



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Texas CASA Hosts Child Welfare Symposium to Grow Family Engagement in the Lives of Children and Youth in Foster Care**

**DENTON, Texas** – Leadership from Texas Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), local CASA programs, and Community-Based Care contractors will meet this Wednesday and Thursday, May 3-4, at the Denton Convention Center for the Collaborative Family Engagement (CFE) Symposium. Under the theme “CFE for All,” attendees will take lessons learned from child welfare and family engagement experts home to support Texas CASA’s statewide goal of helping children achieve strong connectivity and permanency with relatives and trusted loved ones when possible.

“CFE is all about connections and relies on the CFE teams to work together to explore potential positive connections identified by the family,” said Vicki Spriggs, Chief Executive Officer of Texas CASA. “The CFE Symposium is our opportunity to bring together everyone involved in CFE statewide to learn and grow together.”

CFE is Texas’ team-based approach between local CASA programs and DFPS, Community-Based Care contractors, and other child welfare professionals. The team engages, finds, and works with family members and fictive kin to create and develop a lifetime network for young people in the foster care system. CFE provides creative tools for CASA volunteers and caseworkers to use with the child, parent, or relative in order to identify important people to the child or youth and to fully hear their voice and story.

The CFE program grew from just three local CASA programs in 2015 to a united statewide network of family engagement-focused CASA programs today. In 2022 alone, Texas CASA engaged more than 2,400 families in over 108 counties — which served nearly 4,500 children through CFE.

Keynote speakers of the CFE Symposium include Dr. Amelia Franck Meyer, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Alia Innovations; Kevin Campbell, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of Pale Blue.; and more.

The CFE Symposium is supported by the Texas Bar Foundation, which awarded Texas CASA with a \$10,000 grant in November 2022. Since its inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$24 million in grants to law-related programs.

For more information on becoming a CASA volunteer and other ways you can get involved, visit [www.BecomeACASA.org](http://www.BecomeACASA.org).

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### **About Texas CASA**

Austin-based Texas CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is the statewide organization of 73 local CASA programs that recruit and train volunteers to advocate for children and families in the child protection system. Last year, 9,590 well-trained volunteers served 23,943 children in 219 of the 254 Texas counties. Texas CASA supports the local CASA programs by advocating for effective public policy for children in the child protection system and by providing funding, training and technical assistance to program staff, board and volunteers.

CASA volunteers are everyday people from all walks of life in the child's community who are specially trained to advocate for them. They get to know the child, parents and family, and gather information from everyone involved in their daily life. Volunteers work collaboratively with professionals, family and others to promote the child's best interest in court, school, their foster placement and other settings. CASA volunteers advocate first for reunification when safe and possible, and work to keep children connected to their family and community of origin. They focus on facilitating nurturing relationships for the child and helping to find, engage and strengthen a support network for the child and family.

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