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CASA Volunteers Speak Up for Abused, Neglected Children

Join CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County's commitment to helping victims of child abuse and neglect heal and to making sure all children feel safe and loved

CONROE, Texas (April 1, 2015)--Anytime a child is abused or neglected, it's a tragedy – one that all too often scars victims for a lifetime. The latest statistics from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are sobering:

- Child Protective Services agencies across the United States received some 3.9 million reports of child abuse or neglect in 2013.
- An estimated 1,520 children died from child abuse or neglect in 2013, nearly three-quarters of them younger than age 3.
- In Montgomery County in 2014, 668 children were in the custody of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and 1 child died as a result of abuse and/or neglect.

Studies have shown that children who have suffered abuse or neglect are more likely to struggle in school, have run-ins with law enforcement, experience homelessness or abuse drugs or alcohol. Research also shows that abused children are more apt to grow up to abuse their own kids.

At CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County, volunteers speak up for the best interests of abused and neglected children so they can live happier, safer lives. CASA volunteers – Court-Appointed Special Advocates – make sure kids don't get lost in the overburdened legal and social service systems or languish in unsupportive foster homes. They serve as the "eyes and ears" for the judge in child welfare cases. Each Advocate is assigned to help one child or set of siblings at a time, so they can focus on giving that child or sibling group the individualized advocacy and attention they need. CASA volunteers stay with children until their court case is closed and the child is placed in a safe, permanent home.

CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County continually encourages the community to learn more about the work Advocates do and consider becoming a CASA volunteer.

Perhaps not everyone feels they can become a CASA volunteer yet, but everyone can be an advocate by taking steps to make our community safer for our children:

- Be mindful of the signs of abuse and neglect in children (lack of adult supervision, extreme passivity/aggression, poor hygiene).
- Be aware of warning signs in parents (showing indifference or rarely touching/looking at their child, constant verbal criticism, demands for perfection, blaming the child for family problems, other irrational behaviors).
- If you think a child is in immediate danger, don't hesitate. Call 911.
- If you believe a child is being abused or neglected, report your suspicions confidentially to our state's toll-free child abuse hotline at (800) 252-5400 or go to www.txabusehotline.org.

Working together as a community, we can end abuse and neglect so that every child has a chance to thrive. For more information about CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County, visit the website at www.CASASpeaks4Kids.com or call (936) 441-5437.

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Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) are appointed by the Court to speak up for the best interest of children who have been removed from their parents and are under the Court's jurisdiction. CASA's goal is to provide a court-appointed volunteer to serve as Guardian ad Litem for every child in the foster care system. For the past 23 years, CASA has been training volunteers, raising awareness in the community, and working to stop the cycle of child abuse in Montgomery County. Learn more about CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County at www.casaspeaks4kids.com and on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CASACHildAdvocatesofMontgomeryCounty>