

## Mission:

CASA of Tarrant County speaks up for abused and neglected children by training court-appointed volunteers to make recommendations for safe, permanent homes where these children can thrive.

## Vision:

A clear voice, a safe home and a bright future for every abused and neglected child living in foster care in Tarrant County

## Promise:

Raising a voice against the unspeakable

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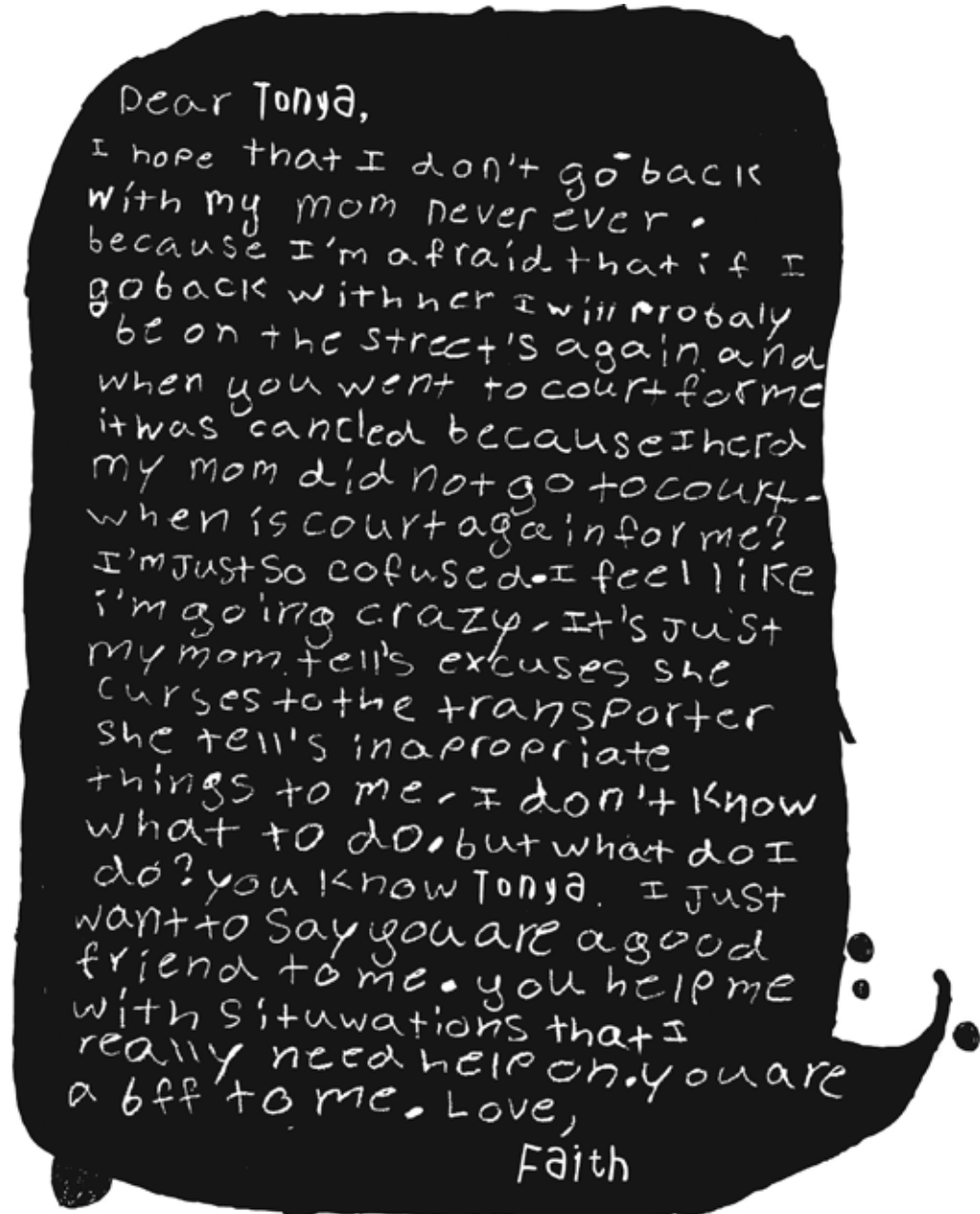
Connie R. Brown, CFRE

SpeakUpForAChild.org

Winter 2011

# Spirit of hope

A PUBLICATION OF CASA OF TARRANT COUNTY, INC.



Volunteer Advocate "Tonya" received a precious gift from "Faith". A note to tell her just how important her role is in keeping "Faith's" story before the judge and making sure that her best interests are being met. This holiday season please consider a gift to the 2011 Children's Campaign. Your support will help to ensure that the over 400 children, just like "Faith", that are waiting on the critical voice of an Advocate will not be forgotten, lost or silenced.

Please make a secure online donation at [SpeakUpForChild.org](http://SpeakUpForChild.org) or call 817.877.5891.

**400 innocent victims are waiting.**

CASA of Tarrant County, Inc.  
Staff

**Connie R. Brown, CFRE**  
Executive Director

**Lynne Burns**  
Casework Supervisor -  
Transitioning Youth Specialist

**Susan A. Chapman**  
Casework Supervisor - Intake

**Verna Cook**  
Administrative Assistant

**Tonya Green**  
Program Director

**Lindsey Guerin**  
Casework Supervisor

**Christina L. Judge, MA, CFRE**  
Director of Development

**Randee Kaitcer**  
Family Connections Specialist

**Natasha Lawry**  
Casework Supervisor

**Cherine Murray**  
Communications Specialist

**Bertha Orona**  
Casework Supervisor

**Heather Pearson**  
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**Charlotte Smith**  
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**Nicole Vasquez**  
Casework Supervisor

**Teddi Wiggins**  
Outreach - Recruitment Specialist

**Nicole Williams**  
Trainer - Casework Supervisor

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Fort Worth, TX 76102

**817-877-5891**  
**Fax: 817-877-3200**

[SpeakUpForAChild.org](http://SpeakUpForAChild.org)

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Once again, the holiday season has arrived which means we are soon to close another year! **Reflecting upon 2011, CASA of Tarrant County has many things for which to be grateful.**

An outpouring of generosity from individuals across our community continues to come our way. We are on pace to have more active volunteer advocates than ever before in the course of one year. Our **Board of Directors** is diligent in ensuring that strategies are in place to maximize our mission effectiveness. Our incredibly dedicated and talented **Staff** and **Volunteer Advocates** work tirelessly to ensure that the abused and neglected children in our community have the voice they deserve. And last, but not least, our **Donor Partners** continue to support our efforts during extraordinarily difficult economic times. We are thankful for the steadfast support of time, talent and treasure from all of these individuals.

As many of you know, our state recently underwent one of the most challenging legislative budget sessions in our history. CASA programs across Texas were at risk of severe and devastating budget cuts. **Joe Gagen**, CEO of Texas CASA, and **Andrea Sparks**, Public Affairs Director for Texas CASA, meticulously worked to mobilize CASA programs across the state to meet with legislative officials communicating the urgency of our important mission. CASA of Tarrant County was very proud to be part of such a worthwhile endeavor. Locally, **Senator Jane Nelson, Senator Chris Harris** and **Senator Wendy Davis** have been particularly supportive of our efforts. We are thrilled to report that in the end, CASA programs across the state of Texas prevailed, not only in maintaining their current level of funding but with a significant increase in appropriations! Our Texas Legislators placed a priority on our state's most vulnerable children – a true act of leadership! For that, we are sincerely grateful.

We have been blessed with so much. That said, the sad reality is that more children need us now more than ever before! **Currently, more than 400 children are waiting on the critical voice of a CASA volunteer.** I am asking you to please give thoughtful consideration as to how you might make a meaningful difference. I encourage you to visit our website to find ways to volunteer and/or donate to our 2011 Children's Campaign. In a recent blog by National CASA CEO, Michael Piraino he says it best: "...we owe it to the thousands of children in care to remember that they are people, not statistics. We are obliged to listen to their concerns, to lift up their voices and to do everything we can to guide each of them safely to a permanent home." Please join us in our steadfast efforts to do just that for every abused and neglected child in our community!

I wish you and yours a very warm holiday season filled much love and happiness!

Warmest Regards,

Connie R. Brown, CFRE  
Executive Director

3rd Annual holiday Gift wrap Project Volunteers Needed!

**The Hulen Mall Gift Wrap** raises money and awareness for CASA each holiday season. Funds raised go directly to provide services for the abused and neglected children of Tarrant County. Our gift wrap booth will be located at Hulen Mall (4800 South Hulen Street, Fort Worth) on the lower level in front of Dillard's.

**The Gift Wrap runs Sunday December 18, 22, 23, and 24.** Shifts are three hours each. We have a large number of shifts to staff, and we need as much community support as possible! This is a wonderful opportunity for community groups, families and individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of many children.

For more information or to volunteer contact **Bertha Orona** at 817-877-5891 or [bertha@casatc.org](mailto:bertha@casatc.org).

# Reaching Out

We ask you to consider inviting CASA of Tarrant County to your organization (professional or social), faith based institution, civic group, or corporation as a guest speaker! We also welcome the opportunity to host a short get together at your company and allow your co-workers to learn more about the mission of CASA of Tarrant County and the life changing work we do on behalf of abused and neglected children in Tarrant County. Please contact **Teddi Wiggins**, Outreach/Recruitment Specialist at 817.877.5891 or [teddi@casatc.org](mailto:teddi@casatc.org) today!

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please join us for an information session—a one hour session where we discuss the ins and outs of becoming an Advocate, as well as watch a short video and address any questions or concerns. These info sessions are required in order to move to the next phase of the enrollment process.

Sessions are held at the CASA office with scheduled dates and times listed below:

## JANUARY 2012

Wednesday	1/4	12 noon
Monday	1/9	12 noon
Saturday	1/21	12 noon
Wednesday	1/25	6pm

## FEBRUARY 2012

Saturday	2/4	12 noon
Wednesday	2/8	6pm
Thursday	2/16	12 noon
Monday	2/20	12 noon
Monday	2/27	6pm

## MARCH 2012

Tuesday	3/6	6pm
Saturday	3/17	12 noon
Thursday	3/22	12 noon
Wednesday	3/28	12 noon



## Strong voices for CASA

CASA of Tarrant County's Legislative Advocacy Team (LAT) is a model volunteer public policy advocacy group for CASA programs across Texas. The LAT's success is due to their persistent and consistent work to cultivate relationships with their legislators and legislative staffers and to provide vital input through written and oral testimony on legislation affecting CASA and the children we serve. Communication is key! During the most recent legislative session, not only were laws passed to provide improvements in the child welfare system, but a four million dollar increase over the next two years in appropriations was generated to support the critical work of CASA programs across the state of Texas. We are so proud of our CASA volunteers that go above and beyond to ensure that our legislators have the information they need to make the best decisions for abused and neglected children across our state.

For information on how you can get involved, please contact **Connie Brown** at [connie@casatc.org](mailto:connie@casatc.org). Additional strong voices are always needed for our children!



## The Perfect Gift for the Person who has Everything!

This holiday season remember family and friends through memorial and honorarium contributions to CASA of Tarrant County.

Your special gift will help ensure a safe, permanent and loving home for foster children in our community.

**Make your gift today by calling 817.877.5891 and ask for Christina Judge. Or make a secure donation online at [www.SpeakUpForAChild.org](http://www.SpeakUpForAChild.org)**

A special acknowledgement will be sent to your designated recipient.

## Free and Easy way to raise funds for CASA of Tarrant County!

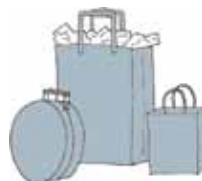
This is going to be the easiest thing we've ever asked you to do! We just signed up with GoodShop.com and now every time you shop online or search the internet, a donation will be made to CASA of Tarrant County.

### Here's how:

GoodShop.com works with more than 2,500 stores (including Target, Apple, Petsmart etc..) and every time you purchase something, a percentage will be donated to us! And, even more exciting, GoodShop also offers over 100,000 of the most up-to-date coupons and free shipping offers so you can save money at the same time. It's win win.

GoodSearch, a component of GoodShop, is a Yahoo powered search engine which makes a donation to us each time you do a search.

Join the rest of our community in using these sites to help us easily raise money for our mission.





*Matt Heinzelmann, Joni Heinzelmann, Alicia Lindsey and Steve Lindsey*



*Marty Durbin, Cheryl Durbin, Janice Graczyk, Morris Johnston*

# CASA uncorked

**Jon Bonnell**, renowned chef and owner of Bonnell's Fine Texas Cuisine, walked guests through the perfect food and wine pairings at the **2nd Annual CASA Uncorked** event. This intimate gathering took place on Wednesday, October 5th at the lovely home of Board Member **Laura O'Brien** and her husband **Michael**.



*Jon Bonnell, Kathryn Laughlin*



*Vicki Andrews, Mary Livingston, Christina Johnson*



*Georgina Condrey, Sarah Murrin*



*Connie Brown, Michael O'Brien, Janet Bishop, Martha Williams, Laura O'Brien*



*Lisa Grady, Martha Williams, Lynne Eller, Doug Eller*



*Brian Bell, Kara Bell, Cheryl Durbin, Marty Durbin*

# Save the Date

JUDGE SCOTT MOORE  
AWARDS DINNER

APRIL 12, 2012

GRAND BALLROOM  
RENAISSANCE  
WORTHINGTON  
HOTEL

Sponsorship opportunities  
and tickets are available.  
Please contact Christina Judge  
at [christina@casatc.org](mailto:christina@casatc.org)  
or 817-877-5891.

## Wishful Thinking

### Needs for the Children

More Advocates!

Gift Cards to Wal-Mart,  
Target or Babies-r-Us

Phone Cards

### Needs for the Office

Presentation  
and Speaking Opportunities

Coffee Pump  
Dispenser for Training

Gift Cards from  
Staples, Office Max,  
and Office Depot

20# All Purpose  
Copier Paper

Paper Goods (all white),  
Paper Plates, Napkins,  
Utensils and Cups



## CASA of Tarrant County Named Community Hero

On Saturday September 24th, during the coin toss at the TCU vs. Portland State game, CASA of Tarrant County was recognized by Community Trust Bank and TCU as the Community Hero of the Week!

Accepting the award on behalf of CASA of Tarrant County was State Advocate of the Year **Morris Johnston**, Executive Director **Connie R. Brown** and Advocate of the Year **Janice Graczyk**. Also photographed, far left, is **Grant James** - President of Community Trust Bank.

A very special thank you to Community Trust Bank and TCU for their continued support!

## CASA of Tarrant County Selected for Diligent Recruitment Pilot Program

Looking back to see what's been lost and moving forward to connect youth with people, places and memories that will last a lifetime.

We are pleased to announce that CASA of Tarrant County was selected, along with four other CASA programs across the state, as a recipient of a five year **Diligent Recruitment** Grant. The grant is a pilot program that will seek to eliminate barriers to permanency for Texas children in foster care. It provides child-specific, targeted, and general diligent recruitment of relatives, foster adoptive families, and adoptive families to improve concurrent permanency planning.



CASA of Tarrant County Casework Supervisor, **Randee Kaitcer**, has transitioned to the new role of Family Connections Specialist, a new collaboration with Texas CPS and Child Trends in an effort to find permanency and those sometimes elusive "family connections" for our children who are in Permanent Managing Conservatorship care the longest.

Our organization will be closely collaborating with the leadership of the Department of Family and Protective Services for Region 3. We all see this project as a win-win for children and youth and are eager to work together in searching for more hopeful outcomes for these young victims.

The Diligent Recruitment project has tremendous potential for discovering new ways to achieve true permanency for our children. One example is utilizing the **Heart Gallery of North Texas**, an exhibit that is designed to enlighten, inspire and generate awareness of special children who desire nothing more in life than to find a loving home. Professional photographers have volunteered to capture the spirit of children who are legally available for adoption through the art of photography. The children featured in this article are part of the Heart Gallery and available for adoption.



For more information visit:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption\\_and\\_Foster\\_Care/Texas\\_Heart\\_Galleries/NorthTexas/default.asp](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption_and_Foster_Care/Texas_Heart_Galleries/NorthTexas/default.asp)  
[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption\\_and\\_Foster\\_Care/About\\_TARE/Adoption/](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Adoption_and_Foster_Care/About_TARE/Adoption/)

We look forward to sharing more information about this worthwhile endeavor in the upcoming months.

# CASA of Tarrant County Gratefully Acknowledges Friends & Benefactors

Gifts from 3.18.2011 to 10.26.2011

## 3rd Party Benefit Events

Freedom Elementary School  
3rd Annual Funky Finds Spring Fling  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Howard  
Rahr & Sons Brewery Events  
Urban Yoga

## 3rd Party Benefit Events – Red Slippers Soiree

Ms. Barrie Allen  
Ms. Carly Andrews  
Anonymous  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Beall  
Mrs. Connie Brown  
Mrs. Lynne Burns  
Ms. Carol Cage  
Campania Pizza and More  
Mrs. Susan Chapman  
Ms. Missy Cheatham  
Ms. Lorraine Compo  
Ms. Liz Cox  
Ms. April Crow  
Ms. Lisa Cumbie  
Ms. Mary Dalton  
Ms. Sara Dekalb  
Ms. Joy Donovan Brandon  
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Ms. Bonnie Kurtz  
Mr. & Mrs. Kyle D. Lain  
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Ms. Jill Lentini  
Ms. Merissa Lovfald  
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Mrs. Heather Pearson  
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Ms. Melanie Pizzey  
Ms. Ronda Poettcker  
Mr. & Mrs. Artie C. Romack

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Ms. Jasmine Streete  
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Ms. Courtenay Taylor  
Ms. Diane Thornburg  
Ms. Donna Trulove  
Ms. Susan Tully  
Mr. & Mrs. Timothy L. Vasquez  
Ms. Niki Vinson  
Ms. Barbara Wall  
Mr. & Mrs. J. Lee Whittington  
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Wiggins  
Ms. Nicole Williams

## Children's Campaign

Anonymous  
Ms. Christina L. Judge  
Kimberly-Clark Foundation

## Children's Campaign – Honorariums & Memorials

Ms. Christine Nally in honor of her  
grandsons Ethan & Joshua Pearson  
Mr. & Mrs. Mark L. Johnson in honor  
of Laura and Michael O'Brien  
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Wiggins in memory  
of Rise Stewart

## Corporate, Church & Civic Donations

First Command Bank  
Arlington Area Newcomers Club  
Arlington Kiwanis Foundation  
First Command Financial Planning, Inc.  
Hurst Christian Church  
Mr. & Mrs. David C. Laurenzo on behalf  
of Teneo Linguistics Co., LLC  
North Texas Home and Consumer  
Sciences  
Provarsu Study Club  
Range Resources  
Tom Thumb Good Neighbor Program

## Fall Social Event – "CASA Uncorked"

Mr. & Mrs. Bryan R. Allen  
Mr. & Mrs. Donald R. Andrews, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Bell  
Ms. Ronda Blair  
Bonnell's Fine Texas Cuisine  
Mr. & Mrs. James P. Cox  
Mr. & Mrs. David D. Draper  
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Mr. & Mrs. Michael O'Brien  
Once Upon a Time. . .  
Mrs. Pamela Corbett Murrin  
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Mr. & Mrs. Richard Robinson

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& Ms. Patricia Hopkins

## Foundations, Trusts & Grants

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Community Foundation of North Texas  
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Foundation  
Graham & Carolyn Holloway  
Family Foundation  
Greater Keller Women's Club Foundation  
J.E.S. Edwards Foundation  
Junior League of Arlington  
Kappa Alpha Theta Fort Worth  
Foundation, Inc.  
Martin and Helen Wikierak Charitable Trust  
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin E. Nunnally  
Southlake Women's Club Foundation, Inc.  
The Gil and Dody Weaver Foundation  
The Mary Potishman Lard Trust

## Individual Donations

Mr. John Abrams  
Ms. Wanda Adams  
Ms. Trista Allen  
Anonymous  
Ms. Karen Bailey  
Ms. Gail C. Barham  
Mr. Kennie E. Garlington & Mrs. Jacqueline  
Bender  
Mr. & Mrs. James Bratton  
Dr. & Mrs. Kent R. Brown  
Mr. Sam Buchanan  
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CFC of North Central Texas  
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Ms. Carla Slater  
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Ms. Michele Talucci on behalf of  
Teramo Properties LLC  
United Way of Tarrant County  
Mr. & Mrs. Jason Vanoni  
Ms. Triste Vasquez-White  
Ms. Ronda Watkins  
Mr. Paul Q. Weirether  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack D. West  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Whiteside  
Ms. Noline N. Wollman

## Individual Donations – Honorariums & Memorials

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Bernstein in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. James T. Blanton in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. W. Barton Boling in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Phil Burns in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
CASA Staff in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. David N. Dike in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Ms. Linda L. Eakman in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Ms. Billie Edwards in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Mrs. John S. Estill, Jr. in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne C. Hairgrove in  
memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Ms. Christina L. Judge in memory  
of Judge Scott Moore

CASA of Tarrant County greatly appreciates your generous support. And every gift, no matter how great or small, will make a difference in the life of a Tarrant County foster child or youth served by CASA. CASA makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of the names listed.

We apologize if an error or omission has occurred. Please contact us at 817.877.5891 to make us aware of the oversight.

# Exciting Staff Additions to the CASA Team!

**Lindsey Guerin**, Casework Supervisor, is CASA of Tarrant County's newest addition. Ms. Guerin is a graduate of Texas A&M University with a BS in Sociology and a minor in Women's & Gender Studies. Her previous work experience has been as a Volunteer Coordinator in hospice. In her new role at CASA Ms. Guerin states, "I am very excited to be at CASA of Tarrant County! My heart has always been with children in foster care as I've watched my mom advocate for them in Houston as a Child Advocate for the past five years and personally volunteered through various organizations with children in need."

**Bertha Orona** graduated from Arizona State University with a BA in Education and has worked several years in the non-profit world. She was formerly the Volunteer Coordinator at Trinity Habitat for Humanity in Arizona before moving to Texas and serving the same position here at Trinity Habitat for Humanity Fort Worth. Bertha started with CASA as an office volunteer in the latter part of 2010 and served as the Development Assistant before taking on the role of a CASA Supervisor. "I have always enjoyed helping others and am inspired by working with volunteers," says Ms. Orona. She continues, "CASA volunteers are such dedicated people that are willing to help children in need and I am so lucky to be a part of it all!"



Bertha Orona and Lindsey Guerin

## Individual Donations – Honorariums & Memorials cont'd

Ms. Marty V. Leonard in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Dr. Victor Levy in memory of Zachary Levy  
Mr. Terrie Livingston & Ms. Connie Langston in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Martin Moore in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael O'Brien in memory of Shields O. Livingston and Paul Judge  
Mr. George Duegely & Ms. Joyce M. Reisetter in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Nickolas J. Rogers in honor of Antonio's birthday  
Mr. & Mrs. Edwin S. Ryan in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Scott W. Smith in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe B. Swift, Jr. in memory of William P. Roe  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe B. Swift, Jr. in memory of Pete Still  
Mr. & Mrs. Joe B. Swift, Jr. in memory of Deloris Amelia Eschbach Brown  
Mr. & Mrs. Danny Voss in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Ms. Marian M. Ward in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Ms. Linda Darlene Warner in memory of Mrs. Ross Ann Cox Isbell  
Williams Trew Real Estate Services in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael L. Williams in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Mr. James D. Wofford in memory of Judge Scott Moore  
Ms. Ronda Watkins in memory of Barbara Harvey

## In-Kind Donations

Fort Worth, Texas Magazine  
GM Direct  
Kay's Hallmark  
Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth  
Project Linus

## Judge Scott Moore Awards Dinner Sponsors & Donations

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Mr. & Mrs. Robert F. Huseman  
Jackson Walker L.L.P.  
Mr. & Mrs. Rob Jacobs

## Community Foundation of North Texas Gifts CASA of Tarrant County with Technology Grant



The Community Foundation of North Texas approved a grant request in the amount of \$11,500 to CASA of Tarrant County for technology upgrades. Along with its funding partners, the Community Foundation of North Texas provided \$425,000 in ToolBox grants to 39 Tarrant County nonprofits. These Projects serve to strengthen organizational capacity and include computer and technology upgrades, software updates, fund development and marketing plans, website development, and strategic planning.

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Real stories.

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Grace wore long sleeves and pants even in the heat of summer.

Grace plays dress up in princess gowns and tiaras.

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Her foster Mom tells her daily that she is smart, kind and loved. Grace's spirit radiates and her eyes twinkle.

Her name has been changed, but Grace's story is true – and there are hundreds of children across Tarrant County just like her. The difference is, they are still stuck in a nightmare. But you can change that.

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