

2022

Annual Report



VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Court Appointed Special Advocates

Challenges, Changes, and Opportunities



In 2022, Voices for Children welcomed Executive Director, Amy Faulkner. Amy has been part of the VFC community since 2005 and is thrilled to be leading the dedicated staff and volunteers who carry out the mission.

This past year has been an adventure. It has brought many challenges, changes, and opportunities. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the profound changes that have taken place, Voices for Children, like other volunteer-driven organizations, faced many challenges. During 2022, VFC supported 173 volunteers serving 433 children. With a decrease in the number of volunteers serving our area, VFC was only able to serve 74% of children in CPS care. Increased community awareness and recruitment efforts are essential for the organization to continue to grow and ensure every child in CPS care has a CASA. Our recruitment team made more than 30 presentations to local groups to educate and inform the community about the need for CASA volunteers. Momentum is building with the increased community presence and it is anticipated to continue this trajectory through 2023. VFC is excited about the new partnerships and additional volunteers to serve children and families.

These challenges have provided an opportunity to develop strong partnerships in the community. Voices for Children and other stakeholders working in the child welfare arena need to be more proactive and intentional in our approach to effectively strengthen families. Collaborative Family Engagement has been a core model for effective advocacy at VFC since 2017. CFE is a team-based approach that recognizes children have the best chance of success when their families are engaged in the process of ensuring their safety, permanency, and well-being.

The 2022 year also saw the successful transition of Voices for Children from a 7-county program to a 5-county program with the launch of Freestone & Limestone Counties as their own independent CASA program, now known as Bi-Stone CASA, in September 2022.

So, what does the future look like for Voices for Children moving forward? VFC is actively engaging in the community, spreading awareness of the issues faced by children and families involved in the child welfare system. To extend resources, VFC staff has developed the ROAR program (Recruitment Outreach & Advocacy Representatives), created to encourage the intentional engagement of volunteers to assist with community events, presentations, and administrative tasks. Plans are also in place to complete modifications to our building. These modifications will allow better use of our space and ensure we are in compliance with building codes. VFC is actively growing the CASA Brazos Valley Foundation which, when fully funded, will lessen the program's dependence on other diminishing financial resources. And finally, VFC is continuing to focus on providing high-quality advocacy for children involved in the foster care system.

Voices for Children is grateful for the ongoing support of our donors, community partners, and volunteers. Thank you for your continued support and for standing with us as we work to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families in our community.

A handwritten signature of Amy Faulkner in black ink, written over a light blue background.

Amy Faulkner

Voices for Children Executive Director

VOICES FOR CHILDREN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Delores Crum, Premiere Events - BCS
Board President

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

Lauren Fox, College Station Hilton & Conference Center
2nd Vice President

Jacque Flagg, Voices for Children Founding Member
Treasurer

Sherry Pittman, Aggieland Realtors
Secretary

Shane Phelps, Law Offices of Shane Phelps
Immediate Past President



Board Members at Large

Mary Barringer, Licensed Specialist in School Psychology-Educational Consultant

Alice Blue-McLendon, TAMU Winnie Carter Wild Life Center - Clinical Associate Professor & Veterinarian

Caleb Britt, KBTX - Multi-media Journalist

Billy Castillo, D'Vine Cuisine

Brac Jones, Texas Farm Bureau - retired

Phil Reeves, Community Volunteer

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

Justine Spath, VFC Advocate Representative





The commitment of one's time, talent, and emotions to an unknown child for an undetermined amount of time seems daunting, even frightening, until you consider that the child may never have had an adult so unconditionally love him/her, including the parents. It becomes an even more unbalanced consideration of risk and exposure of oneself when you consider that the child's life may have been laid bare to the world with no security for the future.

Thus, the consideration of investing my time in the child really comes to only one conclusion: yes, it is worth the effort.

To hear more from Stephine about her experiences as a Voices for Children advocate, visit <https://youtu.be/OA86FAJhfUI>

Stephine Lacey
2022 Bonnie Wikse Advocate of the Year

Why CASA?

Advocate Stories

I am a former foster parent and have adopted two children through foster care. I am passionate about serving children from hard places. I believe that foster care is broken and foster care is beautiful. I believe that families should be reunified and that children should be protected. I believe that adoption is traumatic and adoption is healing. In my profession as a speech-language pathologist, I help give children a voice. I want to help provide and amplify voices of some of our most vulnerable children. As a CASA, I am passionate about my role of advocating for the child's best interest. I am both honored and humbled by this responsibility.



"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

– Mother Teresa

Amanda Bowen
Voices for Children Advocate

Why CASA?

Board Member Stories



DELORES CRUM

VFC BOARD PRESIDENT / PREMIERE EVENTS

I'm involved with VFC because every child deserves a chance - a chance I can help provide by donating time, energy, and financial gifts that support VFC's critically important work. Accomplishing our mission, providing effective advocacy for the children and families we're appointed by the court system to serve, requires a village. Together, we can, and we do, make a difference!



BILLY CASTILLO

VFC BOARD MEMBER / D'VINE CUISINE

I decided to volunteer with VFC because of its commitment to the local community and the fact that it is run by dedicated local staff and volunteers. One of the things I appreciate about VFC is that we prioritize the welfare of children and ensure that their best interests are always kept in mind. For many children in foster care, CASAs are the only consistent presence in their lives, and it is an honor to be a part of advocating on their behalf.



CALEB BRITT

VFC BOARD MEMBER / KBTX MULTI MEDIA JOURNALIST

It's an honor to stand alongside others on a mission to change a child's story. There are hundreds of children in the Brazos Valley in the foster care system. The Voices For Children team, CASA volunteers, and board members aim to stand in the gaps to ensure that these children feel loved, valued, and protected. Whether giving your time or resources, you can also help ensure these children live a prosperous and productive life.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

ASSETS, LIABILITIES, NET ASSETS

	2020	2021
ASSETS	\$602,829	\$765,577
LIABILITIES	\$15,658	\$ 34,127
NET ASSETS	\$587,171	\$731,450

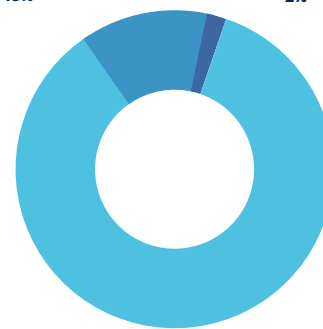
	2020	2021
REVENUE	\$1,115,395	\$1,072,963
EXPENSES	\$932,928	\$ 928,684

MANAGEMENT

13%

FUNDRAISING

2%



PROGRAMS

85%

2021 ANNUAL OPERATING EXPENSES

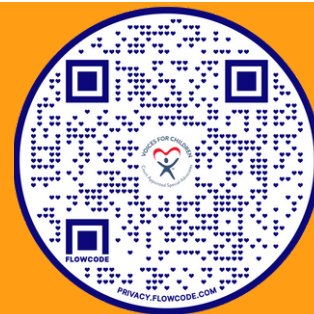
SUPPORT VFC - NOW & IN THE FUTURE

Our supporters make our work possible.

Want to make a difference right now?

Make a donation today to ensure children have a quality advocate as they navigate foster care.

Scan the QR for giving options.



Thank you to our Corporate Partners!

Corporate Partners commit to supporting advocacy efforts at the \$10,000+ level. Their partnership supported advocacy for 433 children this past year. We cannot thank you enough for your commitment to providing advocacy for children in our community!



THE LAW OFFICE OF
SHANE PHELPS, P.C.

Visit vfcbrasos.org/corporate-giving-program to learn how your business can partner with Voices for Children.

Voices For Children Inc., CASA of Brazos Valley

Serving Brazos, Burleson, Freestone, Grimes, Leon, Limestone and Madison Counties

Established in 2000 • Service Area Population: 360,889 • Square Miles of Service Area 5,448

CASA is of, and for, the community

CASA volunteers are community members advocating for the best interest of children involved in the foster care system. CASA volunteers are well-trained and work to address a child's mental, medical and educational needs during their time in foster care.

Local CASA Program FY2022 Service

Texas CASA Network FY2022 Service

433
173
8,789

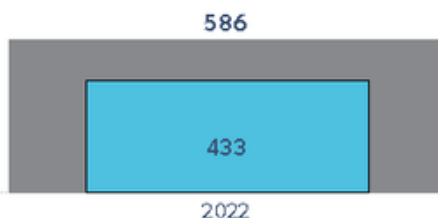
Children Served
CASA Volunteers
Volunteer Hours

23,943
9,590
361,517

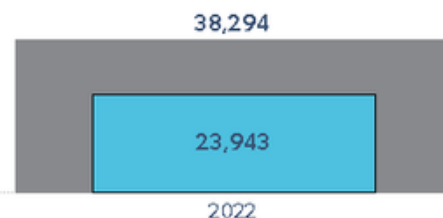
CASA volunteers support children and families involved in the child welfare system

Through the recruitment, training, supervision, and empowering of CASA volunteers appointed by the local court, CASA programs strive toward the common goal of providing a CASA volunteer for every child who needs one.

Children Served by Local CASA Program



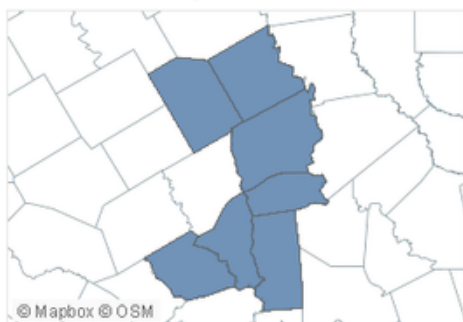
Children Served by Texas CASA Network



An investment in CASA is an investment in your community

The Texas Legislature provides state funding for local CASA programs to ensure CASA volunteers can provide high-quality advocacy for children, youth and families experiencing foster care. This funding is essential to the operations and administration of the 73 local CASA programs in Texas.

Local Program Service Area



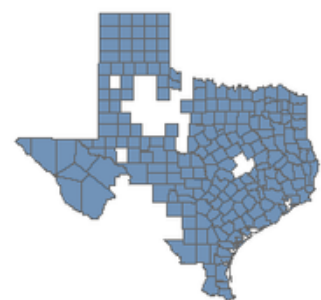
\$14,165,016

89% of FY 2023 state
funding was directly passed
through to local programs

This program receives:

\$219,036

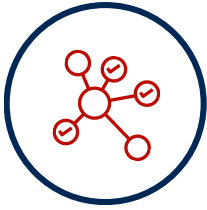
Texas CASA Network Service Area



Building Connections

COLLABORATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family is Important



Collaborative Family Engagement is a team-based approach between local CASA programs and CPS to engage, find and work with family members and fictive kin in the creation and development of a lifetime network for young people in the foster care system. One of the goals of CFE is to help children achieve strong connectivity and permanency faster, preferably with relatives or other trusted loved ones. In collaboration with the Department of Family & Protective Services (DFPS), local CASA programs and community partners, we are working to ensure that every child in foster care has the opportunity for lifelong connections.

CFE's goal is to identify and increase the families support network that is meant to last beyond their involvement in the child protection system.

FOUR PILLARS OF COLLABORATIVE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT



COLLABORATE

Greater collaboration between stakeholders to involve families and build networks.



CULTIVATE

Access to connection, engagement and searching tools to engage and find family/important relationships.



CONVENE

Families and their support network come together for family meetings.



CONNECT

A lifetime network of supportive relationships is formed for the child and their family.



218

children from the Brazos Valley found a safe and permanent home.

**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.

To discuss planned giving opportunities or for additional information please contact the Foundation at foundation@vfcbrazos.org

*The
Future*



Mark & Nancy Browning

Nancy's background working with youth and a career starting as a CPS case worker, together with Mark's background in trust banking was a good formula for figuring out how to express their passions for supporting young people and education. Working with young people in their careers, in their church and later serving on scholarship efforts for high school seniors was just confirmation that these were important areas for the Brownings to support.

Nancy currently serves as the Development Director for Voices for Children, having started in 2017 as a volunteer for the organization. Mark is a Senior Vice President and Trust Officer with a local banking institution and volunteers as a Board member for the CASA Brazos Valley Foundation. After their first child was born in the early 1990's, Nancy and Mark drafted their first will. Their most recent estate documents, written after their three kids reached adulthood, allowed some planning to benefit charitable causes they support. "We have chosen a direction by which we include our children in our estate plans, and also support Voices for Children and other charitable causes we are passionate about," Nancy states.

The Brownings have included provisions in their estate plan to support Voices for Children via a gift to the CASA Brazos Valley Foundation in their will after their passing. "The earnings from the Foundation's endowment will help support the operations of Voices for Children in perpetuity, reducing their dependence on fundraising events and government grants," Mark mentions.

To find out more about methods to support the CASA Brazos Valley Foundation and Voices for Children with a will bequest or other methods, visit our website at <https://www.vfcbrazos.org/foundation>, email foundation@vfcbrazos.org or call 979-822-9700.

Voices for Children in the Community



Voices for Children Staff
December 2022

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Contact Us



979.822.9700



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www.vfcbrazos.org



@vfcbrazos



**Every child has a chance
- it's you.®**

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.