

CASA Critical

Critical Information for CASAs

[#19—September-October 2018](#)

To our volunteers:

In celebration and appreciation of your time and efforts, mark your calendars for our **2018 Volunteer Appreciation Fiesta dinner on SUNDAY, October 28, 2018 at 6pm at the Grace Museum!!** We hope each of you will be able to join us as we **celebrate YOU!!!**

RSVP to your supervisor. Each volunteer may bring one guest.



Leslie Boiles is presented as Volunteer of the Quarter for Summer 2018 by BCC Supervisor Rob Marcelain at the September Board meeting. Leslie is taking a leave from CASA as she devotes her full-time efforts to her teaching position in the ACU School of Nursing. She has served several children in Taylor County in a superb way during the last two years as a CASA.

[A Great Local Resource for Advocates](#)

Copy and paste this link into your browser to access resources for your role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate in the Big Country:

<https://bigcountrycasa.org/volunteer/advocate-resources/>

You'll find CEU ideas and links, including book and movie titles; local and on-line resources to help as you advocate for your CASA kids; and a host of other links and information. If you have other resources you would like added, contact Stephanie Ellison at the BCC office.

Advocacy—What Does it Cost?

- Becoming a CASA volunteer is an investment of time, energy and heart. But as many volunteers have said of the children they worked with: "It wasn't about what I gave them; it was what they showed me."
- Most CASA volunteers spend an average of 10-15 hours per month on their case, including visits, phone calls, e-mails, documentation, and court appearances. Some months during the life of the case are more time-consuming than others.
- National CASA requires that all volunteers receive a minimum of 30 hours of pre-service training as well as court observation hours.
- Additionally, volunteers are required to complete **12 hours of in-service training** per year. As in any professional setting, policies and laws change and new ways of "doing business" appear periodically. Effective CASA volunteers need to stay current with changes in Family Law, CPS policies, child development studies, and a host of other updates to help us be the best advocates we can be...*for children who deserve nothing but our best*. If you are not current on your CEUs, remember that many opportunities exist to meet this requirement. Books, movies, videos, perhaps even conferences through your church or work can all be used as credits if they connect with your role as a child advocate. Google National and Texas CASA for videos and webinars that are not only up to date and helpful but can be painlessly completed in your own home. And, of course, CASA Café and Lunch and Learn events are scheduled frequently with local resources who are invaluable as we pursue our CASA cases.
- SOMETHING NEW: Texas CASA is the guideline for our CEU requirements; recently, the time frame for accruing CEUs has changed. Big Country CASA will now track advocate CEUs by the **calendar year**. So, CEU documentation will begin on **January 1, 2019**: each advocate needs to gain 12 hours of continuing education by **December 31, 2019**. Call the office and speak to Rebel if you have questions about your CEUs.

Don't let these opportunities pass you by...and don't lose your connection with CASA because you aren't up to date with continuing education!

CONFIDENTIAL COMPANION TRAINING: There are still openings for the next training on October 23, 2018 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at our CASA offices. This three-hour training will allow a spouse or friend to accompany the CASA as you work your case. Notify the office for an application.

Advocate Training Calendar

Continue to recruit new advocates—help us reach our goal of serving 100% of the foster children in Taylor County! Currently, we are assigned to 50% of the cases of removal with 121 active volunteers. The next training opportunity is in January:

WINTER 2019—January-February

Monday	January 14	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 17	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Monday	January 21	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 24	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Monday	January 28	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 31	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Saturday	February 2	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

The next session is Spring 2019, scheduled for March 18 through April 6, 2019.

Big Country CASA’s first “Post-Adoption Educational Guidance” meeting. Kathy Giebler, supervisor, and Rebel Taylor, CASA on this case, along with the AAL Sara Tenneson, met with Destiny Ann Nemolo and her new mom today at the CASA offices after her adoption to encourage Destiny to take advantage of college tuition waivers and other services from being in CPS care.





BCCASA Executive Director Angela Sharp and Program Supervisor Sandra Shirey attended a quarterly CPS/CASA meeting at the Eastland County Child Advocacy Center on September 6, 2018. After the meeting, the CAC staff gave the group a tour of the facility.

“An Education Enlightened by Faith”

Stephanie Ellison, Big Country CASA Administrative/Marketing Assistant, is featured in a Hardin-Simmons University press release, dated October 12, 2018. Access the following link to read her story and to discover a unique program at HSU which works with foster children:

<https://www.baptiststandard.com/news/texas/students-without-parental-support-find-christs-love-at-hsu/>



Advocates on a first visit—Several items are available in the office for CASAs to take on visits with their children. (From left) **Ashley Hart** delivers quilts and games; **Meagan Tunnell** takes stuffed animals and quilts; and **Susan Cronan** introduces herself to her CASA girl with an owl sleeping bag and game.