

CASA IN THE HEART OF TEXAS



Newsletter October 2016

SERVING BROWN, COMANCHE AND MILLS COUNTIES

Texas Raises the Bar on Child Abuse Prevention

Texas released its first-ever strategic plan on child abuse prevention and early intervention, shifting from primarily investigation-based efforts aimed at protecting children to a public health approach to strengthen families. The five-year plan, developed by the Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) division of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) was developed in collaboration with stakeholders statewide. In PEI's public health approach, child abuse and neglect are considered a community problem that only a community can prevent, informed by research and demographic data that identifies neighborhoods, cities, and counties where it is more likely to occur. PEI also

identifies the most vulnerable children and shares that information with Child Protective Services (CPS). The goal of the new effort is to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect in Texas, particularly the number of serious injuries and fatalities. The plan also emphasizes the staggering economic cost of child abuse: a 2014 study from the Waco-based Peryman Group found child maltreatment in Texas (foster care, health care, unemployment, incarceration) costs \$454 billion. "I'm proud of the 84th Texas Legislature's efforts to support and expand programs that prevent child abuse and neglect," said Senator *Continues Back page*



An Advocate for Every Child

At CASA in the Heart of Texas we are dedicated to a very simple goal: that we will help change the world for every abused or neglected child in our community. This is no pie-in-the-sky idea. It's a goal we can reach. We don't need to invent a new technology because we already know what works. Put a qualified, compassionate adult into the life of an abused child to fight for and protect the child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to learn and grow in a loving family. I believe—and I hope you agree—that all children in foster care should have a caring adult advocating on

their behalf. Every child should have someone whose full attention is focused on that child's needs and who can help the system provide the right kind of support. Many compassionate and caring professionals—judges, lawyers, social workers—work within state child protection systems. But too often they simply have too many children on their caseloads and not enough time to pay adequate attention to each child. I am very proud of the fact that our CASA volunteers are now helping lift up the voices of many children in our area every year. But here's the thing: we are reaching only about half of the children who need a volunteer.

That's why I want to invite you to join us in this effort to build a brighter and safer future for these children. Through your financial support, yours can be one of the compassionate, caring voices standing up and speaking out. Together, we will change the world for every abused and neglected child in our community. And will change the future for their children and generations to come. Make a gift today by going to www.gofundme.com/bwdcasafund

-Alex Garcia
Training and Recruitment

Continuing Education in Child Advocacy

10/6– Transportation Training 5:15 p.m.

10/7– CASA 101 12:15-12:45 p.m.

10/11– CASA CAFÉ: Communicating with Children to build meaningful relationships, Webinar by Foster Care Alumni of America 9 a.m.

10/13– Early Church of Christ hosts a free child abuse prevention training by Darkness to Light



A safe, permanent, loving home for every child.

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We Need Help!

We have ordered a few new desks for our offices. We got them in and now we need to put them together. If you know of anyone who is a handyman or a do-it-yourselfer who would be willing to help us, please send them our way.

October Birthdays

10/11 Kathy Thornton
10/13 Michelle Wells
10/13 Sheron Watts
10/23 Carol Jarvis

From Page 1: Plan

Charles Schwertner, chairman of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee. "One of our primary duties as lawmakers is to protect the most vulnerable children in our state, and this plan will guide the state's efforts to better protect them and preserve families." Representative Richard Peña Raymond, chairman of the House Human Services Committee, also expressed his support for the plan. "Through the years, we have seen that prevention and early intervention efforts can be highly effective - both in terms of helping people and saving funds and other resources," Raymond said. "I commend PEI and all the folks at DFPS for putting forth this great plan. I believe it will have a great and positive impact." One example of how smart child abuse prevention funding can actually save long-term dollars is the Texas Home Visiting program, a key PEI program in which health care and child development professionals visit mothers of infants at home. One study found that for every public dollar spent for home visiting during a child's first six months, three dollars were saved for fewer emergency room visits.

Here are some Pei projects already under way:

- ⇒ Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR) provides family crisis intervention counseling, short-term emergency respite care, and counseling.
- ⇒ Community Youth Development (CYD) is built to prevent juvenile delinquency and includes mentoring, youth employment programs, and recreational activities.
- ⇒ Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN) provides community and juvenile delinquency prevention programs.
- ⇒ Texas Families Together and Safe (TFTS) is designed to alleviate stress and promote parental skills that give families a better chance to become self-sufficient and successfully nurture their children.

Volunteer of the Month: Kathy Thornton



Kathy Thornton is a retired school teacher and has been a volunteer for three years. And in that time she

has served 18 children and 7 family groups. She volunteers with CASA because she is intrigued by families and the court system and has a need to help children.

Kathy is married to her husband, Richard. Her family is a blending of three generations.

Kathy enjoys reading and good chocolate. Her favorite color is purple and her favorite television series is "Law and Order: SVU." Her favorite animals

are elephants. She loves to garden when ever the weather is green and blue.

Kathy wanted others to know she was actually born North of the Red River.

We are thankful for her dedication to CASA and the children we serve.

Thank you to all our board members and volunteers for all you do to support and help children in need.

