

# The CASA Bulletin



Monthly Newsletter



## MEET A CASA LEAH VOISIN

This month, we would like to introduce a CASA volunteer who has been with our program since March 2019, Leah Voisin. Leah has been on one case and shares the case with her sister, Kristy Ledford. Leah is from Dularge/Theriot but now lives in Houma with her husband, Kevan Boudreaux. Kevan and Leah will be celebrating their first wedding anniversary on June 12th. As an animal lover, Leah has two dogs, Pierre and Lafitte, and three cats; Suchi, Mochi, and Maki. Kristy is Deputy Clerk at the Clerk of Court's Office. She earned her undergraduate degree from SLU and her graduate degree from LSU. After college, she worked at Disney World for a short period. Leah enjoys playing board games, video games, and reading. She likes to travel and has ziplined through the Costa Rican rainforest.



While she was in Grad School, Leah worked at United Way/211Info and that is where she first heard about CASA. She said she wanted to become a CASA because she “wanted to make a positive change in a child’s life and in our community.” When asked what advice she would give about becoming a CASA, Leah said that new volunteers should be patient, “remember that you are doing this for the kids, even if the adults can be frustrating.” A CASA polo will be donated to this month's CASA Volunteer by Shelly Toups at Artistic Embroidery.



## THANK YOU!

**CASA of Terrebonne would like to thank Lt. Governor Billy Nungesser and the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board who will once again be donating a portion of the crawfish served at the 15th Annual Southdown Bar and Grill Crawfish Boil-Off to benefit CASA of Terrebonne!**

# A MESSAGE FROM CHRISTINE AUCOIN

## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Louisiana CASA honored one of our own CASA of Terrebonne volunteer advocates, Sarah Ghere, with the special award of Advocate of the Year for the state. Through her advocacy, Sarah has demonstrated her commitment and compassion for the children she has served. We are so proud to have her as part of our community.

One event that we look forward to every May is the annual Herman J. Courville Crawfish Boil-Off. This year marks the 15th year the Courville's along with Amos Moseley join forces to host this event. It was held on Saturday, May 7th, and all proceeds are donated to CASA. It is community members like this who support and help us to continue our mission of serving abused and neglected children who come into State's custody.

We continue to applaud the positive difference our CASA volunteers bring to a child in foster care. Whether the case ends in reunification or adoption, our volunteers are steadfast in their commitment to advocate for what is in the best interest of the child. Currently, there are 191 Terrebonne parish children in State's custody with 37 advocates assigned to 53 of these foster children. This leaves 138 foster children without a community



volunteer advocating on their behalf. If you ask our volunteers what drew them to CASA, most would say it was a simple desire to help a child in need. There is no time like the present to be a part of our efforts to provide a consistent and caring presence while these children navigate through the court system.

These words rang true when I decided to step out of my comfort zone in 2016 to become an advocate:

**“I’m not telling you  
it’s going to be easy,  
I’m telling you it’s  
going to be worth it.”**

**- Anonymous Quote**

## VOLUNTEER SHOUT-OUTS

- **Karey Kinnard**- Thank you for jumping headfirst into your new case! You made your first child contact visit and you rocked it! I know you will be an awesome advocate on your case and again thank you.
- **Tija Hopkins**- Thank you for being an amazing advocate on your case! Your CASA baby is finally freed for adoption and is in a loving adoption placement. We are sad that you are relocating for your job, but happy you made a difference in your CASA child's life.
- **Rushelle Fitzgerald** - Your tenacity throughout the life of your case has been remarkable! I love watching your passion coming through with your CASA kids. Thank you for attending their FTM and court hearing.
- **Allison Eschete** - Your bond with your CASA baby is apparent. Thank you for the many pictures you send me. I am loving watching him grow. Thank you for completing your court report on time.
- **Gina Danos** - Congratulations on seeing your case to closing with reunification. You played a vital role to ensure the best possible timing and outcome for the children's return home. Thank you for your dedication and we can't wait to see what you will bring to your next case!
- **Darlene Naquin** - Thank you for taking on your new case and remaining dedicated to this child. Your presence in court is appreciated!

## LOUISIANA ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR



### SARAH GHERE

CASA of Terrebonne is proud to announce that our very own CASA volunteer, Sarah Ghere, was recognized as the Advocate of the Year by Louisiana CASA at Monday night's Awards of Excellence ceremony.

We at CASA want to thank Sarah for all of her hard work and dedication to the children she has advocated for. This award and recognition are well deserved and we are looking forward to what she will bring to her cases in the future.



## APRIL DONATIONS

Nicholas & Elaine Fry  
 Alice Fanguy  
 Martin Majewski, III  
 S&D Entertainment  
 L & K Party Bus Rental's  
 Southern Axe  
 Tess Doiron and Kayla Lavergne  
 CASA-AP



*Special thanks to Tess Doiron and Kayla Lavergne and our amazing community of Houma for gathering the items in the Easter buckets for our CASA volunteers to give to their CASA children.*

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Mia Foret      | 5/12 |
| Jennifer Parks | 5/12 |
| Bonnie Naquin  | 5/14 |
| Reis Prevost   | 5/14 |

## MAY VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

### 3 YEARS

Allison Eschete  
 Kimberly Eubanks  
 Kristy Ledford  
 Leah Voisin

### 4 Years

Carol Bergeron  
 Emily Gilmore

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION LUNCH

CASA of Terrebonne celebrated National Volunteer Week by celebrating each and every one of our CASA volunteers and volunteer board members! They work hard to advocate for the abused and neglected children of Terrebonne Parish all year long and we are grateful to have them as the backbone of our CASA community.

On Friday, we celebrated and showed them our appreciation with our Annual Manuel Merlos Memorial Volunteer Appreciation Crawfish Boil! We would like to thank Doug Davis and Main Pass Seafood for donating the crawfish and all the fixins for our advocates to enjoy! If you need to get your boiled seafood fix, stop by Main Pass Seafood and show your support!



## 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*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Martin Majewski III

Mary Laing-Guidry

Bonnie Naquin

Shelly Toups

Rev. Charles Brown

Cindy Courville

Carl "Buddy" McNabb

Reis Prevost

Angelle Caro Thibodeaux



# ADVOCATE'S CORNER

*Written By: Heather Falls, Advocate Supervisor*

May is National Foster Care Month. Here at CASA of Terrebonne, we take pride in our volunteers who advocate for the children in foster care. At the moment, there are well over 200 children in foster care in Terrebonne Parish. Can you believe those numbers?

When I started as a CASA advocate back in 2021 I could not believe there were so many children in foster care in the parish where I reside. I think as individuals we get so wrapped up in our own lives, that we don't know what's going on in our own backyard. As an advocate supervisor, I make it a point to reach out to the foster parents on my caseload just to check in and let them know they are doing a wonderful job. I know everyone is not able to become a foster family or adopt a child for many

reasons but becoming a CASA volunteer is an introduction to the world of the child welfare system. When you become a CASA volunteer it will only require 10-12 hours *a month* of your time. I can honestly say CASA has changed my life for the better and I am more aware of what's going on in the parish I live in. So, I challenge you for National Foster Care month to tell someone about CASA of Terrebonne, log on to our website and see what events we have going on, or attend an information session. **All it takes is one person to change a child's life, will that person be you?**



## CASA VOLUNTEERS ROCK! April Stats

**38**

Active Volunteer Advocates

**55**

Children Served

**111.75**

Hours Spent on Cases

**1,391**

Miles Traveled

 **139**

children waiting for a CASA



### March Gift Card Winner: Rushelle Fitzgerald

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.

## Check out the following for continuing education hours:

### In-Service: TBRI

### TBRI: CONNECTING PRINCIPLES

**Wednesday \* May 18, 2022 \* 5:30 PM - 8:45 PM (3 Credit Hours)**

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is an attachment-based trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. Often, children from hard places tend to retreat from relationships with others as a form of fear or distrust. In TBRI®'s connecting principles, the focus is to meet a child's need for relationships through awareness and playful engagement. Active CASA volunteers can find the registration link "Continuing Education" online at [www.casaofterrebonne.org](http://www.casaofterrebonne.org).



 **139**

*children waiting for YOU!*

**Our next pre-service training session begins July 11, 2022.**

**Volunteer Today!**

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