



LOUISIANA
www.louisianacasa.org

Annual Report 2009



▶ Capital Area CASA Association

In 2009, 11 Capital Area CASA staff members supported CASA's mission. Four pre-service training sessions prepared 109 new volunteers for their roles. 193 advocates volunteered. 278 children had a voice in court. 7,444 service hours were reported by CASA volunteers. 129 children reached safe and permanent homes.



New volunteers are sworn in at a Capital Area CASA Association training session. Due to the success of the program's ongoing recruiting efforts, it is currently providing an advocate for each child in need of one in East Baton Rouge Parish.

A Message from the Louisiana CASA Executive Director

Looking back for a moment, 2009 was another monumental year for CASA in Louisiana. In 2009, there were 1,803 CASA volunteers who spoke up for the best interests of over 4,000 abused and/or neglected children in Louisiana's foster care system. CASA volunteers make a difference in their communities and, more importantly, make a difference in the life of a child who has done nothing wrong.

It is important to take a moment to reflect and acknowledge the hard work and commitment of staff, volunteers, and supporters. Because of their dedication, thousands of Louisiana's abused and neglected children were given a voice through a trained community advocate. Because of this steadfast belief that we can make a difference by working together, children in foster care have found a safe and permanent home with a family that is caring and nurturing.

Here at Louisiana CASA, we keep our focus on the mission: supporting local programs in their work to be the difference in an abused child's life. Whether through training, support, community development, or recognition, our goal is to support and uplift those who really matter to the children we serve — our CASA volunteers and staff!

To learn more about CASA in Louisiana, visit www.louisianacasa.org . Thanks again for your support and encouragement.

Sincerely,

John E. Wyble, Ph.D.

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

Thanks again for your support in 2009. Because of your commitment to Louisiana's abused and neglected children, CASA programs were able to serve over 4,000 children last year. CASA programs in Louisiana continue to grow in strength and in numbers of children served. In many ways, you are the reason CASA has such an incredible impact in our state. Whether you are one of the nearly 2,000 volunteers, a local program board member or staff, or partner or policy maker, it takes a spirit of cooperation and teamwork at the community level to make a real difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. As we are well into 2010, perhaps you have considered how you can help CASA spread its message even further. Help us spread this message; talk to your family, friends, and co-workers. Let them know that they too can.... **Be the 1— Be a CASA!** Again, thank you for your support!

Stanley Dameron

President/CEO, American Bank & Trust
Covington, LA

▶ CASA of Central Louisiana, Inc.

CASA of Central Louisiana has a new Executive Director. Jack L. Duty of Natchitoches, LA took on this position full-time on December 1, 2009. Fifty-five dedicated volunteers of CASA of Central Louisiana advocated for 80 children during the year.



Pictured are, left to right: Cheree Moffett, Volunteer Coordinator; Angela Anthony, Program Support Specialist; Demarius Payne, Advocate Coordinator; and Jack Duty, Executive Director.

▶ Youth Service Bureau – CASA

Last year in St. Tammany and Washington Parishes, 154 Youth Service Bureau CASA volunteers provided top quality advocacy and served as a powerful voice in court for 387 abused and neglected children. YSB CASA staff worked throughout the year to increase awareness of child abuse and recruit CASA volunteers, reaching over 1,400 citizens through live presentations throughout the community.



Outstanding Service to Children Award Recipients are, front row: Dorothy Maloney, Wanda Siverd, Paula Wood, and Joyce Pyatt; back row: Donna Mott, Judy Munn, Mary Ann Brannon, Christina Welch, Adele Bruce, and BK Baldwin.

► **CASA of St. Landry, Inc.**

CASA of St. Landry, Inc. officially became an independent program in July of 2009 and during the year 21 volunteers advocated on behalf of 40 children appointed to the program.



OCS staff, CASA staff and volunteers prepare for a Christmas party for children in foster care in St. Landry Parish. Donations included building space and over 200 toys. Over 60 children attended the party.

2009 Was Quite a Busy Year for Training.

Below are the highlights:

- Hosted 10 court improvement program trainings all across the state with over 500 attendees.
- In January, National CASA staff members Terene Bennett, Veronica Montaña-Pilch and Tracy Evans presented on diversity issues at our multidisciplinary “Together We Can” conference.
- In March, National CASA staff member Brien Aguilar trained over 30 local program staff on how to better use the National CASA-developed database to track information on volunteers and children and generate statistical reports.
- In April, over 40 local program staff and LaCASA staff attended the National CASA conference in Washington, DC. Staff from Louisiana CASA and from several local programs were invited presenters for the conference.
- In September, National CASA staff members Terene Bennett and Tracy Evans led a week-long training for 30 local program staff on facilitating training for new volunteers.
- Had over 200 attendees at our annual “Together We Can” conference.
- Sent state and local staff to the LANO (Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations) conference.
- Louisiana CASA staff member Jacqueline Wilson was the featured speaker for one of National CASA’s semi-monthly podcasts.
- Revonda Kirby came on board in November 2009 as Training Coordinator.

2009 Statewide Collaborations

Louisiana CASA staff participated in a multitude of multidisciplinary collaboratives focused on improving the lives of children in foster care, including:

- Court Improvement Program, Louisiana Supreme Court
- 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
- OCS Stakeholders Committee
- DSS Connections for Success Committee

CASA Partners with AmeriCorps VISTA Program

In 2009, Louisiana CASA's AmeriCorps VISTA members served with local programs. Their activities included speaking engagements, developing recruitment materials, and developing other resources to expand the efforts of local CASA programs. VISTA members serve all over Louisiana including Hammond, New Iberia, Plaquemine, Denham Springs, and New Orleans.

► CASA of Lafourche

CASA of Lafourche became an independent non-profit organization in October 2009. In the month of November, they had their biggest training ever, swearing in 17 new volunteers. To date, 59 volunteers have been trained and 64 children served.



CASA of Lafourche's ribbon cutting ceremony celebrated becoming an independent non-profit organization and member of the Thibodaux Chamber of Commerce in November 2009.

► CASA Jefferson

In 2009, 207 advocates were assigned to 363 children in Jefferson Parish. Volunteers conducting CASA advocacy logged 22,011 activity hours in 2009. CASA Jefferson, along with Office of Community Services, Greater New Orleans Region/Jefferson District, was recognized by the National CASA Association for innovative child welfare practices and collaboration.



Pictured from left are The Honorable Ernestine Gray, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judge and National CASA Board President; Hannah Dunn, Office of Community Services, Greater NO Region/Jefferson District, District Manager; Cynthia Chauvin, CASA Jefferson Director, and Michael Piraino, National CASA Chief Executive Officer.

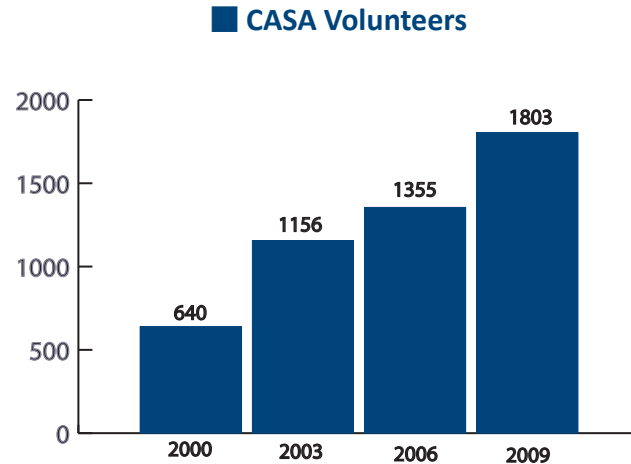
► CASA of NELA (Northeast Louisiana)

CASA of Northeast Louisiana serves 11 parishes and has 4 satellite offices. 224 dedicated advocates contributed 22,823 hours to advocacy and traveled 73,101 miles to serve 482 children. CASA of Northeast Louisiana presented at state and national levels on Volunteer Management and Retention. CASA of Northeast Louisiana also presented at the Foster Parent Association Meeting.



CASA of NELA partnered with LACASA for the “Stand Up for an Abused Child, so They’ll Stand a Chance” event. The cardboard cutouts of children from The Forgotten Children Campaign were placed on the grounds of the American Legion Hall where community officials and members literally stood up for children for 12 hours.

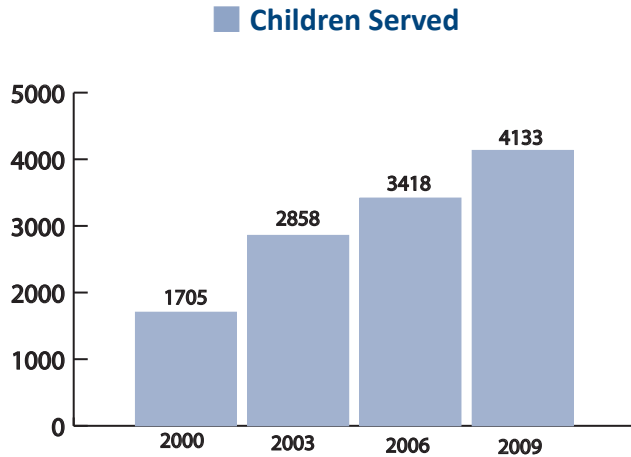
► In 2009, the hourly contributions of CASA volunteers



The number of CASA volunteers serving children has nearly tripled since 2000. There were 325 more volunteers active in 2009 than 2008, an increase of over 20% (1,478 volunteers in 2008 compared to 1,803 volunteers in 2009).

*Source: Independent Sector
+ Used 2008's dollar per hour

were valued at **\$2.6 million!!!*+**



The number of children served by CASA volunteers has more than doubled since 2000. In 2009, volunteers served a total of 414 more children than in 2008, an increase of over 10% (3,719 children served in 2008 compared to 4,133 children served in 2009).

► Child Advocacy Services, Inc.

Child Advocacy Services CASA served more children in 2009 and had its biggest year ever! Covering over 10 parishes and serving five Judicial Districts, CASA served 452 children with 185 volunteers. Of that number, 141 were placed in safe and permanent homes.



CAS CASA launched the Cottages for CASA project. With the help of generous donors, two playhouses were built and raffled in October. By the end of the project, the CASA mission had reached thousands. Pictured: CAS Staff

► CASA New Orleans

CASA New Orleans served 100% of the children assigned to them in 2009. In 2009 a total of seventy-five (75) new volunteers were trained and a total of 145 volunteers served 201 children. Also in 2009, CASA New Orleans significantly increased the number of African-American volunteers and male volunteers to better reflect the demographics of the children they serve.

CASA New Orleans staff (pictured) were selected for the US Commerce Association's (USCA's) 2009 Best of New Orleans Award in the social service and welfare organizations category.



► Louisiana CASA Honors “Special” Heroes for Outstanding Efforts in 2009!

LACASA, in partnership with its member programs, once again honored outstanding individuals for their service to children through CASA. Although we value all of the outstanding volunteers, staff, and stakeholders we work with, CASA wanted to present special recognition for those individuals who have gone that extra mile for children.

In 2009, the honorees were recognized at a special CASA Awards Night held at the Vermillionville in Lafayette. There was food, music, and tears of joy as recipients were surprised or overcome at the event.



◀ **Judge of the Year**
The Honorable Judge Charles L. Porter

Speaking at local community organizations, awareness events, or training sessions for CASA volunteers, the Honorable **Judge Charles L. Porter** is an outspoken supporter for CASA of the 16th JDC. He is known for his kindness and the respectful temperance offered to all who enter his courtroom.



◀ **Volunteer Advocate of the Year**
Russ Rehm

Russ Rehm has been a volunteer with New Orleans CASA since 2003. In that time he has had three cases. Whether it is traveling 10 hours to visit a child, compiling information for a youth aging out of foster care, or mentoring new CASA volunteers through the Orleans Parish Court System, this Quiet Hero readily places aside the inconveniences of his own life to assist our most vulnerable assets, abused and neglected children in the foster care system.



◀ **Executive Director of the Year**
Rob Carlisle

Rob Carlisle has demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities by effectively managing a 25-member staff to give voice, healing, and security to children in the 10 parishes served by Child Advocacy Services.



◀ **Staff Member of the Year**
Dana Wolcott

A gifted speaker with a tremendous ability to tailor the CASA message to her audience, **Dana Wolcott** heightens the community’s awareness of issues facing abused and neglected children and CASA’s role in advocating for the best interests of children.



◀ **Board Member of the Year**
Hugh Daschbach

A decade of service with CASA began with a donation on behalf of **Hugh Daschbach** from his four sons as a Christmas gift. Shortly afterward, Hugh saw an advertisement for CASA volunteers and inquired about becoming a volunteer. Over 10 years, he has supervised more than five cases serving over 10 children.



◀ **Office of Community Service (OCS)
Staff Member of the Year**
William Cezar

William Cezar has a strong desire to help people better themselves and their situations. He is a dedicated worker for the Iberville/West Baton

Rouge OCS office, going well beyond what is expected to provide service for his clients.



◀ **Media Professional of the
Year Award**
Cathye Davis

Through the professional expertise offered by **Cathye Davis** of The Radio People in Monroe, the CASA message reached thousands

of people. Cathye is proof that with a little money and a lot of heart there are few limitations on what can be accomplished.



◀ **Diversity Award of the Year**
Capital Area CASA

While 45% of the population of East Baton Rouge Parish is African American, 90% of the children served by CASA are African American. Capital Area CASA came to understand the importance of

the CASA program – staff, board of directors and advocates – becoming more culturally competent in all areas.

▶ **CASA of West CENLA**

In 2009, CASA of West CENLA had 35 active volunteers who served 136 children. For the first time, one of their advocates was asked to testify in an abuse case in the Army's court-martial of a soldier. The agency was chosen as the Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year in 2008 in



Beauregard Parish and 2009 in Vernon Parish.

CASA of West CENLA was recognized as the Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year for 2009 in Vernon Parish.

▶ **CASA of Plaquemines**

Louisiana welcomed its newest program, CASA of Plaquemines Parish, when it received provisional approval in December 2009. Starting out with only 2 advocates, Director Peggy Morris plans to grow the program as quickly as possible to provide advocates for all of Plaquemines Parish's children in care.

Swearing in of CASA of Plaquemines Parish's first two advocates. Pictured left to right are: CASA Advisory Board Member Mike Callegari; advocate Emily Campbell; The Honorable Joy C. Lobrano, 25th JDC, Juvenile Division; advocate Jan Martinez; CASA Director Peggy Morris, and Plaquemines Community C.A.R.E. Center Executive Director Monica Baltodano-Dubey.



► CASA of Terrebonne, Inc.

In 2009, CASA of Terrebonne held two successful fundraisers, CASA for Kidz Spring Fest “A World of Fun” and the CASA Draw Down. Both events brought in needed funds to help the program. Three pre-service training classes were held, swearing in 18 new volunteers. 48 active volunteers served 119 children. Of these children, CASA volunteers helped 41 children reach safe and permanent homes in Terrebonne Parish.



A local company, Weatherford, donated Christmas presents to all children served by CASA of Terrebonne, Inc.

► Rapides CASA

Rapides CASA spent the year of 2009 gearing up on community awareness and volunteer recruitment. Through multiple community-sponsored events and speaking engagements they were able to increase their volunteer recruitment by 22%. They doubled the number of minorities who volunteer for Rapides CASA and saw a dramatic increase in number of CASA Volunteers under the age of 40. Through advocacy and volunteer retention efforts, they provided services to over 300 children utilizing 91 volunteers.



Rapides CASA and Rapides Child Advocacy Center Staff

► CASA of the 16th JDC, Inc.

On March 16, 2009, CASA of the 16th JDC became an independent non-profit CASA program. CASA of the 16th JDC, Inc. also increased its volunteer base from only 10 advocates to 45 advocates during 2009. These 45 volunteer advocates spent 3,834 hours in service to a total of 133 children and helped 33 of those children find safe, permanent homes.

Pictured are, left to right: Americorps VISTA Veronica Olmi, Advocate Supervisor Penny Colwart and Advocate Supervisor Page Hemphill.



► CASA of SoLA

In 2009, CASA of SoLA was proud to double their volunteer base from 15 to more than 30 volunteers. Over 100 children were served and 37 children were placed in permanent homes. CASA of SoLA also received 501c3 status and moved to a bigger and better office space to accommodate their growing program.

CASA of SoLA volunteers, staff, and board members hard at work at their April 2009 Jambalaya Fundraiser.



► **CASA, A Program of Family and Youth**

CASA, a program of Family & Youth, reached a significant milestone in serving over 200 abused and neglected children annually for the first time. Volunteers advocated on behalf of 233 children in 2009, up from 180 children served in 2008.



Representatives from the various participating industries, CASA volunteers and CASA staff show off the end result of a toy drive that local industries held for CASA kids at Christmas. Obviously, people in SWLA care about CASA kids.

► **Volunteers for Youth Justice – CASA**

In 2009, Volunteers for Youth Justice’s CASA program volunteers served 697 children, logging 17,774 hours and helping 290 children to find safe and permanent homes.



Youth from Booker T. Washington High School Drum Line help to raise child abuse awareness by performing at the annual “Light of Hope” event at the Louisiana Boardwalk in Shreveport on March 27, 2009.

► **LaCASA – CASA of the 18th JDC**

CASA of the 18th JDC underwent restructuring in 2009, moving to new office space and refocusing on recruiting volunteers to serve abused and neglected children in Pointe Coupee, Iberville and West Baton Rouge Parishes.

Pictured from left to right: Mingling at the 2009 National CASA Conference in Denver, CO are CASA of the 18th JDC staffer Angelia Elzy; Dellona Davis; The Honorable Ernestine Gray, Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judge and National CASA Board President; NCASA CEO Michael Piraino and Carleen Jones.



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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



Children's
Justice Act



Corporation for National &
Community Service

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