

**CASA of Galveston County**

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**Representatives**

**Connie Ricketts****Executive Director**

**Primary****Erin Cohen****Recruitment, Training, and Communications Dir**

**Kasey Warren****Advocacy & Communications Associate**

CASA of Galveston County is a non-profit organization which provides trained, court-appointed volunteers to serve as advocates and provide best interest advocacy for children who have experienced abuse and/or neglect and have been removed from their home. CASA volunteers support children and families involved in the child welfare system and work to ensure a child’s best interest is being met in a variety of ways. Some examples include: identifying and addressing risks to the child’s safety and well-being, ensuring appropriate physical and mental health assessments are completed and verifying educational assessments are completed and supports are in place.

CASA volunteers stay by a child’s side throughout the duration of a case, advocating first for reunification when safe and possible. If that is not a reality, a CASA will advocate for the best permanency plan possible for the child.

There are 72 CASA programs in the state of Texas and locally, our program has been in existence for over 25 years, initially formed by the Resource and Crisis Center of Galveston. As of 2014, CASA of Galveston County became its own 501(c)(3).

Our organization serves children in all of Galveston County. We recruit volunteers from all around the mainland, including the Texas City-La Marque community. Prior to the pandemic, we were holding regular in-person information sessions at the United Way Mainland in Texas City. Currently, we promote our program needs in the TCLM Chamber newsletter and in the Texas Post newspaper. This has been a great way to reach out the community.

The past year was a difficult one for everyone. However, CASA of Galveston County has many shining moments to be proud of in 2020. First, we hired four new CASA team members who jumped right into work, even in a most unusual virtual work environment. Secondly, we exceeded our fundraising goal in April during our Child Abuse Awareness ribbon campaign. In December, we more than doubled our fundraising goal during our annual Walk A Mile in My Shoes event. We could not have done any of this without the steadfast and loyal support of community members who appreciate the value of our work. We are incredibly grateful.

Additionally, we have successfully revised our volunteer training curriculum to be totally remote and held four Zoom training sessions since having to close our office to the public due to COVID.

Finally, and most importantly, through this year of hardships, our work never stopped. Our advocates continued to serve the children of this community, working tirelessly for their best interests, no matter how difficult or challenging the situation. We are so proud of our volunteers.

Our main focus continues to be volunteer recruitment. We have an urgent need for more CASA volunteers. Our goal is to provide a CASA to every child who needs one. We need 60-70 more volunteers to make that goal a reality. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about becoming a CASA, please go to casagalveston.org/volunteer or contact Erin Cohen, erin@casagalveston.org for more information.

Recruitment, Training and Communications Dept

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