



# CASA OF TERREBONNE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER | ISSUE NO.9



402 CANAL STREET

985-876-0250

WWW.CASAOFTERREBONNE.ORG

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

Our community has been hit hard by Hurricane Ida. It will be months before we are able to return to some sense of normalcy. I want to commend my staff and our advocates. In the midst of all the chaos, they continued to reach out to make the necessary connections to ensure our CASA children were safe. We have received a generous grant from the ***Ticket to Dream Foundation*** to meet the needs of our CASA children and the foster parents because of the hurricane.



Each day brings a new challenge and I have personally witnessed the resilience of our community and the dedication to the rebuilding effort. We have listed some of the resources currently available in the parish and the CASA staff is also available to assist volunteers.

Since Hurricane Ida's landfall on August 29, we have seen huge strides forward in the rebuilding effort. Our favorite saying these days is "***we are in this together and we will take it one day at a time***". Don't lose heart; better days are yet to come. Be safe!

**Survivors affected by Hurricane Ida can now meet with FEMA specialists at a temporary Disaster Recovery Center in Houma to start planning their recovery.**

Survivors can get assistance with their FEMA applications, upload documents and get questions answered about federal disaster assistance. Representatives from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) are also on hand to provide program information and explain how to apply for SBA's low-interest disaster loans for businesses, private nonprofits, homeowners and renters.

***The center is located at: Houma Civic Center – Open 7 days a week (9AM - 6PM)***

### **ADDITIONAL DISASTER RECOVERY SITES:**

1. DuLarge Branch Library – 837 Bayou Dularge Rd, Houma, LA
2. Dulac Branch Library - 200 Badou Dr., Dulac, LA 70353
3. Chauvin Branch Library – 5500 LA-56, Chauvin, LA 70344
4. Montegut Branch Library - 1135 LA-55, Montegut, LA 70377.

For the latest information visit [fema.gov/disaster/4611](https://fema.gov/disaster/4611). Follow the FEMA Region 6 Twitter account at [twitter.com/FEMARegion6](https://twitter.com/FEMARegion6) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/FEMARegion6/](https://facebook.com/FEMARegion6/).



## MEET CASA VOLUNTEER : AMBER BERRY

This month's CASA, Amber Berry, has been with us for a year and is currently working her second case with her CASA co-partner, Emily Gilmore. Amber grew up in Southwest Missouri and was a traveling nurse. She lived in several places before meeting her husband Dr. Chris Berry. They have resided in Houma for 16 years. Amber has three children; Neal Grace is 14, Caraway is 11 and Pierce is nine. The family has one dog, Iris that they rescued four years ago.

After 20 years of working in the medical field, Amber is taking a break as a nurse practitioner to be home with her children and be available for more volunteer activities. Her favorite thing to do is Bible study. She enjoys running, participating in triathlons, and teaching fitness classes at Twisted Fitness. She also spends time coaching her kids' sports like volleyball and cross country.

A fun fact about Amber is that she can wiggle her ears. An interesting fact about Amber is that she had a stroke at birth, was paralyzed on her right side until she completed physical therapy at three years old and then had seizures until the age of 17. Amber is now completely recovered without any further

residual problems and says, "I feel so blessed and grateful for my health and recovery."

Amber shared that she was fortunate to have a foster brother and foster sister growing up. Her parents became certified foster parents when she was in junior high and it left a huge impression on her. Amber and her husband are in the process of completing their foster care certification through DCFS Lafourche. Before becoming a CASA herself, Amber had several friends who were advocates.

Amber believes that "we are called as Christians to advocate and defend the most vulnerable." With that belief, Amber also believes that with all of her heart, "God called me to do this."

Amber says that being a CASA is hard, but we can do hard things. She states, "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 says she feels like she is really doing something meaningful as a CASA and again "feels blessed and grateful to have met these wonderful children."

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

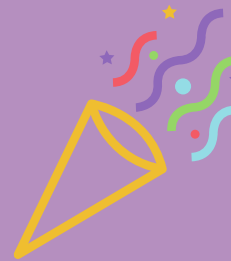
### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- Destiny Clement 9/1
- Tasha Lirette 9/6
- Jonathan Russo 9/7
- Rhonda Lovell 9/8
- Yvonne White 9/8
- Gina Danos 9/9
- Traci Hawthorne 9/10
- Kathryn Mella 9/10
- Jennifer Kryvanick 9/12
- Cathy Duet 9/21
- Anna Merlos 9/21
- Tija Hopkins 9/25



### OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

- Kari Griffin 10/7
- Kathleen Andrews 10/9
- Ann Beeson 10/9
- Mary Guidry 10/11
- Blayne Bergeron 10/19
- Elaine Beyer 10/21
- Lori Olivier 10/28



### VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

*We appreciate your commitment & service to CASA*

#### September Anniversaries

Christine Evans  
8 Years

#### October Anniversaries

Priscilla Callais  
2 Years

Gina Danos  
2 Years

Buddy McNabb  
2 Years



## ANGELS IN ACTION

After Hurricane Ida hit Terrebonne Parish, our CASA volunteers jumped into action to help their CASA children and their families. These are just some of the many stories that shines a light on what makes our CASA community so strong.



Brian Elliott

Brian drove to the foster family's home because he knew they were out of town. He was able to let them know of the destruction as well as send the child a gift card to be able to replace some of his belongings.

Tara Pellegrin

Tara stayed for the storm and visited her CASA child and family as soon as it was safe to do so. She has remained in contact with them and assisted as needed.



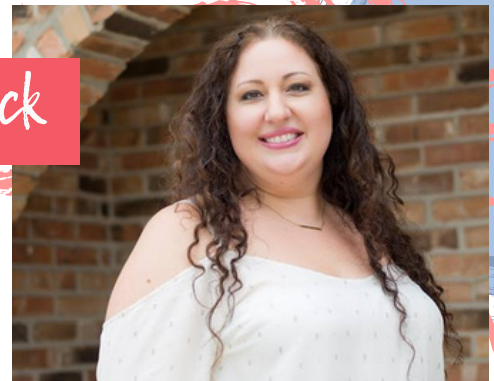
Priscilla Callais

Priscilla has been in constant contact to ensure her CASA children are safe. She worked with the foster family up until the day before the storm and immediately after.



Jennifer Kryvanick

Jennifer realized that the foster parents and biological parents had no transportation. After the storm, she went to distribution locations to pick up needed items and deliver it to them. She brought them hot meals, ice, gas, and other needed supplies. She worked with others to purchase a generator and an a/c unit for the foster family.



## AUGUST/SEPTEMBER DONATIONS & GRANTS

- Tru Savage Tattoo
- Lumiere Blues & Jazz Bistro
- Houma Oilman's Fishing Tournament
- The Gray Foundation
- Tory Rayne
- Amanda Richey
- The BlackBaud Giving Fund
- A Ticket to Dream Foundation
- CASA-AP

Thank  
YOU

## ***SUPERVISOR'S CORNER***

*Written by: Jenny Domangue*

This past month has been a whirlwind for every single one of us. To some extent, we have all faced loss, devastation, and grief. The very infrastructure we depend on has been ripped apart. Electricity, running water, internet, emergency services, and phone services are all things we have learned to rely on and in a matter of hours, it was destroyed and needed to be rebuilt. Many are slowly starting to regain these services while some are still waiting on them to come back.

Unfortunately, the world has not stopped just because our little portion has been destroyed. We are still required to report to our funders. Many of you have two months of work that has not been put into OPTIMA. We are sending them what we have and will update them when we can. You and your family's safety are the most important consideration at this time. If you are in a position to input your logs into OPTIMA please do so. If you are able to come to the office, we do have power and internet service. You are more than welcome to come here and put your logs in. ***We need to try to have as many logs input into OPTIMA by October 4th as possible so that we can submit our request for funding to continue serving our CASA children.*** The office is back to full operation and is open from 8 am - 4 pm.

If you are not in a position to do either of these things, I completely understand. Just continue to keep a journal of the contacts you have had with the child(ren) and/or foster families and we will make sure you get them in once you are in a position to be able to put them in. The most important thing besides your own family is to continue checking in with your child(ren) / foster families and visiting whenever you are in a position to do so.

While this is definitely a dark and trying time, I continue to see the good all around. Keep the faith! We will continue to overcome one day at a time. If you need anything, whether it is for your CASA child or yourself, please reach out to one of us. We are here for you. ***We are a CASA family and will get through this together.***

## ***CASA STAFF***

**Christine Aucoin**  
*Executive Director*

**Jenny Domangue**  
*Lead Advocate Supervisor*

**Heather Falls**  
*Advocate Supervisor*

**Sulma Reyes**  
*Training/Outreach Coordinator*

**Valentine Verdin**  
*Advocate Supervisor*

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

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## ***CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS***

**Martin Majewski, III**  
*President*

**Mary Guidry**  
*Vice President*

**Bonnie Naquin**  
*Treasurer*

**Shelly Touns**  
*Secretary*

**Charles Brown, Sr.**

**Buddy McNabb**

**Angelle Thibodeaux**

## **CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS:**

### **ONLINE TRAINING: *LOUISIANA CASA CHANGING CHILDREN'S STORIES SERIES - RESILIENCE***

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2021, 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM\* ONLINE (1 CREDIT HOUR)**

Louisiana CASA is holding a 10 part public webinar series in 2021-2022. Every month they will be hosting FREE educational webinars presented by a statewide network of subject matter experts with first-hand experience working in the child welfare field. They will be discussing a variety of topics focused on protective factors, strengthening children and families, and building stronger communities. Register for the series at [www.louisianacasa.org/webinars](http://www.louisianacasa.org/webinars).

### **ONLINE TRAINING: *THE LOUISIANA PARENT TRAINING AND INFORMATION CENTER IS PRESENTING A VARIETY OF EDUCATIONAL WEBINARS***

**VIEW [WWW.CASAOFTERREBONNE.ORG](http://WWW.CASAOFTERREBONNE.ORG) FOR TRAINING DATES AND REGISTRATION**

Families Helping Families of Greater New Orleans (FHF of GNO), the Louisiana Parent Training & Information Center (LaPTIC) is presenting a variety of educational webinars for parents/caretakers of children with disabilities or special healthcare needs, and professionals of school-aged students.

### **MOVIE SUGGESTION: *FOUR GOOD DAYS***

**STREAM ON HULU. YOU ARE ALSO ABLE TO STREAM FOUR GOOD DAYS BY RENTING OR PURCHASING ON *AMAZON INSTANT VIDEO, ITUNES, GOOGLE PLAY, AND VUDU.***

The film is Four Good Days, which stars Close as Deb and Mila Kunis as her heroin-addicted daughter, Molly. After her latest detox, Molly finds hope at sobriety in an opioid antagonist -- which would curb her craving and prevent her from getting high -- but she must not get high for the four days before the injection. So, she turns to her mother to help fight her demons, and despite a decade of grief, betrayal and trauma, Deb agrees.

