



CASA FOR KIDS OF EAST TEXAS

COMMUNITY CONNECTION



CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS MONTH

April is recognized as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Communities and advocates across the country come together to raise awareness about the importance of prevention. In 2025 alone, 552 removals from unsafe homes occurred in Smith, Wood, and Van Zandt counties. We encourage you to join us this month by following and engaging with our social media as we share ways to support and advocate for children. Once April passes, we will continue to advocate for children.



ETX GIVING DAY

We are so grateful to be able to return to Great Harvest Bakery and Cafe for this year's East Texas Giving Day. On April 28th, 10% of all proceeds will benefit CASA for Kids of East Texas. Save the date and swing by to say hello and grab yourself either breakfast, lunch, or a baked good. CASA staff will be there to greet you!

CAUGHT DOING GOOD FOR KIDS 2026

Don't be surprised if a friend calls to say they've been caught and need your help making a donation to CASA to get off the hook.

On April 24, 2026, businesses, community groups, and individuals will cast their lines in a one-day challenge to reel in the most support for CASA for Kids of East Texas.

This year is already shaping up to be quite the catch, as we have a mixture of new and seasoned teams. Stay tuned as we witness these teams raise awareness about our mission.

Visit tylercasa.com to see existing teams.

Interested in participating?
Email Ayana@casaforkidsofet.org



LIFE CHANGERS

Teens are one of the most vulnerable populations in the child welfare system. Many experienced trauma, instability, and disrupted relationships. As they near adulthood, they face pressures with limited guidance on education, employment, relationships, and independent living. This is where CASA helps.

CASA advocates provide consistent encouragement, mentorship, and support that helps youth prepare for adulthood. Recently, 24 teens met with Judge Wilson. Most of them have a CASA volunteer advocate who has been assigned to their case for at least one year. This commitment allows advocates to provide stability for youth who often experience frequent changes.

Advocates stay with their assigned child regardless of distance, maintaining the continuity and trust that are essential for meaningful advocacy. For example, even while traveling outside the country, CASA Advocate Michelle Ihrig remained actively engaged during urgent developments in the child's case. Her commitment reflects the heart of CASA's mission and the extraordinary dedication of its volunteers.

The depth of these relationships became clear at a recent court hearing. A young man who had just turned 18 chose to remain in foster care and specifically asked the judge if he could retain his CASA Advocate. He shared that his advocate, Ed Lamaster, had been the only consistent person in his life and that he wanted to continue receiving that support even after becoming a legal adult.

These stories represent just a small glimpse of the impact CASA volunteers make every day. Through their time, compassion, and commitment, CASA advocates provide

stability, guidance, and hope, making life-changing differences for children.

COINS FOR KIDS

Schools and learning institutions in Smith, Wood, and Van Zandt counties are coming together to collect spare change to support CASA. Kids helping kids not only raises awareness about our work, it's also a strong message of support for children currently in foster care. Every cent helps provide advocacy and resources. Keep an eye out for this year's award winning schools!

Learn more at coinsforcasa.org.

Interested in participating? Email Ayana@casaforkidsofet.org



ONE TEAM ONE DREAM

Our Annual Fall Event is set for October 20, 2026! This year's theme, "One Team, One Dream" reflects the spirit we carry every day as we work together on behalf of the children in our community. Guests can look forward to an exciting auction, delicious food, and entertainment the whole family can enjoy. Join us for an evening of celebration while helping support CASA's mission.

THANK YOU STANLEY'S



Stanley's Famous Pit BBQ chose CASA to be the recipient for their Round Up Program in January of 2026. We are so grateful to both Stanley's and to all that showed up to round up their totals. Despite a few bad weather days, the community and Stanley's showed up for our kids.



MONTEZ-COOPER CAR SHOW

CASA for Kids of East Texas is honored to be the beneficiary of this year's Montez-Cooper Car & Truck Show on Saturday, May 9, 2026. Join us from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM to enjoy an impressive lineup of classic cars and trucks while supporting CASA's mission to advocate for children in foster care.

5 WAYS CASA VOLUNTEERS MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE

1. Children who have a CASA volunteer have an improved self esteem and increased confidence.
2. CASA helps break the generational cycle of abuse.
3. CASA helps youth prepare for transitioning to adulthood at 18 with IDs, financial resources, as well as exploring education and work options.
4. There is a higher chance that a child will improve academically and receive a high school diploma with CASA's support.
5. CASA volunteers helps decrease the likelihood of substance abuse and homelessness for foster youth.
6. CASA helps meet basic needs including food, clothing, hygiene items, school supplies, and more.

Serving Children from birth to age 21 in Smith, Wood, and Van Zandt Counties



20 25 IMPACT REPORT



4,100

hours of contact with children



41

community volunteer advocates sworn-in



473

children served in Smith, Wood, & Van Zandt counties

CASA Volunteers

50,768

miles reported



145

active volunteer advocates

5,500+

volunteer hours recorded

Case Closure

39 children adopted

63 children reunified with parents

30 children placed with a relative

Advocacy

\$31,609

in donated items distributed to children

769

appearances in court

\$5,935

gift cards provided to help children and families

The Mission of CASA for Kids of East Texas is to make life-changing differences by advocating for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Our staff and trained community volunteers achieve this by identifying children's needs, recommending services, connecting with support systems and advocating for safety and permanency.

INFO SESSIONS AT RUBY'S

We will be having two information sessions hosted by Ruby's Mexican Restaurant. Bring a friend, pull up a chair, and have some authentic Mexican food while we share our mission with the community. Join us on Monday, March 16th, from 6:00 - 7:00PM & Friday, March 20th, 10:00 - 11:00AM.

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