

CASA OF TERREBONNE



JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER



The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the very fabric of our daily lives. Normal is not a thing anymore. We don't know what tomorrow will bring, and some days we almost dread what awaits us when the sun rises, like the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis last week which sparked demonstrations and riots around the world.

Because of this pandemic, and now the riots, many of us are experiencing shock, denial, disbelief, confusion, difficulty concentrating, anxiety, fear ... which are all symptoms of trauma. If you've never dealt with stress, anxiety, and/or grief on a regular basis before, you're likely very familiar with it now.

This all-consuming feeling is common for many children in foster care...every day. Not knowing if or when they will be able to return home; see their own families again; how long the pandemic will last; when they will see their friends or teachers again; and even when they will get a hug from someone who cares about them.

It's hard enough for us as adults with support systems. Imagine what this feels like to children without them. This is part of the reason why a CASA is so important. When a child's life is turned upside down through no fault of their own, it's traumatic. They need someone to help them through that trauma and to explain to them that what happened to them was not their fault and that now they have an adult – an advocate – who isn't going anywhere. They have someone to help make sure their needs are being met and to reassure them that this present turmoil is not permanent.

Hopefully once this pandemic has passed, we'll return to life as normal. The panic and fear will slowly subside and we'll sink back into that comfortable security most of us had before this started. However, those children who are waiting for an advocate will likely not have that same luxury. This is why it's so important for our community to continue to come together. From advocates, to donors, to those who share our mission with others, we are all working together to provide these vulnerable children with the stability, understanding, care and compassion that they so desperately need.

To see how you can help "Change a Child's Story" give us a call or go to our web site:

www.casafterrebonne.org.

"Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

— Martin Luther King Jr.

Beginning this month, we are replacing our CASA Spotlight of the month with a new feature called “Meet a CASA”.

Each month, CASA of Terrebonne will randomly choose a volunteer for the readers of this newsletter to meet. We want people to realize that they share many of the same characteristics as our volunteers.



Our June “Meet a CASA” is Mrs. Mary Guidry. Mary has been married to Leroy Guidry for 8 years. They have 4 children; Gracie 15 years old, Lily 21 years old, Emma 22 years old, and Alexis 27 years old. Even though Mary does not work outside of the home she does work extremely hard as a mom, a CASA and a volunteer for a number of other charitable organizations. In her free time, she and her husband enjoy attending live music concerts. Her favorite artist, as well as concert, is Tom Petty who she was able to see at Red Rock Amphitheater in Denver Colorado. She said it was AWESOME!!! Mary was not born in Houma, however, she has been living here since the 3rd grade.

Mary came to CASA initially as a board member. She has been a board member for four years and has been awarded Board Member of the Year twice. Yes, she is THAT GOOD! She also stepped into the role of Vice-President two years ago. She is instrumental in all of our events and her energy is contagious! She is enthusiastic, passionate and constantly striving to make CASA bigger and better! She has been a volunteer advocate for 2 years and still on her first case which is finally wrapping up. Since swearing in, she has advocated for a sibling group consisting of a boy (age 6) and a girl (age 2). Mary has spent numerous hours in visits, research and travel for the best interest of these children. When asked, she stated that: “the best feeling is to be loved unconditionally by someone who is not related to you. It is amazing to see the excitement when they see you coming down the driveway.” Mary feels that the best part of her case is seeing these two children adopted and knowing that they have a chance to live up to their full potential.

We are thrilled and blessed to have Mary Guidry on our team! She brings a unique element to CASA of Terrebonne. Thank you Mary for being who you are and doing what you do!



Congratulations to Melanie Prentice and Alicia Dove for being sworn in as CASA volunteers. In the middle of all the chaos of Covid, these two managed to complete the training required to become a CASA. Welcome to the CASA family!!



Would you like to show your support for CASA? Contact the office so we can get one of these yard signs to you!

SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

Beginning June 1st 2020, you will be required to visit your CASA child(ren) in person. The only exception will be if you, your CASA child or the caregiver's family has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is showing any symptoms. Please begin scheduling your visits early to ensure that you are able to visit before the end of the month.



MAY VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

54

VOLUNTEER
ADVOCATES



79

CASA
CHILDREN
SERVED



74

HOURS SPENT
ADVOCATING



225

MILES
TRAVELED BY
ADVOCATES



165

CHILDREN
ON THE
WAITING LIST



NOTE: Breakdown of 165 Waiting List cases: Sexual: 3 Physical: 10 Neglect:102 Substance Abuse:50

happy
birthday

Donna Brunet 6/17

Marty Majewski 6/17

Bill Lovell 6/26



Congratulations to *Tressa Hebert!*

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.



Volunteer **Paula Voisin** with CASA children on adoption day.



Volunteer **Rebecca Clement** shown far right along with adoptive parents and CASA child at adoption.



SHOUT OUTS

- ♦ Gina Danos for attending court via Zoom for her CASA children and checking to make sure CASA staff had enough face masks.
- ♦ Sarah Ghere for completing a court report and attending court via Zoom for her CASA teenagers.
- ♦ Michael Brown for attending a court hearing for his CASA child via Zoom.
- ♦ Kim Eubanks for writing a court report and attending a court hearing in person for her CASA child.
- ♦ Amanda LeBlanc for writing a court report and attending a court hearing via Zoom for her CASA child.
- ♦ Miranda Price for attending court via Zoom for her CASA children.
- ♦ Traci Hawthorne for writing a court report and attending a court hearing in person for her CASA child.
- ♦ Kathleen Andrews for attending a court hearing via Zoom for her CASA child.
- ♦ Jennifer Kryvanick for writing a court report and attending a court hearing in person for her CASA child.
- ♦ Tressa Hebert for attending a court hearing in person for her CASA children.
- ♦ Rebecca Clement for seeing her case to adoption for her CASA child.
- ♦ Amber Ward for completing a court report and attending court via Zoom for her CASA children.
- ♦ Lori Olivier for completing a court report for her CASA child.
- ♦ Miranda Legendre for writing a court report and attending a court hearing via Zoom for her CASA child.
- ♦ Tim Hitt for writing a court report and attending a court hearing via Zoom for his CASA children.
- ♦ Jonathan Russo for seeing his difficult and often unpredictable case through to permanency.
- ♦ Earleather Celestine for attending court via Zoom for her CASA child.
- ♦ Tasha Lirette for being prepared for court for her CASA children even though the case was continued.
- ♦ Yvonne White for attending a court hearing in person for her CASA children.
- ♦ Edward Olivier for attending a court hearing via Zoom for his CASA children.

MAY DONATIONS



CASA – AP

Catherine Hermans - in memory of Gabrielle Hernandez

8 anonymous Facebook donations

Catholic Foundation of South Louisiana - Women's Giving Circle



Congratulations to **Hannah Hebert**, recipient of the first annual Gabrielle Hernandez Scholarship award sponsored by her husband, Jared Hernandez, and her family.

The scholarship honors the memory of Gabby Hernandez who was a dedicated CASA volunteer for over six years before her passing in October 2019.

The competition for the scholarship was intense but Hannah came out on top based on her written essay, academic achievements and extracurricular activities

From left: Donna Brunet, Executive Director, Hannah Hebert, Jared Hernandez and Alex Hernandez

Caroline Evans, pictured in the middle along with CASA staff, a senior at Vandebilt Catholic High School, was awarded a \$500 scholarship by CASA of Terrebonne. Caroline was chosen for this scholarship because of her outstanding academic achievements and numerous extracurricular activities during her time at Vandebilt. Also, Caroline is part of CASA of Terrebonne's extended family as her mother, Christine "Tina" Evans, has been a CASA volunteer for the past six years. Congratulations Caroline and best of luck in the future!



Current Board Members

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

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

Charles Kornegay
Buddy McNabb
Ida Moore
Angelle Thibodeaux





1. This is a must see video about why children do not disclose abuse.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/rewind-xhud74/>

THE LINK EXPIRES 6/10/20

2. This free workshop presented by Kelly Miller via Zoom explores *Family Resilience in Difficult Times*

The Zoom presentation will be on Thursday, June 4 and Thursday, June 18

You must register using the link below:

<https://abrighterpurposecoach.com/free-family-resilience-workshop>



*In order for volunteers to receive credit for In-Service trainings, training hours must be entered to Optima.
Note: If you've read this newsletter you earn 1/2 hour !!*



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.

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