



IMPACT REPORT 2022

LEARNING FROM LIVED EXPERIENCES













VISION: Texas CASA envisions a safe and positive future for all Texas children.

MISSION: Texas CASA's mission is to support local CASA volunteer advocacy programs and to advocate for effective public policy for children and families in the child protection system.

THE CASA WAY: We have an uncompromising belief that we will achieve what others think is impossible, and each of us is an essential part of the solution.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES: Texas CASA commits to prioritizing keeping families together whenever safely possible, with a focus on child and family wellbeing and stability.

Texas CASA is committed to supporting programs in advocacy for children and families of all cultures, abilities, identities and backgrounds.

Texas CASA commits to destigmatizing issues faced by families within the child welfare system.

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Vicki Spriggs



Melissa Jones

LETTER FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

The Texas CASA vision is clear: we envision a safe and positive future for all Texas children. What isn't always clear is how we are going to get there. How do we define positive future? Is it even up to us to define? It's the last question in particular that stuck with us at Texas CASA the most, and it's that question that has led to a major shift in how we are doing business.

When it comes to identifying what children, youth and families need to heal, thrive and be their best selves, we recognize that we are not always the experts. The youth and families who have experienced foster care know better than anyone else what is going right and what is going wrong within the system. That is why Texas CASA has been working to shift our focus towards *Learning from Lived Experiences*.

From the Texas CASA conference to our new series Hear My Voice, we are doing what CASA does best – amplifying the voices of children and youth. Whether it is in the courtroom, at the Capitol or on conference stages, we are making sure youth voices are being heard.

And this is only the beginning for us. We recognize this is an ongoing journey as we continue to evolve our practices to become the best version of CASA yet. We are grateful to you for choosing to go on this journey with us. The dedication and passion CASA volunteers brought this past year shows. Across Texas, 9,590 CASA volunteers provided 361,517 hours of service for children and families, an outstanding accomplishment. We continue to be inspired each and every year by their commitment and know this next year will be faced head-on with the same level of enthusiasm.

Thank you for being an integral part of the CASA movement, and thank you for all that you do for Texas children and families.

Vicki Spriggs Texas CASA CEO

Melissa Jones

FY23 Texas CASA Board President

CASA VOLUNTEERS ARE OF, AND FOR, THE COMMUNITY.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers are everyday people from the community appointed by a judge to look after a child's best interests while they're in foster care.

CASA volunteers are well-trained and work to address a child's needs around safety, permanency, connections and well-being. They represent the best interest of the child in court, monitor for child safety, and advocate to keep families together when it is possible. CASA volunteers learn about the child by getting to know the child's family, the child's community members (caregivers, foster care providers, doctors, therapists, teachers, etc.) and the child's legal team (their attorney and their caseworker).

CASA VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES INVOLVED IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM.

CASA volunteers provide a consistent presence for the child and family. They stay by a child's side throughout the case, advocating first for reunification when safe and possible.



CASA PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY WITH CHILD ADVOCATES SAN ANTONIO & CASA OF GALVESTON COUNTY

Child Advocates San Antonio

In September 2019, the University of Texas at San Antonio, Texas A&M University-San Antonio, the Alamo Colleges, Bexar County Children's Court, and Child Advocates San Antonio came together to develop a collaborative pilot program called Bexar County Fostering Education Success, or BCFES. The mission of the program is to improve college graduation rates for foster care alumni and to increase the number of children in foster care who are academically and emotionally prepared to succeed in college.

Child Advocates San Antonio works to provide every youth that joins the College Docket, and is still under legal jurisdiction with Bexar County Children's Court, with a CASA volunteer. These advocates receive additional training focused on education and the BCFES program.

This past fiscal year, Child Advocates San Antonio served a total of 33 youth in the BCFES program. Advocates accompanied youth on campus tours, and in the Spring, CASA celebrated the graduations of 11 high school seniors and the college acceptances received by those students.

CASA of Galveston County

CASA of Galveston County formed an Education Committee to improve collaboration with the school districts for the best interest of children and their academic needs. The Education Committee is made up of district foster care liaisons, district administration, an attorney, former educators, CASA staff and CASA volunteers.

The Committee has been instrumental in developing and delivering a variety of Educational Advocacy Continuing Education Trainings covering topics like Admissions, Workforce Solutions, Connecting with Foster Care Liaisons, and other pertinent topics to increase Educational Advocacy competencies for CASA volunteers and staff. These trainings are also open to child welfare partners, the court, and the legal community so everyone involved in a case can partner together to increase educational outcomes for youth in foster care.

The Committee also developed and launched the Student Incentive Program. This program identifies areas of improvement in the academic setting to encourage good behavior, citizenship, hygiene, and academic success. The child, teacher and advocate work alongside each other to ensure the child is successful.

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TEXAS CASA SERVICES

Texas CASA is the statewide membership association for the 72 local CASA programs. We work to connect each part of the CASA network and empower the local programs to perform at their highest level by providing assistance in six core areas.

Awareness: Texas CASA creates and oversees a statewide recruitment campaign to increase public awareness, recruit volunteers and reinforce local recruitment efforts with billboards, radio, television and social media advertisements.

Policy: Texas CASA collaborates with stakeholders, the state child welfare system and elected officials to ensure public policies focus on issues affecting children and families experiencing foster care.

Education: Texas CASA provides ongoing opportunities for the CASA network and the child welfare community to grow their understanding of the system and learn new ways to support children and families involved in foster care.

Support: Texas CASA provides access to information, training and technical assistance so that local CASA programs can focus their efforts on monitoring to ensure children and youth are safe and supported.

Accountability: Texas CASA is a trusted partner that identifies, disperses, administers and manages federal, state and private funds, and helps to ensure the local CASA programs effectively utilize the funding to achieve their missions.

Leadership: Texas CASA provides innovative training, mentorship and resources that build strong local CASA program board members, executive directors and staff.

TEXAS CASA SERVICES IN ACTION

Normalcy Matters: A Guide to Supporting Children & Youth in Texas Foster Care

Normalcy means helping children and youth to live as normal a life as possible, doing activities that youth are expected to do, while in foster care. This guide and video cover what normalcy is, why it matters, and the important role each of us plays in supporting and promoting normalcy for young people in the Texas child welfare system.

Child Safety Toolkit & Training Access

Those who work directly with children must pay special attention to the safety of children and be prepared to respond to any safety concerns. As part of that preparation, Texas CASA provided local program leadership access to two new resources:

- **Praesidium Academy**, a series of free online trainings about preventing and responding to child sexual abuse, created by Praesidium, for staff and leadership at CASA programs.
- > The Child Safety Toolkit, an extensive toolkit from CASA of Travis County in partnership with Praesidium, that outlines how programs can incorporate safety measures into all levels of their practices, policies and procedures aimed at preventing sexual abuse.

Outreach Materials

With the goal of expanding the CASA network to better represent the demographics and experiences of youth in care, Texas CASA creates materials and resources to help programs share the importance of CASA volunteers to diverse communities.

Distinguished Speaker Series

The Distinguished Speaker Series was back in FY22 and featured high-caliber speakers sharing their expertise on topics and issues impacting the child welfare system. The series explores ways anyone who works with children and families can better engage, connect with, and empathize with those they work with to become a stronger advocate.

Training Opportunities

In FY22, Texas CASA hosted 246 in-person and online trainings with a live facilitator for local CASA program staff, board members and volunteers.

- > 19,507 total hours of training provided
- > 445 hours of facilitated training provided by Texas CASA employees
- > 8,463 attendees

Texas CASA's online learning center, CASA College, is open to all CASA program staff, volunteers and board members, including those from across the country. Dynamic and relevant online learning materials are created and shared in CASA College to support local programs' educational needs.

- > 7,256 courses completed
- > 14,469 credit hours
- > 3,078 new users enrolled



THE CASA IMPACT

FY 22 IMPACT NUMBERS September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022

> **72** LOCAL CASA PROGRAMS

> > 9,590 CASA VOLUNTEERS

23,943* CHILDREN SERVED BY CASA

219 of 254 TEXAS COUNTIES SERVED BY CASA

> 38,294 CHILDREN IN DEPS CARE

361,517 HOURS OF CASA SERVICE

In FY 2022, CASA volunteers served **61.7%** of children in DFPS care.**

*Includes the 23,630 children in legal responsibility of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services and 313 children only receiving court-ordered services

**Excludes children receiving court-ordered services, not in legal responsibility of the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services

CASA PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

Advocacy for Older Youth with CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery

CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County launched its expanded teen program, CASA4Teens in 2019, aimed at increasing successful outcomes for youth aging out of foster care. Some of the first CASA4Teens activities included:

- > leading a teen book club with a local RTC
- > providing college talks about options available to youth in foster care
- holding a quinceañera celebration for one of their youth reaching this key milestone age
- > hosting a "Game of Life" day with activities and presenters to teach key life skills such as budgeting, grocery shopping, opening a bank account, and doing laundry



In 2022, CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County expanded the CASA4Teens program to include engaging activities throughout the summer. More than 50 youth in care participated in the teencentered events that promoted normalcy and fun. CASA Child Advocates hosted teen girls' and boys' nights at the CASA house that included karaoke, "spa" nights with nail stickers, nutrition classes, arts and crafts, games, tug of war, paper airplane folding and racing, and delicious dinner and snacks. Most importantly, the youth had the opportunity to connect with several caring adults, including CASA staff and volunteers.

Other highlights from the summer activities included Art Bus experiences, museum presentations, and visiting docents that brought "Bugs on Wheels" and shared about astronomy. CASA also provided several books for summer reading opportunities, building on the book club from the previous year. These activities gave teens in care the chance to explore the world around them and make connections with other youth and adults.





LEGISLATIVE **ADVOCACY**

The Texas CASA Public Policy Team solicits input and suggestions for legislative priorities from the CASA network and advocates for identified priorities as well as network funding at the Texas Legislature. The team identifies best practices and policy innovations for the CASA network and to improve the child protection system as a whole.

The team also works with legislators and other key decision makers and collaborates with other child welfare organizations.

The Child Welfare Primer: Creative Community Approaches to Building Foster Care Capacity

Texas CASA hosted the 2022 virtual primer to bring together experts and leaders from across the child welfare system to discuss the capacity crisis and highlight creative, long-term solutions to prevent this kind of crisis in the future. The webinar featured a panel of experts from the child welfare system moderated by facilitator Katie Olse, CEO of the Texas Alliance of Child and Family Services.

The panelists included Dr. Brock Boudreau, Deputy Associate Commissioner for Texas Child Protective Services; Carol Self, Child Welfare Consultant with Casey Family Programs; Wayne Carson, CEO of All Children and Families Services; and Metoyer Martin, CASA Program Director at Child Advocates of Fort Bend.

ROAD TO THE 88TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

During the interim, Texas CASA's Public Policy team was hard at work developing and refining our legislative priorities, training the local CASA network and creating new materials for 45 Legislative Advocacy Teams (LATs). LATs are local program staff, board members and volunteers who help promote legislative priorities.

10 Regional Trainings + a Virtual Training

- > Amarillo > Denton > Athens > El Paso > Fort Worth > Austin **B**rownsville > Rosenberg
- > Corpus Christi
 - > San Antonio





88th Legislative Session Priorities

- 1. Texas CASA supports policies that preserve families, promote family reunification when possible, and minimize the time children spend in foster care.
- 2. Texas CASA supports funding and policies that provide a child access to safe, stable placements in their community, that meet their individual needs and support their permanency goals.
- 3. Texas CASA supports policies that allow CASA volunteers to be appointed by judges to represent the best interest of children involved with the child protection system, whether as part of a Suit Affecting the Child Parent Relationship or motions from the court.
- 4. Texas CASA supports funding and policies that further support and encourage placement with relative caregivers.
- **5.** Texas CASA supports continued funding from the Health and Human Services Commission and the Department of Family and Protective Services.

THE IMAGINATION REPORT

In early 2020, Texas CASA was well underway planning our first concert experience that would bring together 100+ people to hear local artists and discover how they can make a difference for children and families in the community. Then COVID-19 happened. The concert plan fell apart, but from that came The Imagination Report – an original, collaborative piece between Riders Against the Storm, Ebony Stewart and Jonathan Horstmann.

The song is meant to inspire and show the difference one person can make in a child's life, especially when that person is from the same community as the child and can connect with them.

"This is my imagination report. This is why all I need is a door. Open wide find my way and explore. Climb any mountain rise up and stand tall."

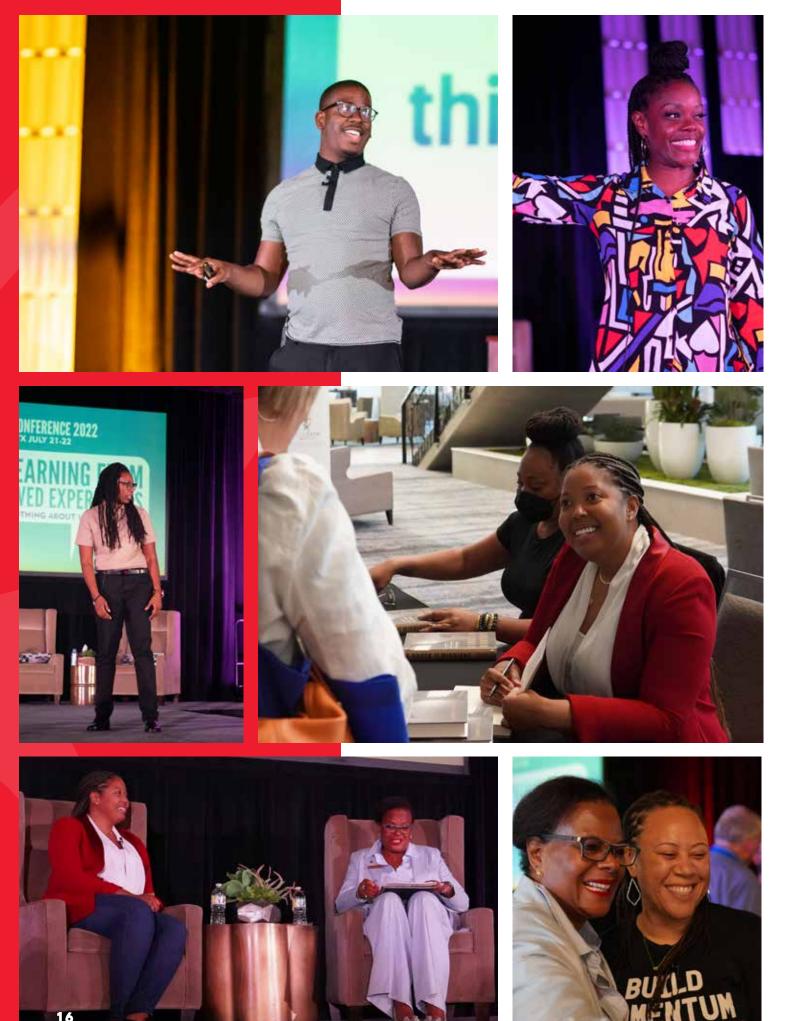


WHO OPENED A DOOR FOR YOU GROWING UP?

WHO INSPIRED YOU? WHO ENCOURAGED YOU TO DREAM BIG? WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST CHAMPION AND MOTIVATOR?



spread my wings for the world to witness."



LEARNING FROM LIVED EXPERIENCES: **"NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US"**

The CASA network gathered in Denton, Texas, on July 21, 2022, for the Texas CASA Conference. The theme was Learning from Lived Experiences: "Nothing About Us Without Us". That phrase, "Nothing about us without us," gained popularity as the mantra for the disabilities rights movement. It's since spread to drive home the wider concept that policies and system changes should not be decided without the full representation and leadership of those impacted by the systems.

In our case, Texas CASA interprets the phrase to mean that it is essential that the youth and families directly impacted by the child welfare system are at the table when decisions are made, and when imagining what a better system can look like.

The conference featured many incredible speakers with lived experience in foster care, including young leaders like Sixto Cancel,



TEXAS CASA CONFERENCE

Founder and CEO of Think of Us; and Cortney Jones, Founder and Executive Director of Change 1. Parents and families who have previously been involved with the system were included to bring a critical voice to the discussion.

The conference also explored how the child welfare system intersects with other systems like the juvenile justice and prison system in conversations with Café Momentum and Brittany K. Barnett, author of A Knock at *Midnight*. Closing out the conference were powerful performances from poets Slam Anderson and Ebony Stewart. Slam also shared her story in a special panel discussion with Matt Anderson, host of Seen Out Loud, and Shrounda Selivanoff, Director of Public Policy, Children's Home Society of Washington.

Attendees took away new insights to further their advocacy for children and families in the child welfare system.





THE FIX

Texas CASA launched a new video series, The Fix, to explore issues in the foster care system that need fixing, and propose solutions, in 5 minutes or less.

To date The Fix featured speakers covering educational advocacy, kinship care, advocacy for older youth, and the need for more support for parents and within communities. These big topics are broken into small segments and provide ideas for how advocacy for children and families can be improved to create a stronger, more equitable child welfare system.

The special Lived Experiences episode featured amazing young people who experienced foster care. Sixto Cancel, Brooke Shewmake, Cortney Jones, Ronika Allen, Slam Anderson and Renellquiana Blackburn discussed how to best work for positive change for youth and families in the system.

AMPLIFYING AUTHENTIC VOICES

HEAR MY VOICE

Hear My Voice is a series of first-person testimonies from people with lived experience with the foster care system, created from indepth interviews.

Kalynda's Story

"This advice applies to CASA volunteers as well: not only do the kids need you, but their families need you! Foster families, adoptive families, blood families... they all need your help understanding and navigating the system that is currently affecting them and will continue to affect them even after its involvement ends."

Kalynda adopted her three children, siblings Ryan, Raeleigh and Raychel, over the course of 10 years. The three share the same birth mother. Raeleigh, Ryan and Kalynda's great niece share the same birth father, which is how Kalynda ended up becoming a core part of their lives.

Monica's Story

"Kids, you know, they've got to be pulled closer when they push. Like, with my CASA kids, I get on the ground the same way my therapist would get on the floor with me and cry with me. A lot of these kids are just surviving, because that's all they know how to do. But they can make something out of themselves." Monica, age 27, tells her story of surviving both child abuse and the foster care system. She shares how she found healing, purpose and family on her own terms. Monica now works for a local CASA program.

Jackson's Story

"Now, CASA used to step in place whenever CPS was trying to move me to different placements and stuff where I didn't want to go. They stood up for me, they gave me a voice. CASA is good people."

Jackson, age 23, aged out of foster care and now lives in Mt. Pleasant, TX.

Leon's Story

"I was just like... 'Dang, I'm gonna fail, but I'm not a failure.' And then from that point on, I've never failed anything. I just transformed. I don't know how to explain it. I ended up making an A in that class. I guess I had just been through so much in my life at that point, I was just like, 'Well, I've made it this far. I can't give up now. I can't let a class defeat me.'"

Leon entered foster care at age 3 and was adopted, but the adoptive family broke down in his teen years and he was returned to the child welfare system. He aged out of the system at 18, while learning how to strive, forgive others and protect himself. Today, at age 23, he cares for others daily as a mental health professional, working two fulltime jobs in crisis counseling—and owns his own energy drink business.



RE

STATE FUNDING

FEDERAL FUNDING

PRIVATE FUNDING

ENDOWMENT INCOME (LOSS)*

CONTRIBUTED SERVICES

TOTAL

EX

Local Program Support Services & Trai

Volunteer Recruitment & Awareness

Grants Management & Development

Administration

Public Policy Advocacy

TOTAL

* Net operating loss is budgeted each year to be covered with an endowment withdrawal.

PASS THRU AMOUNT



of government funding that Texas CASA receives is awarded to local CASA programs for recruitment, training, and volunteer support.

PASS THRU AMOUNT INCLUDES \$1,144,953 FOR THE STATEWIDE **RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN**

FINANCIALS

| VENUE | |
|-------|----------------|
| | \$ 15,702,271 |
| | \$ 21,845,703 |
| | \$ 681,617 |
| | \$ (1,363,671) |
| | \$ 2,401,993 |
| | \$ 39,267,913 |

| PENSES | |
|--------|---------------|
| iining | \$ 36,196,653 |
| | \$ 2,588,674 |
| | \$ 359,917 |
| | \$ 1,325,193 |
| | \$ 344,677 |
| | \$ 40,815,114 |

LOCAL CASA PROGRAMS

LOCAL CASA PROGRAMS

ABILENE

Big Country CASA 325.677.6448

ALPINE

Frontier CASA 432.837.7448

AMARILLO Amarillo Area CASA, Inc. 806.373.2272

ATHENS CASA of Trinity Valley 903.675.7070

AUSTIN CASA of Travis County 512.459.2272

BASTROP

CASA of Bastrop, Fayette & Lee Counties 512.303.2272

BAY CITY Gulf Coast CASA 979.308.4576

BEAUMONT CASA of Southeast Texas

409.832.2272

BEEVILLE

CASA of Bee, Live Oak and McMullen Counties 361.542.4407

BONHAM Fannin County Children's CASA of the Center

903.583.4339

BRENHAM CASA for Kids of South Central Texas 979.277.0088

BROWNSVILLE CASA of Cameron & Willacy Counties 956.546.6545

BROWNWOOD CASA in the Heart of Texas 325.643.2557

BRYAN Voices For Children, Inc. CASA of Brazos Valley 979.822.9700

CHILDRESS CASA of the Rolling Plains 940.937.3180

CLEBURNE CASA of Johnson County 817.558.6995

CONROE CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County 936.441.5437

CORPUS CHRISTI

Coastal Bend 361.884.2272

CORSICANA CASA of Navarro County 903.872.3772

DALHART CASA 69, Inc. 806.244.2684

DALLAS Dallas CASA 214.827.8961

DECATUR CASA of Wise & Jack Counties 940.627.7535

DENTON CASA of Denton County 940.243.2272

EDINBURG CASA of Hidalgo County 956.381.0346

FI PASO CASA of El Paso 915.225.5214

FORT WORTH CASA of Tarrant County 817.877.5891

GAINESVILLE CASA of North Texas 940.665.2244

GALVESTON CASA of Galveston County

409.572.2552

GEORGETOWN CASA of Williamson County Texas 512.868.2822

GRAHAM North Star CASA 940.549.9829

GRANBURY CASA of Hood & Somervell Counties 817.579.6866

GREENVILLE CASA for Hunt County 903.450.4410

HEREFORD Great Plains CASA for Kids 806.363.1211

HILLSBORO CASA of Hill County Texas 254.283.5082

HOUSTON Child Advocates, Inc. 713.529.1396

HUNTSVILLE

CASA of Walker, San Jacinto & Trinity Counties 936.291.2272

KERRVILLE Hill Country CASA 830.896.2272

KINGSLAND CASA for the Highland Lakes Area 325.388.3440

KINGSVILLE Brush Country CASA 361.595.7233

LAREDO Voz de Niños 956.727.8691

LIBERTY CASA of Liberty/ Chambers Counties 512.473.2627 ext 115

LONGVIEW East Texas CASA 903.753.8093

LUBBOCK CASA of the South Plains 806.763.2272

LUFKIN CASA of the Pines 936.634.6725

MARSHALL CASA of Harrison County 903.923.9224

MASON Bluebonnet CASA 325.347.6474

MCKINNEY CASA of Collin County 214.215.8221

MEXIA CASA of Freestone & Limestone Counties

> **MIDLAND** CASA of West Texas 432.683.1114

903.654.8249

MOUNT PLEASANT CASA of Titus, Camp and Morris Counties 903.717.8940

NACOGDOCHES CASA of Deep East Texas 936.560.4711

NEW BRAUNFELS CASA of Central Texas 830.626.2272

ODESSA CASA of the Permian Basin Area 432.498.4174

ORANGE CASA of the Sabine Neches Region 409.886.2272

PAMPA CASA of the High Plains 806.669.7638

PARIS CASA for KIDS 903.737.4346

PLEASANTON CASA of South Texas 830.569.4696

ROCKWALL Lone Star CASA 972.772.5858

ROSENBERG Child Advocates of Fort Bend 281.344.5100

SAN ANGELO Children's Advocacy Center of Greater West Texas 325.653.4673

SAN ANTONIO Child Advocates San Antonio Inc. 210.225.7070

SHERMAN CASA of Grayson County 903.813.5400

STEPHENVILLE CASA for the Cross Timbers Area 254.965.6610

SULPHUR SPRINGS

Lake Country CASA 903.885.1173

TEMPLE CASA of Bell & Corvell Counties 254.774.1881

TEXARKANA CASA of Northeast Texas 903.792.1030

TYLER CASA for Kids of East Texas 903.597.7725

UVALDE Tri-County CASA 830.426.8848

VICTORIA Golden Crescent CASA, Inc. 361.573.3734

WACO CASA of McLennan County 254.304.7982

WAXAHACHIE CASA of Ellis County 972.937.1455

WEATHERFORD CASA - Hope for Children, Inc. 817.599.6224

WICHITA FALLS Child Advocates CASA of Red River 940.766.0552

OUR LEADERSHIP

FY22 Board of Directors

OUR LEADERSHIP

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TREASURER

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HR Program Manager for ADA & Employee Relations, Houston Methodist Hospital

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Rhonda Thompson Retired; Vice President of University Advancement University of Houston— Clear Lake

Jason Waldie Partner, PWC

Meca Walker Mediator/Arbitrator Walker ADR Services

Robert Wessa, CPA Principal, kbb Services, Inc.

LEGACY LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Legacy Leadership Circle members are former Texas CASA Board Members and Emeritus Board members who invested their passion, gifts and leadership while holding office and continue to support the mission of Texas CASA.

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THREE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH CASA

1. VOLUNTEER. Help amplify a child's voice during their time in foster care. Get started today at BecomeACASA.org.

2. NOMINATE. Put in a good word for us by letting your friends and family know they have what it takes to be a CASA volunteer! Nominate them today at NominateACASA.org.

3. DONATE. A donation to Texas CASA is an investment in the statewide CASA community and the future of Texas. Make your gift today at TexasCASA.org/donate.

