



# ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

# About CASA of Terrebonne

When a child is removed from their parent, they become part of a system where their best interest may be overlooked and can change their life story. CASA of Terrebonne believes that every child should have a safe and nurturing home and have a voice in their own story. The courts provide a CASA who is a community volunteer trained in making the best recommendations to the judge while advocating for the foster child's best interest. The CASA monitors the child's educational, medical and social progress and voices the child's wants and needs in the courtroom.

## Our Mission

The mission of Court Appointed Special Advocate of Terrebonne, Inc. is to be an independent and objective presence in the courts to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in foster care in Terrebonne Parish. CASA promotes and supports quality volunteer advocacy to help assure each child a safe, permanent and nurturing home.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Meet the dedicated team members of our volunteer board (July 2020 - June 2021)



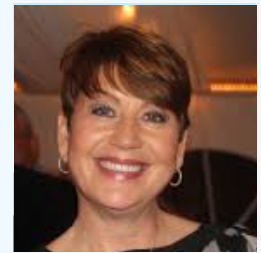
**Martin Majewski, III**  
President



**Mary Guidry**  
Vice-President



**Bonnie Naquin**  
Treasurer



**Shelly Toups**  
Secretary



**Charles Brown**



**Patricia Reeves Floyd**



**Angelle Thibodeaux**



**Carl "Buddy" McNabb**



**Heather Hebert**



**Charles Kornegay**



**Christopher Chiasson**



**CASA Board Cooking Team at  
CASA of Terrebonne Crawfish Boil-Off**



**CASA Staff and Board of Director members  
with members of the Danos Foundation**



**Donation from HIOT**

# Executive Director's Summary

We are once again recapping a successful year here at CASA. The fiscal year 2020-2021 brought challenges, changes, and most of all commitment from our supporters in the community. From the volunteers and board members to the foundations and donors, CASA continues to benefit from and grow because of community involvement. Our mission remains to be an independent and objective presence in the courts by speaking for the best interest of abused and neglected children of Terrebonne parish.

I am new to the Executive Director's position but have been a part of the CASA family for 5 years. I started as a volunteer then came on board as a staff member taking on the role of Office Manager and then Outreach/Training Coordinator before accepting my current position.

We continue to navigate the problems caused by the COVID pandemic and the havoc caused by Hurricane Ida. Community events and fundraising efforts have been curtailed because of the many cancellations. We have had changes in staffing roles including Sulma Reyes transitioning to Outreach/Training Coordinator, Heather Falls our new Advocate Supervisor, and Anna Merlos expanding her Office Manager role to include Marketing Coordinator. Valentine Verdin continues as an Advocate Supervisor and Jenny Domangue celebrated ten years as an Advocate Supervisor.

During the year, the following achievements were noted:

- 16 new advocates were sworn-in
- 73 volunteers advocated for 122 children
- Volunteers traveled 11,104 miles to advocate on their cases

New and continuing Community partnerships include:

- CASA Tutor program is partnering with Sylvan Learning Center to meet the educational needs of foster children
- Inauguration of Family Preservation court with CASA participating in quarterly committee meetings and bi-monthly court hearings
- Collaboration with Louisiana CASA for compliance with National CASA standards and enhancement of best practices

We will continue to face challenges daily with the knowledge that the CASA community of volunteers and partners stands ready to assist and support our efforts. We remain committed to helping children be a voice in their stories.

On behalf of the staff, I thank all those who were a part of our success story this year.

ALL THE BEST,

**CHRISTINE AUCOIN**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



(NOT PICTURED: FORMER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DONNA BRUNET)

## 2021 CASA STAFF

(First Row)

**Jenny Domangue**, Lead Advocate Supervisor,

**Christine Aucoin**, Executive Director,

**Sulma Reyes** Outreach/Training Coordinator,

(Back Row)

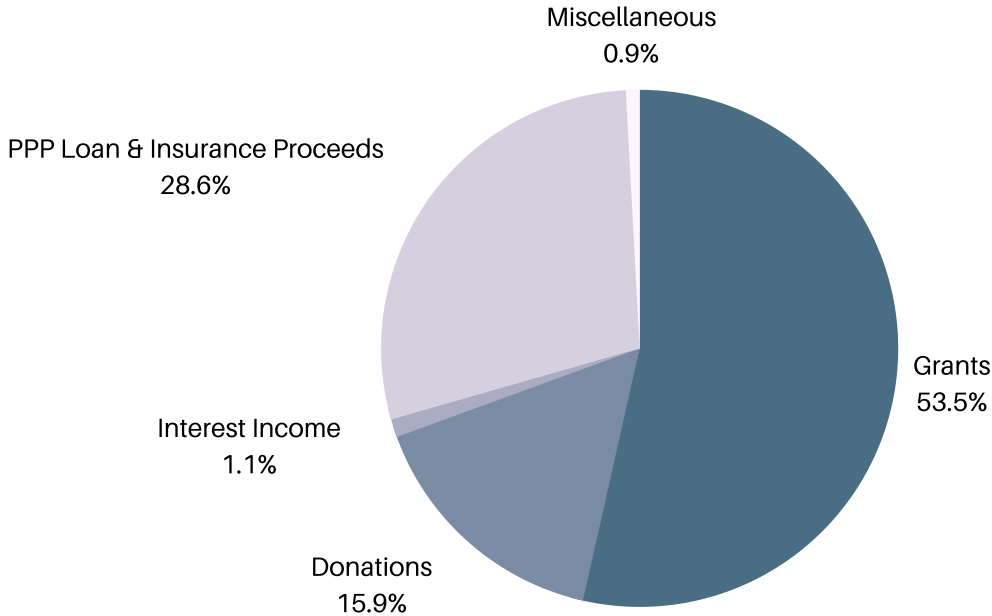
**Valentine Verdin**, Advocate Supervisor,

**Anna Merlos**, Office Manager/Marketing Coordinator,

**Heather Falls**, Advocate Supervisor

# Financial Summary

## Operating Revenue



**Grants**

\$327,116.

**Donations**

\$97,264.

**Interest Income**

\$6,906.

**PPP Loan & Insurance Proceeds**

\$174,688.

**Miscellaneous**

\$5,242.

**Total Operating Revenue**  
**\$611,216.**

## Operating Expenses

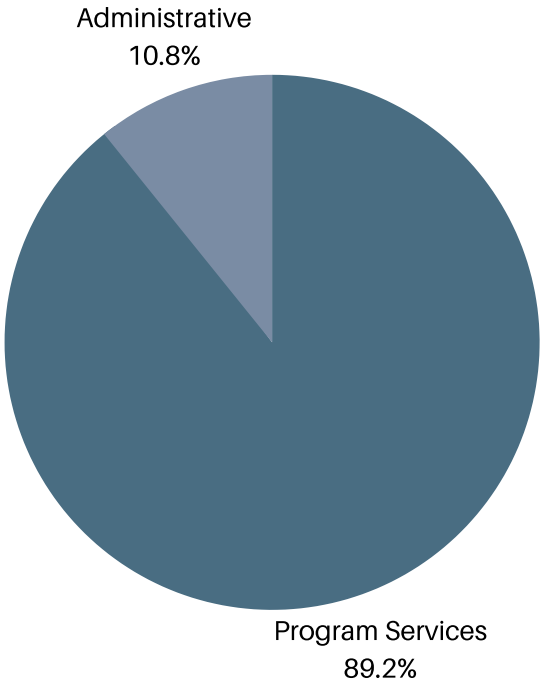
**Program Services**

\$497,516.

**Administrative**

\$60,255.

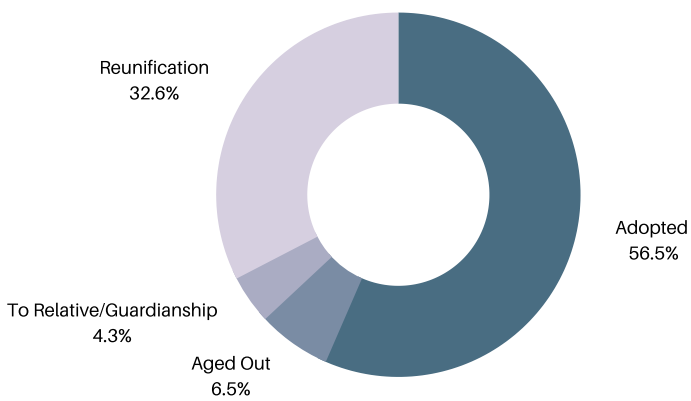
**Total Operating Expenses**  
**\$557,771.**



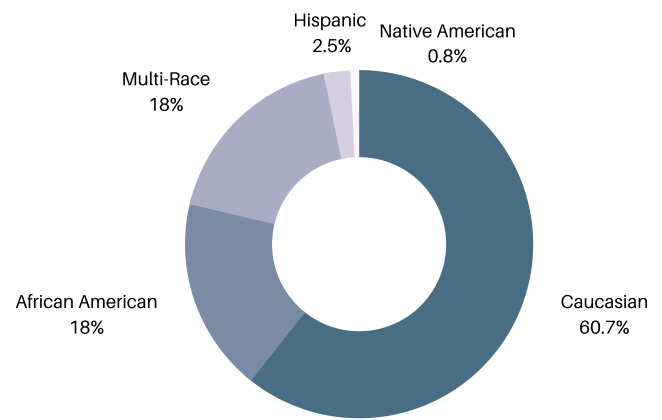
# Program Stats

Children Served  
in the 2020-2021  
Fiscal Year

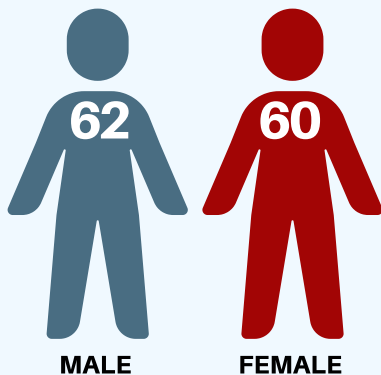
122



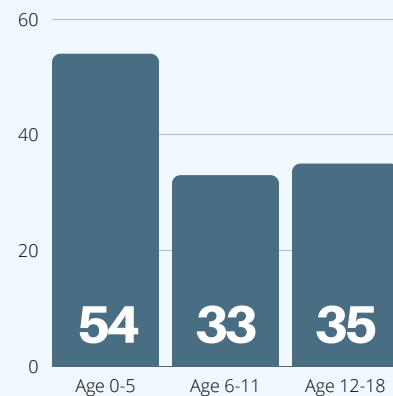
The outcome of the children whose cases were closed between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.



Ethnicity of children served between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.



Gender of children served between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.



Age of children served between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021.

# Volunteer Stats

**122** Children  
had the benefit  
of...

**73** caring  
volunteer  
advocates...

Who gave **1856**  
**hours** of their  
time

Saving the Child  
welfare system  
**\$27,834.**  
**(\$15/HR)**



**WE WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE THE 73  
VOLUNTEERS WHO SERVED THE ABUSED  
AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN IN  
TERREBONNE PARISH THIS PAST YEAR:**

Kathleen Andrews

Molly Arrington

Cynthia "Ann" Beeson

Carol Bergeron

Blayne Bergeron

Amber Berry

Elaine Beyer

Jennifer Bonvillain

Terissa Boquet

Tammy Brouillette

Michael Brown

Silvana Brown

Terri Brown

Jennifer Burrough

Lisa Bustamante

Priscilla Callais

Earleather Celestine

Rebecca Clement

Gina Danos

Alicia Dove

Cathy Duet

Brian Elliott

Emily Elmore

Allison Eschete

Kimberly Eubanks

Christine Evans

Heather Falls

Rushelle Fitzgerald

Linda Ford

Mia Foret

Jacob Ghere

Sarah Ghere

Emily Gilmore

Colleen Greer

Kari Griffin

Mary Guidry

Traci Hawthorne

Alyssia Hay

Penny Hebert

Tressa Hebert

Timothy Hitt

Tija Hopkins

Jennifer Kryvanick

Amanda LeBlanc

Kristy Ledford

Miranda Legendre

Tasha Lirette

Rhonda Lovell

Norma Macks

Sherry Mahaney

Carl McNabb

Claire McNabb

Kathryn Mella

Kathi Murphy

Vickie Naquin

Edward Olivier

Lori Olivier

Tara Pellegrin

Melanie Prentice

Miranda Price

Carey Redmond

Nicole Reiss

Mitzi Rieve

Jonathan Russo

Joy Tingle

Meagan Verret

Suzanne Vice

Leah Voisin

Betty Wallace

Danielle Walker

Amber Ward

Yvonne White

Ann Williams

*Thank  
you!*



# Finding Forever Homes



*Ann Beeson at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*



*Timothy Hitt at CASA Children's Adoption Hearing*



*Earleather Celestine at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*



*Kristy Ledford and Leah Voisin at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*



*Yvonne White at CASA Children's Adoption Hearing*



*Lori Olivier at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*



*Allison Eschete at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*



*Ann Beeson at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*



*Tasha Lirette at CASA Children's Adoption Hearing*



*Meagan Verret at CASA Child's Adoption Hearing*

# WHEN **CASA** BECOMES **FAMILY**

Our Advocate Supervisors and staff see the greatness in our volunteers and the work they do every day. We try to make it a point to let the volunteers know how much they are appreciated and how much of a difference they are making in the lives of their CASA children. But when their CASA child, whom they have been working with for many years, recognizes the effort and verbalizes the positive impact, it makes the recognition that much sweeter.

In a Facebook post earlier this year, here is what Ann's former CASA child shared:



*I'll never be able to thank this woman here enough. When I came into foster care the second time - I was lost, hurt, neglected, abused, just broken altogether. This woman, Changed my whole life. She wasn't just my CASA worker. She was a friend. She always tried to push me to do better. She helped me heal and understand the pain I endured. She gave me a shoulder to cry on. she kept me going even when I was so hard-headed and didn't wanna listen. She pushed me to do better. She helped me change the way I handled things. she kept me going. She always made sure I was okay and always looked out for me and never gave up. I'm 19 years old almost 20 and I came into foster care the second time at 14 aged out at 18 and this woman still hasn't given up on me and is still around to this day. And she didn't just do it for me. she did it for the three siblings as well. This is proof, not all super hero's wear capes. Because this woman is my hero. She gave me light in times of darkness. She gave me motivation when I felt like giving up. She gave me a hand to hold when I felt alone in the world. And when I had no family to lean on she was always there to reassure me that she was my family. She's not just the CASA worker I had when I was in foster care. She's my Gammy. I love her so much and I'm beyond thankful for her. This woman is a hero, she is my rock, my best friend, my family.*

Mrs. Ann, you are an angel on earth and CASA of Terrebonne is lucky to have you as a volunteer and friend. Know that you are making a huge difference even when you are having a hard time seeing your impact.

Keep fighting, keep going, keep the faith and never give up! Keep pushing your CASA kids to greatness! You are a superhero!

# From Our Volunteers



“

Don't let fear stop you from being there for a child in need. You could be the one person, the one constant, the one reliable adult in that child's life that could be the reason they go on to become happy, healthy, successful, loving adults.

- *Alyssia Hay*

“

When you first meet your child, it's such a heartfelt experience! Just listening to them talk and seeing them smile makes the training all worth it.



- *Darlene Nagrin*



“

You get to meet the children and they will melt your heart. They get to the point where they look forward to seeing you on monthly visits. They want you to be a part of each aspect of their lives, from home life to extracurricular activities to showing you their newfound skill or talent.

- *Timothy Hitt*

“

These children have to do very hard things through no fault of their own. So dig in and get messy and stay focused on the goal of loving others.



- *Amber Berry*

# Volunteer Classes

## Class #56

**From Left to Right:**

Tara Pellegrin, Nicole Reiss, Amber Berry, Tija Hopkins and Christine Aucoin (CASA Trainer)

Sworn in by The Honorable Judge Juan Pickett



## Class #57

**Back Row:** Tammy Brouillette, Sherry Mahaney, Lisa Bustamante, Jennifer Bonvillain

**Front Row:** Colleen Greer, Kari Griffin, Christine Aucoin (CASA Trainer) and Heather Falls

Sworn in by The Honorable Judge Juan Pickett



## Class #58

**From Left to Right:**

Elaine Beyer, Darlene Naquin, Molly Arrington, Kathy Mella and Terri Brown (sworn in at a later date)

Sworn in by The Honorable Judge Timothy Ellender, Jr.



# Celebrating 20 Years of CASA of Terrebonne

*2020 Volunteer Appreciation Award Recipients*

## Five Years of Service



*Blayne Bergeron*



*Penny Hebert*



*Lori Olivier*

## Ten Years of Service



*Earleather Celestine*



*Edward Olivier*





## *Hernandez/Theriot Family* **Angel of the Year**

The Hernandez and Theriot family have gone above and beyond to not only support CASA of Terrebonne but they work tirelessly to ensure that the CASA name is everywhere possible. The family is the boots on the ground for their heavenly angel who was once a CASA volunteer. The family of Gabrielle Hernandez has made it their personal mission to honor Gabby's legacy through her CASA work.



## *Angelle Thibodeaux* **Board Memeber of the Year**

Angelle became a board member in November 2018. During the planning of the March 2020 First Annual Gala, Angelle was an instrumental part of the success of the Gala. She called food vendors and got them to donate a large assortment of items for the Gala. She even had her husband bake butter/garlic crostinis and they were delicious. She secured several auction items and donated one week at her home in Orlando which sold for over \$2000.



## *Priscilla Callais* **Rookie of the Year**

In 2020, CASA of Terrebonne created a new award category to recognize one of our new volunteers who had sworn in within the previous 15 months. Priscilla is persistent on her CASA cases and refuses to accept no for an answer. She is constantly looking for resources to assist the family. After a difficult first case where the ruling went against her recommendations, her Advocate Supervisor was afraid Priscilla would leave, but not only did she come back, she took on a case with four siblings in three different placements. She advocates for services that she knows will help break the cycle they have been in for so long. Most importantly, she cares for each one of them individually and is in tune with their different needs.



## *Rushelle Fitzgerald* **Advocate of the Year**

Rushelle has been committed to our program for four years (April 2019). During those four years, she has advocated for six children in four different cases. All of those cases have had different outcomes; reunification with their parent, a successful adoption, a child's custody being transferred to a relative, and her current case that is still to be determined. Within all of those cases, there is one constant, Rushelle's focus on the child's best interest. She has made it her mission to leave no stone unturned, a true investigator by nature, detailed and observant. Her court reports are her platform where she lays out concerns and facts that others may fail to mention. She always encourages her CASA children, biological parents, and foster parents to do better for the children. She makes bold moves and is not afraid to tell it how it is.

”Every kid is one  
caring adult away  
from being a  
success story.”

- Josh Shipp  
(Former Foster Child)



## THE ROLE OF A CASA CAN BE A POWERFUL VOICE IN A CHILD'S LIFE....

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a court-appointed, trained and committed adult who ensures that each child's individual needs remain a priority in an overburdened child welfare system.

CASA volunteers are appointed as advocates and act as the eyes and ears of the Judge by documenting each child's circumstances and making recommendations for services and permanency. The ultimate goal of the CASA advocate is to help ensure that every child lives in a safe and permanent home. This could mean reunification with parents, placement with relatives, or adoption by a loving family.

What are the requirements to be a CASA?

- Anyone 21 years of age or older
- Pass DCFS and criminal background checks
- Attend 30 hours of training

### 2022 PRE-SERVICE CLASS START DATES

<b>Class #61</b>	<b>January 18, 2022</b>
<b>Class #62</b>	<b>April 19, 2022</b>
<b>Class #63</b>	<b>July 12, 2022</b>
<b>Class #64</b>	<b>October 11, 2022</b>

What are the expectations of a CASA?

- Visit child(ren) at least monthly
- Interview everyone involved in the child's life
- Enter visitations and notes in an online database
- Complete state-mandated online well-being assessments for children bi-annually
- Prepare written court reports with findings and recommendations
- Complete 12 hours of in-service training annually

**As of June 30, 2021, there were 122 children in need of a CASA volunteer.**

To learn more about CASA of Terrebonne, please call us at 985-876-0250 or visit our website at [www.casafterrebonne.org](http://www.casafterrebonne.org).

*We're waiting to hear from you!*

**Help an Abused or Neglected Child**

*Volunteer Today!!*



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

## PLATINUM - Over \$5,000

CASA-AP  
 Herman J. Courville Foundation  
 Houma Invitational Oilman's Tournament (HIOT)  
 Mr. & Mrs. Charles Theriot  
 Bayou Community Foundation  
 LA Bar Foundation

## GOLD - Over \$1,000 - \$5,000

The Gray Foundation  
 The Shack of Houma  
 2020 Terrebonne Parish Consolidated School Drive  
 Mr. & Mrs. Carl Detiveaux  
 Southern Bayou Bourbon Society  
 Danos Foundation  
 Junior Auxiliary of Houma  
 Louisiana Seafood

## SILVER - Over \$250 - \$1000

Artistic Embroidery  
 Mr. & Mrs. Tommy Fudge  
 Mr. & Mrs. Nicholas Fry  
 Kwik Kopy  
 Amber Johnson  
 Dr. Catherine Schwab  
 Martin Majewski, III  
 Ms. Carolyn Lirette  
 Ms. Linda Ayers  
 Terrebonne Parish 4-H  
 Copeland's of New Orleans  
 Mr. & Mrs. Morris Hebert  
 Tori Rayne  
 South Central Louisiana Human Service Authority

## BAYOUGives Day

- Teresa King
- Christina Tucker
- Suzanne Vice
- Mr. & Mrs. Tyler Harrington
- Jennifer Bonvillain
- Darlene Naquin
- Megan Merlos
- Millie Bourgeois
- Mark Lee
- Joyce Thibodaux
- Kathleen Andrews
- Callais Family Fund

## Give Nola Day

### The Greater New Orleans Foundation

- Three Anonymous Donors
- Jenny Dupre
- Ryan Gootee
- Rhonda Schoonenberg



Shoe Donation from Junior Auxiliary of Houma



Donation from Southern Bayou Bourbon Society



Liana's Lemons on Lemonade Day



Anonymous Donation from Amazon Wishlist



Jenny Domangue weighing donated crawfish from The Shack of Houma

## BRONZE - Up to \$250

Mr. & Mrs. James Goodwin  
 Jude Fanguy  
 Kathleen Hotard  
 Brian Powell  
 Lisowe's Lights  
 Julie Moore  
 Mitzi Rieve  
 Lola Ledet  
 Folse Productions  
 A.F. Morgan  
 Alma Pellegrin  
 Shantal Roger  
 Christina Tucker  
 Monique Boudreaux  
 Danna Schwab  
 Carolyn McNabb  
 Patricia Floyd  
 Kathryn Richard  
 Jodie Tueton  
 Mr. & Mrs. Mark Lee  
 ONEHOPE  
 Maxine Carlos  
 Elaine Beyer  
 Everyone's Favorite Twins  
 Classical Conversation  
 Homeschool Community  
 Ericka Dinger  
 Gretta Calongne  
 Priscilla Callais  
 Jane Atkins & Sewing Group



Buddy McNabb enjoying crawfish donated by The Shack of Houma



Cajun Bahamas food donation for Pre-Service Training



The Shack of Houma food donation for Pre-Service Training



Bayou Community Foundation Grant



Christmas Toy Donations from Louisiana Bar Foundation



Christmas Toy Donations from Q Hotels



CASA Volunteer Molly Arrington picking up Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

*"The greatest Good is what we do for one another"*  
 -MOTHER TERESA



CASA Children Easter Bag Gift Donation

# 2021 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

## GABRIELLE HERNANDEZ SCHOLARSHIP

Graduating Senior, Tia Millier, was chosen for the second annual Gabrielle Hernandez Scholarship. Tia will be attending the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in the fall and will seek a major in Computer Science Engineering.



*Tia Miller along with her father, the Hernandez family, & CASA Staff and Board Members*

## CASA OF TERREBONNE SCHOLARSHIP

CASA of Terrebonne would like to congratulate 2021 graduate Madison Kimble on being the recipient of the annual CASA of Terrebonne Scholarship.

Maddy, a graduate of Vandebilt Catholic High School, was chosen for this scholarship because of her outstanding academic achievements. She is attending LSU in the fall and is pursuing a career as a Neurosurgeon.



*Madison Kimble, pictured in the middle, along with her father and CASA staff*

# CRAWFISH BOIL-OFF

In May of 2021, the Herman J. Courville Foundation was able to raise \$46,335.70 at their 14th Annual CASA of Terrebonne Crawfish Boil-Off. Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser and Louisiana Seafood donated \$2,500 worth of live Louisiana crawfish from the Atchafalaya Basin to the event. We appreciate all who participated and helped in organizing the event.



# YEAR IN REVIEW



CASA Staff and Volunteers with Guest Speaker, LGBTQ+ Advocate, Blain Grandin



CASA Volunteers Rebecca Clement and Priscilla Callais at Southdown Marketplace



CASA Volunteers and Staff hosting the Piglet Pen at the Bayou Terrebonne Boucherie



TBRI Practitioner, Jenny Domangue, hosting CASA volunteer's TBRI In-Service Training



CASA Volunteers catching up at Annual Volunteer Appreciation Social  
From Left to Right: Heather Falls, Kari Griffin, Tammy Brouillette & Sherry Mahaney

# THANK YOU FROM





## CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.

Be a CASA.  
Volunteer. Advocate.



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[www.casaofterrebonne.org](http://www.casaofterrebonne.org)