

The CASA Bulletin



Monthly Newsletter



MEET A CASA

TIFFANY GUY

This month we would like to introduce to our community one of our newer CASA Volunteers, Tiffany Guy. Tiffany swore in approximately six months ago and has been advocating for two children in her current case. Tiffany attributes her interest in CASA to her aunt Celeste, who was a CASA when Tiffany was just a teenager. She then connected with Sulma, our Training/Outreach Coordinator, at our outreach booth during Southdown Market Place. Tiffany is the mother of one daughter Paislynn Rose and two doggies, Stella and Addie. Tiffany was born and raised in Montegut and is a South Terrebonne High School graduate. She currently resides in Thibodaux but works in Houma. In her professional life, she is the Human Resource Position Control Specialist for Terrebonne Parish School District's central office. In her spare time, she enjoys shopping, learning, fishing, traveling, camping, cooking, and enjoying time with friends and family. Something that is unusual about Tiffany is that even though she is 29 years old, she cannot whistle!

Tiffany stated, "You don't have to be wealthy to give back to your community. Meaningful time with others is more expensive than money." What a true statement! Time is the most valuable thing that we have in our possession. How do you spend your extra time?



Tiffany chooses CASA because of her love and compassion for children. She also recognized the tremendous needs of our community. She also stated, "Dogs at the shelter get more attention and publicity than our own human babies and I wanted to do my part at shining light into a child's life so they know that their story is heard and they are cared for."

We are looking for everyday citizens to shine a light in a child's direction, give them a voice and help them in their time of need. We each have a part to play so that the load isn't so heavy to carry.

A CASA polo will be donated to this month's CASA Volunteer by Shelly Toups at Artistic Embroidery.

A MESSAGE FROM CHRISTINE AUCOIN

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

You know that saying, “Be careful what you wish for”? We asked to be out in the community to gain exposure and boy did our wish come true in a big way in March. We hosted the Kid’s Corner at the Bayou Terrebonne Boucherie, had an info booth at Roux for a Reason, participated in the Irish/Italian parade, and hosted a fundraiser featuring Bandit at Watergrill. We were also the Non-Profit Spotlight for the Chamber of Commerce’s March luncheon.

April will be another event-filled month.

We will have an info booth on the **9th at Southdown Marketplace**. Look for the booth giving out balloons! On the **26th Texas Roadhouse Night** will feature CASA. **You MUST mention** us, for a portion of the proceeds to be donated to CASA. April is National Volunteer Month and we will once again be celebrating our volunteers with the **annual Manuel Merlos Volunteer Crawfish Boil on Friday, April 22**. The Shack of Houma and Doug Davis will once again be donating crawfish to help us celebrate our volunteers and the hard work they do for the CASA children all year round.

We also recognize Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month in April and what better way to be a part of the solution than to sign up to be a CASA volunteer. Volunteers are



part of a network of caring community members who give foster children a voice in the courts when they otherwise may not have one. Our spring pre-service training begins on April 19th. Please apply online or call the office at 985-876-0250 for more information on how you can change a child’s story.

In closing, I leave you with this thought to ponder:

**"Don't judge each day
by the harvest you reap
but by the seeds that
you plant."**

- Robert Louis Stevenson



VOLUNTEER SHOUT-OUTS

- **Kathy Mella** - Thank you for being a Rockstar on your case. You make it a point to visit your CASA kids every month no matter what you have going on. I also want to express my gratitude to you for making my job so easy. You always call with updates and complete your court report before it's due. Thank you so much!
- Thank you to **Emily Gilmore** and **Amber Berry** for being a dedicated force in the lives of their CASA children. Both Amber and Emily make sure that the children's voices are heard loud and clear in court. Their hard work, heart, and passion shine brightly!
- **Shelia Johnson** - Thank you for being so active on your case and connecting so quickly with your CASA child. You make it a point to see him promptly every month and attend extracurricular activities as well. Thank you for completing your court report on time! You are an amazing advocate.
- **Cathy Duet**- Thank you for loving your CASA child the way you do. You follow up weekly on his progress in school as well as with his caretaker on his progress within the home. You are active on the case and you don't take "no" for an answer when it comes to the well-being of your CASA child. We have found a gem in you. Thank you for writing such an outstanding court report. It was very detailed and was written with love.
- **Priscilla Callais**- your never-ending grit and determination are so admirable. You are truly fighting to save your CASA kids from the streets and themselves. Thank you for attending staffing and hearings this month. Thank you for your generosity to ensure that your CASA children have all the comforts of their home.
- **Emily Gilmore** is active on 5 total children in 2 different cases. In both cases, she is completely devoted to their well-being. Thank you for going above and beyond to protect and care for all of them. Thank you for your well-written court report. Your knowledge is a wonderful asset in both of your cases. Thank you for being you.
- **Jennifer Bonvillian** - You continue to show up strong for your case. Even when the case is now split into two separate cases, your devotion to these siblings remains admirable. Thank you for your court report, your presence in court, and your visit with the family.
- **Tim Hitt** - Thank you for taking on a new case and running with it. You have been extremely helpful in getting everyone connected and ensuring that they all have the same information. Thanks for attending court and continuing to push for the zoom links to be sent to involved parties.

MARCH DONATIONS

Mr. & Mrs. Edward Thibodeaux
The Blackburn Giving Fund
Mr. & Mrs. David Arceneaux
Yvonne White
Douglas Davis
Maxine Carlos
Terry Calongne
South Louisiana Bank Employee
Giving Fund
Schwab Charitable
CASA-AP

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Betty Wallace	4/8
Tammy Brouillette	4/13
Alyssia Hay	4/20
Karey Kinnard	4/22
Kathi Murphy	4/30

APRIL VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

6 YEARS

Rushelle Fitzgerald

8 Years

Betty Wallace

10 Years

Ann Beeson

UPCOMING EVENTS

Southdown Marketplace: April 9th



Stop by the CASA of Terrebonne Information booth at Southdown Marketplace on April 9th!

Look for the booth giving out balloons

Texas Roadhouse Dine to Donate: April 26



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



INFORMATION SESSION

WHEN: April 13, 2022 | 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm

WHERE: Downtown Jeux Cafe

Join us for this one-hour information session to learn how you can make an impact on a child's life while you have coffee or tea **ON US!**

ADVOCATE'S CORNER

Written By: *Valentine Verdin* Advocate Supervisor

April is National Volunteer Month. Here at CASA, that is what it's all about. Our advocates volunteer their time to help a child in need. People often want to give back and volunteer in their community, a feeling that they could be doing more. That is what I was looking for when I was introduced to CASA six years ago. I was a single working mom of two with a very busy life, but I couldn't shake the feeling that there was more I could be doing, something to help. I was talking to a friend of mine about wanting to do more for my community. I wanted to help and give back to someone who may be in need. While discussing some possibilities I was looking into, he told me his wife volunteered at CASA and loved it. I wasn't familiar with CASA, but I had seen the logo around town and had wondered what it was all about. When I called, there was a training class that was about to begin. I attended the orientation and instantly fell in love with the program!!



CASA plays such a crucial role in a case. There are so many moving parts in a case. The parent's attorneys are fighting for what the parents want, the child's attorney is fighting for what the child wants, and the state is making a recommendation based on the whole family. What I loved about CASA is that not only is CASA a voice for the child in court when so many are trying to decide what's best for them, but CASA is also advocating for the best interest of the child. CASA presents fact-based recommendations based on what is best for the child. Yes, we give them a voice in court, and that is very important because they deserve to have their voice heard; however, sometimes what they want is not always in their best interest. My child would love to have ice cream for dinner! While I do sometimes give in and she gets her ice cream, it is not until after she has had her proper dinner. Believe me, my children have no problem using their voice, but what good is that voice if no one hears it. As a parent, and as a CASA, I have listened to my children. Whether it is letting them know that I acknowledge that my son wants to negotiate his bedtime and we work it out, or that I let my CASA child know that I will tell the Judge that she wants to be with her sister. Children are our future, and sometimes for a child in the foster care system, a CASA is the only constant in their life, their only voice. And while we don't make the final decision in their case, we can bring their voice and their best interest to the Judge to help them make the most informed judgment for that child.

I know I have been blessed in my life with amazing friends and family. I have always wanted to do something with my life that helped people in need. I had no idea becoming a CASA volunteer would lead to my career as an Advocate Supervisor, but I am so glad it did! Volunteering, and now working with CASA, has been one of the most rewarding things in my life. That is not saying that there aren't ups and downs in the process, but I never want to lose focus on why I chose to volunteer. I chose to volunteer to make a difference, and while I would love for that to happen overnight, I know it doesn't. As a supervisor, I have seen the good and the bad, and both make me want to fight harder to continue to make that change, to make that difference. Thank you so much to all of you who are already volunteering, and for those wanting to do more this National Volunteer Month, be a voice, be a CASA.

CASA VOLUNTEERS ROCK!

March Stats

36

Active Volunteer
Advocates

54

Children
Served

103.25

Hours Spent
on Cases

1281.70

Miles
Traveled

 **133**

children waiting
for a CASA

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.

ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS



Spring has sprung and the time has come to celebrate **YOU!**

Mark your calendars - **APRIL 22** will be the Annual Manuel Merlos Volunteer Crawfish Boil at the CASA of Terrebonne office! We will be sending an e-mail out with more information in the coming weeks!



March Gift Card Winner: Meagan Verret

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.