



**VOICES FOR CHILDREN**

Court Appointed Special Advocates

# EVERY CHILD HAS A CHANCE IT'S YOU!



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**2023**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

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## **OUR MISSION**

*To improve the lives of children in foster care through powerful volunteer advocacy until each child is placed in a safe and permanent home.*



# ABOUT VOICES FOR CHILDREN

## ● 1977

The first CASA program is established in Seattle, Washington

## ● 1989

The CASA movement came to Texas. Texas CASA is founded. There are currently 74 CASA programs in the state of Texas.

## ● 2000

Voices for Children is founded.

## ● 2001

Voices for Children trains it's first class of advocates.

## ● 2024

Voices for Children is currently serving 5 counties in the Brazos Valley region- Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Madison and Leon.

## HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

*A CASA volunteer provides a consistent presence in the child's life while working with others to identify the child's physical, emotional, and educational needs along with resources to help the child and the family heal.*

### Volunteer

- Be at least 21 years old
- Attend an Information Session
- Complete an application
- Attend an interview
- Pass screening requirements

### Support

- Become a monthly donor
- Become a community partner
- Host an event benefitting VFC
- Invite VFC to present to your business or organization

Information sessions & training dates are listed on our website:  
[www.vfcbrazos.org](http://www.vfcbrazos.org)



For more information about how you can support VFC, email [vfc@vfcbrazos.org](mailto:vfc@vfcbrazos.org)



# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

## AMY FAULKNER

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to present to you the 2023-2024 Annual Report for Voices for Children. This report highlights the remarkable achievements and milestones of the past year. As we reflect on the endeavors of our dedicated team, steadfast volunteers, and supportive community, we are grateful for the impact we have collectively made in the lives of children in foster care in our community.

**VFC ROAR Launch:** In March 2023, we launched a new volunteer-match program called VFC ROAR, which stands for Recruitment, Outreach & Advocacy Representatives. ROAR is designed to close the gap between compassionate community members' quest to find meaningful service opportunities and VFC's need to find dedicated volunteers for non-case related activities/projects.

Employing the ROAR Program, we engaged with the community through various outreach initiatives and awareness campaigns. Thirty-five (35) ROAR volunteers donated more than 1500 hours staffing tables at more than 40 community events, speaking to civic groups, and engaging the faith-based community to make a positive impact for children in foster care.

**Enhanced Volunteer Training:** Last year brought an enhanced focus on volunteer training and support. Our CASA volunteer training program is time-intensive and is designed to prepare community members to step into the CASA role, equipping them with the most up-to-date resources and tools to better serve the children and families engaged in the child protection system. Additionally, our advocate supervisors provide ongoing support to our CASAs as they work their assigned case, ensuring they feel empowered and capable in their roles. This year we trained 26 new CASA volunteers and offered more than 98 hours of continuing education opportunities for volunteers to learn and grow.

**Bi-Stone CASA Launch:** With support from individuals living in Freestone and Limestone counties, we successfully launched those two counties as the 74th independent CASA Program in Texas. Recognizing the importance of community-based advocacy allowed both programs to allocate resources more effectively and serve children and families from their respective communities with greater precision and care.

**Advocacy Success Stories:** Throughout the year, our advocates achieved numerous successes in advocating for the best interests of the children they served. Whether it was ensuring access to essential services, advocating for educational opportunities, or facilitating safe and permanent placements, our advocates made a tangible difference in the lives of vulnerable children.





Voices for Children served 295 children and 144 children achieved permanency last year. Our volunteers donated more than 7,400 hours advocating for children in our five-county area. As we celebrate these accomplishments, we also acknowledge the ongoing challenges and work that lies ahead. The need for CASA remains ever-present, and we are committed to continuing our efforts to advocate for the best interest of every child in CPS care in our area.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated volunteers, staff, board members, donors, and community partners for their unwavering support and commitment to our cause. Together, we have made a lasting impact on the lives of countless children, and I am confident that with our collective dedication, we will continue to make strides toward a brighter future for all.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support as we embark on another year of service and advocacy.

With gratitude,

Amy Faulkner  
Executive Director

## VOICES FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee

Katie Compian DeHaven, RE/Max 20/20  
Board President

Sherry Pittman, Community Member  
Secretary

Billy Castillo, D'Vine Cusine  
Vice President

Delores Crum, Premiere Events  
Immediate Past President

Alice Blue-McLendon, TAMU Winnie Carter Wild Life Center - Clinical Assoc Professor & Veterinarian  
2nd Vice President

Jacque Flagg, Voices for Children Founding Member  
Treasurer

### Board Members at Large

Caleb Britt, KBTX - Multimedia Journalist

Brac Jones, Texas Farm Bureau - retired

Susan Mott, Burleson County Chamber of Commerce

Sara Salzer, MoH Realty

Amber Widener, Seidel Schroeder

Robbie Robichau, Department of Public Service and Administration at the Bush  
School of Government and Public Service - TAMU

### EX-OFFICIO

Amy Faulkner, VFC Executive Director

Kelly Gerland, VFC Advocate Representative



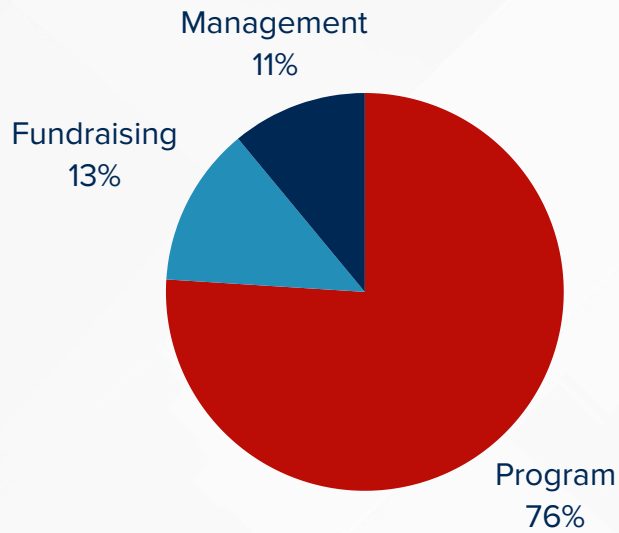
# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

## ASSETS, LIABILITIES, NET ASSETS

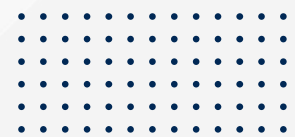
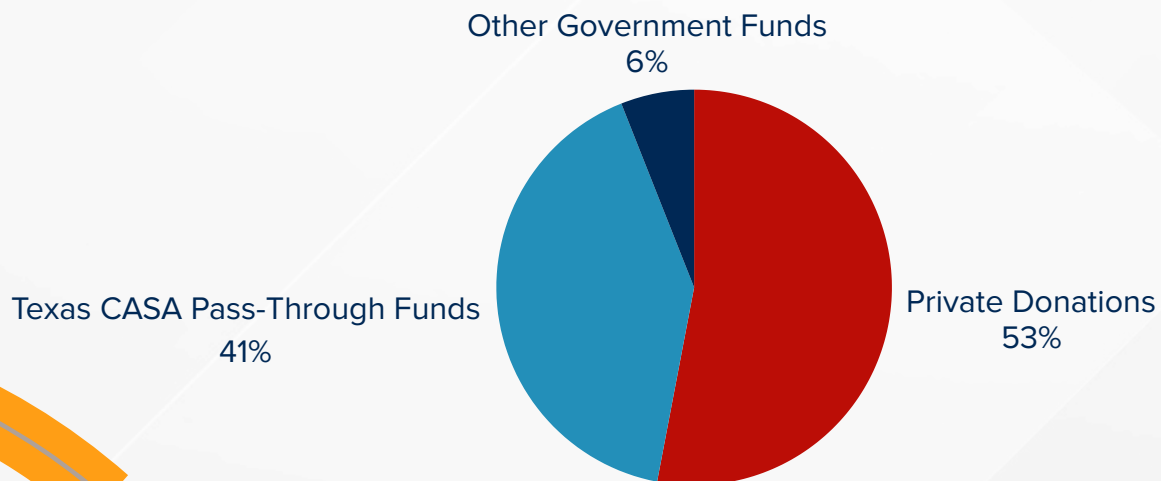
	2022	2023
ASSETS	\$1,051,792	\$1,212,560
LIABILITIES	\$ 18,025	\$ 44,631
NET ASSETS	\$1,033,767	\$1,167,929

	2022	2023
REVENUE	\$1,177,769	\$1,096,483
EXPENSES	\$ 875,452	\$ 923,781

## 2023 ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES



## 2023 FUNDING SOURCES



Every child has a chance -  
it's you.



Voices for Children was fortunate to work with Texas Filmworks in 2023 to create a series of videos describing what CASA does and the impact this advocacy work has for children involved in the foster care system. We invite you to learn more about Voices for Children and those we serve.



## VOICES FOR CHILDREN BY THE NUMBERS

**\$2,477**  
COST TO TRAIN A NEW  
VOLUNTEER

**640**  
HOURS IN COURT  
PROCEEDINGS

**5**  
COUNTY SERVICE AREA

**144**  
CHILDREN ACHIEVED  
PERMANENCY

**295**  
CHILDREN SERVED

**7,464**  
DOCUMENTED VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

**3,600**  
SQUARE MILES IN COVERAGE  
AREA

**136**  
ACTIVE CASA VOLUNTEERS

**72,090**  
MILES DRIVEN BY  
VOLUNTEERS





*How Does*  
**VOICES FOR CHILDREN**  
BECOME INVOLVED?



## 1 INVESTIGATION

Child Protective Services receives a report alleging abuse or neglect of a child and conducts an investigation. If CPS finds that abuse or neglect has occurred and the home is not safe for the child, they work with the family to find a safe placement for the child and provide services to assist the family.



## 2 COURT INTERVENTION

If the family is unable to ensure the safety of the child, CPS may file a petition with the court to obtain Temporary Managing Conservatorship of the child to move forward with placement of the child in a safe environment and provide services to the family with the goal of resolving the safety concerns.



## 3 CASA APPOINTED

If the court finds that abuse or neglect occurred and that the child is in danger, the court may grant Temporary Managing Conservatorship of the child to the State of Texas and appoint Voices For Children as Guardian ad Litem for the child.

## 4 ADVOCACY

While a child is involved in the foster care system, a Voices For Children Advocate meets with the child, caregiver, family, teachers, doctors, therapists, caseworkers, attorneys, and anyone else with information regarding the child. The information gathered is used to advocate for the best interest of the child.



## 5 PERMANENCY

Voices For Children strives to work with the child, their family, and all stakeholders to find permanency for the child in a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent placement.

# BEING A CASA



**All it really takes is  
somebody willing to learn  
and listen.**

Mark Troy  
2024 Advocate of the Year



## Mark Troy

### Bonnie Wikse 2024 Advocate of the Year

This award recognizes a CASA volunteer who embodies the spirit and goals of Voices for Children, providing tireless advocacy for the children they serve.

Mark is a native of Saint Louis, a graduate of Quincy University, and a former Peace Corps Volunteer. He earned a doctorate from the University of Hawaii before moving to College Station. In 2011, he was invited to serve on the Board of Directors for Voices for Children where he acquired an understanding and appreciation for the mission of CASA. The dedicated hard work of his wife, Mary Frances, herself an advocate, inspired him to take CASA training and, in 2019, following his retirement from Texas A&M, he became an advocate.



Mark & Mary Fran Troy

Since that time, Mark has served as an Early Family Engagement CASA on 39 cases, completing an initial investigation and making recommendations to the court at the Adversary Hearing. Mark has served as the long-term CASA for 9 children staying with those children from the time they came into care until each case closed with a permanent home for the kids. Sometimes, the relationship with some of the kids he has served has continued beyond the close of the case.

To learn more about Mark's service as a CASA, view his Advocate of the Year interview:



# Voices for Children Honorees

Voices for Children recognizes several individuals and organizations from the community each year for their ongoing efforts to address challenges faced by children and families involved in the foster care system. The following honorees were recognized by Voices for Children: Shane & Jean Phelps (Champion for Children), Greater Texas Federal Credit Union / Aggieland Credit Union (Ronnie Jackson Friend of Children), Mark Troy (Bonnie Wikse Advocate of the Year) and John Bennett & Santos Arguello (Ron & Judy Winn Foster Parents of the Year - photo unavailable).



Champion for Children Award  
Shane & Jean Phelps

The Champion for Children Award recognizes an individual or organization that demonstrates their long-standing financial support and unwavering commitment to advancing the mission of Voices for Children.



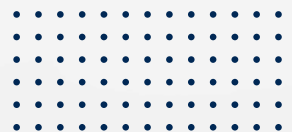
Ronnie Jackson Friend of Children Award  
Aggieland Credit Union

This award recognizes an organization or individual who has shown particular devotion to the well-being of children through their support of Voices for Children and their commitment to service.

## Thank you to our Community Partners!



Visit [vfcbrasos.org/corporate-giving-program](http://vfcbrasos.org/corporate-giving-program) to learn how your business can partner with Voices for Children.





**CASA Brazos Valley  
Board of Trustees**

**Jean Phelps**

*Attorney, Law office of Shane Phelps*

**Andy Winn**

*Owner/Vice President Beal & Winn Insurance*

**Mark Browning**

*Sr. VP and Trust Officer, Extraco Banks*

**Ernie Wright**

*Retired investment professional*



The CASA Brazos Valley Foundation is a nonprofit corporation formed to raise current funds and estate gifts to provide endowed financial support to Voices for Children's operations. It is managed by a volunteer board: Jean Phelps, Andy Winn, Ernie Wright, and Mark Browning.

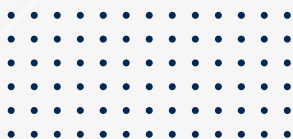
The CASA of the Brazos Valley Foundation ended 2023 with assets under management totaling \$102,574.20, which includes our main unrestricted endowment and the Jan & Gary Barnett Scholarship fund. Our investments returned 14.97% in 2023 under the management of our outside investment firm.

To provide meaningful support to Voices for Children, the Board of the Foundation has elected to build the main endowment assets, through donor contributions and reinvested investment returns, until the fund reaches a value of \$500,000. At that time, we will initiate annual distributions for our sole purpose, which is to support the operations of Voices for Children.

The Barnett Scholarship fund began making distributions in 2023 to support former foster children who are now pursuing post-secondary education. We will soon announce another special purpose fund created to provide financial support for training and continuing education to VFC staff and volunteers.

The CASA of the Brazos Valley Foundation fully supports the Voices For Children theme of volunteerism and connection as we watch our generous supporters give of their "time, talent, and treasure" to build long-term resources. We need your help to grow the CBVVF! We invite you to visit with a board member about how you can include Voices for Children and the CBVVF in your estate plans. The CBVVF appreciates your help in connecting the board with the "Doers, Donors, and Door Openers" of the Brazos Valley who share your passion for providing advocacy for children in foster care.

To discuss planned giving opportunities or for additional information, please contact the Foundation at [foundation@vfcbrasos.org](mailto:foundation@vfcbrasos.org)





# Contact Us



979.822.9700



[vfc@vfcbrazos.org](mailto:vfc@vfcbrazos.org)



[www.vfcbrazos.org](http://www.vfcbrazos.org)



@vfcbrazos

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- it's you.®**

