

CASA Critical

Critical Information for CASAs

#20—November-December 2018

CASA Christmas

- **Celebrate the season with us on **Friday, December 14** at the **Big Country CASA office**. Staff and board will host a come-and-go open house from **1-3 p.m.** Come enjoy refreshments and fellowship as we look forward to a blessed holiday.**
- **Help us honor CPS caseworkers and supervisors during this season for their hard and difficult work all year round. We will continue our tradition of “Cookies from CASA” at the CPS offices, 3610 Vine Street, Room 134, on **Wednesday, December 12** from **1:30 to 3:30 p.m.****

Christmas for CASA Kids

- **Many CASA volunteers like to celebrate with their CASA kids by giving them gifts. If you would like to do this, feel free, of course; however, if giving your CASA children a gift will put a strain on your budget, consider the following options:**
 - Visit the supply room at the Big County CASA offices to select toys, stuffed animals, and/or books for your CASA child(ren). **We also have available a bicycle and an American Girl doll.**
 - If you have a CASA child ages 13 through 18, we have Christmas cards containing \$5 and a bookmark donated by one of the classes at Abilene Christian High School. These high school students signed their first names in the cards, so that our teens know that someone

of their own age is thinking of them during the holidays. Drop by Sandra's office if you would like one of these cards for your CASA teen.

- We also have 10 gift cards from Southern Hills Church of Christ; ask Rob about these.

HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A BLESSED NEW YEAR!

2019 BC CASA CEU Opportunities—Lunch & Learn/CASA Café

Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at noon—TIP

Presented by *Susan W. Cronan*, Abilene ISD Mental Health Coordinator and *Lorrie Renfro*, Therapeutic Intervention Teacher, AHS

What is the Therapeutic Intervention Program (TIP)?

- TIP is a District-wide mental health support program.
- TIP provides a high-level intensive support for students with or without a documented mental health diagnosis.
- This is a collaborative effort involving educators, case managers, families, students, and community providers.
- The program is a small support community to encourage students to safely deal with mental health issues while learning social and academic skills
- TIP is structured in its overall goal to reintegrate students back into the traditional classroom setting.
- TIP is sensory-based, and the environment is designed to promote a sense of calmness. The use of kinetic sand, aromatherapy, weighted animals, dimmed lights, tranquil music, and projectors as well as alternative seating is integral to creating an environment unique to TIP.
- TIP is highly individualized for each student.
- TIP is a place where mental health is de-stigmatized and mental wellness is promoted. Everyone is on a journey and that journey is honored.

- It is not a **Behavioral Unit**.

Come to learn about this newly implemented program and how it impacts our foster children and you as a CASA!

Tuesday, February 12, 2019, 5:45 p.m.—Surrogate Parent Training

Presented by Connie Mangin, Abilene ISD Special Education Coordinator (If you've already completed this training and received your Surrogate Parent certification, it's not required again.)

March 12, 2019 – To be announced

Remember that all advocates will begin with a clean CEU slate on **January 1, 2019**. Your supervisor will track your CEUs by the calendar year instead of the date you were sworn in as a CASA. Each advocate needs to gain 12 hours of continuing education by December 31, 2019.

A Great Local Resource for Advocates

Copy and paste this link into your browser to access resources for your role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate in the Big Country:

<https://bigcountrycasa.org/volunteer/advocate-resources/>

You'll find CEU ideas and links, including book and movie titles; local and on-line resources to help as you advocate for your CASA kids; and a host of other links and information. If you have other resources you would like added, contact the BCC office.

- Volunteers are required to complete **12 hours of in-service training** per year. As in any professional setting, policies and laws change and new ways of "doing business" appear periodically. Effective CASA volunteers need to stay current with changes in Family Law, CPS policies, child development studies, and a host of other updates to help us be the best advocates we can be...*for children who deserve nothing but our best*. If you are not current on your CEUs, remember that many opportunities exist to meet this requirement. Books, movies, videos, perhaps even conferences through your church or work can all be used as credits if they connect with your role as a child advocate. Google National and Texas CASA for videos and webinars that are not only

up to date and helpful but can be painlessly completed in your own home. And, of course, CASA Café and Lunch and Learn events are scheduled frequently with local resources who are invaluable as we pursue our CASA cases.

Advocate Training Calendar

Continue to recruit new advocates—help us reach our goal of serving 100% of the foster children in Taylor County! Currently, we are assigned to 50% of the cases of removal with 121 active volunteers. The next training opportunity is in January:

WINTER 2019—January-February

Monday	January 14	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 17	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Monday	January 21	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 24	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Monday	January 28	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Thursday	January 31	5:45 – 9:00 p.m.
Saturday	February 2	9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.