

CASA OF TERREBONNE**JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER**

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS !!



July 10 will mark **20 years** that CASA of Terrebonne has trained and supervised community volunteers to advocate for children in foster care in Terrebonne Parish.

I would like to extend a big thank you to **Carolyn McNabb and Danna Schwab** for bringing CASA to Terrebonne Parish 20 years ago. We all owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Without their vision and hard work CASA would not be the successful program it is today.

Also, thank you to the first Board of Directors of CASA of Terrebonne: Carolyn McNabb, Danna Schwab, Sandra Ellender, Susan Schwab, Linda Tate, Jason Hutchinson, Michelle Sykes, Doug Holloway, Julia Bourque, Jodie Teuton, Monique Rhodes Monoc and Catherine Schwab

I am proud to lead an organization that envisions – and is working towards – a world where all children are safe and thriving.

I am thankful for each and every volunteer advocate who believes consistency can make a difference in the life of a child.

I appreciate the continued support of our community partners, donors and friends.

I invite you to join the celebration by helping us continue to serve our community's most vulnerable children by doing one of the following:

- Sign up for an information session
- Fill out an application to become a CASA volunteer
- Make a monetary donation to CASA

www.casaofterrebonne.org

Together we can continue to make a difference and change a child's future!

“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.



The CASA Advocate we would like you to meet this month is Mrs. Rushelle Fitzgerald. Rushelle was sworn-in April of 2016. Since that time, she has advocated for 6 children in 4 cases. She has been married for 37 years to Allan Fitzgerald and they have 2 children and 4 grandchildren who are the light of their world. Rushelle is not currently working, however her background is in accounting. She currently spends her time loving and playing with her grandchildren and advocating for children in foster care. Rushelle was born in Galliano, Louisiana but has been a resident of Houma since she was 10 years old.

Rushelle first heard about CASA due to her niece and niece-in-law being CASA advocates and them recognizing the tremendous difference she could make if she only made the commitment. However, due to working full time she did not feel she would have the time to commit to volunteering. Several years later, when she decided to quit working, she wanted to give back to the community by volunteering with children. She began seeing CASA billboards around town and after multiple “glances” she decided that CASA would be the organization to join.

Rushelle almost didn’t make it through training though. Multiple times she wanted to give up. When court report writing came around her anxiety almost got the best of her. She could not fathom having to write a report that would be submitted as evidence in a court of law. She was on her way to the office to drop out when she noticed a billboard with a CASA child and her “big brown eyes staring at her” which caused her to change her mind. This made her even more determined to push through and finish what she started. Thankfully, Rushelle reports that she has no regrets in pushing herself to finish training and take a case. She also says that CASA has opened her eyes to the reality of the cruel world that is right in our own backyards -- that parents are causing severe harm to their own children. But, if she is able to make the difference in the life of one child, it was all worth it.

When asked what advice she would give to anyone thinking of joining CASA, she said, *“You are so desperately needed. Your heart will be broken by the stories that you will hear about and even more so by the stories that you become a part of. You have to be prepared to become an emotional wreck at times. You will cry yourself to sleep at times. You will sometimes cry your eyes out when you leave your visits. You will wonder if you are actually making a difference. Then the day will come when your CASA child gives you the hello hugs or the goodbye hugs that will make it all worthwhile. You will then realize that you are making a difference in their lives. They melt into your heart the way that I thought only my children or grandchildren could.”*

Thank you so much for all of your hard work Mrs. Rushelle Fitzgerald! We appreciate all that you do!

We Appreciate Your Commitment and Service to CASA
JULY ANNIVERSARIES

Tressa Hebert 2 Years
Norma Macks 2 Years

Jennifer Kryvanick 2 Years
Eddie Olivier 10 Years

Amanda LeBlanc 2 Years
Mitzi Rieve 2 Years

JUNE VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

53

VOLUNTEER
ADVOCATES



79

CASA
CHILDREN
SERVED



101

HOURS SPENT
ADVOCATING



466

MILES
TRAVELED BY
ADVOCATES



173

CHILDREN
ON THE
WAITING LIST



Breakdown of Waiting List Cases: Sexual 8— Physical 8— Neglect 102— Substance Abuse 55



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Silvana Brown	7/2	Meagan Verret	7/10
Penny Hebert	7/4	Linda Ford	7/13
Tim Hitt	7/7	Brian Elliott	7/14
Carol Bergeron	7/10	Rebecca Clement	7/20



Congratulations
to
*Traci
Hawthorne!*

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.

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



Volunteer, Mary Guidry, with sibling CASA children on their respective adoption days.



SHOUT OUTS

- * Alyssia Hay for attending a Family Team Meeting and a court hearing for her CASA child. Also for completing the required 12 hours of continuing education for 2020 and entering them into Optima.
- * Mary Guidry for seeing her case through to adoption and attending the proceedings for the two adoptions (see pictures above). Mary has also taken on two new cases.
- * Tasha Lirette for attending a court hearing for her CASA children and for completing the required 12 hours of continuing education for 2020 and entering them into Optima.
- * Priscilla Callais and Tim Hitt for completing 12 or more hours of continuing education required for the year and entering the training to Optima.
- * Terissa Boquet for submitting a court report for her CASA children.
- * Kristy Ledford and Leah Voisin for submitting a court report and attending court for their CASA children.
- * Gina Danos for writing a court report and attending a court hearing for her CASA children.
- * Penny Hebert and Carol Bergeron for attending a court hearing for their CASA children.
- * Alicia Dove for taking on her first CASA case.
- * Silvana Brown for completing a court report and attending a court hearing for her CASA children.
- * Allison Eschete for attending a court hearing for her CASA child.
- * Norma Macks for submitting a court report and attending a court hearing for her CASA child.

JUNE DONATIONS



CASA AP

Joshua Aucoin

Nicholas & Elaine Fry



Check out the following for continuing education hours:

1. Just Mercy : the book (3 Credit hours) is available in our Volunteer library and the movie (2Credit hours) can be seen On Demand
Go to website for details: <https://www.iustmercyfilm.com>
2. LCWTA e-learning opportunities: Working with LGBTQ Children, Youth & Families in Child Welfare Go to <https://moodle.lcwta.org/login/index.php> (1 credit hour)
(This training site has a wealth of online training opportunities)
3. New DVD's in Volunteer library:
 - Black or White
 - Dustbin Baby
 - Lion
 - Mother and Child
 - October Baby
 - Sleepwalking
 - The Unloved
4. New book in Volunteer library: **"Listen: Stories We Carry With Us From House to House"**
This book is a collection of stories about experiences in foster care written by youth of foster care.

Reminder: Enter all continuing education hours to Optima.

Try CDC's FREE Milestone Tracker app today...
Because milestones matter!

- Milestone checklists for 2 months to 5 years
- Summary of your child's milestones
- Activities to help your child's development
- Tips for what to do if you have concerns
- Appointment reminders

cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker

Now available in Spanish!

Check out this great advocacy tool.

If your CASA child is 2 months to 5 years old, go to cdc.gov/MilestoneTracker to determine if he/she is meeting age related milestones.