

Good News from CASA

Summer Newsletter 2021

Bell and Coryell Counties



NEW VOLUNTEERS

Fourteen new volunteer advocates joined the CASA ranks over the summer. A class of eight new volunteers took the oath with **Judge Chris Cornish** presiding on June 1st, 2021 and another 6 advocates were sworn in on July 20th with **Judge Dallas Sims** administering the oath to that group. Both groups immediately had cases assigned to them and began working with CASA supervisors to get acclimated to the casework and familiar with the history of each case they were assigned. Both classes have already proven to be assets to CASA and the children they represent. All of the new advocates felt the call to provide a voice for the children in foster care that are assigned to CASA. **Howard Hawk**, joined the Coffee with CASA program in early June and told his story of wanting to give back to his community – especially to serve as a mentor for young boys who need guidance and leadership at a critical time in their lives. Howard and **George Fennell** were part of a special effort called “Men of CASA” that was instigated by Recruiter/Trainer **Lolita Gilmore** to target finding more males to serve as CASA advocates.

Want to Volunteer?

Check out www.casabellcoryell.org or call the CASA Office at (254)-774-1881



L to R Top: Darla Wilson, Judge Chris Cornish, Howard Hawk, Blyth Jones, Anna Tuma, Sarah Beaty, and Maggie Barrientes
Bottom: Amanda Spoon, Ashia Hunter, and Alasia Hunt
Not Pictured: Alia Girard and Simone Burns



L to R: George Fennell, Ron Patrick, Justin Williamson, and Claudine Ortiz. Not Pictured: Raven Sullivan, Jeffrey Mucha

CASA is a proud partner of
United Way



United Way of
Central Texas

The **Men of CASA** campaign is paying dividends as 4 out of the 6 new advocates sworn in on July 20th were men. **Justin Williamson**, is an active duty soldier at Fort Hood and expressed his desire to help young children who just need a voice to make sure they are not forgotten in the foster care system. Williamson finds the time to serve our country and makes time to serve the children of CASA. His goal is to help young boys understand that they have options and support in breaking the cycle of abuse or neglect that landed them in the foster care system. He enjoys being a mentor and spending time sharing his own life story and examples of positive leadership with the child in the case he was assigned. CASA welcomes these volunteers with open arms and encourages anyone who is considering helping today's youth who are in need of help and support – to become CASA advocates to be that voice for a child in need

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GOLF TOURNAMENT

FIRST ANNUAL CASA/WINGS, PIZZA, N THINGS GOLF OUTING RAISES RECORD FUNDS FOR CASA

THE DENT FAMILY'S CONNECTION TO CASA

When **Mike Dent** decided to do something to give back to his community, he wasn't sure how or what he would do at the time. Fast forward a few months to a conversation he had with a friend who had organized a golf outing to benefit another cause, and the idea was born for what he wanted to do. He just had to figure out who he would choose to help and when to start.



Mike was raised in the foster care system as a child. His reflections on support he wished he could have received as a foster child led him to consider CASA as a recipient. He knew of the work CASA does to support foster children. Throw in a long-time friendship with a founding member of the CASA Bell/Coryell County office, **Yveta Phillips**, plus a good working relationship with the Past President **Tina Capito**, and Mike was certain he knew who to help. The final piece to the puzzle happened by good fortune when new CASA Executive Director,

Kevin Kyle, went to make an introductory visit with Mike at his restaurant back in January and listened to Mike's vision about creating a golf tournament. Over the next several weeks, conversations ensued and Kevin made sure that Mike was aware of CASA's need for financial support. In late spring, Mike finally broke the news that he had a date set for an outing, the time to organize it, and that CASA would be the beneficiary of his efforts.

During those early discussions, dreams of raising possibly \$5000 or more were merely that, dreams. Everyone agreed that success would be measured by making the event fun for all. Money was not the ultimate goal. The chance to tell the CASA story and the opportunity for Mike and his wife, **Sara Dent** to give something back to a local organization in need were their driving influences. Fast forward to August 2nd, 2021, and the results of Mike and Sara's efforts exceeded even the wildest imaginations of all involved in organizing the tournament. A sold-out field of 32 teams set the tone for an amazing day.

More than 40 local sponsors helped support the event as well. A support staff of more than 25 volunteers that included Wings, Pizza, n Things employees, CASA board members, CASA advocates and staff members, and of course Mike Dent right in the middle of it



all for the entire day helped make it the most successful fundraising event in CASA history. Mike leads by example and he was one of the hardest working volunteers throughout the entire event. He wanted to be sure that every detail was covered so that each player, each sponsor, and everyone who participated had an enjoyable experience with the outing.

The end result was proof that the friends and sponsors who played golf and attended the dinner at **Wings, Pizza, n Things** restaurant felt good about sharing their generosity with CASA. More than \$26,000 was raised for the agency and will be put to direct support of the children in foster care that CASA represents. It all started with an idea. An idea to find a way to give back to his community. For that, CASA thanks and salutes the entire Dent family and Wings, Pizza, n Things for making dreams come true and enabling our CASA staff to continue serving even more kids in our communities.



A HUGE THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!!

This event would not have been possible without you!

1st ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT CASA OF BELL & CORYELL COUNTIES



Do you have a friend, coworker or family member who you think would be a great advocate for a child in foster care? Consider nominating them to become a CASA volunteer with CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties or visit https://texascasa.org/how-to-help/become-a-casa/#nominate_form



CASA's work would not be possible without the support of donors like you! Click the link below to make a monthly pledge or a one-time donation through our secure donation portal. Thank you! or visit <https://casabellcoryell.org/donate/>

Recent Success Stories



Alasia Hunt

By **Sarah Beaty**- CASA Advocate Supervisor

Volunteer Advocate, **Alasia Hunt**, recently went well above and beyond the call of duty for her CASA case. She agreed to travel with me for a July visit on the child's birthday. The child was at a facility in north Texas approximately 4 hours away, so it was an all day trip. She even had to request time off from her job due to the extended travel time required to make the visit. The Sunday prior to our planned visit, the child's uncle passed away and the child started having behavior issues. The day of our visit, we were able to give the child an opportunity to show us around the facility, we took the child some presents from the CASA toy closet and from the family. A local agency that supports efforts to care for foster kids gave us a \$50 Walmart gift card, so we took the child shopping to get some items she needed and wanted for her birthday. We also took her out to lunch and the advocate used her own cell phone to make a three-way call with the child's two siblings that she had not seen in person since early June. The child's family has not been able to visit, so this was the first visit from anyone for her except for CPS caseworker visits that the child has received. The child seemed to enjoy the special outing for her 12th birthday and knowing that CASA cared enough to make the special effort to celebrate her birthday.

Alasia has continued to work the case and has since been able to take on a second case to serve 3 more children assigned to CASA.

She truly is a selfless and caring CASA Advocate. We are grateful for the effort she makes to be the voice for CASA kids she serves.



Alasia Hunt



Guy Slimp and Family

Guy Slimp

By **Denise P. Hanley**- CASA Lead Advocate Supervisor

CASA Advocate **Guy Slimp**, has worked diligently with the child he was assigned to, from a toddler just barely walking to one running and thriving in his foster placement. Guy has worked closely with the child's mother by helping her realign her core values to show her how that would help her relationship with her son. He continues to offer her words of encouragement even when it seems all others have lost hope in her. Guy has observed major maturity and growth of the mother since the beginning of their journey. Guy was very influential in the process of the mother working her services, seeking employment and a home in which family reunification was made possible. Guy's interaction and relationship with the child went over and above his calling, but most importantly the voice of the child was heard through Guy.

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Back to School & What to Look Forward to

BACKPACK DONATIONS

Stephanie Harris, CEO and Founder of **IMPACT Texas**

recently donated 25 backpacks to CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties.

The backpacks were fully loaded with necessary school supplies for high school, middle school, and elementary age children that CASA serves. Ms. Harris also donated other items such as personal health, and tooth care kits for up to 25 children plus pre-packaged snack kits as well.

CASA will work with its supervisors and volunteer advocates to make sure all of the items donated are provided to CASA kids in need in our area as they start back to school over the next couple of weeks.

IMPACT Texas is based in Pflugerville, TX but provides similar support in areas such as Houston, Richmond, Rosenberg, Round Rock, Austin, and Pflugerville. To learn more about IMPACT Texas and what they do, you can find them on Facebook at [Facebook.com/impact-texas.org](https://www.facebook.com/impact-texas.org) or their web site online at

<https://www.impact-texas.org>

CASA is so thankful for Stephanie seeing our needs and offering to help provide support by donating these backpacks and back to school care kits for our local CASA children



Support CASA with a Specialty CASA License Plate

You can help raise awareness for CASA and support the local programs across Texas by purchasing a specialty CASA license plate for your vehicle! For every \$30 plate sold, \$22 of that goes to Texas CASA and the local programs to increase our statewide efforts to advocate for every child in the foster care system.

By buying a specialty CASA license plate you are not only supporting the programs through your purchase, you are also increasing awareness to every bystander that sees your plate! As of now, more than 1,170 people have registered their CASA plates. Let's keep that number growing!

Visit <https://www.myplates.com/design/personalized/passenger/casa-court-appointed-special-advocate/> to order your license plate!

What's coming up?

- **Coffee With CASA** at Megg's Cafe(1749 Everton Dr, Temple on October 1st, 2021 9:00 am
- **CASA Volunteer Appreciation** and Training Event on November 4th, 2021 11:00 am
- **Coffee with CASA** on November 5th, 2021 9:00 am
- **CASA Cinema Night** at Beltonian Theater on Monday, November 29th (SAVE THE DATE-more details coming soon!)
- **Coffee With CASA** on December 3rd, 2021 9:00 am