



CASA OF GALVESTON COUNTY



Annual Report
Fiscal Year

2025



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF GALVESTON COUNTY



September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025



LETTER FROM

CONNIE RICKETTS

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Dear Valued Stakeholders,

This impact report is to share the outcomes of our quality advocacy, a direct result of your investment in every possible way. As we headed into FY 2025, We celebrated our 10 year anniversary. We began the year celebrating our most valued resource – our CASA volunteers at the Backyard Beach Party where we recognized each volunteer for their advocacy for children in our community who need them the most! We recognized our Advocate of the Year, Ms. Judy Garcia, Education Advocate of the Year, Mr. Chris Spiller, Innovative Advocate of the Year, Ms. Chrystal Wilcox, Medical Advocate of the Year, Ms. Jennifer Duos and our Rookie of the Year, Ms. Cynthia Gardner. We heard from former foster youth and volunteer, Jennifer Duos, who shared her journey in foster care to being a volunteer and the impact she had on youth's transition from foster care and her continued connection to them!

We headed into the holiday season keeping our connection to Paul Mitcham and Fallon Franklin who have provided wishes and needs to our children for more than 10 years. Our children and families were also gifted funds raised by our friends on Tiki Island, headed by Mr. Herb Juppe.

We kicked off April Child Abuse Prevention/Awareness Month and hosted our Candlelight Vigil on the grounds of the Justice Center to focus our heart and thoughts to the children who have experienced the unimaginable. This evening brought our community and community partners together and heard the invocation by Brandon Williams; Executive Director of Galveston Urban Ministries, Children's Choir from Fanfare Music Academy, and a resolution from our State Legislators, Senator Mayes Middleton, Representative Terri Leo-Wilson and Representative Dr. Greg Bonnen.

Passion for Fashion show was the highlight of Child Abuse Awareness month in 2025. We partnered with 3 lovely retailers, Gaby & Grace, Kimmy's and Belle Lees to bring their fashion and accessories to raise awareness about the plight of children in our community who need CASA volunteers the most. This inaugural event was enjoyed by a sold-out crowd. The style show was hosted at the Bryan Museum with catering by Chopin Mon Ami, and a silent auction spearheaded by Sheila Meritt. Taylor Biddle, former CASA Volunteer, former Board Member and an adoptive Mom, joined us as our Keynote Speaker.

We joined in the fight of human trafficking by launching our Child Exploitation Intervention Advocacy to ensure we are identifying youth who have been trafficked and who are at risk of trafficking. CASA of Galveston County is a partner agency on the Care Coordination Advisory Board in Galveston County to ensure our youth have access to support and interventions to find healing and connection. We are honored to be a part of solution-based advocacy and to bring the voice of the children we serve to community partners, so resources are designed with them in mind.



We concluded our year in late July 2025 with an unforgettable evening at the Tremont House. We welcomed guests to CASA Night of Magic with Keynote Speaker Andrew Bridge, a Harvard Lawyer and best-selling author who turned his foster care experience into action. Andy (as he wanted to be called) led the charge to shut down a care facility that re-traumatized foster youth, including himself. His story was raw and heart wrenching but provided the context that if he had a CASA volunteer someone would have asked him "Do You Feel Safe" but no one did. He also echoed that family is important! We should always ensure we honor where a child comes from – that is what our Collaborative Family Engagement process provides for children and families. Our guests invested about \$105,000 into our advocacy program that night. Our Auctioneer Mr. Tim Culp brought it home with our Raise the Paddle at the end of the night!

During CASA Night of Magic, we honored Mr. Shawn Bailey, who is one of the most philanthropic leaders in our community. Mr. Bailey is the CEO/President of AMOCO Federal Credit Union and he was joined by his wife, his parents, and many of his treasured colleagues to celebrate this very special and well-deserved recognition. Thanks, Mr. Bailey, for investing in CASA all these years.

We partnered with many community resources to support our families, including the Galveston County Food Bank, St. Vincent's House, Family Service Center, United Way Galveston County Mainland and United Way of Galveston, our chambers of commerce, The Birthday Joy Program, Gracie's Day of Service, Clear Falls High School and many more. These partnerships allow our volunteers to have access to resources to support their advocacy for children and families. It takes a community to come together for our most vulnerable population – our children. The Galveston County community is rich with caring and giving hearts!

As we were leaving FY 2025, Community Based Care Single Source Continuum Contractors in our Region were announced. Community Based Care is the privatization of foster care from a state-run foster care. This model is to ensure that our children remain in their community. Depelchin Children's Center was selected as our community-based care provider, and they created a separate entity, Texans Together. As this is rolled out beginning in FY 2026 and over the next couple years, the community should partner alongside CASA to ensure our children remain in our community to live and thrive.

We are so incredibly grateful to all of YOU for Supporting HOPE, CONNECTION, and COLLABORATION! We will continue our fight and fulfill our mission with your support and investment. We hope you will visit every page of our impact report and see the difference that is made alongside YOU!; our volunteers, friends, family, supporters, champions, and investors.

With most sincere gratitude,



Connie A. Ricketts
Chief Executive Officer



Our Mission

The mission of CASA of Galveston County is to advocate for children who have experienced abuse and neglect by ensuring they find safe and permanent homes through strong community engagement.

Our Vision

To provide a CASA for every child who needs one.



CASA OF GALVESTON COUNTY'S IMPACT



CASA of Galveston County's Impact – Success Story

A Steady Presence, A Lasting Impact



What began as a commitment to help a young person academically grew into something much more meaningful. After first becoming involved as their tutor, CASA Volunteer Advocate, Laurie, stepped forward to become the child's CASA Advocate, ensuring that she would have a consistent presence in her life.

Through the CASA of Galveston County Tutoring Program, she provided weekly tutoring, and noticeable academic improvement was shown. This was a reflection of the patience, consistency, and care Laurie brought to every tutoring session.

Laurie understands that meaningful advocacy means looking at the whole child. She stayed connected with the child's school and medical providers, attended court hearings and meetings, documented her advocacy thoroughly, and made sure the child had opportunities to participate in Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) events.

At her CASA youth's very first PAL event, she was there volunteering alongside her, turning a new experience into a moment of connection and support.

Her story is a powerful reminder that impact is created through relationships. One person showing up, week after week, can help a child feel supported, heard, and never alone.



THE CHILDREN WE SERVED

247

CHILDREN SERVED

GENDER

51%



49%



AGE

81%

0-12
YEARS OLD

15%

13-17
YEARS OLD

4%

18 +
YEARS OLD

ETHNICITY

14%

HISPANIC

32%

BLACK

46%

WHITE

8%

OTHER

OUTCOMES OF CLOSED CASES

45%

Reunified
with Parents

28%

Kinship
Placement

6%

Adoption
with a
Relative

11%

Adoption
non relative

10%

OTHER

September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

OUR ADVOCATES

of Advocates

83



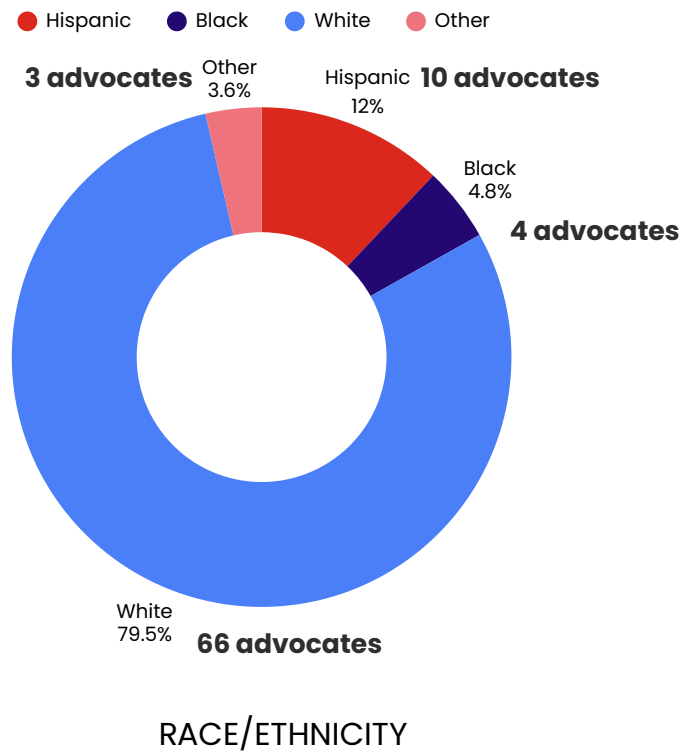
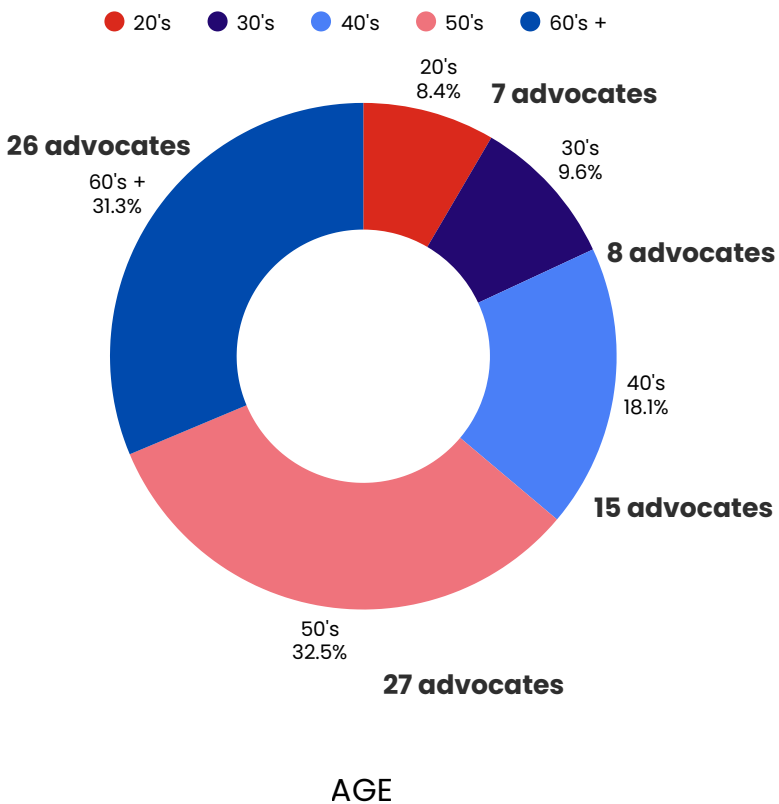
Volunteer Hours

6,665



Volunteer Miles

64,951



COLLABORATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT (CFE)

CFE is a team-based approach between CASA and CPS to engage, find, and work with family members and fictive kin in the creation and development of a lifetime network for young people experiencing foster care.

One of the goals of CFE is to help children achieve strong connectivity and permanency faster, preferably with relatives or other trusted loved ones. CASA works hard to ensure that every child in foster care has the opportunity for lifelong connections.



COLLABORATE

Greater collaboration between stakeholders to involve families and build networks.



CULTIVATE

Access to connection, engagement and searching tools to engage and find family/important relationships.



CONVENE

Families and their support network come together for family meetings.



CONNECT

A lifetime network of supportive relationships is formed for the child and their family.

4,284

CPS & CASA
Contacts

193

CFE Tools
Completed

40

CFE Family
Meetings

128

Family/Child
Connections



EDUCATION

- 100% school history documentation for cases
- CASA of Galveston County had an 8 person Education Committee
- 1 Full Time Staff Member to oversee educational needs
- 6 Sworn in volunteers ready to tutor children in need
- 5 children received tutoring services by our CASA volunteer tutors
- All 5 children served by our tutors improved in school as reported by their report cards, progress reports, and teacher's notes.
- 100% of school aged childred served were provided with brand new school supplies provided by CASA through school supply drives



“I began tutoring a young man in June, and at first, he was quiet and reluctant to try. After the first few sessions—and a bag of Takis—you could see his confidence beginning to grow. Takis are his favorite, so I used them as a weekly reward, and we made a deal: complete a few math problems, enjoy a few Takis. We met once a week and focused on multiplication, division, and reading comprehension. Reading was already a strength for him; he mainly needed consistent encouragement to build his self-confidence. Over time, his understanding of multiplication and division steadily improved, and by September he was completing problems with little assistance.”

- Laurie N. CASA Volunteer Tutor



CHILD EXPLOITATION INTERVENTION ADVOCACY (CEI)

- CASA of Galveston County began the implementation of using the CSE-IT tool for every child in care over the age of 10.
- Lighthouse portal use to complete the tool.
- The CSE-IT, Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool is a screening tool that helps professionals accurately identify signs of exploitation without relying on self-disclosure.
- 73 CSE-IT tools have been recorded as completed since July 2025.
- 3 referrals were recorded between July 2025 to present. Referrals are made to Unbound Now.
- CASA of Galveston County has been a member of the Advisory Council since 2025, alongside CPS, Forensic Nurses, Sheriff's office, local non-profits and more.
- 1 Full-Time Staff Member to oversee program.
- Training sessions for Child Exploitation Intervention Advocacy planned and scheduled to begin August 20, 2026.

LIGHTHOUSE



EVENTS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FY25

PASSION FOR FASHION STYLE SHOW

Held in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month, our Passion for Fashion Style Show creates an atmosphere full of fun, fashion, but most importantly, purpose.

Our Passion for Fashion Style Show logo features a blue pinwheel, which is the national symbol for child abuse and neglect prevention. The needle and thread stitching represents the healing of the children we serve.

Our Passion for Fashion Style Show showcases the latest spring styles in collaboration with local boutiques raising awareness to supporting our local community small businesses all while raising awareness for child abuse prevention!



EVENTS

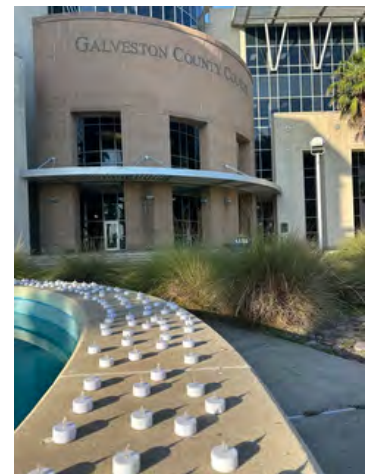
HIGHLIGHTS FROM FY25

CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL

Held in April during Child Abuse Prevention Month, our annual candlelight vigil shines a light on child abuse and the children affected by it.

In 2025, 597 children in Galveston County experienced abuse and/or neglect.

Community members and partners, elected officials and representatives, child protection groups, and other members of the public help us continue to raise awareness and join us in standing in support of the children in our community who suffer due to abuse and neglect at the Galveston County Justice Center, the same court where we provide a voice for the children we serve.



EVENTS

HIGHLIGHTS FROM FY25

JULY DINNER FUNDRAISER "CASA NIGHT OF MAGIC"

Each July, CASA of Galveston County brings our community together for our largest fundraiser of the year. A special evening dedicated to supporting children and families impacted by the foster care system due to abuse and neglect.

CASA Night of Magic, this year's theme, brought an unforgettable evening of dinner, entertainment, and inspiration to the community. This event is our biggest opportunity to share the CASA mission and remind our community that every child deserves a voice, a safe and permanent home, and someone in their corner.

The generosity of our sponsors, donors, and guests helps make it possible for CASA advocates to stand beside children throughout their time in foster care. Funds raised support the programs, resources, and advocacy that allow our volunteers to focus on advocating for the children's best interest.



Volunteer Appreciation Banquet

"Garden of Gratitude"

Each year, CASA of Galveston County hosts an annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet to celebrate and honor the incredible volunteers who dedicate their time and heart to children in our community. The evening is an opportunity to recognize the impact our advocates make throughout the year and to thank them for standing up for a child in need of a voice.

During the banquet, we present several awards honoring outstanding volunteers for their exceptional service! Below are our volunteers and community partners who were honored in 2025. Thank you to ALL of our amazing volunteers!

Advocate of the Year: **Marte Hersey**

Innovative Advocate of the Year: **Stacey Gonzalez**

Medical Advocate of the Year: **Chris Spiller**

Education Advocate of the Year: **Laurie Nicks**

Rookie of the Year: **Tracy Williams**

Collaboration Partners of the Year:

Herb Juppe, Stephanie Sammons



FINANCIALS

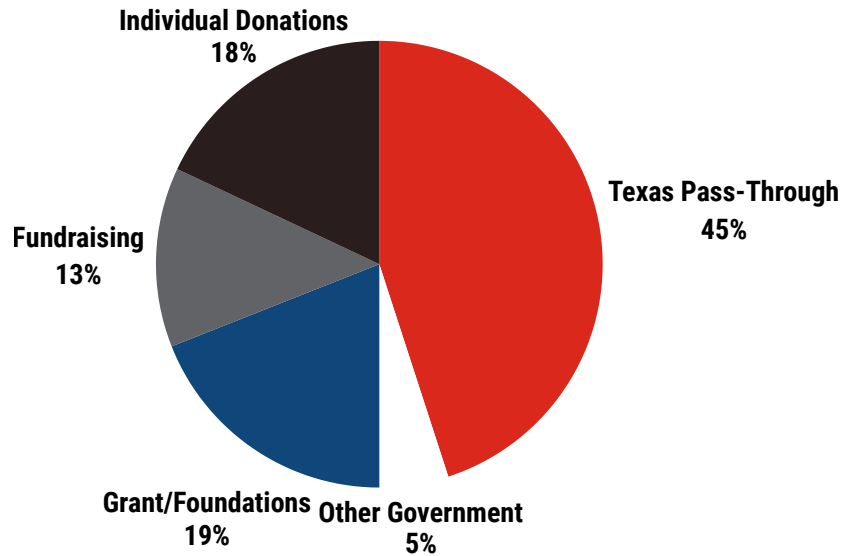
FISCAL YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2025

Organizational Revenue

\$938,156

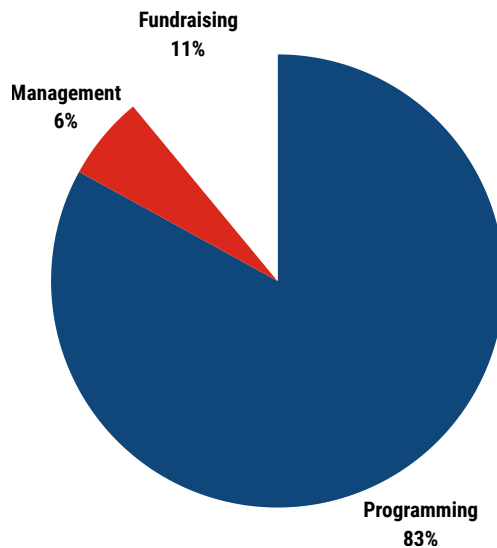
Revenue Sources:

**Program Funding Distribution
for CASA of Galveston County**



Organizational Expenses:

\$1,079,105



CASA of Galveston County is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization. If you have questions regarding the organization's form 990, please reach out - connie@casagalveston.org

A YEAR IN CASA

"I love knowing I'm making a difference in a child's life and learning so much about what is offered to families I'm retired and if everyone does some we can help so many people. The kids today need a chance to break the cycle they did not ask to be caught up in."
- CASA Volunteer



"Seeing that my actions lead to real positive changes in the life of the child whose case I was assigned to is extremely rewarding. Also getting to work with the caring staff at CASA and other volunteers is very satisfying." - CASA Volunteer



"Relationships with CASA staff, other volunteers, and my CPS caseworker. Of course, I love the child I have been assigned to, and I pray for him. I enjoy testifying in court, and it is very nice to know the Judge, ADA, and AAL actually read my reports and ask me for my opinions in court."
- CASA Volunteer



"The CASA workers are very knowledgeable and are more than willing to share what they know."
- CPS Caseworker



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

CASA of Galveston County's life blood are our volunteers, donors, and corporate partners. We are grateful to our stakeholders that are giving of their time and talents and who share our vision and make a financial investment to help us amplify the voices of children experiencing foster care in our community.

Gifts \$5000 +

May Jeanne and Garland Slaughter Family Foundation

Hey Mikey's Foundation

Charles A Freauff Foundation

The Mary Moody Northen Endowment

Wayne and Joann Moore Charitable Foundation

Marathon Petroleum

AMOCO Federal Credit Union

Mac Haik Toyota/Toyota International

Mr. Shawn Bailey

Ms Rebecca Habib

Dr. Leon Bromberg Charitable Trust

Herzstein Foundation

First Presbyterian Community Outreach Fund

Texas CASA Advertising Competitive Grant

Mr. Paul Mitcham and Ms. Fallon Franklin

United Way Galveston County Mainland

United Way of Galveston

Moody Permanent Endowment Fund

Texas Attorney General Office

Only 40% of our funding comes from Texas CASA grants.
Thank you for helping us bridge the gap and helping us make an impact.

CASA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Board



Erin Callahan
Board Chair



Kent Etienne, Jr.
Board Vice Chair



June Dempsey
Secretary



Marc Renjard
Treasurer

Members of the Board



Rose Lazo
Board Member



Rebecca Pitman
Board Member



Meg Winchester
Board Member



Liz Rogers
Board Member



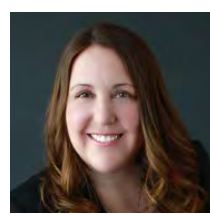
Dr. Ja'Neice Houston
Board Member



Joe Stanton
Board Member



Karen McWhorter
Board Member



Dawn Hoffman
Board Member



Debbie Barron
Board Member

September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025

CASA STAFF



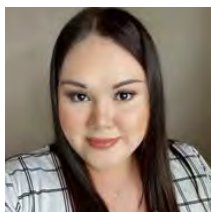
Connie Ricketts
Chief Executive
Officer



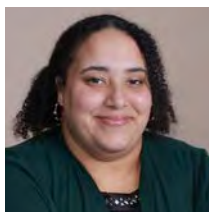
Devin Siordia
Chief Programs
Officer



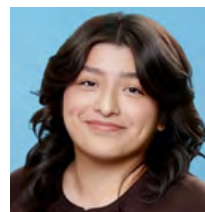
Alli Hines
Executive Operations
& Retention Specialist



Joanna Mendoza
Strategic Marketing
& Outreach Manager

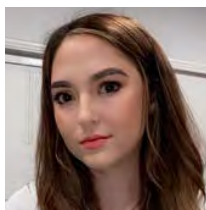


Jocelyn Smith
Recruitment
& Training Lead



Ayleen Requena
Community Engagement
Coordinator

Advocacy Team Staff



Kate Sonnier
Education
Program Manager



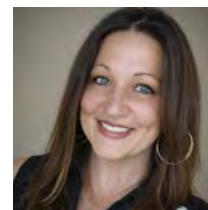
Lauren Davis
Collaborative Family
Engagement (CFE)
Coordinator



Amelia Smith
Advocate
Supervisor



Sitinna Blankenship
Advocate
Supervisor



Jennifer Martin
Advocate
Supervisor



Connect with us:

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casagalveston.org



@CASAgalveston

Every Child Has A Chance – It's You!

CASA of Galveston County is part of a national volunteer movement that began in 1977 in Seattle. Judge David Soukup decided he needed to know more about the children whose lives were in his hands. He asked community volunteers to act as a “voice in court” for abused and neglected children. These Court Appointed Special Advocates® (CASA) were able to provide the detailed information he needed to safeguard the children’s best interests and ensure placement in safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible. Since 1977, the CASA program has spread across the nation.

There are more than 950 CASA programs nationwide and 72 CASA programs in the state of Texas.

CASA has served abused and neglected children in Texas for over 25 years, providing trained community volunteers for children assigned to the program through the court.

CASA of Galveston County is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors. We are a member of the National and Texas CASA Associations.

