs of our CASA kids.

Memorial Donations of any kind

CASA Happenings



Above: Johnson Sewell manager, TJ Kendall, accepts award of appreciation for supporting CASA.
Right: 17 new advocates participate in training with the Judge.

Right: Galyn was the advocate on a case that ended happily, in adoption! Parents attribute success to CASA!!!!



Tip from the Trainer

CASA Volunteers, sometimes knowing who is who in a case can be confusing! Families are all different and keeping everyone straight can be a challenge. It often helps to create a visual. Putting together a family tree for your case not only helps you to see who everyone is, but it also is a great conversation starter when talking with children or parents. If you draw out a family tree together you might be surprised at what you learn and how many resources within the family you might find that are not already being utilized. Successful case closures often occur when we find a relative who is willing to step up in some way for the family. Relatives that we are not even aware of until we dig a little might be the relatives that will provide a home for a child, or even consistent transportation for a parent needing to get to therapy. There are all kinds of online tools that can be used to help develop family trees. If you need help, ask the trainer! Galyn would be happy to assist you with a family tree!



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 and Staff!



Janelle Boutte
September 3rd

Michael Lubawski
September 8th

Marti Pogue
September 11th

Susan Bundrick
September 17th

Amy Masuda
September 21st

Dave Johnson
September 22nd

Paula McGregor
September 27th

- Our first round of applause goes out to each of our new volunteer advocates who all just finished their 30 hours of pre-service training! Let's welcome the following new advocates to our CASA team: **Mark Grimes; Michelle Weaver-Radford; April Owens; Dana Ablon; Marti Pogue; Andrea Peck; Maria Sfura-Francis; Sarah Cox; Pamela Green; Tangie Lockeby; Valerie Ehrhardt; Mattie Cryer; Connie Ross; Jim Kamas; Jeff St. Clair; Susan Rader; and Cheyenne Cox.** Welcome to the CASA Team!!!!
- Our next round of applause goes out to **Debbie Massey!** **Debbie** is currently advocating for 7 CASA kids! She has been a wonderful advocate and she works very hard on her cases to ensure that the children are taken care of. She's done countless wonderful things, but today we want to recognize her for her work with a parent on a case. Parents can sometimes be difficult to establish a trusting relationship with, but we all know that if trust can be established it really helps to move the case in the right direction for the kids. **Debbie** did a wonderful job of establishing trust with one of the parents early on in one of her CASA cases. She took a genuine interest in his strengths and asked questions about an area in which he was the expert. This allowed him to feel valued and to share with her some of his knowledge. This seemingly small, but genuine gesture by **Debbie** was huge for this father. He felt respected by her, which helped her to gain his trust. **Debbie**, you are doing a great job with your CASA kids! You also have reminded us that as advocate for the children we have opportunities to boost a parent's self-esteem and show them that they are worthy of better things for themselves and for their family.
- Our last round of applause this month goes out to **Susan Bundrick!** **Susan** has been working her tail off to get sibling visits set up for some of her CASA kids! She is the advocate on a case involving 4 children and 2 of these children live in Georgetown while the other 2 reside in the Houston area. We all know how challenging it can be, at times, to ensure that kids get to see their siblings. Sibling relationships are SO important though, and **Susan** understands the need for these kids to see each other and their mom, too. **Susan** even traveled to Columbus, Texas to observe the visit and make sure that things went as planned. Thank you, **Susan**, for your hard work on behalf of your CASA kids!!!! We are so glad that they have you as their advocate!

Special Announcements

- It's not too late to join the CASA Book Club ! We have been meeting, but are still discussing just the beginning of the wonderful book, **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. We will meet again at the end of September to discuss all of Part 1.
- On September 19th you are invited to participate in a free seminar about Child Exploitation in Belton. The seminar is from 9AM-5PM and will provide perspectives from law enforcement and service providers on the risks of exploitation for children and, specifically, foster youth in their communities. The seminar will include a panel of former foster youth who will share their experiences on the subject. If you are interested, contact our office for more information on how to register. We also will set up a carpool if enough people are interested in attending.
- 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
Trinity Episcopal Church - Marble Falls
Emily Johnson
Lori Hosea
Shirley McCoy
Jeff and Pamela St. Clair
Betty Dove
ExxonMobil

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

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.