

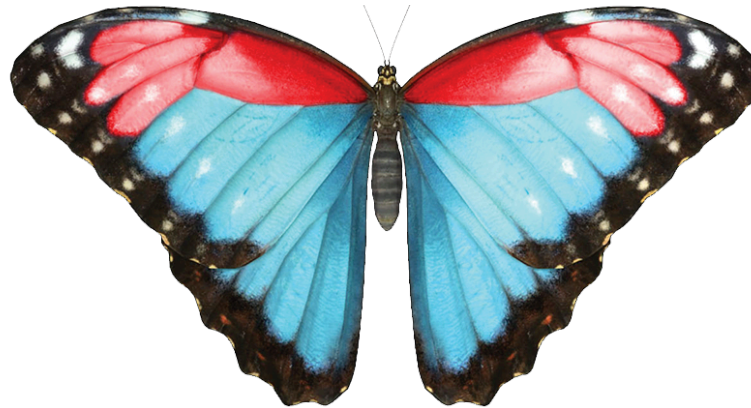
# VOICES FOR CHILDREN, CASA ANNUAL REPORT

---

20  
25



# THE CASA EFFECT



Our mission is to equip trained volunteers to advocate for the best interest and wellbeing of children in the foster care system, until they are placed in safe, permanent homes.

*“Small moments today make a big impact tomorrow”*

# A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

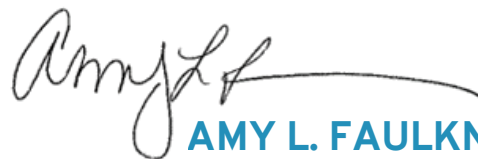
*For 25 years, Voices for Children has stood alongside children in foster care thanks to a generous community that chose to invest in advocacy. This milestone reflects more than time - it represents The CASA Effect: what happens when a trained, consistent volunteer shows up for a child and helps shape safer, more stable futures.*

*Over the past 25 years, more than 765 dedicated volunteers have served as Court Appointed Special Advocates, collectively supporting over 2,200 children in our community. This year alone, 100 CASA volunteers advocated for 266 children where the heart of this work remains just as strong today. Your investment fuels advocacy that prioritizes safety, preserves family connections whenever possible, and connects families to resources that support stability and lasting change.*

*We are also deeply grateful to our community partners; CPS professionals, attorneys, judges, and service providers. Their collaboration is essential to effective advocacy. CASA works because it is rooted in partnership and shared commitment to children and families.*

*This year, donor generosity was powerfully felt. Our second annual Pickleball Palooza raised just over \$50,000 to support CASA advocacy, and our 25th anniversary Jubilee in March brought our community together in celebration while raising vital funds to sustain our work. These moments are reminders that behind every dollar is a child who benefits from consistent, informed advocacy.*

*To our donors, staff, and volunteers: thank you for believing in the power of one committed advocate to change a child's story. As you continue through this report, I invite you to meet the children, families, and volunteers whose experiences reflect The CASA Effect and show exactly why your support matters.*



**AMY L. FAULKNER**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# OUR STORY

## The CASA movement begins in Seattle, Washington.

A juvenile court judge recognizes a critical gap in child welfare cases: judges are being asked to make life-changing decisions for children without having all the information they need. Community volunteers are appointed to advocate solely for a child's best interests — and the CASA movement is born..

1977

1989

## The CASA movement expands to Texas.

Texas CASA is established, laying the groundwork for a statewide network of local programs committed to ensuring children in foster care have a powerful, consistent voice in court. There are currently 74 CASA programs in the state of Texas.

## Voices for Children, CASA is founded in Bryan, Texas.

In response to growing local need, Voices for Children is established to recruit, train, and support community volunteers to advocate for children navigating the foster care system in the Brazos Valley.

2000

2001

## Voices for Children trains its first class of CASA volunteers.

From the beginning, the program is built on the belief that trained community members can bring stability, insight, and compassion to a child's life during an uncertain time.

## Voices for Children, CASA serves five counties .

Today, Voices for Children supports more than 135 trained CASA volunteers advocating for children in Brazos, Burleson, Grimes, Madison, and Leon counties — ensuring children's voices are heard until they are placed in safe, permanent homes.

2025

## 2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOT

5

County service  
area

3,600

Square miles in  
coverage area

\$2,500

Cost to train a  
new volunteer

2,298

Hours meeting with  
children & families

266

Children Served

100

Active CASA  
Volunteers

72,954

Miles Driven by  
Volunteers

5,644

Documented  
Volunteer Hours

85

Children achieved  
Permanency

## SAVE THE DATE

### COFFEE CRAWL



Participants explore local coffee shops across Bryan-College Station while supporting advocacy for children in foster care.

### MAHJONG



A social mahjong event, a traditional tile-based game, benefiting CASA volunteers and children in foster care.

### PICKLEBALL PALOOZA TOURNAMENT



The Pickleball Palooza Tournament is one of Voices for Children's fundraising events, bringing the community together for friendly competition and meaningful impact.

### BRAZOS VALLEY GIVES



An 18-hour online giving event that unites the Brazos Valley in support of local nonprofit organizations.

### THETA 5K



CASA is the national philanthropy for Kappa Alpha Theta. "Theta" hosts the CASA 5K annually in April. Proceeds from the event benefit Voices for Children and the Theta Foundation.

### HOLIDAY GIFT DRIVE



An annual toy drive that brings joy and comfort to children during the holiday season.

### SHOP FOR CASA



This back-to-school drive is meant to provide basics like clothing and backpacks so that a child can feel confident going back to school. The goal is to provide two new outfits and a backpack for each child.

### PAGES & PINTS



A community fundraiser hosted by a local brewery and bookstore. Come enjoy a pint, discover some great reads, and support kids in foster care!

# “THEY NEED PEOPLE. AND WHEN YOU SHOW UP, YOU DON’T JUST CHANGE A CASE... YOU CHANGE A LIFE.”

*As a child in foster care, Shawnee learned early that adults could disappear. Visits were scheduled, hopes were high — and sometimes no one came. But his CASA did.*

*“My CASA would show up to my visits,” he said. “Sometimes my parents didn’t, so I’d be left there waiting until my foster family came. He would come and bring something to eat... or a little gift card with five dollars.”*

*It wasn’t the food or the money that stayed with him. It was what those moments meant: I see you. You matter. “It didn’t feel like someone was just recording my life down,” he explained. “It felt like someone actually cared about me — from the heart.”*

*That consistency became a turning point for Shawnee. In foster care, social workers changed. Lawyers came and went. Decisions were made by adults with deadlines and pressure. But his CASA offered something different: a steady relationship and a voice that didn’t disappear.*

*“That made me feel more worthy of myself,” he said. “When your life is being ripped apart, it’s hard to believe you’re worthy.”*

*Years later, that memory became his motivation. Shawnee has now served as a CASA volunteer with Voices for Children for more than three years — building relationships with young children, staying connected to their placements, and showing up in the moments that matter.*

*In one case, nearly everyone pushed toward returning a child to her mother before a full investigation — but Shawnee knew the option was unsafe based on the time he had spent listening to, observing, and learning from the child and her family.*

*“It felt like a setup for failure,” he said. “I wasn’t worried about who I offended. I’m here for the truth — and for the safety and well-being of the child.”*

*Before reunification could happen, the mother tested positive for cocaine — confirming what he had feared.*

*“I don’t know what would have happened if she would have gone back,” he said. “That’s why this role matters.”*

*His perspective is shaped not only by his childhood, but also by his career: he works in a prison system. He sees what happens when children grow up without stable support, without tools, without anyone to guide them toward healthy relationships.*

*“I see the end of the story every day,” he explains. “Prison. Addiction. Homelessness. Those outcomes don’t start in adulthood — they start in childhood.”*

*“That’s the difference we’re making. It’s not just case-by-case. It’s a lifelong impact.”*

*To him, CASA is more than advocacy. It’s an example of what safe, consistent care looks like — and proof to a child that they are worthy of patience, belonging, and a future.*

*“They need healthy adults with compassion and care,” he said. “They need people. And when you show up, you don’t just change a case... you change a life.”*

**- Shawnee (CASA Volunteer)**



# CBVF: GROWING TO GIVE BACK

The endowment fund established by the CASA of the Brazos Valley Foundation works to provide funding in perpetuity for Voices for Children, Inc. At the close of 2024, the Foundation managed \$175,390.58 in assets, including our unrestricted endowment, the Wikse Continuing Education Fund, and the Jan & Gary Barnett Scholarship Fund. Investments returned 9.58% under the guidance of our outside investment firm.

The Foundation Board—Jean Phelps, Andy Winn, Mark Browning, and Ernie Wright—is committed to growing the main endowment to \$500,000 through donor contributions and reinvested earnings. Once reached, annual distributions will directly support Voices for Children’s operations.



Learn more at [www.vfcbrazos.org/foundation](http://www.vfcbrazos.org/foundation) or contact us at [foundation@vfcbrazos.org](mailto:foundation@vfcbrazos.org).

## BUILDING BRIGHTER TOMORROWS, ONE GIFT AT A TIME

Supporter Spotlight: Carmella & George Edwards

Carmella and George Edwards have called the Brazos Valley home since the 1970s. Deeply connected to the community, they believe in leaving it better than they found it. They included Voices for Children in their estate plan because they know that early intervention can change the course of a child’s life.

Creating an endowment to support the operations of Voices for Children will give the organization a reliable source of funding and greater potential to engage in long-term planning.

*Have you remembered Voices for Children in your will?*

“  
It’s especially satisfying to be able to provide assistance at a critical point in a young person’s life.  
”

George Edwards III  
CBVF Supporter

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Executive Committee

### Ex-Officio



**Alice Blue-McLendon**  
Board President  
Brazos County, Vet Science, Lifetime Member



**Dwight Mathis**  
Vice President/ Treasurer  
Leon County, Retired Law Enforcement, 2025-2027



**Alex Tran**  
Secretary  
Brazos County, CPA, 2025-2027



**Billy Castillo**  
Immediate Past President  
Brazos County, Business Owner, 2024-2026



**Amy Faulkner**  
VFC Executive Director



**Tom Walker**  
VFC Advocate Representative, 2026

### Board Members at Large




**Amber Widener**  
Brazos County, CPA, 2024-2026



**Anjelica Harris**  
Brazos County, Attorney, 2026-2028



**April Douglass**  
Brazos County, Education, 2026-2028




**Susan Mott**  
Burleson County, Chamber of Commerce, 2024-2026



**Bonnie Davila**  
Brazos County, Nonprofit, 2026-2028



**Denise Beakey**  
Brazos County, Education, 2025-2027



**Joel Bravo**  
Brazos County, Finance, 2025-2027



**Melissa Vezurk**  
Grimes County, Banking, 2025-2027

# FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

2024

<b>Revenue</b> \$1,183,685	<b>Expenses</b> \$977,704
-------------------------------	------------------------------

2025

<b>Revenue</b> \$969,456	<b>Expenses</b> \$970,448
-----------------------------	------------------------------

2024

<b>Assets</b> \$1,439,415
------------------------------

<b>Liabilities</b> \$101,116
---------------------------------

<b>Net Assets</b> \$1,338,299
----------------------------------

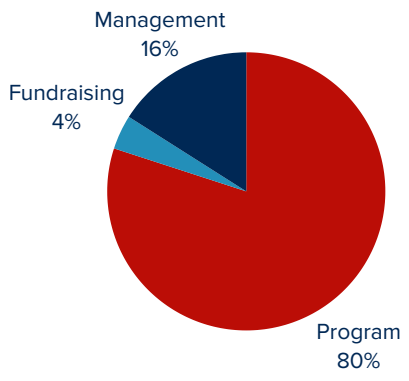
2025

<b>Assets</b> \$1,367,367
------------------------------

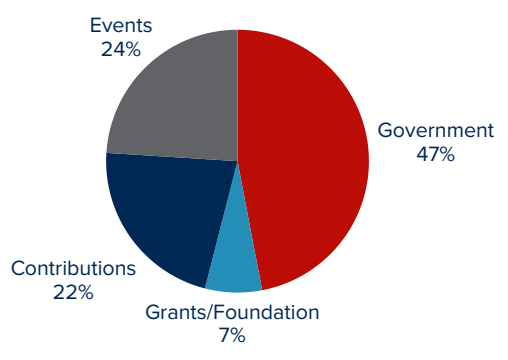
<b>Liabilities</b> \$55,060
--------------------------------

<b>Net Assets</b> \$1,312,307
----------------------------------

## Annual Operating Expenses



## Funding Sources



# “I DIDN’T CHANGE THE WORLD — BUT I CHANGED THAT KID’S WORLD.”

*Katie became a CASA volunteer in 2017 after seeing the impact of advocacy firsthand within her own family. A relative was fighting for custody of a grandchild, and the presence of a CASA volunteer in court made a critical difference.*

*Years later, Katie found herself on a case that reminded her exactly why persistence and consistency matter. Two children had been brought to Texas from another state and placed in foster care. The adults who knew them best were hundreds of miles away. The case was complex, constantly shifting, and moving toward an outcome that felt easier on paper: non-relative adoption.*

*During a routine visit, while coloring and placing stickers together, one of the children began talking about the beach — and about someone they loved deeply: “MiMi.”*

*To anyone else, it might have sounded like a nickname in a child’s story. To Katie, it sounded like a real family connection that hadn’t been identified.*

*As the case progressed, pressure to close it increased. There were delays. There were doubts. The mother refused to provide information about relatives, and no one could identify who “MiMi” was.*

*On the paternal side, the children’s father had expressed interest in taking custody — but an arrest from decades earlier raised concerns, despite a long history of stability since. Katie refused to let the case move forward without fully exploring family placement.*

*She documented everything. She asked difficult questions. She advocated across state lines. She pushed — sometimes uncomfortably — for the children’s story to be fully understood before permanent decisions were made.*

*The day before court, she found the missing piece: “MiMi.”*

*By identifying her, Katie demonstrated that the children had an existing, loving family network — one that knew them, remembered them, and wanted them. That discovery forced the case to slow down and reopened conversations about family reunification rather than non-relative adoption.*

*In court, Katie told the caseworker, “I found her. Please don’t start the process for non-relative adoption.”*

*With renewed momentum — and with the children’s attorney taking a deeper look at all family options — the father was ultimately approved for placement.*

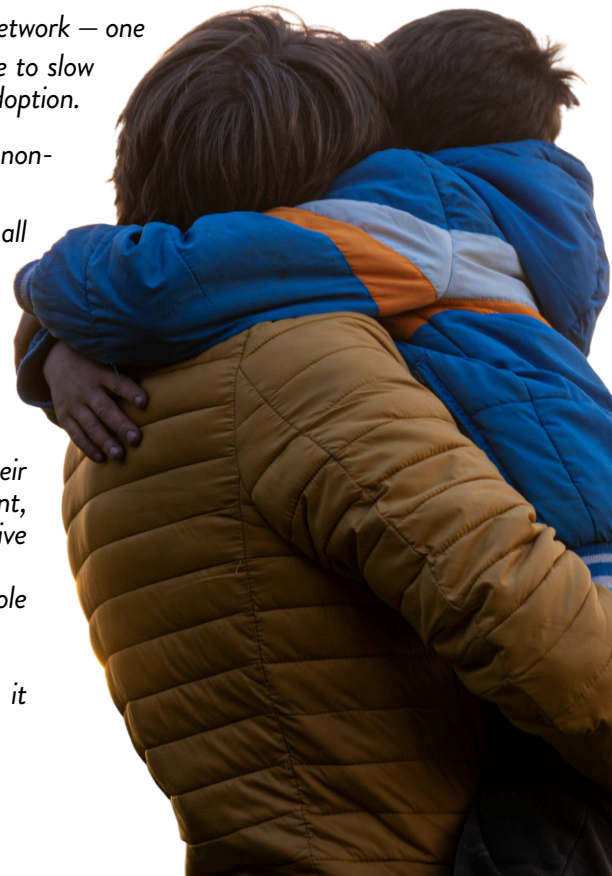
*When he arrived for a supervised visit, the children ran to him. He cried. They hugged him tightly. Watching from behind the two-way mirror, the attorney turned to Katie with tears in her eyes and said, “You were 100% right. I’m so glad we got this outcome.”*

*For Katie, the moment mattered not only because the children were reunified with their father — but because they were returned to an entire network of belonging: a loving aunt, familiar cousins, and family connections that would have been lost through non-relative adoption.*

*“It wasn’t just returning them to one person,” Katie said. “It was returning them to a whole family — people who already loved them.”*

*Katie describes herself simply: persistent, consistent, and willing to be “a pain” when it counts. But the reason she continues to serve as a CASA volunteer is straightforward. “I didn’t change the world,” she says. “But I changed that kid’s world.”*

## - Katie (CASA Volunteer)



# BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

MAKE A DIFFERENCE. MONTH AFTER MONTH.

Behind every CASA volunteer is a community of supporters who make consistent advocacy possible. Monthly giving provides the stability Voices for Children needs to recruit, train, and support CASA volunteers — ensuring children in foster care are never without a voice.

When you give monthly, you're not responding to a crisis. You're helping prevent one by making sure advocacy is there from the beginning — and stays for as long as a child needs it.

## Why Monthly Giving Matters:

### Stability

Reliable funding allows us to plan, train volunteers, and meet children's needs without interruption.

### Continuity

Children's cases can last months or years. Monthly support ensures advocacy lasts just as long.

### Impact

Your gift directly supports volunteer training, child visits, court preparation, and advocacy resources.



## Friend

\$25/month

**IMPACT:** Supplies a CASA with resources for child visits

**BENEFIT:** Quarterly email updates + annual thank-you letter



## Supporter

\$50/month

**IMPACT:** Supports travel costs for child advocates

**BENEFIT:** All Friend benefits + name listed in annual report



## Advocate

\$100/month

**IMPACT:** Provides advocacy for a child for a full year

**BENEFIT:** All Supporter benefits + special impact story



## Champion

\$250/month

**IMPACT:** Covers training costs for a new class of CASA volunteers

**BENEFIT:** All Advocate benefits + recognition on social media



Voices for Children, CASA serves a five-county area spanning more than 3,600 square miles.

Providing advocacy at this scale requires careful planning, trained volunteers, and sustained operational support.

# 75+



## New Monthly Donors

\$25, \$50, \$100

*Help us reach our goal in the new year!*

# CORPORATE & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

## PARTNER WITH US. CHANGE LIVES LOCALLY.

Local businesses play a vital role in strengthening advocacy for children in foster care. Corporate partnerships provide steady, dependable funding that allows Voices for Children to expand programs, train volunteers, and reach more children across the Brazos Valley.

When businesses partner monthly, they invest directly in the well-being of children in their own communities.

### Why Partner as a Business:

#### Local Impact

Your support stays in the Brazos Valley, directly benefiting children and families here.

#### Sustained Advocacy

Monthly partnerships help maintain a steady pipeline of trained CASA volunteers.

#### Community Leadership

Corporate partners demonstrate a commitment to children, families, and long-term solutions.



### Advocate

\$200/month

IMPACT: Covers technology updates for staff and volunteers

BENEFIT: Name listed on website, annual report & quarterly impact updates



### Champion

\$425/month

IMPACT: Provides advocacy for 5 children for a full year

BENEFIT: All Advocate benefits + social media spotlight once a year



### Leader

\$600/month

IMPACT: Funds recruitment, training, and ongoing support for CASA volunteers

BENEFIT: All Champion benefits + logo in all newsletters & event signage



### Visionary

\$1000/month

IMPACT: Funds the Continuing Education of staff and volunteers

BENEFIT: All Leader benefits + featured story in our annual report & spotlight at signature events



Being there — consistently — is what makes the difference.”

-CASA Volunteer



# THANK YOU



## TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Voices for Children | 115 N. Main St. Bryan, Texas 77803 | 979-822-9700 | @vfcbrasos | www.vfcbrasos.org

As a volunteer-based organization, social media helps us extend our reach and share the impact of advocacy.

**Follow along to stay connected.**



@vfc.casa.brazos



@vfcbrasos



@Voices For Children