



CASA OF TERREBONNE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021 • ISSUE NO. 4



402 CANAL STREET

985-876-0250

WWW.CASAOFTERREBONNE.ORG



MEET CASA VOLUNTEER : TRACI HAWTHORNE

This month we would like to introduce you to CASA advocate, Traci Hawthorne. Traci has been an advocate at CASA since 2014. She has advocated on 3 cases, with a total of 8 children. Traci has been married to her husband, Randy Hawthorne, for 7 ½ years. They do not have any children, but they do have a little dog, Molle', who they absolutely adore!! Traci is a retired French teacher (11 years). Her hobbies include the French culture and language, as well as scrapbooking and reading. Traci was born and raised in Kalamazoo, Michigan (how fun is that to say!). She moved here in 2007 for a teaching job and has been here ever since. Something almost no one knows about Traci, is that she had a job selling underground mining equipment.

Traci first heard about CASA from her friend Kristie Matherne Patrick, who is a former advocate. They met when Traci started attending her husband's church. She states that "Knowing there are so many children out there that have not experienced unconditional love before, breaks my heart, and I could not turn away knowing that I could give unconditional love to at least a few of them. People often say that they wish things would change in the world. As a CASA volunteer, you can start that change with "changing the story" for one child at a time. Every child you advocate for will become a member of society. This is your chance to help that child grow into a productive and powerful member of society. What else is there to think about?"

When asked what she would like to share about her CASA experience Traci says, "I have never worked for or volunteered with another organization that recognizes the work of their volunteers as much as CASA does. The people that have come into my life because of CASA are relationships that I can't imagine living without. You are never alone in your volunteer work at CASA. The staff and other CASA volunteers are always there to support you."

At CASA we certainly do feel blessed to have Traci, as not only a volunteer but as a friend. Thank you for all you continue to do for CASA and the community!



A POLO SHIRT WILL BE DONATED TO THIS MONTH'S CASA VOLUNTEER BY SHELLY TOUPS AT ARTISTIC EMBROIDERY.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS #58

We are thrilled to welcome our newest Court Appointed Special Advocates (pictured left to right): Elain Beyer, Kathy Mella, Darlene Naquin, and Molly Arrington were sworn in by The Honorable Judge Timothy Ellender, Jr.

These women have completed 30 hours of intensive training and will advocate for children who have been placed into foster care as a result of abuse and/or neglect.



APRIL VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

We appreciate your commitment & service to CASA

Ann Beeson

9 years

Destiny Clement

5 years

Rushelle Fitzgerald

5 years

Betty Wallace

7 years

SATURDAY, MAY 8, 2021

1238 St Charles St, Houma, LA | 11 AM - 2 PM
OLD RITEAID PARKING LOT

\$75 TEAM ENTRY

- Teams can register at Southdown Bar. 216 Mystic Blvd.
 - You can pay cash, check made out to HJC Foundation, or charge in person.
- If you would like to register online, we are taking Venmo
 - Please go to Venmo @hjcfoundation and pay the entry fee of \$75.00
 - Put your Team Captain's name AND Phone number in the details.

PRESENTED BY:



**A MESSAGE FROM CHRISTINE AUCOIN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

April is National Child Abuse prevention month. CASA's role in preventing abuse is found in our mission statement: "Court Appointed Special Advocate of Terrebonne, Inc. is to be an independent and objective presence in the courts and to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children of Terrebonne Parish. We promote and support trained community volunteers to represent our children and help secure for each child a nurturing, safe, and permanent home."

CASA volunteers are fierce defenders of a child's right to thrive in a safe and loving environment. Our advocates step in to ensure that the circumstances in the child's life that brought them into State's custody are being addressed. Advocates investigate and monitor the progress of the case in order to make recommendations for reunification or adoption.

As we strive to keep children safe, remember, CASA volunteers are ordinary citizens from all walks of life who feel compelled to be there for a child as they navigate through a very difficult time in their life.

On a different note, you've heard the saying "the more things change, the more they stay the same." Once again we have change here at the CASA office. On March 15, 2021, Sulma Reyes moved into the role of Outreach/Training





Coordinator. She brings so much knowledge and experience to this role and the volunteers that she trains will be well prepared to advocate for the children.

On April 1, 2021, Heather Falls filled the position of Advocate Supervisor. Heather recently swore in as an advocate and completed one case. She will receive a diploma in May from Nicholls with a degree in Sociology.

What remains the same is that no matter the staff turnover, advocates continue to work their cases. This is such a testimony to the commitment the volunteers have to the children. Through changes in our staff, advocates continue to be a consistent and reliable presence for their "CASA kids".

We are honored and humbled to work with such a dedicated volunteer group.

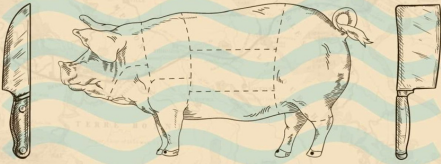



Kim Eubanks

She has won a gift card of her choice for visiting with her CASA children and putting in her contact logs by the last day of the month.

To be entered into the monthly drawing, volunteers must see their CASA children and enter contact logs by the last day of the month.

BAYOU TERREBONNE BOUCHERIE
APRIL 17, 2021



FOOD ■ FUN ■ FAIS DO-DO
DOWNTOWN HOUMA

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Bayou Terrebonne Boucherie
Piglets' Pen

April 17, 2021 | 10 am - 5 pm

If active CASA Volunteers are interested, please call Sulma at 985-876-0250 for available timeslots.

VOLUNTEER SHOUT OUTS!

- Penny Hebert and Carol Bergeron on seeing their case through to adoption for their CASA child, attending a family team meeting for their CASA child on a separate case and for volunteering their time at Southdown Marketplace.
- Leah Voisin and Kristy Ledford for attending a court hearing for their CASA children.
- Jennifer Kryvanick for attending a Family Team Meeting and a court hearing for her CASA child.
- Kari Griffin and Sherry Mahaney for attending a Family Team Meeting and multiple hearings for their CASA children.
- Kari Griffin for attending a court hearing for her other CASA case.
- Kim Eubanks for attending a court hearing for her CASA child.
- Rebecca Clement for attending a court hearing for her CASA child and volunteering her time at Southdown Marketplace.
- Rhonda Lovell for attending a family team meeting and completing a court report for her CASA children.
- Tara Pellegrin for attending a court hearing for her CASA child.
- Eddie Olivier for attending a family preservation court hearing, completing a court report, attending a court hearing for his CASA child and attending a staffing with his advocate supervisor.
- Emily Gilmore for attending a family team meeting, a family preservation court hearing, completing a court report and attending a court hearing for her CASA child. Emily also attended a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Melanie Prentice for attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Brian Elliott for completing a court report and the wellbeing assessment for his CASA child. He also attended a staffing with his advocate supervisor.
- Tim Hitt for completing the wellbeing assessment for his CASA children and attending a staffing with his advocate supervisor.
- Ann Beeson for completing her wellbeing assessment for her CASA case and attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Carey Redmond for attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Colleen Greer for completing the wellbeing assessment for her CASA case and attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Mary Guidry for attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Jon Russo for attending a staffing with his advocate supervisor.
- Priscilla Callais for attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Rushelle Fitzgerald for attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.
- Amber Berry for attending Family Preservation Court for her CASA children and attending a staffing with her advocate supervisor.

MARCH DONATIONS & GRANTS

- Anonymous Facebook Donors
- Elaine Beyer
- CASA-AP
- Maxine Carlos
- Sherry & Cherry Wilmore

*Thank
you!*

CASA STAFF

Christine Aucoin
Executive Director

Jenny Domangue
Lead Advocate Supervisor

Heather Falls
Advocate Supervisor

Anna Merlos
*Office Manager/
Marketing Coordinator*

Sulma Reyes
Training/Outreach Coordinator

Valentine Verdin
Advocate Supervisor

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

Martin Majewski, III

President

Mary Guidry

Vice President

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Charles Brown, Sr.

Christopher Chiasson

Patricia Floyd

Heather Hebert

Charles Kornegay

Buddy McNabb

Angelle Thibodeaux

SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

Written by: Jenny Domangue

April is child abuse prevention month. Each year you may see blue pinwheels placed around the area. This is a reminder of the many children who have suffered some form of child abuse. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services Children's Bureau, nationally there were 656,000 children who were victims of child abuse. Of these children, 1840 died as a result of the abuse that they suffered. In Louisiana alone there were 20, 597



JENNY DOMANGUE, LEAD ADVOCATE SUPERVISOR

children who required DCFS intervention. The goal should be to intervene before a crisis happens within the family. Some indicators of possible victimization are substance abuse by the caretaker including alcohol, domestic violence within the caretaker including alcohol, domestic violence within the home, financial struggles, inadequate housing, receiving public assistance, and caregiver disability. When we are aware of concerns within the family

MARCH VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

66

VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES



69

CASA CHILDREN SERVED



160

HOURS SPENT ADVOCATING



658.20

MILES TRAVELED BY ADVOCATES



153

CHILDREN ON THE WAITING LIST



Breakdown of Waitlist Cases: **Sexual (9) - Physical (11) - Neglect (78) - Substance Abuse (55)**

FEBRUARY CHILDREN STATISTICS

80

CHILDREN SERVED

52

CHILDREN SEEN FACE-TO-FACE

13

CHILDREN CONTACTED OTHER THAN FACE-TO-FACE

76%

OF CHILDREN SEEN

81%

OF CHILDREN WERE CONTACTED

unit, we can implement services to assist in strengthening the family bond in order to avoid child abuse. Our role as CASA is to advocate for the best interest of the children. This starts with their biological parents. We must support them to support the children. Let's push forward through the crowd to be light for our CASA children. Let's help them thrive and overcome all the obstacles that life has put in their way. Be their voice, speak up when they can't and put their needs in the spotlight.

Visit the Children's Bureau for more information regarding Child Abuse Prevention month!

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/>



MEET OUR NEW ADVOCATE SUPERVISOR, HEATHER FALLS

Heather became a CASA volunteer in November 2020 and will soon be a graduate from Nicholls State University in May 2021, with a BA in Sociology with a concentration in Social Work.

Heather states, "While I was waiting on a response after my interview, I just thought about all the good I can do for the community and for the kids who are placed in these impossible situations." Heather is excited to start her new journey and career with CASA and can't wait to make a difference in the world.

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS:

IN-SERVICE: FAMILY PRESERVATION COURT OVERVIEW WITH JUDGE ARCENEUX MAY 11, 2021 | 12 PM - 1 PM | JUDGE ARCENEUX'S COURT ROOM (1 CREDIT HOUR)

Join us in Judge Arceneaux's court room for an introduction to Family Preservation Court. This is a new and compelling program available in Terrebonne parish that is designed to help families with substance use disorders get the treatment and support that they need to get their children out of foster care sooner or avoid foster care all together. It is an intensive treatment plan based loosely on drug court but with a focus on the family unit. We will hear from Judge Arceneaux, ADA Ellen Doskey and Valerie Cooper.

RSVP at www.casafterrebonne.org>For Advocates>Advocate Calendar.

INS-SERVICE: TBRI INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW WITH JENNY DOMANGUE (3 CREDIT HOURS) APRIL 27, 2021 | 5:30 PM - 8:45 PM | TERREBONNE PARISH LIBRARY - MAIN BRANCH

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (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 to address attachment needs and correcting principles to disarm fear-based behaviors. This Introduction and Overview to TBRI will give you insight into this complex intervention tool.

RSVP at www.casafterrebonne.org>For Advocates>Advocate Calendar.

***THIS TRAINING IS MANDATORY FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS AND MUST BE COMPLETED BY JUNE 2021. ***

[HTTPS://MOODLE.LCMTA.ORG/ENROL/INDEX.PHP?ID=376](https://moodle.lcmta.org/enrol/index.php?id=376) (1.5 CREDIT HOURS)

It will help you learn your rights and obligations as a mandated reporter. In return, you will help keep children safe in your role as a CASA volunteer. (Include program ID #10241 when training is complete)

***ENTER ALL TRAINING CREDIT HOURS TO OPTIMA ***



**CASA
TUTORING
PROGRAM**

Help tutor foster children in your community.

- MUST HAVE A TEACHING CERTIFICATE
- TUTORS ARE PAID \$25/HOUR
- 3 HOURS OF TRAINING BEFORE BEING ASSIGNED TO A CASE
- MUST PASS A BACKGROUND CHECK

APPLY ONLINE
www.casafterrebonne.org



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Betty Wallas 4/8
Tammy Brouillette 4/13
Alyssia Hay 4/20
Charles Kornegay 4/28
Kathi Murphy 4/30