



LOUISIANA
www.louisianacasa.org

Annual Report 2011



▶ Capital Area CASA

Capital Area CASA Association served 262 children with 157 active volunteers in 2011.

Volunteers and staff, with input from foster youth, developed a manual designed to assist older youth transitioning out of foster care. “Paving the Way for the Future” includes information on many topics necessary for successful adulthood, including housing, education, independent living skills, employment and health.

Staff also developed a three-hour educational advocacy in-service training for volunteers to provide additional support focusing on how to be better educational advocates for CASA children of all ages.



Capital Area CASA Association honored its dedicated volunteers at its annual volunteer appreciation picnic held in April 2011. Pictured, from left, are CASA volunteers Marvin Taylor and Paula Ouder, Baton Rouge Police Cpl. Caleb Eisorwh and 2011 CASA Board of Directors President Roy Hebert.

A Message from the Louisiana CASA Executive Director

CASA in Louisiana is an effective and powerful resource for children only because communities like yours and individuals like our 2,000 CASA volunteers embrace one simple action – standing up for a child. While many factors contribute toward CASA’s uniqueness and effectiveness, the most important value is taking a stand for abused and neglected children whose voices would remain unheard without the dedication and passion of CASA staff and volunteer advocates. Never in the history of our state have children been a higher priority and CASA is proud to be a part of lifting up the voices of children in Louisiana.

LACASA stands steady and more devoted than ever to our mission of serving programs in their efforts to ensure quality advocacy for children in foster care. We salute our volunteers and local program staff for their unwavering commitment to a safe and permanent home with a loving and nurturing family for all Louisiana children!

As we celebrate the good works and successes of CASA in Louisiana, it is critical that we never become complacent. For every child who is placed in a permanent home through the advocacy of dedicated CASA staff and volunteers, there are many more children who need a caring and committed person to stand up. We encourage you to take one more step – share your CASA experience with family and friends. Let them know they too can stand up for a child. Encourage them to volunteer or support CASA financially. A quick visit to www.louisianacasa.org is all they need to do to get started.

Thank you, again, for your support and commitment to Louisiana’s children. Together, we can lift up the voices of all of Louisiana’s children as we guide them through the darkness to ensure safe, permanent homes and a brighter future.

Sincerely,

John E. Wyble, Ph.D.

A Message from the President of the Louisiana CASA Board of Directors

I want to thank you for all of the work that you have done, and will do, on behalf of abused and neglected children in Louisiana's court systems. We all share a common commitment of integrity, teamwork and service – three enduring principles that have allowed us to serve nearly 4,000 children last year alone.

Whether you are one of our 2,000 volunteers, a board member, a staff member, a judge, or a policy maker, it is your commitment to these principles that is making an immeasurable difference in the lives of our Louisiana children.

A special thank you goes to our tireless volunteers and participating judges. Without these special people, CASA would not be possible, and certainly not effective.

Thank you also to our state's policy makers who insure that our CASA staff members and volunteers have the tools they need to represent our children.

We need your help in making more Louisianans aware of how effective CASA has been, and continues to be, for children and how they too can be a part of this successful program. Whether they wish to volunteer, support our efforts financially, or just learn more about CASA in their communities, I urge you to encourage family and friends to visit www.louisianacasa.org to learn more about how they can be a part of making such a difference in a child's life.

Again, on behalf of the many children whose lives have been touched by a CASA volunteer, thank you for all of your hard work and for your endless support of CASA.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Marusak, President
Board of Directors

▶ CASA of West Central LA

In 2011, CASA of West CenLA began working with the Rapides Foundation under a capacity building grant to enhance the services being provided by the agency to the children served. There were 62 children served by advocates during the year. Of the cases closed in 2011, eight children were adopted. CASA had 14 new advocates sworn in by Beauregard and Vernon Parish Judges. CASA of West CenLA advocates accumulated 2455 hours in service time advocating for children and logged 22,780 miles as they traveled to see their children.



Judge Martha Ann O'Neal, 36th JDC, swore in five new advocates from Beauregard and Vernon parishes for CASA West Cenla in December 2011. From right to left in photo: Temiya Bryant, Alan Taylor, Shayla Outlaw, Nora Lersch and James Evans; Judge O'Neal is in center.

▶ Youth Services Bureau CASA



Slidell City Court Judge Jim Lamz presents the Youth Service Bureau's 2011 Advocate of the Year Award to Ronald Buie, a YSB CASA Volunteer since March 2007.

In 2011, 124 Youth Service Bureau CASA Volunteers provided outstanding advocacy for 288 children in St. Tammany and Washington parishes. The program also trained 34 new advocates. In November 2011, CASA Volunteer Ronald Buie was presented the YSB CASA Program's Advocate of the Year award by Slidell City Court Judge Jim Lamz. Buie and Lamz were also featured on the National CASA Association's website.

► CASA of St. Landry



Children attending the annual Christmas party hosted jointly by CASA St. Landry and DCFS were treated to a magic show.

In 2011, CASA of St. Landry, Inc. made great strides in building a new team that is ready to take CASA of St. Landry, Inc. to new heights and bring it to the forefront of becoming the voice for children of St. Landry Parish who cannot advocate for themselves. We continue to build upon current relationships within the community and create new ones that will have a positive impact on St. Landry Parish. In collaboration with the Department of Children and Family Services, CASA St. Landry hosted the annual Christmas party for the children who were currently in foster care in 2011. The support and donations from the community were tremendous and each child that attended received several Christmas gifts, participated in a magic show, and also sat to chat with Santa.

► CASA of Northeast Louisiana

CASA of Northeast Louisiana had a successful 2011, which included many highlights. Along with the hiring of several new staff members, we trained 57 new community volunteers to be child advocates. In addition, our own Joan Chardkoff was named the 2011 Child Advocate of the Year by the Louisiana CASA Association. We are proud that the excellent work of Mrs. Chardkoff has been recognized on the state level. She is a shining example of the amazing work that is done by all of our CASA NELA volunteers every day.



CASA of NELA Advocate Supervisor Tessa Hendrix on the left and Joan Chardkoff on the right.

Training Highlights in 2011

- LACASA continued its contractual working relationship with the LA Supreme Court's Court Improvement Program. LACASA designed, developed and facilitated ten (10) multi-disciplinary trainings that provided education on child welfare issues to 520 trainees.
- Hosted a training on supervising and coaching volunteers held for CASA staff in Shreveport April 12 with staff from all over the state in attendance.
- Sponsored a regional training on recruitment, training and retention of volunteers in concert with the quarterly program council meeting in August 2011.
- Sponsored a regional training in Alexandria in September entitled "Building Resiliency in Child Advocates" presented by Karen Kalergis of the Resiliency Project with UT. Secured 15 scholarships for DCFS partners to attend. Over 30 CASA staff from around the state attended.
- Hosted a joint Louisiana and Mississippi CASA Training of Facilitators in November at the Jefferson CASA office with 13 program staff from around Louisiana, 11 of whom had been with CASA less than three months.
- Presented Casey Family's "Knowing Who You Are" curriculum for developing healthy racial and ethnic identity for youth in care in May and December.

2011 Statewide Collaborations

- Children's Justice Act Task Force
- Legislative Task Force on Legal Representation of Children
- Children's Cabinet Advisory Board
- Children's Code Committee
- Children's Advocacy Centers of Louisiana
- DCFS Stakeholders Committee
- Council on the Status of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- Prevent Child Abuse Louisiana
- 16th JDC Transformation Zone Advisory Committee
- Children's Trust Fund
- Human Trafficking Study Group
- CIP, Pelican Center of Excellence for Children and Families
- La. Partnership for Children and Families (Member)
- La. Association of Nonprofit Organizations (LANO - Member)
- Louisiana LGBTQ Task Force

2011 Marked Five Years for the Louisiana CASA AmeriCorps VISTA Program

In 2011, Louisiana CASA's nine AmeriCorps VISTA members served with local CASA programs across Louisiana, providing nearly 10,000 hours of service in six parishes. Their projects included recruiting new volunteers, designing new outreach materials and websites, assisting with special events, and expanding awareness of CASA through use of social media.

► CASA of Lafourche

CASA of Lafourche concluded its second year of independence in 2011, and the year proved to be a year of much growth! Our program was fortunate enough to fill a new position, allowing us to reach more children and, at the same time, have more focus in the areas of public awareness and data management. CASA of Lafourche was able to acquire an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer for the year, Ms. Phyllis Lear, who completely revamped our public awareness material and our website, which has proven to be very effective. Our program has managed to develop a great relationship with our local college, Nicholls State University, and in the process has provided internships for several students and several are scheduled for the future. With our growth, we moved into a larger building that now has a training room! In the midst of this excitement, our fundraisers and amazing patrons held strong throughout the year, helping us to exceed our fundraising goal for the year by nearly double!

► CAS

In 2011, Child Advocacy Services CASA served 476 children with 238 volunteers providing over 10,452 volunteer hours. Thanks to the compassionate work of our CASA volunteers and CAS' CASA staff, 168 of those children were placed in safe, permanent homes. Re-Bath hosted CAS' first Sundresses and Shrimp Boots at picturesque Frenier Landing Restaurant in LaPlace, kicking off Cottages for CASA Playhouse raffle 2011.



From left to right: Brooks Hebert, Program Coordinator; Aimee Lemmon, Advocate Supervisor; Eugene Gregory, CASA Volunteer; Carla Landry, CASA Volunteer; Tammy Gibson, Executive Director. [The child in the photo is a previous CASA Child who was adopted by CASA Lafourche Advocate Supervisor Tiffany Lee (not pictured).]



Pictured: Celebrity Host Randi Rousseau with WDSU News, builders, CAS Board of Directors, and staff unveil the 2011 playhouse.

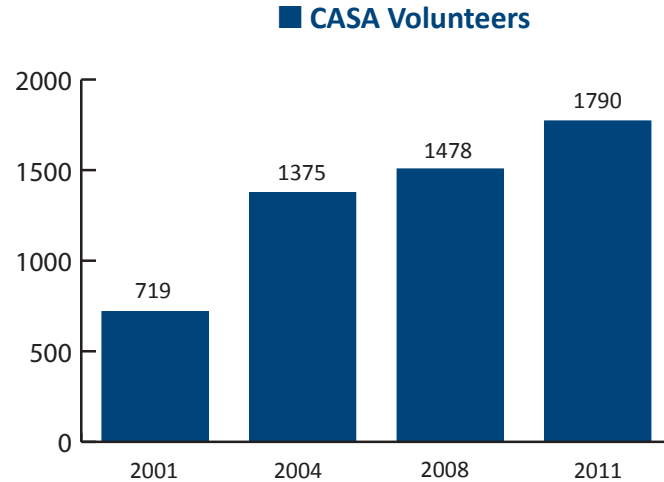
► CASA Jefferson

In 2011, 185 CASA Advocates were assigned to 336 foster children in Jefferson Parish. Those same 185 volunteers donated over 18,300 hours of their time to ensure the safety and well-being of their CASA children. With 91% of the closed CASA cases in 2011 reflecting a permanent placement for our children, advocates with CASA Jefferson remain committed to the facilitation of a forever home for every child in the program. In 2011, CASA Jefferson piloted two initiatives at the request of National CASA. In January 2011 CASA Jefferson partnered with the American Bar Association to create a task force to improve outcomes for LGBTQ Foster Youth. Additionally, in the fall of 2011 the program piloted NCASA's Blended Learning Curriculum which will be an alternative training tool for programs around the country in the coming year.



35 Advocates and Staff from CASA Jefferson standing up for foster kids at the 2011 CASA Day at the Louisiana State Capitol.

► In 2011, the hourly contributions of CASA volunteers

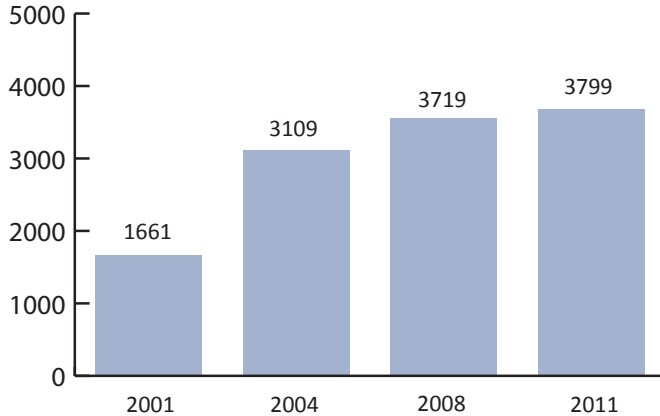


The number of CASA volunteers serving children has more than doubled since 2001.

*Source: Independent Sector
+ Used 2010's dollar per hour

... were valued at **\$2 million!!!*+**

■ Children Served



The number of children CASA volunteers have served has more than doubled since 2001.

► CASA of New Orleans

2011 was a year of transition as we said goodbye to old friends and made some new ones. Dellona Davis left the Executive Director position but did not go far – she is now working for the court, right across the street from us. In October, we welcomed Joy Bruce as the new Executive Director; before she joined our staff, she was an Advocate with Capital Area CASA. In November, we were blessed to celebrate with Wendell Pierce as honorary chair of the “What’s Cookin’ with CASA” event. Wendell presented the Jack C. Benjamin Service Award to Kim Dassey, our Advocate of the Year, and congratulated our two amazing runners-up, Vanessa Branch and Racquel Ezell. Kim, Vanessa and Racquel were just three of the incredible Advocates who helped us serve 98% of the children assigned to us in 2011. Thanks to the dedication of our Advocates, last year 27 children were successfully reunited with their parents, 5 were transferred to the custody of relatives, and 19 children were adopted.



CASA New Orleans volunteers are recognized by Wendell Pierce at the annual “What’s Cookin’ with CASA” event.

▶ 2011 Louisiana CASA Awards of Excellence Recipients

Baton Rouge, LA October 17, 2011: Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association, in partnership with its member programs, honored outstanding individuals for their service to abused and neglected children in Louisiana through CASA. Honorees were recognized at a special Louisiana CASA Awards Night on October 17th at the Old State Capitol in Baton Rouge, LA. Louisiana CASA "Awards of Excellence" highlight extraordinary efforts and the positive impact of contributions made by CASA volunteers, CASA staff and their community partners. The catered event, with nearly 200 in attendance, was hosted by Dr. John Wyble, Louisiana CASA Executive Director, and featured entertainment by local entertainers Tino Thomas and Eric Baskin. Assisting in presenting the awards was Jacqueline M. Wilson, Louisiana CASA Program Operations Director. Secretary of State Tom Schedler, a CASA volunteer himself, made it possible for the event to be held at the Old State Capital.

"Louisiana CASA is proud to honor the extraordinary work of ordinary people who commit to making a difference in the lives of children and families all over our state," offered Dr. Wyble.



Board Member
of the Year
Ron J. Nezat
CASA of St. Landry, Inc.



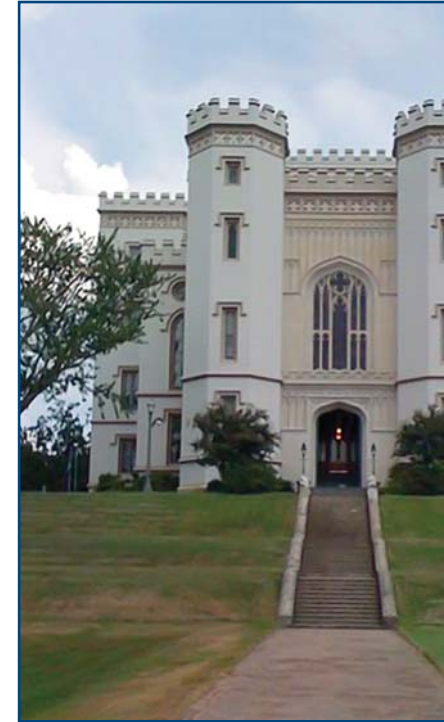
Child Advocate
of the Year
Joan Chardkoff
CASA of NELA



Media Professional of
the Year
Emily Kern Hebert
The Advocate - Baton Rouge



Program Staff Member of
the Year
Wendy Magee
CASA Jefferson



**2011 Louisiana CASA Awards of Excellence
Announced During Evening Reception
at Louisiana's Old State Capital**

Recipients Announced



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ception
tol.



DCFS Staff Member
of the Year
Cidney Ordoyne
Thibodaux Region



Director of the Year
Mary Slazer
Youth Services Bureau CASA



Diversity Award
Accepted by Robin Hedge,
Executive Director
CASA of the 16th JDC



Judge of the Year
Judge Randall L. Bethancourt
32nd Judicial District,
Terrebonne

► Family and Youth

In 2011, Family & Youth celebrated 15 years of Children's Advocacy in Southwest Louisiana. At our annual Child Advocate Celebration, the Junior League of Lake Charles was presented the Light of Hope Award in recognition of their establishing the CASA program in Calcasieu Parish in 1996. Since the



Junior League of Lake Charles is presented the Light of Hope Award in recognition of their establishing the CASA program in Calcasieu Parish in 1996.

inception of CASA in SWLA, CASA volunteers have received 10,074 hours of training, donated 23,963 case hours, and driven over 284,055 miles in support of 904 abused and neglected children in Calcasieu, Allen, and Jeff Davis Parishes.

► CASA of Plaquemines

CASA of Plaquemines Parish made positive strides in 2011. We are the newest and smallest CASA program in Louisiana. However, we have made every effort to effectively advocate for children and work closely with our partners in the process. In 2011 we provided advocacy to almost 90% of our CINC cases at different times throughout the year. And because Plaquemines Parish is a rural area that is close knit, we have been able to partner with several agencies (thanks in large part to the Plaquemines Community C.A.R.E. Center Foundation) that truly believe in putting children's needs first. The faith-based communities have truly assisted us in spreading the word about our services, while allowing us a platform to promote child wellness and recruit potential Volunteers/Friends of CASA.



US Military Defenders (Navy Motorcycle Club) distribute Christmas gifts to CASA Plaquemines children.

► Rapides CASA

Rapides CASA had a successful 2011. We utilized over 100 CASA Volunteers to work with over 300 children. Focusing on volunteer retention, recruitment, and implementing our new Krewe CASA, our efforts resulted in 100 additional Krewe and CASA Volunteers joining our team. CASA Kids participated in another Art Camp sponsored by our board of directors. Several local churches, civic groups, and individual supporters adopted all of our CASA Kids and provided totes, bears, toiletries, school supplies for all CASA Kids, and Christmas gifts to every child in foster care from Rapides Parish.

► CASA of the 16th JDC

In 2011, CASA of the 16th JDC, Inc. staff and volunteers were involved in several projects to educate the public on child abuse and neglect. At the Night of Hope in 2011, over 300 people watched as volunteer advocates were awarded for their diligence and time in serving children of the 16th Judicial District. Also, staff and volunteers are partnering with DCFS in improving the foster



Rapides CASA trainees are sworn in by Louisiana CASA 2012 Judge of the Year, Patricia Koch.



CASA of the 16th JDC volunteers attend a training presented by former foster child and child advocate Tim Lee.

care system through the transformation zone. CASA of the 16th JDC, Inc. welcomed Thomas Jolivet as the newest member of the staff as a recruitment and training coordinator. Through staff changes and different programs, CASA of the 16th's volunteers have remained committed and flexible as they participate in trainings instrumental to effective advocacy.

► CASA of Terrebonne

Last year was a great year for CASA of Terrebonne. Crawfish, music and fun were on the menu at the Fourth Annual Crawfish Boil-off on May 14, held at the Southdown Bar and Grill. Over \$14,000 was raised from the event coordinated by community members Amos Mosley and the late Herman Courville—far exceeding the program's goal. The event featured 22 teams competing for prizes for the best boiled crawfish. CASA of Terrebonne hosted "Spring Fest: A World of Fun" in April in the Downtown Houma Courthouse Square. This event allowed children and guests to learn about different countries around the world through food, activities, and live entertainment. In addition to these phenomenal fundraisers, last year CASA of Terrebonne welcomed new staff members to our team as well as training 18 new volunteers. We ended our



Proceeds from the Fourth Annual Crawfish Boil-off are presented to CASA of Terrebonne. Pictured from left to right: Amos Mosley, former CASA Terrebonne Executive Director Stacey Martin, and the late Herman Courville.

year by hosting our Tenth Annual Volunteer Appreciation Banquet, which was an absolute success in showcasing our wonderful volunteers, staff, board and community members.

► **Volunteers for Youth Justice – CASA**

VYJ CASA serves a total six parishes in the state of Louisiana. In 2011, VYJ CASA served 578 children with a total of 196 volunteers advocating for these children. Forty-five new volunteers were trained during the year. VYJ continues to heighten community awareness by hosting annual events and trainings for collaborating agencies and law enforcement.

VYJ has focused much of its efforts on volunteer recruitment and retention and has worked with the Board of Directors to collaborate on volunteer appreciation. This year our Volunteer Appreciation Event for the Caddo and Bossier Parish CASA volunteers was completely organized and hosted by our Board of Directors. The day was spent at a lakehouse retreat where the Board members cooked gumbo and other Cajun food for our volunteers and staff members.



Youth Justice CASA Volunteers attended an appreciation event in Arcadia, LA.

Our satellite offices (Webster, Bienville, Claiborne, and Jackson parishes) had a separate Volunteer Appreciation event. The volunteers were honored with a sit-down steak dinner and CASA T-shirts and several of the volunteers provided entertainment for the group.

► **CASA of SOLA**

2011 proved to be a year full of successes for CASA of SoLA. In June 2011 we welcomed our new Executive Director, Ms. Courtney Lanclos. CASA of SoLA served 132 children with 67 dedicated volunteers throughout Acadia, Lafayette and Vermilion parishes. CASA of SoLA was also the recipient of multiple grants from Winn Dixie, Louisiana Bar Association, James Devin Moncus and Children's Justice Act.



CASA of SoLA staff and volunteers attended the annual Together We Can Conference in Baton Rouge during October 2011.

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Mission Statement

The mission of Louisiana CASA Association is to support local programs in their efforts to ensure that abused and neglected children in the Louisiana legal system have a competent and caring volunteer advocate through quality, local CASA programs.

Our Partners



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