

CASA OF TERREBONNE



MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER



I am happy to report that CASA of Terrebonne’s office is now permanently back open!

May is National Foster Care Month. In Terrebonne Parish there are over 200 children currently in the foster care system.

Due to Covid-19 many of us are experiencing a temporary state of isolation, uncertainty, and fear of the unknown. For children in foster care, this is their everyday norm. Foster children do not get to call the shots or choose where they will be placed, with whom or for how long. They go through most days not knowing what the next will bring and that uncertainty can last for years, not just months. I am so grateful for the people who break through these barriers for children by giving them someone to count on and a voice—CASA volunteers. Right now, CASAs are working harder than ever, ensuring remote contact with their assigned children, calling into court hearings via Zoom and making contact with CASA staff. We have seen CASAs and staff step up to meet the challenge of ensuring that children feel connected and cared for during this unprecedented time.

Both state and national reports anticipate that there will be more cases of abuse and/or neglect that enter the courts once the isolation period ends. We hope you will help support not only our current work, but help us prepare for the work ahead to ensure the safety of children here in Terrebonne Parish. **If you are thinking of becoming a CASA, please contact us. If you are already a CASA, thank you. If you are able to financially support CASA, we need you now more than ever.**

Here are some National foster care statistics:

- Each year, more than 400,000 children experience foster care in the USA.
- In 2017, 9 out of every 1,000 children in the U.S. were determined to be victims of abuse or neglect.
- 15% of children in foster care have languished there for three or more years.
- 50% will never graduate from high school or obtain a GED.
- Only 15% of foster children will attend college, and fewer than 3% will earn a college degree.
- After “aging out” of the system, 25% of foster teens will experience homelessness at least once.

“Every child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists that they become the best they can possibly be.” – Rita F. Pierson

Please share our posts on Facebook so that we can get the word out to as many people as possible!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Priscilla Callais was sworn-in as a CASA volunteer on October 24, 2019. While attending court hearing observations she observed a case that tugged at her heart so upon graduation she was assigned to that case and immediately contacted all associated parties and her CASA child. The connection with all of the parties was instant. Throughout the case she made herself available for court hearings and meetings. She observed interactions and body language as she listened carefully during family visits and upon any questions or concerns being raised she was always prepared. She immediately tried to find resources at the lowest cost possible for the family. Priscilla understood that in her case the family unit needed to be whole in order to succeed. She provided information, advised, and gave them the tools necessary to rise above their current situation. Upon finding out sensitive information she made sure all agencies were notified and encouraged to put services in place. When her suggestions were not taken seriously, she put them in writing so that all attorneys would know the issues. As the world got hit with COVID-19, Priscilla continued her commitment to her CASA child and family by making sure her CASA child knew she was there for her. During the time when social distancing was put into place, contact with her CASA child was done through video chat, visits through a door, and most recently by writing letters to her. Priscilla's commitment is not only to her CASA child and family but to the CASA organization. She is always eager to learn more about resources and searches out continuing education opportunities every chance she gets. Thank you for coming to CASA with an open mind and a heart for service. We appreciate you.

Priscilla will receive an embroidered polo shirt donated by Shelly Toups at Artistic Embroidery.



If you or someone you know would like to display our yard sign, please contact the office. We have 50 more to hand out!



APRIL VOLUNTEER STATISTICS:

**57 VOLUNTEERS ADVOCATED FOR
84 CHILDREN
SPENT 88 HOURS AND
TRAVELED 509 MILES**



CASA of Terrebonne

We currently have

165

children on our waiting list!!



Sexual



Physical



Neglect



Substance Abuse



Beth Tabor 5/2
Doug Gregory 5/4
Bonnie Naquin 5/14
Amber Ward 5/16



**Department of
Children &
Family Services**

Building a Stronger Louisiana



Congratulations to *Lori Olivier!*

She has won a gift card of her choice for visiting with her CASA child 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.



We Appreciate Your Commitment and Service to CASA MAY ANNIVERSARIES

Carol Bergeron 2 Years
Terissa Boquet 3.5 Years
Michael Brown 1 Year
Allison Eschete 1 Year
Kim Eubanks 1 Year
Connie Fremin 2 Years

Emily Gilmore 2 Years
Brittany Jones 1 Year
Kristy Ledford 1 Year
Miranda Legendre 1 Year
Leah Voisin 1 Year
Amber Ward 2 Years

FINDING A
FOREVER
HOME



Carey Redmond, along with her CASA child, is celebrating adoption day. Carey was assigned to this case in January of 2018. Thank you, Carey, for your advocacy!

SHOUT OUTS

- * Thank you to all volunteers who delivered donated Easter gifts to their CASA children.
- * Tim Hitt and Mary Guidry for using their creativity to visit their CASA children during the quarantine and attending a Family Team Meeting for their CASA children.
- * Rushell Fitzgerald and Miranda Price for attending a family team meeting, completing a court report, and attending a court hearing via Zoom for their CASA children.
- * Eddie Olivier, Lori Olivier and Meagan Verret for using their creativity to visit their CASA children during the stay-at-home order.
- * These volunteers completed a court report and attended a court hearing via Zoom for their CASA children:
Blayne Bergeron, Carol Bergeron, Rebecca Clement, Emily Gilmore, Penny Hebert, Joni Oncale and Suzanne Vice
- * Silvana Brown for completing a court report, attending a court hearing via Zoom and continuing visitation with her CASA children during COVID-19.
- * Yvonne White for participating in a Family Team Meeting conference call for her CASA children.
- * Jennifer Burrough and Allison Eschete for completing court reports for their CASA children.
- * Carey Redmond for completing her case to adoption for her CASA child.
- * The following volunteers attended a court hearing via Zoom for their CASA children:
Buddy McNabb, Gina Danos, Rhonda Lovell & Beth Tabor

APRIL DONATIONS



CASA AP
Charlene Wallace
11 anonymous Facebook donors for Jenny Domangue's birthday



To request a tutor for your **CASA** child, fill out the online application on our website and we will match your child with a **Traveling Tutor**.

NEW DVD'S IN THE VOLUNTEER LIBRARY:



- ⇒ *The Blind Side*
- ⇒ *Life as We Know It*
- ⇒ *Then She Found Me*
- ⇒ *Like Dandelion Dust*
- ⇒ *Raising Helen*

REMINDER: ENTER ALL CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS YOU EARN TO OPTIMA

- Here are two ideas to help you earn your continuing education hours:
1. Netflix series *The Trials of Gabriel Hernandez* (10 hours)
 2. Podcast series *Finding Cleo* www.cbc.ca/radio/findingcleo (7 Hours)

Current Board Members

Marty Majewski, III—President
Mary Guidry—Vice President
Bonnie Naquin—Treasurer
Shelly Toups—Secretary

Charles Brown, Sr.
Christopher Chiasson
Patricia Floyd
Douglas Gregory
Heather Hebert

Charles Kornegay
Buddy McNabb
Ida Moore
Angelle Thibodeaux

*We are looking for our next class of volunteers.
Help us spread the word!*



CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY BE A **CASA VOLUNTEER**

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (**CASA**) works hard to ensure that children in foster care in Terrebonne Parish will have a safe and permanent home as soon as possible. Join us and make a difference. Together we can change a child's story.

CLASS START DATES:

July 7, 2020

October 6, 2020

Contact *Christine Aucoin* to find out how you can become a community volunteer who advocates for a child who has been abused or neglected.

SEVEN WEEKS

Get trained in seven weeks to make a difference in the life of a child in foster care.

FLEX TRAINING

In-person and online training are combined for all learning styles.

APPLY ONLINE

www.casaofterrebonne.org



Get in touch • 985-876-0250 • 402 Canal St. Houma, LA • www.casaofterrebonne.org