

Let's CONNECT

NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026



National Foster Care Month

Ask how you can help

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Let's celebrate!

May was National Foster Care Month!

As Court Appointed Special Advocates, we know that foster parents are very often the unsung heroes of the child welfare system. Foster parents bring the trauma and grief that result from abuse, neglect, and removal into their homes and daily lives. We ask them to nurture children walking through unimaginable circumstances as though they were their own. We ask them to care for sick children through the night, and comfort terrified children back to sleep.

They navigate big behaviors while managing school and sports pick ups and drop offs, managing their work and family lives - all while juggling dozens of medical and therapy appointments along with caseworker, CASA, and attorney visits to their home. They grieve with these children and give them the nurturing care they need to heal, yet often have very little if any input in decisions made for those children.

And then, when services are complete and a case closes in reunification, they are asked to let go and move on as if a giant piece of their heart isn't missing.

"You signed up for this."
"You knew what you were getting into."
"You're just the foster parent."

Is it any wonder that 50% of foster parents quit within their first year?

When the professionals go home at the end

of the day to their own lives and families, foster parents are boots on the ground 24/7 – yet are sometimes perceived as nothing more than full time babysitters.

Having been a foster parent myself, I can say that having a CASA I knew was fighting for the best interests of the children I loved was invaluable. Beyond that, the support and appreciation I received from CASA made a real difference – enough that it drew me to become an Advocate myself once my foster care journey had ended.

Children who are going through the trauma



of a removal desperately need loving, safe, and stable foster homes to heal in. With approximately 18,000 children in foster care in the state of Texas, and only around 9,000 licensed foster parents, we have an ongoing foster care crisis. The incredible souls stepping up and doing this vital work should be celebrated and supported!

If you know a foster parent, don't forget to reach out and lend a listening ear or ask how you can help.

CASA Hope for Children Turns 20!

On May 30th, CASA Hope for Children celebrated 20 years of being a voice for children in Parker and Palo Pinto County.

For two decades, our advocates, staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners have come together to ensure children in foster care have someone standing beside them when they need it most. And we're just getting started! Throughout the year, we'll be sharing memories, milestones, stories of impact, and a few special surprises as we celebrate this incredible anniversary.

Here's to celebrating our past, embracing our future, and continuing to change lives—one child at a time.

Also in 2026, our Program Director Denise Ballinger celebrated the 20th anniversary of her CASA career, and Advocate Robyn Jackson retired after 20 years of incredible volunteer service.

Thank you Denise and Robyn for your dedication, sacrifices, and fierce advocacy!



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF ADVOCACY

2026 Advocate Awards

The most wonderful night of the year, at CASA, is the one that we get to celebrate the incomparable heroes who give so much of their heart, time, and hard work to children who need them so desperately. We are so thankful for each and every one of you, and had a beautiful night celebrating YOU!



Advocate Award Winners from L to R: Denise Crawford, Lacy Pruitt, Peggy Hutton, Lindsey Fox, Callie Hall, Jennifer Limon, Stephanie Gomez



From Left to Right: Judge Lynn Marie Johnson, Jackie Martin, Peacemaker of the Year Award Winner Deborah Hinds, County Attorney John Forrest, and Renee Sanchez



Advocate Award Winner Billie Bradford (Left), with Training Director Christina Phenix



Parker County Permanency Specialist of the Year, Monica Villegas



From Left to Right: Volunteer Coordinator Cheryl Duke and Advocate Award Winner Laura Roberts

Attorney Ad Litem of the Year, Scott Edmonds



Scott Edmonds won the Legal Eagle Award at our 2026 Advocate Awards Banquet for his exemplary service to children involved with the child welfare system in Parker County. We don't think there was a dry eye in the room as he shared his original poem, "Tonight I Cried For You", and for anyone who missed it, we are sharing it here.

Scott embodies the heart and soul of our mission, and we are thankful for him!

Tonight I Cried For You

Scott Edmonds

Tonight, I sat with the weight of the pain,
 A river of sorrow that falls like rain.
 Legs crossed, eyes closed, I let it flow,
 The heartache of others I've come to know.
 I cried for the mother who fights to stay,
 For the father who fears his child drifts away.
 For the bruises hidden, the words unsaid,
 For love turned cold where warmth once spread.
 For the widow who signs with a trembling hand,
 For the orphaned hearts that don't understand.
 For dreams that shattered, left behind,
 For justice sought but hard to find.
 For the prison tattoos and the past mistakes,
 For the chains of regret that a sentence makes.
 For the drug test failed, the visits missed,
 For the child left waiting for one more kiss.
 For the ones whose records say who they are,
 But I see past the scars, past the metal bars.
 I see the child that life left behind,
 Afraid of the world, of love unkind.
 The hug never given, the warmth never felt,
 The nights spent starving while hunger knelt.
 Drugs where food should have been,
 Hands that hurt where love should have been.
 For the game of hide and seek we played,
 Where laughter tried but couldn't fade,
 The quiet wish behind their eyes—
 That it was their parent counting, not I.
 For the arms wrapped tight around my frame,
 A borrowed hug, but not the same.
 They hold on longer, press in deep,
 For love that's missing, love they keep.
 For the parent signing their name in ink,
 Hands that tremble, voices sink.
 A final whisper, a soft goodbye,
 A soul now haunted as they walk and cry.
 I hold their grief, I bear their fears,
 I carry their burdens through the years.
 I walk with sorrow, side by side,
 With every case, a soul has cried.
 But tonight, I let the silence speak,
 And let my own heart feel the weak.
 I breathed it in, I breathed it out,
 Let go of shadows wrapped in doubt.
 The universe heard the silent plea,
 The whispered pain inside of me.
 And in that moment, soft and true,
 I knew tonight, I cried for you.

TBRI® Moment

June 2026 TBRI Training Dates

Please join us for TBRI (Trust Based Relational Intervention) Caregiver Training. In June, we are offering both in person and virtual training.

In Person TBRI Caregiver Training:

June 16th-17th from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Parker County Hospital District Administration Building
1130 Pecan Drive, Weatherford, TX 76086

Contact Suzy McCarley to register at:

suzannemccarley@casahopeforchildren.org

Virtual TBRI Caregiver Training:

June 22nd – 26th (five sessions total) from 5 – 7 p.m.

Contact Suzy McCarley to register at:

suzannemccarley@casahopeforchildren.org



A Note From Our Executive Director, Honoring Co-CASAs

Co-CASAs are the behind-the-scenes advocates most people never see, yet their impact is felt every day by the CASA Advocates they support and by the children they serve. They often travel alongside the Advocates they work with and attend visits together, providing a valuable second set of eyes on each case and a trusted sounding board for their CASA partner.

Co-CASAs bring additional stability, encouragement, and care to children who need steady, supportive adults in their lives. One of their greatest strengths is the mutual support they share with the Advocate they assist. The emotional and mental support CASAs provide one another is essential when working through difficult and complex cases.

Although they often remain behind the scenes, Co-CASAs contribute just as much dedication, compassion, and support to the children and cases as the primary Advocate. Their quiet commitment helps strengthen both the CASA team and the children they serve.

Co-CASA's go through the same training and background screening that CASA Volunteers go through and are a true asset to the work that we do! We couldn't do it without them!

**Thank you to every Co-CASA,
from the bottom of my heart!**



Thank You CASA Ambassadors!

CASA Ambassadors are a special group of volunteers who raise awareness and support the mission of CASA in the community. Ambassadors assist with volunteer recruitment and fundraising by securing donations and sponsors and representing CASA at various community events such as festivals, fairs, and National Night Out.

Thank you to our current CASA Ambassadors, you are so much appreciated!

Angie Thompson

Brenda Cook

Destiny Cervantez

JJ Mendoza

Jackie Bainbridge

Kathy Deen

Laura Stewart

Ruth Hanson

Sarah Wilson

Mary Chandler,

serving alongside her mother, Advocate Penny for 2 years

Karen Garrett,

serving alongside her daughter,
Volunteer Coordinator Chelsea

Francine Lessard,

serving alongside Volunteer Coordinator Cheryl Duke

Darren McCarley,

serving alongside his wife Suzy for more than 2.5 years

Christina Phenix,

serving alongside longtime Advocate Billie Bradford

Joey Pope,

serving alongside his wife Emily for 2 years

David Rinearson,

serving alongside his wife Robyn

ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT

April



Cindy Flynn

May



Stephanie Gomez

June



Trudy Smith

Please join us in celebrating this quarter's Advocate Spotlights! These incredible volunteers pour out their time, hearts, and efforts to ensure that every child on their caseload has a constant in their lives advocating for their Education, Health, Safety, and Emotional well-being.

Thank you Cindy, Stephanie and Trudy – we are so blessed by you!!

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to our Office Manager, Nicole and her family!

After six years of being his Mama and Daddy through Permanent Managing Conservatorship, Nicole and her husband finally got to make it official and legally adopt their beloved little boy.

It was such a memorable adoption hearing, and we all loved celebrating with them.

Congratulations Botvidson Family, we love you!



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA - HOPE FOR CHILDREN

WHERE TO FIND US:

CASA Hope for Children

305 S Rusk Street

Weatherford, TX 76086

www.casahopeforchildren.org

OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

CASA Hope for Children recruits, trains, and supports volunteer Court Appointed Special

Advocates (CASA) to advocate for the best interest of children and empower families in the child welfare system.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Becky Hanley, President

Christie James, Vice President

Brian Shelton, Treasurer

Tosha McClune, Secretary

Christina Robinson

Judy Jordan Giles

Kim Ortiz

Michael Parker

Tiffany Dromgoole