**June Media Release Template**

UPDATE ALL HIGHLIGHTED AREAS. USE THE [DFPS DATA BOOK](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/About_DFPS/Data_Book/) TO PULL STATEWIDE AND LOCAL STATISTICS AS NEEDED. COPY AND PASTE THE TEXT INTO THE BODY OF AN EMAIL TO YOUR LOCAL MEDIA. IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE WITH DATA OR IDENTIFYING YOUR LOCAL MEDIA, PLEASE CONTACT [THE COMMUNICATIONS & AWARENESS TEAM](mailto:communications@texascasa.org). PLEASE SEND A LINK OR PDF OF ANY COVERAGE YOU GET. GOOD LUCK!

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**YOUR CASA PROGRAM Focuses on Keeping Families Together**

YOUR CITY, Texas – June is National Reunification Month, a month dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of keeping families involved in the child welfare system together, and recognizing how the community can better support these families.

When a family becomes involved with the child welfare system, the first priority of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and YOUR CASA PROGRAM is to help reunite children with their parents whenever safe and possible – and during this month and beyond, CASA volunteers strive to engage and connect with the families so that they have the support and resources needed to have their children safely come back home.

“Some people believe that once children are removed from home and placed into foster care, no further help for them is needed, said ED’s FIRST AND LAST NAME, executive director of YOUR CASA PROGRAM. “The reality, though, is that foster care is not meant to be a permanent situation, and most kids in foster care experience a sense of grief and loss after being removed from their home, regardless of what their situation was like.”

YOUR CASA PROGRAM recruits and trains Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA volunteers, to stay by a child’s side throughout their time in foster care, advocating first for reunification when safe and possible. These volunteers get to know the children, parents and family as well as others involved in their lives—including foster parents, therapists, teachers and attorneys—collaborating with everyone to put family reunification as the first priority whenever it is safe and possible.

“We know that the vast majority of parents love their children and want what’s best for them, and the parents of the children we serve are no exception,” said ED’s LAST NAME. “We want to support parents during this time so that they have the tools and resources needed so that their children can live with them safely, because going back home is the best possible outcome for these kids.”

[Insert reunification story if available. Remember to change names and identifiable information, exact locations and ages]

Many times, parents involved with the foster care system struggle to access the resources, support and education they need to be able to complete services ordered by the judge. This issue has been especially glaring in the era of COVID-19, ED’s LAST NAME explained.

“We’ve all been affected by the virus, but things like physical distancing, food and supply shortages, and the increased need to rely on technology and internet access have been weighing even more heavily on the families we serve,” ED’s LAST NAME explained. “Our CASA volunteers can make a monumental difference by helping bridge the access gap and connecting families to services and support, during this time and beyond.”

CASA volunteers also make sure the children and parents have a support system of family and other caring adults who are able to help in whatever ways needed, and stay involved long after CASA and DFPS involvement ends.

“If parents and children have a good support system, it’s much more likely that a plan for reunification will be successful and sustainable,” ED’s LAST NAME said. “That’s what we want for the children we serve – for them to be able to grow up safe, happy and supported, surrounded by people who love them.”

By becoming a CASA volunteer, you can help more children and families in your community stay safely and happily connected. Every child has a chance—it’s you.® Learn more at BECOMEACASA.ORG OR LOCAL PROGRAM URL. The next information session is DATE.

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