



# CASA OF TERREBONNE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2021 • ISSUE NO. 2



402 CANAL STREET

985-876-0250

WWW.CASAOFTERREBONNE.ORG



## MEET CASA VOLUNTEER : EMILY GILMORE

CASA of Terrebonne would like to introduce CASA Volunteer, Emily Gilmore. Born and raised in Houma, LA, Emily attended Nicholls State University, where she and her husband met. Emily's husband served in the U.S. Army for 28 years and is now retired. She has been married for 30 years and has two children. Emily's son was recently married, and her daughter is a senior at LSU as an Animal Science/pre-vet major. Her family loves animals and has several animals at home.

As an elementary educator for 30 years, Emily has taught children from many walks of life and has lost sleep over the safety, health, and family-life of prior students through the years. Her heart always went out to the struggling

families and their children. She stated that she found out about CASA from Facebook. After some research, she concluded that CASA was a productive outlet to advocate for the children and families she wanted to help at school.

Emily has been a CASA Volunteer for two and half years and is still advocating on her first case. She states that her CASA experience has been rewarding. She's traveled hours to maintain communication and in-person visits with her CASA child. She spent the evening in the hospital watching "Mrs. Doubtfire" when her CASA child had no other visitor. She answered the phone when there was no one else to answer. Advocating for her CASA child has brought tears of joy, as well as tears of sadness. Emily states, "she wouldn't trade her CASA experience for anything."

In January, Emily partnered with fellow

CASA Volunteer Amber Berry for her second CASA case. The Co-CASAs partnered to advocate for a family with four children. Emily was inspired to take on another case by a student who is in foster care that did not have a CASA. Emily became a CASA after her children were mostly grown and felt she had more time to advocate for a CASA child. She states, "Looking back, I could have become a CASA earlier in my life." Emily continues, "doing something to make a difference in a child's life is always better than doing nothing to help a child."

Thank you, Emily for being dedicated to your CASA children and all children. We appreciate you!



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

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

The changing of the month has also brought changes to our program. The Board of Directors has appointed me to take over as Interim Executive Director. I am both honored and humbled to serve CASA of Terrebonne in this capacity. Plans are underway to find a permanent replacement for this position, and I intend to do my best to carry out the duties required of me for as long as I am needed.

There has also been changes in the 32nd Judicial District. CASA's staff would like to congratulate the returning presiding judges, as-well-as the two new judges who took the bench: Judge Timothy Ellender, Jr. and Judge Jason Dagate. We look forward to working with each of you during

your time on the bench. Also, Family Preservation Court, with The Honorable Judge Arceneaux presiding, will begin hearing cases this month.

Although February is our shortest month, it is the month with the most celebrations and holidays. February marks Black History Month, a federally recognized nationwide celebration that calls on all



Americans to reflect on the significant roles African-Americans have played in shaping US history. In addition, the beginning of the third week of February brings Valentine's Day, President's Day, and Mardi Gras day. We hope you can enjoy all this month has to offer.

In a time where there seems to be new changes every day, there is often fear of the future. Please read the words of George Addair and ponder what fear you can push past.

**"EVERYTHING  
YOU EVER  
WANTED IS  
ON THE  
OTHER SIDE  
OF FEAR."**

- *George Addair*



## **UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES**

*President's Day*

Office Closed - February 15, 2021

*The Southdown Bar & Grill Crawfish Cook-Off*

May 1, 2021

*Pre-Service Flex Training Start Dates :*

APRIL 13, 2021

JULY 13, 2021

OCTOBER 5, 2021

*For more information, please visit our website  
[www.casafterrebonne.org](http://www.casafterrebonne.org) or call 985-876-0250*

## ***VOLUNTEER SHOUT OUTS!***

- Tasha Lirette on seeing all three CASA children on her case through to adoption.
- Jon Russo for accepting a new case and attending a court hearing for his CASA children.
- Ann Beeson for attending a court hearing for her CASA child.
- Tim Hitt for completing a court report and attending a court hearing for his CASA children.
- Jennifer Kryvanick on seeing her case through to reunification with CASA child's biological parent.
- Heather Falls for attending a family team meeting and seeing her CASA child reunify with her biological parents.
- Penny Hebert & Carol Bergeron for attending a family team meeting and multiple court hearings for all five of their CASA children.
- Kari Griffin and Sherry Mahaney for completing their first court letter for their CASA children.
- Tara Pellegrin for completing her first court report for her CASA child.
- Silvana Brown for finishing out her case and seeing her CASA children through a successful reunification with their biological parents.
- Rushelle Fitzgerald for writing a court report and attending court for her CASA children.
- Colleen Greer for taking over an existing case.
- Elaine Beyer for taking on a new tutoring assignment with a CASA child.

## ***JANUARY DONATIONS***

- CASA-AP
- HTV10/ Martin Folse
- Mr. & Mrs. Mark Lee
- ONEHOPE
- Southern Bayou Bourbon Society

*Thank you!*



## ***CASA STAFF***

**Christine Aucoin**  
*Interim Executive Director*

**Jenny Domangue**  
*Lead Advocate Supervisor*

**Sulma Reyes**  
*Advocate Supervisor*

**Valentine Verdin**  
*Advocate Supervisor*

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

## ***CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS***

**Martin Majewski, III**  
*President*

**Mary Guidry**  
*Vice President*

**Bonnie Naquin**  
*Treasurer*

**Shelly Touns**  
*Secretary*

**Charles Brown, Sr.**  
**Christopher Chiasson**

**Patricia Floyd,**  
**Heather Hebert**

**Charles Kornegay**  
**Buddy McNabb**

**Angelle Thibodeaux**



# SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

Written by: Jenny Domangue

CASA of Terrebonne advocates has four main goals during their work as a CASA. The first goal is to advocate. This one is the most obvious of the four. You should always be advocating for your CASA child's best interest. This includes bringing a newfound need to the attention of DCFS, the judge, and/or service providers, making sure that service providers match the need and personality of the child, or by simply reporting to the court the child's wishes. Advocating is always at the forefront of your CASA work.

The next goal is to investigate. We are independent advocates for the court. This means that we must obtain first-hand information. We must investigate all claims and obtain records to substantiate those claims. For example, if a biological parent states that they are attending their substance abuse classes and doing well; we should contact that service provider with a release



**JENNY DOMANGUE, LEAD ADVOCATE SUPERVISOR**

of information form and obtain documentation that they are in fact attending and doing well. This also means making contact with all involved parties. This should include the child, the foster parents, the biological parents, service providers, teachers, counselors, and anyone else who works closely with any family member.

The next goal works hand in hand with the investigation. We are to monitor the case until the court closes the case or we are relieved of working the case. This means monthly (or more) contact with your CASA child, monthly contact with the caseworker, contact with biological parents, and check-in with service providers. We must monitor that all parts of the system are supporting the needs of the child and family. And if they aren't we are to report that to DCFS and ultimately the judge.

The final goal of a CASA is to facilitate. It is NOT our role to schedule visits or appointments. Nor is it our role to transport anyone to any appointment. We should be ensuring that everyone is aware and encouraging all parties to work collaboratively for the best interest of the child.

So remember your four goals as an advocate are to advocate, investigate, monitor, and facilitate. If ever you have any questions please feel free to reach out to your supervisor or me for clarity. Keep up the great work!

## DECEMBER CHILDREN STATISTICS

**74** CHILDREN SERVED

**62** CHILDREN SEEN FACE-TO-FACE

**0** CHILDREN CONTACTED OTHER THAN FACE-TO-FACE

**84%** OF CHILDREN SEEN FACE-TO-FACE AND/OR CONTACTED

## JANUARY VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

**51**

VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES



**72**

CASA CHILDREN SERVED



**102.75**

HOURS SPENT ADVOCATING



**233**

MILES TRAVELED BY ADVOCATES



**148**

CHILDREN ON THE WAITING LIST



Breakdown of Waitlist Cases: Sexual (4) - Physical (11) - Neglect (75) - Substance Abuse (58)

# FINDING A FOREVER HOME

In January, CASA Volunteer Tasha Lirette was able to witness her CASA children being adopted into their forever home.

Tasha wrote a statement of her time spent as a CASA Volunteer. "As I reflect over the past two years, I never once imagined how three young girls would forever have an impact on my life. I got involved with CASA in the hope that I would make a positive difference in a child's life. However, I didn't know that choosing a

random card from a wall, that these children would become part of my family. There has been no greater honor than to be able to be a small part of their wondrous journey. The girls' laughter, love, and joy that they have for each other proves how time and distance



are not obstacles but strings that tighten the best bonds. Once reunited, their friendship continues as if it was only a moment that they were apart. That is how I know that God placed them, and myself, exactly where we needed to be. I was blessed to witness three extraordinary girls along with their remarkable family become bonded together through adoption. If you ever contemplated helping children in need, please consider CASA. The few



hours that it will remove from the month will give you so much more in return. You may just realize that you need them more than they need you."

Thank you Tasha for your commitment and support to CASA of Terrebonne!



*Tammy Brouillette*

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.



- Tara Pellegrin - 2/2
- Sherry Mahaney - 2/8
- Jennifer Bonvillain - 2/9
- Jennifer Burrough - 2/9
- Leah Voisin - 2/14
- Allison Eschete - 2/17
- Charles Brown - 2/19
- Regina Frank - 2/21
- Kimberly Eubanks - 2/28

## CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS:

### **IN-SERVICE: DIVERSITY TRAINING, PRESENTED BY ROBERT BLUE, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021, 6 P.M. - 7 P.M.**

Cultural competency training with Robert Blue, Tribal Liaison at Healthy Blue Louisiana, via zoom. We will send a zoom link to all active volunteers a week prior to the training. *No need to register.*

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

**[HTTPS://MOODLE.LCIVTA.ORG/ENROL/INDEX.PHP?ID=376](https://moodle.lcivta.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)

### **NATIONAL CASA: NATIONAL CASA AVAILABLE RESOURCES FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH**

National CASA provides training resources for CASA and GAL staff and volunteers to help recognize and advocate for human trafficking and child exploitation victims. Links to the webinar are on our website under "Continuing Educations" in the For Advocate tab.

### **APPLE+ : "PALMER" (2 CREDIT HOURS)**

After 12 years in prison, former high school football star Eddie Palmer returns home to put his life back together and forms an unlikely bond with Sam, an outcast boy from a troubled home. But Eddie's past threatens to ruin his new life and family.

*If you are a reader, we encourage you to check out books from the volunteer library.*

**ENTER ALL TRAINING CREDIT HOURS TO OPTIMA**



**CASA TRAVELING TUTOR'S**

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



**WE CHALLENGE YOU!**

We are challenging each of you to find a business or organization to hang the attached flyer to help us spread the mission of CASA of Terrebonne.

**TAKE A PICTURE OF YOUR FLYER AND TAG US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!**

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