



CASA OF TERREBONNE

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021 • ISSUE NO. 10



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WWW.CASAOFTERREBONNE.ORG



MEET CASA VOLUNTEER: TERRI BROWN

Let us introduce you to Terri Brown this month. She was born and raised here in Houma in a close-knit family. Her mother instilled in her and her siblings the importance of helping and serving others. She feels her childhood prepared her to remain grounded and focused through all of life's adversities. To this day she speaks to her siblings daily and they remain committed to supporting one another; which is a rare trait in today's society. Terri is a proud mother to a daughter, Dr. Tiffany Jones-Wilkins, a pharmacy supervisor in Houston and a son-in-law, Marques Wilkins, an account executive for a major insurance firm and an investment broker. She states she is patiently waiting for a grandbaby so that she can become the "Grand T". We believe she will be one of the best!

Terri has an extensive and diverse professional past. She enlisted and served 6 years in the United States Air Force. She was stationed in California, Korea, and the United Kingdom. Being an active member of the military gave her the opportunity to travel and visit several countries. After leaving the military and returning to Houma, Terri graduated from New Orleans Regional Technical College in Practical Nursing. After passing all licensing tests she worked at Terrebonne General for over 18 years. She then worked at local assisted living homes and nursing homes. She retired from nursing and in 2006 she became a veteran's counselor for the state of Louisiana. She served the veteran population in helping veterans and their families obtain the federal benefits that they rightfully deserved. She is currently working on her masters in Social Work. She will be graduating May 7, 2022! We are so proud of her!

When Terri visits the office, the staff truly enjoys her visit. We may not get much done because she loves to talk and entertain us. She is a devout Christian and an active member of her church. She serves as a senior usher and helps with the youth ushers. Her caring and loving heart shows through in anything and everything she does.

Terri has been with CASA for nearly a year and is still actively working on her first case. She has gone out of her way to ensure that her CASA child has everything that she needs, especially since Hurricane Ida. Terri was drawn to CASA by a flyer that she received and she wanted to make a difference in the life of a child. She states that helping a child is so rewarding.

Terri, we appreciate you and your loving, giving heart so much. Thank you for your service to our country and currently to your CASA child.



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



A MESSAGE FROM CHRISTINE AUCOIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It's that time of year again when we finally get relief from the stifling heat and settle into some cooler days. Let me take this opportunity to send well wishes and encouragement to all those who are still struggling with the aftermath of Hurricane Ida. It is also a time to reflect on what we are thankful for.

For the staff here at CASA, we are gearing up to show our appreciation to our volunteers and community partners by hosting the annual volunteer appreciation social. We hope you are able to join us on November 12th at Bayou Grand Noir where we will honor those who do so much to carry out the mission of CASA:

....to be an independent and objective presence in the courts to speak for the best interests of the abused and neglected children who are in foster care in Terrebonne parish.

CASA of Terrebonne has been through a number of adjustments and cancellations due to the continuing effects of COVID and the hurricane. Despite the circumstances of the past year, we are still able to list numerous ways that we are thankful including the following:

- In 2021, 16 new volunteer advocates have been sworn-in and all but one have been assigned to a case
- 122 foster children have the benefit of a CASA volunteer advocating for their best interest
- We have continued to receive donations and grants from old and new community partners
- We sustained minimal damage to our office building from the storm and all staff were able to return to work
- Despite their own losses, our volunteers continue to advocate for their CASA children

I hope you take a moment to reflect on this past year and focus on the positive moments that have occurred. I wish you all a safe and satisfying Thanksgiving holiday.

NOVEMBER VOLUNTEER ANNIVERSARIES

We appreciate your commitment & service to CASA

Three Years of Service



Rebecca Clement

Sarah Ghere

Mary Guidry

Kathi Murphy

Tasha Lirette

Rhonda Lovell

One Year of Service



Jennifer Bonvillain

Tammy Brouillette

Lisa Bustamante

Colleen Greer

Kari Griffin

Sherry Mahaney

VOLUNTEER SHOUT OUTS!

- Rushelle Fitzgerald for completing her court report and attending court for her CASA children.
- Allison Eschete for attending court for her CASA child.
- Priscilla Callais for attending court for her CASA child.
- Amber Berry and Emily Gilmore for attending court for their CASA children.
- Cathy Duet for attending a family team meeting, completing her court report, and attending court for her CASA children.
- Kathy Mella for completing her court report and attending court for her CASA children.
- Kimberly Eubanks for attending court for her CASA child.
- Darlene Naquin for completing her first court report for her CASA child.
- Suzanne Vice for completing her court report for her CASA child.
- Tammy Brouillette for attending court and seeing her case through to her CASA child aging out.
- Jennifer Kryvanick for attending court for her CASA child.
- Gina Danos for attending court for her CASA child.

OCTOBER DONATIONS & GRANTS

- Mr. & Mrs. James Goodwin
- First Christian Church
- Kate Bonvillain & Friends
- Tori Rayne
- CASA AP



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEWEST CASA VOLUNTEERS IN TERREBONNE PARISH

Terri Falgout, Sulma Reyes (Training Coordinator), Sheila Johnson, Jennifer Parks, Tiffany Guy.

Class #60 was sworn in by the Honorable Judge Jason Dagate. Welcome to the CASA community ladies!

CASA STAFF

Christine Aucoin
Executive Director

Jenny Domangue
Lead Advocate Supervisor

Heather Falls
Advocate Supervisor

Sulma Reyes
Training/Outreach Coordinator

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.

Buddy McNabb

Reis Prevost

Angelle Thibodeaux

SUPERVISOR'S CORNER

Written by: Jenny Domangue

November is adoption awareness month. Adoption days are the days that we look forward to most here at CASA of Terrebonne. A lot of times it is a **LONG** process that comes with plenty of twists, turns, and cartwheels. We all strive to make the process as smooth as possible for not only the birth families but for the foster/adoptive families. Most importantly our goal is to help a child achieve permanency as quickly as possible whether that is through reunification or adoption.



As we are all facing tough times, our most vulnerable children who need a safe and stable home are still very much in need. There are not enough foster homes for our children. We have heard stories in the past of DCFS not being able to find a home for unruly teenagers. However, just recently our local DCFS could not find a temporary home for an infant. Infants are typically very easy to place because everyone loves babies. But foster homes are filled to the brim and unable to take more children. There is a dire need for kind and loving individuals to open up their homes to these children who so desperately need some love and understanding.

We also celebrate when parents work hard and accomplish their case plan goals and can be reunified with their children. This takes a lot of hard work and dedication on their part. We often say we don't promise kids Disney World, we promise them a safe and stable home. If their parents can provide this then that is where they need to be.

CASA's play such a huge role in both of these outcomes. The observations and interactions that build your court report to the judge are influential in the judge's final decision. Your relationship with the child will be one that they can look back

on and realize that you were their support system through it all. Make your mark, make your presence known and help these kids get through some of their toughest days. Sometimes I feel like we lose sight of the difference we are making when judgments don't go the way we feel they should or teenagers rebel against everything put in place to help them. But just know that seeds do not grow overnight. They take time. And just like you don't see the fruit of your labor instantly in gardening, with our CASA kids, you may not get to see the difference you are making now but someone will notice it in the future. We have to stand on the fact that you are making their life better with every visit. You are teaching them that there is at least one reliable person in their corner. **Keep fighting the good fight!**

SEPTEMBER CHILDREN STATISTICS

66	CHILDREN SERVED
26	CHILDREN SEEN FACE-TO-FACE
16	CHILDREN CONTACTED OTHER THAN FACE-TO-FACE
39%	OF CHILDREN SEEN
64%	OF CHILDREN WERE CONTACTED

OCTOBER VOLUNTEER STATISTICS

43

VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES



62

CASA CHILDREN SERVED



76.90

HOURS SPENT ADVOCATING



868

MILES TRAVELED BY ADVOCATES



113

CHILDREN ON THE WAITING LIST



Breakdown of Waitlist Cases: Sexual (5) - Physical (9) - Neglect (48) - Substance Abuse (51)

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS:

ONLINE TRAINING: LOUISIANA CASA CHANGING CHILDREN'S STORIES SERIES

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

THURSDAY * NOVEMBER 18, 2021 * 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM (1 CREDIT HOUR EACH)

Louisiana CASA is holding a 10 part public webinar series in 2021-2022. Every month they will be hosting FREE educational webinars presented by a statewide network of subject matter experts with first-hand experience working in the child welfare field. They will be discussing a variety of topics focused on protective factors, strengthening children and families, and building stronger communities. Active CASA volunteers can find the registration link "Continuing Education" online at www.casaofterrebonne.org.

ONLINE TRAINING: LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF DRUG COURT

NEXT TRAINING SESSION IS NOVEMBER 5, 2021 * 12 PM - 1:15 PM (1.5 CREDIT HOURS EACH)

Attached find the Agenda for the Lunch and Learn Sessions scheduled for 4 consecutive Fridays beginning October 29th. You can see the remaining sessions scheduled on our website. These will be terrific sessions with excellent presenters. Active CASA volunteers can find the registration link "Continuing Education" online at www.casaofterrebonne.org.

SERIES SUGGESTION: MAID

STREAM ON NETFLIX (1 EPISODE 1 CREDIT HOUR) (10 EPISODES)

Single mother Alex turns to housecleaning to make ends meet as she escapes an abusive relationship and overcomes homelessness to create a better life for her daughter, Maddy.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO LOG ALL OF YOUR TRAINING HOURS INTO OPTIMA!
YOU MUST HAVE YOUR 12 CONTINUING EDUCATION HOURS COMPLETED AND INPUT
INTO OPTIMA BY DECEMBER 31, 2021!**



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.



HAPPY
Birthday

Suzanne Vice	11/1
Colleen Greer	11/5
Tressa Hebert	11/16
Danielle Walker	11/26