



EVERY Single CHILD



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

Child Advocates of Montgomery County

2020 IMPACT REPORT

Our mission

CASA CHILD ADVOCATES OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

provides and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so that every abused and neglected child can have the opportunity to thrive in a

SAFE, NURTURING, AND PERMANENT HOME.

IN 2020, CASA CHILD ADVOCATES SERVED
100% OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE IN
MONTGOMERY COUNTY.



In this report

Message from the Executive Director	3
Why is CASA Needed?	4
What Does CASA Do?	4
Who Are CASA Volunteers?	5
Child & Volunteer Statistics	6
Meet a CASA Family and Advocate	7
2020 Statement of Activities	8
CASA Board of Directors and Staff	9
Advocates	10
TBRI and CFE Programs	11
CASA4Teens and GIFT Programs	12
Handle with Care and Education Committee	13
Anti-Trafficking and LGBTQ+ Initiatives	14
Improving the Quality of our Advocacy	15
Events, Committees, Sponsors & Donors	16-19

A Message from the Executive Director



I am extremely honored to serve the community as the new Executive Director of CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County. Please allow me to introduce myself. I am a native Wisconsinite. I am a nurse and I have worked in hospital administration and also taught nursing. My husband and I are parents to 5 children, three of whom are adopted.

I came to CASA as a volunteer 6 years ago. I am very proud to have been an Advocate for 13 children over those six years. Three years ago, I joined the CASA staff as the Training Director. I am passionate about the work we do because I have seen firsthand the incredible impact an Advocate can have.

It has been quite a year for all of us. Everything changed overnight. Pivot became the word of 2020. Here, at CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County, pivot we did. Almost overnight we transitioned to new and innovative ways of serving every single child in care in Montgomery County.

As the pandemic raged on, adult stressors increased. Families struggled with substance abuse, domestic violence, depression, and food insecurity. The children we serve were quite literally trapped with their abusers. No safe adults were able to see our kids and as a result, intakes went down significantly.

For those of us who work in child welfare, the silence---was deafening. When school reopened last fall, children coming into care dramatically increased. We saw monthly increases of up to 77% in the reported cases of abuse. Not only did the number of children coming into care increase, but the severity of the abuse and neglect they suffered also intensified.

According to Ernst & Young, more than 70% of non-profits cut back the services they provide during the pandemic. At CASA, not only did we not reduce the services we provide, but our 350 volunteers continued to serve EVERY SINGLE CHILD...or 680 children. 2020 is the fifth year in a row we have served 100% of the children in Montgomery County.

Financial responsibility is always a priority for us at CASA. We end the year with cash reserves of 11 months of operating expenses. This is a goal set by our board and it ensures our ability to continue to serve every single child.

During the pandemic, when so much of the world's focus was turning inward, CASA continued to make sure EVERY SINGLE CHILD in Montgomery County was safe. CASA's presence ensured that those making decisions kept the child's best interest their highest priority.

CASA Advocates change the trajectory of children's lives. The work we do is powerful, because it is not ONLY about this child in care that we are Advocating for. It is about the ripples that come from changing not only the life of this child, but rather about the generations that follow this child that go on to live healthy lives, unimpacted by trauma.

Our work is not over. On average 6 children enter foster care in Montgomery County each week. We must continue to ensure that the best interest of these children remains the focus of everyone in the child welfare system.

Thank you for your generous support of the most vulnerable children in our community. Whether you are a donor, board member, volunteer or someone with a heart for children, thank you. Your support ensures that we can continue to serve EVERY SINGLE CHILD in Montgomery County.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Marie Ronsman".

Ann Marie Ronsman, MSN, RN, TBRI Practitioner
Executive Director

Why is CASA needed?

2020 FACT & IMPACT

350 Court-Appointed Volunteers
18,900+ Hours Served
680 Children's Lives **CHANGED!**



100% of the children in the custody of DFPS were served by CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County in 2020

Number of confirmed victims of child abuse in Texas in 2020. **251 children died**, victims of abuse or neglect* **68,461**

\$220 MILLION per day is the direct and indirect cost of child abuse in the United States***

Number of children served by Child Advocates of Montgomery County since 1992 **9750+**

5.2 children die every day in the U.S. due to abuse and neglect. **70%** of these fatalities are children under the age of three**

Number of confirmed victims of child abuse or neglect in the U.S. in 2019** **656,243**

\$1500 is what it costs Child Advocates of Montgomery County to serve one child for one year

*Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2020 Data Book

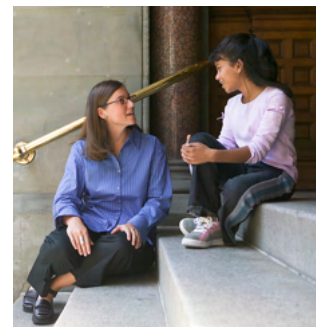
**U.S. Department of Healthy & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Maltreatment (2019)

***Gelles, Richard J., & Perlman, Staci (2012). Estimated Annual Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect. Chicago IL. Prevent Child Abuse America



What does CASA do?

FOLLOW A CASA VOLUNTEER'S JOURNEY TO HELP A CHILD FIND HER FOREVER HOME.



What is a CASA volunteer?

When a child enters the child welfare system due to allegations of abuse or neglect, a CASA volunteer may be appointed by a judge to advocate for the child and family. That volunteer is called a **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE®**, or CASA.

CASA VOLUNTEERS

- Are screened and **HIGHLY TRAINED**
- Are **APPOINTED BY JUDGES** to represent and advocate for a child's best interests in the child protection system
- Are assigned to **HELP ONE CHILD** or set of siblings at a time
- Provide **VALUABLE INFORMATION** to the judge and others involved in the case to ensure the child's best interest
- **RESEARCH** each child's situation
- Make **OBJECTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS** to help each child reclaim their childhood from abuse and neglect
- Are a **CONSISTENT PRESENCE** in the child's life as they navigate the foster care system
- Help maintain a **SENSE OF URGENCY** to all children's cases
- Recognize that **PERMANENCY IS ESSENTIAL** for a child's well-being



Who are CASA volunteers?



CASA VOLUNTEERS ARE PEOPLE JUST LIKE YOU -

objective, compassionate, self-motivated individuals from the community. They come from all walks of life and backgrounds. Some work full-time and others stay at home or are retirees. All are passionately committed to make a difference for children who might otherwise slip through the cracks in an overburdened foster care system.

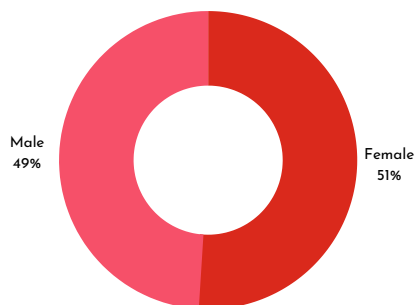
WHAT QUALIFICATIONS DOES AN ADVOCATE NEED?

- Be at least **21 YEARS OLD**
- Successfully pass **CPS SCREENING & BACKGROUND CHECK**
- Successfully complete **30 HOURS** of online & classroom training*
- Be able to make a **12 MONTH COMMITMENT** to a case
- Be **COMPUTER LITERATE** and have **ACCESS** to a computer
- Have a **DRIVER'S LICENSE** and personal transportation
- Be objective, tenacious, wise, and **CARE VERY DEEPLY** about making a difference for kids

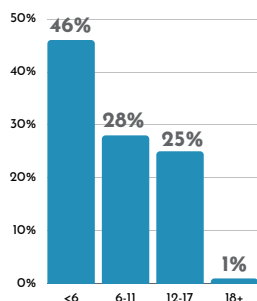
** Plus 3 hours of court observation*

680 Children Served

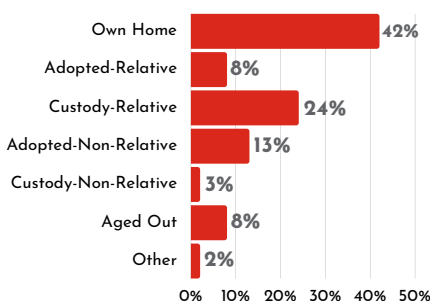
2020 CHILD STATISTICS



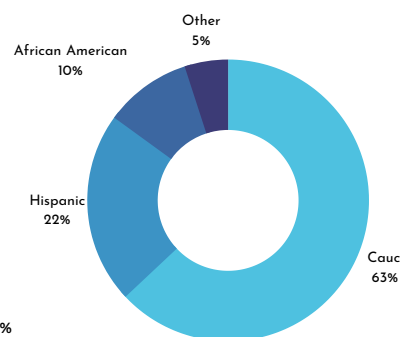
CHILDREN BY GENDER



CHILDREN BY AGE



PLACEMENT OF CHILD AT CLOSE OF CASE

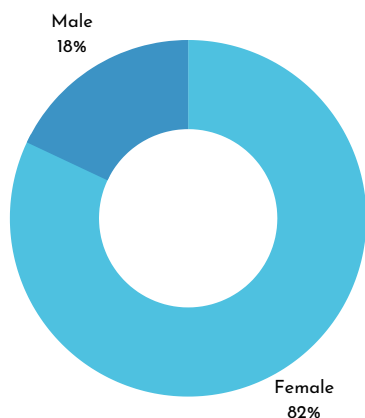


CHILDREN BY ETHNICITY

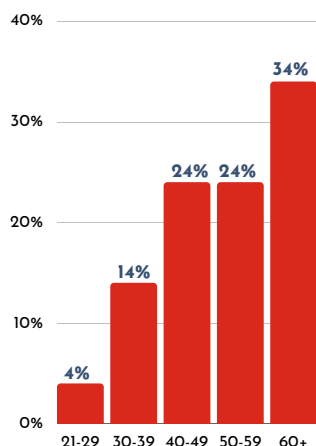


350 Active Volunteers

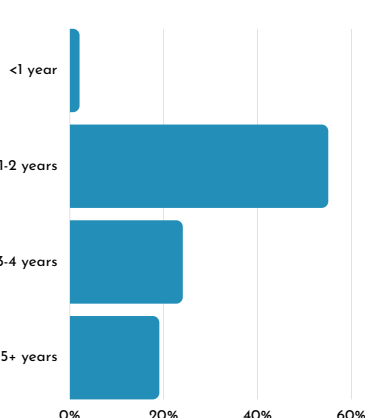
2020 VOLUNTEER STATISTICS



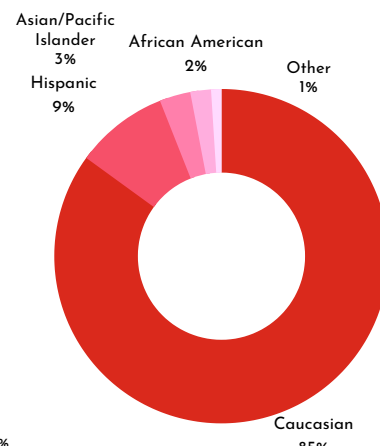
VOLUNTEERS BY GENDER



VOLUNTEERS BY AGE



VOLUNTEERS BY TENURE



VOLUNTEERS BY ETHNICITY

Based on data collected 11/1/19-10/31/20

Meet AJ, John, Audrey, Jeffrey and Harley... and their Advocate, Joe!

Siblings, AJ, John, Audrey, Jeffrey and Harley often felt like they were treading on thin ice, never knowing whether their next step would hold or not. Their parents were addicted to illegal drugs and while under the influence, would often become emotionally and physically violent. Oldest brother, AJ, watched as his dad held a knife to his mother's throat on one occasion. He also became used to the back and forth arguments but knew that when his mother's screaming suddenly stopped, it most likely meant that his father had knocked her unconscious.

The children's parents would also leave the five siblings home alone for days or weeks at a time. Without adults to take care of them, AJ - at the young age of about 9 or 10 - began to step up in the role of caretaker for his younger brothers and sisters.

Left to fend for themselves, the children would ask neighbors for food. The neighborhood was known for illegal activities, and to prevent authorities from coming into the neighborhood, the children's neighbors would order pizza for them or give them cans of Spaghettios.

Finally, Child Protective Services became involved and, concerned for their safety, removed the children. Friends of the family - Tina, Johnny, and their teenage son, Corey - volunteered to take the siblings in, afraid they might be separated in foster care.

At this time, Joe, a volunteer CASA Advocate, stepped up and took the case. During his first meeting with AJ, John, Audrey, Jeffrey, and Harley, he noticed they lined up nervously on the sofa. They seemed to wait for Joe to interrogate them and were afraid of giving a wrong answer.

Joe understood the siblings had already been through so much and wanted them to feel comfortable talking with him. Instead of structured meetings, Joe wanted to try something different.

Joe began attending the kids' events - whether it was AJ's football games on Friday nights, Audrey's volleyball games after school, or a family camp out at Lake Conroe - and was able to get to know each child in a relaxed and comfortable environment. The children began to trust Joe and knew that he was there to look out for their best interests.

As the case progressed, it was determined that the children's biological parents could not provide a safe environment, and their rights were terminated. Tina, Johnny, Corey and the five siblings were excited to be able to proceed with their adoption, and an adoption date was set for November.

Three days before adoption day, the CPS attorney called Tina. A single document was missing a signature. The adoption would not be happening as scheduled and the attorney did not know when another date would be set. Heartbroken and confused, the first person Tina called was Joe.

Joe told Tina, "I'm working on it! I'm not sure what I'm going to do, but I'm going to do my best to get you another adoption date before the end of the year."

Joe made phone calls, pleaded with case workers, and worked tirelessly on behalf of the five siblings. Joe excitedly called Tina to let her know that another adoption date had been set for December 21st. They would be an official family by Christmas.

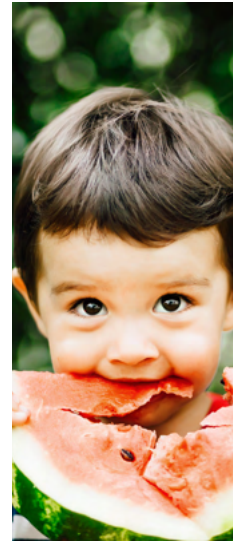
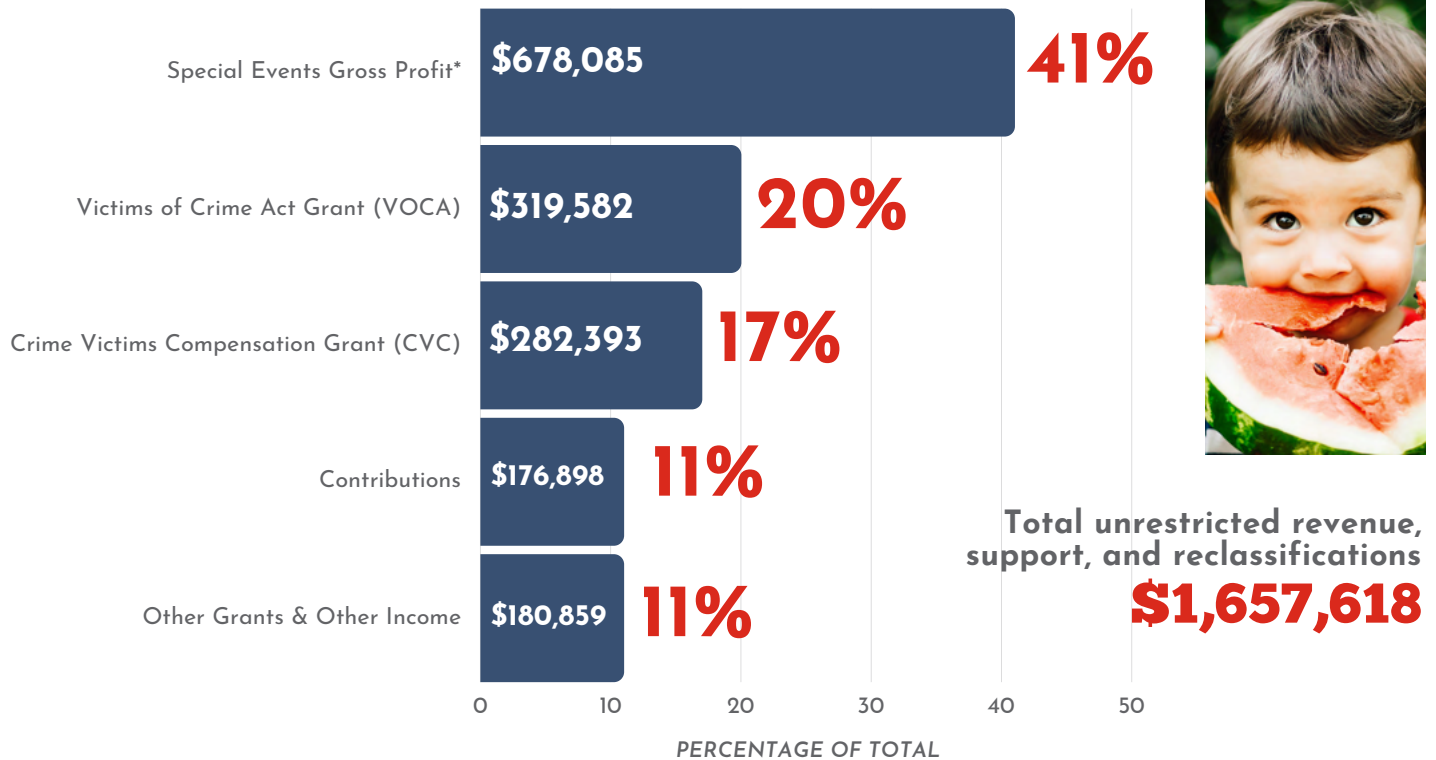
On adoption day, Johnny, Tina, Corey, AJ, John, Audrey, Jeffrey and Harley walked up the courthouse steps to find Joe right there, ready and waiting for them. Tina refers to Joe as a "miracle worker." AJ explains, "[Joe] is warm-hearted. He cares about his job and really cares about the kids he's working for. AJ continues, "With Joe being there and seeing how our everyday life was, him being the Advocate, it really, truly - I feel like - was the reason that we got adopted. And once the day came, everything becoming official, it was cool. It was unreal, honestly."

BECAUSE OF JOE'S EFFORTS, THE SIBLINGS' FUTURES LOOK BRIGHT...AJ, JOHN, AUDREY, JEFFREY AND HARLEY ARE SAFE, LOVED, AND FREE OF THE CYCLE OF ABUSE.



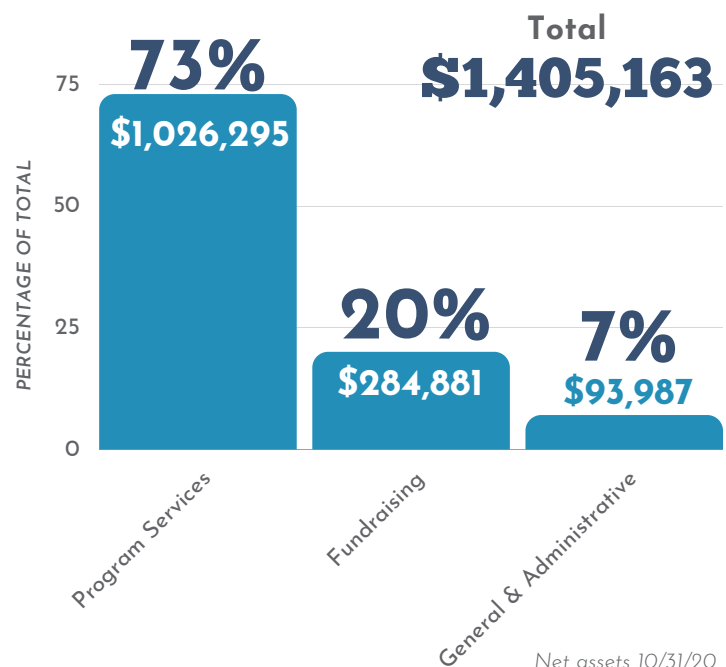
2020 Statement of Activities

REVENUE



* Net of direct benefit to donors

EXPENSES



Net assets 10/31/20

2020 CASA Board of Directors

JAMES E. PUNG
Board Chair
ENERCORP

CLAY MCOLLOR
Board Vice Chair
Stibbs & Co., PC

LORENA FACCINI
Treasurer
Chevron Phillips Chemical

JULIE BARRETT
Secretary
Texas Children's Hospital

KATIE BEATTY
Grant Thornton, LLP

LEE BOOTHBY
Newfield Exploration Co.

SEAN DOUGLAS
Huntsman Corporation



BOB EVANS
Retired, ExxonMobil

JUSTIN LIME
Affordable Concrete of North Houston

KRISTI LINDAHL
Dahl House Interiors

JUD MILLER
Woodforest Bank

DR. CURTIS NULL
Conroe Independent School District

CAROL WATFORD
Retired, Grace International Children's Foundation

SANDY PETERMANN-WILLIAMS
RE/MAX The Woodlands & Spring

CASA Child Advocates Staff



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Ann Marie Ronsman

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
Lindsay Miller

PROGRAM DIRECTOR
Marilyn McQueeney

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR
Alli Stephens

COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Susan McCormick

RECRUITING MANAGER
Shellie Tyrrell

ADVOCACY MANAGERS
Barb Robertson
Mandy Stegint

CASE SUPERVISORS
Melissa Anderson
Christina Bridgett
Trish Gunn
Destin Hudek
Shelly Ladden
Oluchi Nwankwo
Kristy O'Neal
Jennifer Reitmeyer
Susan Truscott
Victoria Warmuth

TRAINING MANAGER
Jenn Engel

COMMUNICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT SPECIALIST
Megan Hersfeld

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR/ EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Stacey McDowell

DATABASE ADMINISTRATOR
Margaret Lauer

Advocates by Years of Service

10+ YEARS

Susan Balette
Paula Balke
Dave Bartlow
Judith Bartok
Rose Mary Bundscho
Linda Chilcoat
Rina French
Jane Funke
Denise Inman
Leslie Nedelka
Susan Olver
Monica Piccardo
Laurie Schoepf
Robyn West

5-9 YEARS

Cheryl Baehr
Julie Brown
Kirsten Bubier
Kathryn Bullard
Heather Cabanas
Ron Carroll
Elizabeth Chapman
Sally Cline
Christine Colombar
Patrick Conlon
Katherine Cooper
Melanie Curtsinger
Pat Evans
Robert Evans
Pamela Fairchild
Mark Fincher
Rebecca Grubert
Cara Hafer
James Harville Jr.
Vicki Hewitt
Mary Kay Hinkle
Margaret Hollinger
Catherine Hoover
Sharon Howerton
Sholpan Jukatayeva
Melinda Lehmann
Betty Keyser
Ronald Kloster
Rebecca Koterwas
Colette Krieps
Nancy McCulloch
Kashonna McHenry
Catherine Miller
Pam Miller
Whitney Montgomery
Susan Munkres
John O'Malley
John Palilla
Sandra Powers
Miriam Reed
Tamara Robichaux
Sara "Shannon" Russell
Carol Seltz
Tammy Sisson
Francine Stanfield
Angelika Stinson
Karen Stinson
Charlotte Tabarini
Schelley Tucker
Meredith Watts

1-4 YEARS

Osman Abi-Saddique
Texas Adams
Cynthia Anders
Dona Angell
Ellen Antonov
Pamella Arquitt
Caroline Austin
Michelle Ayala
Doyin Ayeni
Nancy Ayre
Chelsea Bachrach
Kathleen Baldwin
Elizabeth Barham
Erin Barker
Kayla Barrientes
Jerry Basconi
Sarah Becker
John Bedingfield
Megan Behan
Debora Belanger
Ree Belhumeur
Laura Bennick
Veronica Benson
Sumit Bhat
Kelly Bivens
Julie Black
Audrey Blythe
Charlene Boone
Kathleen Brannon
Kristina Brazee
Lisa Bremner
Jenna Broussard
Melissa Brown
Malika Bruno
Leanne Burns
Christina Bushra
Kathy Butler
Pam Byrne
Martti Cade
Randall Cade
James Cain
Morgan Calhoun
Caroline Cameron
Dawn Campbell
Jesus Campos-Garcia
Jacqueline Candemir
Jennifer Carattini-Wright
Amanda Carroll
Ashling Casey
Patricia Chesser
Ryan Choate
Tanya Claggett
Catherine Marie Colborn
Stephanie Coleman
Catherine Collins
Allison Conner
Dan Conway
Joni Cope
Eileen Corbett
Dana Craig
Steven Crooke
Patricia Curvey
Krishna Danda
Doris Daner
Sharon Daniels
Dawn Dauer
Meaghan Davenport

1-4 YEARS CONTINUED...

Rachel de Groot
Gina DeAngelis
Denise DeGeare
Julia Dell
Carole Denney
Emmanuela Dorsainvil
Jamye Drake
Sandra Dresch
Kristi Drexler
Joseph Driskill
Debra Drumm
Dominique Dunigan
Keenan Durmon
Ginger Eales
Gregg Edelmann
Diana Ender
Maria Falcon
Krystal Farris
Loretta Fay
Edward Felman
Grace Fernandez
Ron Finch
Karinne Fisher
Katherine Fitzgerald
Karen Flink
Heidi Doxey Ford
Thomas Ford
Sherri Forschler
Vanessa Fowlkes
Robert Friedman
James Funke
Rocio Galaviz-Trejo
Racheal Garza
Stephen Gasaway
Jennifer Gibson
Becky Glass
Janet Glisson
Taryn Gordon
Megan Grant
Maria Green
Paul Grimm
Jessica Grosse
Michaela Grudzinski
Monica Hague
Debra Hamilton
Randolph Hansen
Karen Hargrave
Kimberly Hart
Willard Harvey III
Jennifer Hearne
Brittan Hierholzer
Jennifer Hill
Monique Hinehline
Stefani Hinkel
Helen Honeybourne
Andrea Huff
Gerald Humphrey
Molly Hyyppa
Boumerkhoufa
Margarita Iles
Sharon Ingebrechtsen
Pamela Jackson
Sara Jacoby
Brianna Jaetzold
Robert Jefferis
Sarah Jenkins
Misti Jeter
Julia Johnson
Bethany Johnson
Julie Jones
Stephanie Jones
Barbara Jonker-Drenth
Natalie Kaiser
Rupa Kanchi
Sandra Kerth
Michaela King

1-4 YEARS CONTINUED...

Bobbie Kohleffel
Frances Kohoutek
Shelly Ladden
Elizabeth Landgraf
Ingram Lee
Keith Lemons
Tina Lockhart
Lindsey Loflin
Heidi Lofton
Paula Logan
Shanna Lohr
Lindsey Long
Deborah Looney
Christina Lykke
Dana Lynn
Michelle MacLean
Pamela Madrigal
Sandra Mahler
Tammie Manchester
Corey Mark
Amanda Marrot
Margaret Martin
Kari Martin
Victoria Martin
Kimberly Marvel
Daniel Matthews
Mark McDermott
Kelly McGrail
Whitney McMullin
Cynthia Mehling
Andrea Mendez
Shetal Mentlewski
Vicki Migues
Lindsay Miller
Sonia Miller
Annette Milliff
Leslie Mills
Jennifer Mills
Kevin Montagne
Jennifer Moreno
Nicol Morgheim
Deborah Morse
Kimberly Moser
Brian Mullen
Lynnette Mullins
Eulalia Munoz-Cortijo
Marie Murphey
Marc Muzic
Christina Nordstrom
Kristen O'Neal
Jennifer Orr
Katherine Orr
Cari Otto
Wayne Owen
Tracee Palafox
Maxine Parappilly
Brian Parrish
Brett Peabody
Bryan Pearson
Dana Pearson
Samuel Perry
Katelyn Phelan
Rachel Phoenix
Paula Piecyk
Zahir Poonawala
Wesley Prince
Francine Querio
Michael Quinn
David Randall
Ginger Rathert
Cassandra Raun
Melissa Reese
Patrick Riley
William Roe
Kristie Ross

1-4 YEARS CONTINUED...

Amanda Rothwell
Jennifer Rutledge
Robin Sacks
Ana Saldana
Rhonda Salerno
Jeane Schalm
Elizabeth Schardt
Alisann Schweiker
Julia Scott
Cheryl Sellers
Susan Sharp
Debra Shay
Connie Shelden
Stacey Silva
Robert Snell
Rikki Speck
Veronica Stanley
Shannon Stiner
Amy Streifel
Stephen Szymczak
Kimberly Taylor
Mark Taylor
Mykala Thompson
Karen Thorpe
Pamela Thum
Micheal Thurman
Peggy Thurman
Trevor Townsend
John Tumelson
Linda Ulrich
Maree Valentine
Paul Vallone
Amy Van Horn
Timothy Verinder
Lisa Voss
Jeanne Walker
Terri Walker
Esther Wandell
Jamie Ward
Jaime Washburn
Carol Watford
Melinda Weathers
Meredith Wedin
Lisa Wiczynski
Sara Williams
Erin Winnicki
Kelley Wolf
Jennifer Yankee
Beverly Yarbrough
Eden Young
Ellen Zampello



VOLUNTEER COUNCIL

Susan Olver
Judith Bartok
Betty Keyser
Laurie Schoepf
Jane Funke
Pamela Fairchild
Pam Jackson

Creating Connections for Children in Care

TRUST BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION (TBRI)

TBRI® is an attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. TBRI® uses Empowering Principles to address physical needs, Connecting Principles for attachment needs, and Correcting Principles to disarm fear-based behaviors. While the intervention is based on years of attachment, sensory processing, and neuroscience research, the heartbeat of TBRI® is connection.

Although our TBRI efforts looked a little different in 2020, the CASA Child Advocates' team of 6 TBRI Practioner staff members continued to coach parents, foster parents and kinship placements virtually. The TBRI Team also offered trainings for our volunteers, focusing specifically on how to build connection with children virtually (video chat while coloring on the same sheet, reading a book together, playing a game virtually, or bringing a pet onto the Zoom chat.)

CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County trained outside organizations on TBRI and trauma-informed care including Galveston CASA, Conroe ISD, LoneStar College of Nursing, and local attorneys.



Number of TBRI Practioners on-staff at CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County.

6

MONTHLY

TBRI trainings offered to Advocates in 2020

COLLABORATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (CFE)

CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County was one of the first programs in the state of Texas to begin implementing Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) on our cases. Now, more than 6 years later, Advocates use CFE tools readily on every case.

The main goals of Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) are to avoid removing children from their family of origin whenever possible, and to help children achieve strong connectivity and permanency faster, preferably with relatives or other trusted loved ones.

In 2020, CASA Child Advocates continued to train Advocates on CFE principles. Volunteers received certificates of completion for a 3-part CFE training series, held virtually.

A CFE virtual training was conducted in August 2020 for new CPS caseworkers at the request of a CPS Supervisor. The training focused on understanding on how CFE tools work and understanding the CFE process initiated by CASA.

Family member support increased in Family Group meetings during 2020; virtual meetings made it more convenient for parents and family members to be more involved in the CPS process.

In collaboration with the Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS) and community partners, we are working to ensure that every child in foster care has the opportunity for lifelong connections.



67%

Percentage of custody case outcomes resulting in Family Reunification or Relative Custody in 2020. This is up from 62% in 2019.

5

CFE trainings held for Advocates in 2020

Focusing on Children's Specific Needs



GIFT PROGRAM

The GIFT Program provides Advocates with special training and resources for cases involving infants and toddlers. In 2020, GIFT leads hosted GIFT trainings every 3-4 months for Advocates, moving their training online during the pandemic. They also increased the pregnancy and parenting resources available for Advocate use.

CASA4TEENS INITIATIVE

In 2019, CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County announced a new approach for teen outreach. The program, "CASA4Teens" (formerly the "Fostering Futures" program), aims to increase successful outcomes for youth aging out of foster care.

The CASA4Teens steering committee consists of a mix of CASA staff, Advocates, and community partners. In 2020, this group met with leaders from Texas CASA, National CASA, other local CASA offices, DFPS, and non-profits working with teenagers to determine best practices and identify gaps in services for foster youth.

As a result of their extensive research, urgent needs were determined and projects were put in place in an effort to meet those needs. This group developed a teen tracking system with a 24-point assessment that is to be conducted quarterly on all teens in care. This will be used to create individualized care plans for teens, track their individual progress, and provide insights that will our intervention efforts as a program.

Together with Rebecca Smith, LPC-S, they explored a foster youth substance abuse recovery program.

Members of the committee worked in partnership with DFPS facilitators to improve the quality of and increase the occurrence of support meetings for teens, focusing on strengthening their support systems and creating plans for the teens once they exit care.

A partnership was also created with Leadership Montgomery County to plan for Game of Life 2021, an event that will give the teens life skills experience while maintaining safety in the continuing COVID pandemic.

Three Advocate gatherings were conducted specifically for Advocates who support teens. This included an Advocate roundtable, a training on the Texas Education Training Voucher, and a training on how to support teens through the COVID pandemic.



2020 CASA4TEENS COMMITTEE

Melissa Anderson
Jenn Engel
Bob Evans
Rob Johnson
Ann McAlpin
Marilyn McQueeney
Oluchi Nwankwo
Mike Quinn
Barb Robertson
Ann Marie Ronsman
Rebecca Smith
Robyn West

Educational Advocacy



HANDLE WITH CARE

CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County is proud to have partnered with the Montgomery County District Attorney's Office on a collaborative initiative called "Handle with Care." Handle with Care is a program that enables local law enforcement to notify local school districts when they encounter a child at a traumatic scene, so school personnel and mental health partners can provide appropriate trauma-sensitive interventions immediately.

Handle With Care requires:

- Law enforcement to send notification to schools
- Schools to receive notifications and prepare for trauma-sensitive support

The goal is to set schools up to better help children exposed to trauma focus, behave appropriately, and learn.

We are proud to have the following partners in this initiative:

- Montgomery County District Attorney's Office
- Montgomery County Sheriff's office
- Conroe PD
- Magnolia PD
- Conroe ISD
- Montgomery ISD
- Willis ISD
- New Caney ISD/Splendora
- Magnolia ISD

The Montgomery County Handle with Care program is currently the only county-wide program in Texas.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee is made up of many specialists from the education field, mostly retired. This includes a retired superintendent of schools, a retired principal and ESL specialist, a retired school counselor, a retired educational diagnostician (special ed) and a retired gifted and talented specialist. The committee also recently added a behavior specialist.

The Education Committee is available to answer any questions related to the success and or struggles of our children in school. Members of the committee offer to attend meetings with Advocates such as ARD meetings or 504 meetings.

CASA Case Supervisors submit questions regarding education which are then referred to the committee specialist. On a monthly basis, the committee fields an average of 10 questions from volunteers.

The Education Committee has written helpful blog articles for the CASA website and has also contributed articles and videos for drip learning by text message for Advocates.



Serving Every Single Child

ANTI-TRAFFICKING INITIATIVE

Human trafficking, which is the exploitation of people for sexual servitude, forced labor, or financial gain, is rampant in many countries and is thought to generate over \$30 billion worldwide. Here in the U.S., the FBI estimates that over 100,000 children are victims of sex trafficking.

Foster children are particularly vulnerable to falling victim to sex trafficking and other forms of human trafficking. 60% of all child sex trafficking victims have histories in the child welfare system.

CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County had planned two in-person human trafficking training for 2020 prior to the pandemic. The two trainings were then converted to Zoom meetings.

Texas CASA created the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Course that became available in February of 2020. This free course was created to help Advocates identify victims of trafficking, understand the unique needs of exploited youth, and provide them with the highest level of advocacy. The course has 9 modules and takes approximately 2.5 hours to complete. CASA asked our volunteers to register and complete this online training then come together virtually on Zoom to discuss what they had learned. About a dozen Advocates took the course, advancing their knowledge on this important issue.



FOCUS ON INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

In 2020, CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County was one of six Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) organizations from across the USA to have partnered with All Children - All Families (ACAF) to implement LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices. We successfully completed all activities as part of ACAF's 2020 Building Foundation for Inclusion cohort.

There is a growing movement within the CASA/GAL network and child welfare system that recognizes LGBTQ-inclusion is essential to achieving the goals of safety, permanency and well-being.

Accreditation was a rigorous year-long process, and CASA Child Advocates worked diligently to conduct an internal self-assessment, provide professional development to staff, and implement ACAF's Benchmarks of LGBTQ Inclusion.



Improving the Quality of our Advocacy Efforts

ADVOCATE CONTINUING EDUCATION & NEW ADVOCATE TRAINING

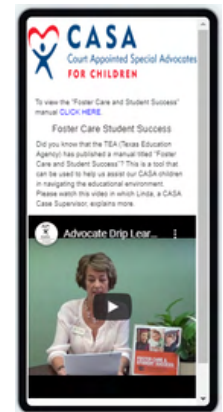
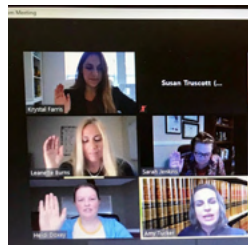
3,524 hours of continuing education were completed by volunteer Advocates in 2020

Number of drip learning text messages sent to Advocates.
73% of Advocates used drip learning for continuing education.

75

74 new Advocates completed training and were sworn in (all virtually after March 2020)

COMMUNICATION BY TEXT MESSAGE WAS ALSO USED FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC.



NEW ADVOCATE RECRUITMENT & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Recruitment efforts in the beginning of 2020 continued with community presentations and events tables including the Republican Women's group of the Woodlands, The National Charitable Roundtable, Kiwanis Club gatherings, just to name a few.

Our Conversations with CASA informational gatherings also continued. However when the pandemic hit, we quickly changed to online gatherings. Our Men of CASA Gathering pivoted as well to a virtual one in August of 2020. The Recruitment Committee continued to spread the word about CASA through our most powerful source: Word of Mouth. We held a virtual recruiting meeting in May of 2020.

Additionally, a billboard was erected at the back of The Woodlands on FM 2978 and a recruitment video was produced featuring our very own volunteers. Special thanks to our Recruitment Committee for assisting with community events and outreach in person and then virtually when the pandemic put things online.



2020 RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

Dona Angell	Pam Miller
Ellen Antonov	Eulalia Munoz
Pamela Farichild	Jenny Orr
Rina French	Fran Querio
Cara Hafer	Mike Quinn
Mark Havican	Dennis Smith
Mary Kay Hinkle	Collette Stelly
Madge Hollinger	Charlotte Tabarini
Bobbie Kohleffel	Connie Taylor
Keith Lemons	Mark Tefft
Corey Mark	

25th Annual CASA Speaks for Kids Gala

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Lindsay Miller, Event Coordinator

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Karen Cahill
Tracy Ray Campbell
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Mary-Lou Fitch
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Angela Hansen
Eric Hansen
Lisa Henthorn
Misti Jeter

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Shannon Regan

Tracey Robinson
Shawn Sellers-Rouge
Cheryl Sellers
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11th Annual CASA Superhero Run



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TOP FUNDRAISERS

ADULT TEAMS

CASA Crusaders (team captain Misti Jeter) - \$3,785

CASA Compassionates (team captain Gregg Edelmann) - \$3,400

Wiggle Warriors (team captain Nicole Bozick) - \$3,180

HIGH SCHOOL TEAMS

Lake Creek Lion XC (team captain Luke Ronsman) - \$1,135

Infinity Knights XC (team captain Leslie Navarro) - \$320

Cooper XC - \$50 by the Oct. 31 youth contest deadline, \$475 total raised

INDIVIDUALS

Gregg Edelmann - \$3,400

Christi Clark - \$3,050

Misti Jeter - \$2,700



2020 RUN COMMITTEE

Holly Gruy, Chair

Nicole Bozick
Amanda Burke
Debra Dozier
Paul Hermann

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Rikki Speck



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Child Advocates of Montgomery County

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