



Helping Hands 'n Hearts



Serving the abused and neglected children of Parker County

FALL 2009

Special points of interest:

- Judge Chrestman Third Annual Awards Dinner
- Advocate of the Year
- New Board Member
- Winter Training Classes for 2009

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Judge Chrestman Third Annual Awards Dinner

CASA held its “Third Annual Judge Chrestman Awards Dinner” on Thursday August 13th at the Doss Heritage and Culture Center. The Dinner is held every year to say thank you to CASA volunteers who selflessly give of their time and resources helping the kids of Parker County. Over 120 guests including Judges Chrestman, Quisenberry, Buckner and Akers were serenaded to the tunes of Frank Sinatra by our very own Steve Markwardt, owner of Community Media Group. Steve also graced us with his own composition, “Your

Blanket”, dedicated to CASA. That was just the beginning of our night for awarding our Advocates. All of our Advocates were presented with a certificate of appreciation in honor of their service. Advocate Amber White was presented with the Advocate of the Year Award for 2009. Six CASA volunteers were awarded with the President’s Volunteer Service Award. CASA also thanked and acknowledged the contribution of all the DFPS Caseworkers and presented Theresia Mullins with the 2009 Caseworker of the Year Award.

CASA would like to give a big thanks to its sponsors of the Awards Dinner: Roy and Jeanne Grogan Family Foundation, Jerry Durant Autogroup, Mr. & Mrs. Ed Kramer, First Financial Bank, Doss Heritage and Culture Center, Bordelon Catering.



Advocate of the Year

[For her passion and perseverance, Parker County CASA volunteer Amber White was selected as the 2009 Advocate of the Year.](#)

Julie Laughlin, CASA program director said, “In advocating for the children assigned to her, Amber has consistently been over and above what is expected of a volunteer.”

White has been a CASA volunteer for just over a year. She and husband Chris lives in Weatherford. They are expecting their first child in January. She also serves as a youth pastor at Convergence Church in Fort Worth.

White shared, “I believe every child deserves someone to fight

for them and many of these children have to fight for themselves at a very young age.”

Kathy Smart, former program director, said White is known for thinking “outside the box.”

Smart gave an example of White’s casework dedication regarding a sibling group of five who have been bounced around the foster care system for most of their lives. Smart shared that White embraced the challenges helping the children by helping to obtain education grants, housing assistance, and permanency (home) for the youngest one.

White encourages others to become a CASA volunteer. “It’s not

easy being a CASA, but there is nothing as rewarding as knowing you’ve made a difference in a child’s life.”

By Lori Cope

The Community News



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CASA of Parker County Honors Volunteers with President's Volunteer Service Award

CASA of Parker County awarded 6 of their volunteers with the PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD, a national honor offered in recognition of volunteer service at their Third Annual Judge Chrestman Award Dinner Thursday August 13th. Two family groups consisting of Angela Gandy and Lois Britton; and Erika and Ingallil Toles, along with two individuals Robyn Jackson and Linda Brown were awarded Bronze Volunteer Service Awards by contributing over 789 hours

to CASA of Parker County and the children of Parker County. This was the second annual award received by volunteer Robyn Jackson for her work with CASA.

"The PRESIDENT'S VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD recognizes individuals and families who have answered the call to make a commitment to volunteer service," said Geneva Martin, Executive Director for CASA of Parker County. "CASA of Parker County is

proud to be aligned with this prestigious volunteer award, and we are especially proud of our volunteers who have made volunteer service a central part of their lives."



Kathy Smart Advocate of the Quarter Award

Beginning this fiscal year 2009-2010, CASA instituted a quarterly award, aptly titled the "Kathy Smart Advocate of The Quarter Award". The award is to be given to a CASA advocate who embodies the spirit of advocacy through their dedicated and tireless commitment in assisting children who have been placed in the custody of DFPS. Our advocates of the Fall Quarter 2009 are Bob & Sandra Moors. Bob & Sandra were sworn in June 4th of this year. They immediately took on a case that involved a child who had been in the system for an extended period of time and was awaiting adoption. When approached by CASA in August to take on a teenager who had

been in the system for over five years, they agreed knowing that this case might also take more than the usual 12-18 months time commitment. Bob kept in touch daily with the CASA office and the events of one very active case while he and Sandra were on vacation in Florida. Upon returning they completed reports and attended court before even having time to recover from their trip. Bob & Sandra were concerned about one of their CASA kids not having their own bike to ride and actively worked to have one secured by donation. Bob was dedicated in voicing his concerns about the placement of his other older child and participated in reviewing and recom-

mending the facility where his CASA kid was eventually placed. Bob & Sandra's open hearts and genuine concern for their CASA kids is evident in their willingness to go the extra mile while advocating for permanent placement and bright futures for "the least of these". We appreciate you Bob and Sandra and thank you for your open hearts!



"Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time."

- Rabbinical
Saying

A New Voice on the Phone

We would love to introduce our new Administrator Assistant here at our CASA office.

Connie Plevak fell right into the position helping Julie, Geneva and CASA with organizing our folders and computer files, not to mention the cheery voice you hear answering the telephone when you call our office. She has already jumped right into helping with the upcoming events and newsletter.

Connie is originally from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Six years ago she moved down to Texas with her family. They

all admit to loving the hot weather more than shoveling many feet of snow for several months of the year!! Connie went to school for Interior Design and has helped many builders/clients for the past 15 years with home selections. It is her passion; however so is her family.



She has a wonderful husband of 14 years and together they have one son who is 10 years old and one daughter who is 9

years old. Connie is active in her church, Grace Community Fellowship. Her hobbies are beading jewelry, reading, design work, waterskiing, biking, and being with her family.

Connie has decided to slow down in the design world and focus on happily taking the Administrative Assistant position to make CASA's office the most organized and well-working place it can be.

CASA Gets a New Board Member

We would like to introduce one of our new CASA board members, Dr. Jessica Ramsey. She has given us a little insight...."I first heard about CASA as a freshman at Kansas State University. I had joined the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority, and CASA was our national philanthropy. I remember having a CASA board member from the Manhattan CASA come and speak to the sorority and give some very touching examples of ways that CASAs help children in the court system, and how important our support at the university was to continuing CASA there. During medical school and residency, I saw the other side of the system, often taking care of kids that didn't have

insurance. Many of those children were underserved in the health arena due to problems with stability at home, and many were in the process of going through the court system. I saw the impact that even a few visits with the doctor had on their overall well being, and it really drove home the need each child has for someone in their life to be an advocate solely for them, without other agendas. I am thrilled to be part of an organization like CASA which is able to provide consistent, individual advocacy for children who otherwise would have none." We are thrilled for her to be a part of the CASA board.

Born: Topeka, Kansas

High School: Cair Paravel-Latin in Topeka, KS

College: Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS – B.S. Biology

Med School – University of Kansas School of Medicine, Wichita, KS

Residency – Pediatrics at the University of Kansas School of Medicine, Wichita, KS

Currently Employed --
Weatherford Regional Medical Center as a General Pediatrician

CASA's Kudos

CASA of Parker County wants to acknowledge the hard work of it's Advocates and give kudos to those who have successfully contributed to CASA.

Advocate Wanda Witherow and Loretta Hale for successfully completing their cases and assisting with their children achieving permanent placement. And for jumping right into their next cases!

To Advocates Erika and Ingalill Toles, for driving to Houston on a Saturday in the rain to observe a

visit!

Friends of CASA Rick and Diane Hill of Couts Methodist Church for donating a fabulous bike for one of our CASA kids.

To Annie "Cowgirl" White of the Cross Timbers Chapter of BACA, Bikers Against Child Abuse, for her presentation at our last Round Table. Anonymous Donors who contributed



funds to help one of our Kids start Driver's Education this fall.

Greenwood Farm Helpers: Brandy Ochs, Bob & Sandra Moors, Lenora Driver, Loretta Hale, Kathy Smart and Family, Regina DeVore, Joan Shaw, Ryan Maloney, Marcus & Elyse Carter



Winter Training 2009

WINTER TRAINING CLASSES Training

CASA of Parker County works to recruit, train and support citizen volunteers who serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA Volunteers. CASAs are ordinary men and women from all walks of life who volunteer to advocate, in court, for children who have been abused and neglected, who have been removed from their homes by DFPS and are under the protection of our courts.

CASA's New Advocate Training for Winter 2010 is scheduled to begin January 16th 2010. It will consist of 4 consecutive Saturday training sessions. Please contact the CASA office if you are interested in joining the class. All prerequisites to attend the training can be handled in advance.

Please check with the CASA office or on our website for more information.

www.casaofparkercounty.com
casa@casaofparkercounty.com



Are you ready to stand up for a child who needs you?

"Having children is a privilege not a right. Use that privilege wisely and our future will be bright."

- Michele A. Martin Davis



In partnership with:



CASA of Parker County

200 Palo Pinto Street, Ste. 107
Weatherford, TX 76086

Phone: 817-599-6224

Fax: 817-887-5541

E-mail: Casa@casaofparkercounty.com

From the Bench

CASA is committed to actively working with Parker County’s Court System along with the DFPS personnel in finding the permanency solution that is in the best interest of each child we serve. Each quarter we are inviting different participants to give their view of CASA and our interaction with them. In this inaugural column, Judge Jerry Buckner of County Court at Law I provided CASA with his viewpoint.

“My experience with CASA has been positive and informative. The CASA report is the first thing

I look for when I am reviewing the file. The CASA report summarizes everything that has happened. I am able to quickly tell which attorney represents what party, parent or child. The report also tells me children’s names and ages. None of this information is readily available from other documents in the file. Usually, the Program Director and members of the board have a continuing interest in the cases. I believe I can rely on CASA to let me know if anything is taking a wrong turn, concerning the children’s best interest.”

Thank you Judge Buckner!



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.CASAOFPARKERCOUNTY.COM

Upcoming Events

BREAKFAST WITH SANTA



Santa is almost done checking his list, but before he gets on his sleigh for Christmas he wants to have breakfast with you! He has requested to meet with you on Saturday, December 5th at the Central Christian Church. The church is

located at 1602 S. Main in Weatherford. Santa will be able to stay from 8:00 to 11:30 am; however SEATING IS LIMITED! So we are going to have two separate serving times for everyone to be able to have time with Santa. The two serving times will be from 8 to 9:30 am & 10 to 11:30 am. Also, Mrs. Claus will have a story corner; we will have crafts to create and get to enjoy sleigh rides! To keep track of Santa’s fans we are selling tickets for this event! Please purchase the tickets at either the CASA office or at Super Save in Weatherford. For future ticket purchasing locations, please contact the CASA office at #817-599-6224. Ticket prices are as follows: Children 12 & under are \$10 (includes photo with Santa) and Adults are \$5. Remember that all the proceeds benefit CASA of Parker County children!

Connie Plevak

CASA of Parker County

The Board of Directors

Marcus Carter, President

Ryan Maloney, Vice President & Advocate Care Chair

Joan Shaw, Board Development Chair & Secretary

Regina DeVore, Treasurer & Friends of CASA Chair

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- Elyse Carter
- Sophie Clark
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- Bill Kiker
- Ralph Martinez
- Dr. Jessica Ramsey
- Dave Deison
- Craig Towson

CASA Staff

Geneva Martin, Executive Director

Julie Laughlin, Program Director

Connie Plevak, Admin. Assistant

CASA Volunteers

- Lois Britton
- Linda Brown
- Robert Bull
- Earlene Clouse
- Lori Cope
- Lenora Driver
- Cynthia Elder
- Shara Fox
- Angela Gandy
- Loretta Hale
- K. Hott
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- Daria Price
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- Margaret Smith
- Martha Tandy
- Erika Toles
- Ingalill Toles
- Amber White
- Wanda Witherow