



## Our 2019 Leadership Team

### 2019 Board of Directors:

Pat Somers **PRESIDENT**, Betty Baitland **VICE PRESIDENT**, Robert Culak **TREASURER**, Nancy Olson **SECRETARY**, Jim Lockwood **PARLIAMENTARIAN**, Farha Ahmed, Eileen Akerson, Cynthia Barratt, Bob Brown (Emeritus), Brian Covault, Tom Duffy, Joe Freudenberg, Valerie Golden, Dave Johnston, Barbara Jones, Kurt Kirchof, Rhonda Kuykendall, David Lanagan, Mark Lapeyrouse, Vickie Looney, Xavier Maza, Jim McClellan, Ruthanne Mefford, Barkley Peschel, Mike Smith, James Steenbergen, John Vanderzyl, Shiroz Virani, OD

### CAC Advisory Council:

James Steenbergen **CHAIR**, Celina Shariff **VICE CHAIR**, Farha Ahmed, Riad Ali, Bob Bennett, Mike Berezin, Dr. Robert Bostic, David Clary, John Colburn, Roy Cordes, James Davis, Supt. Charles Dupre, Dr. Rebecca Girardet, Dr. Karen Gollaher, Mike Harvey, Juli Johnson, Ruthanne Mefford, District Attorney Brian Middleton, Suzy Morton, Jarret Nethery, Fiona Remko, Jennifer Roberts, Sandra Sanchez, Kenny Seymore, Ashly Smith, Dallis Warren

### CASA Advisory Council:

Marjorie Hancock **PRESIDENT**, Bob Mayo **SECRETARY**  
Dr. Connie Almeida, Rene Canova, Pam Collins, Leshia Fisher, Ilene Harper, Dejuana Jernigan, Metoyer Martin, Daphne McCadney, Ruthanne Mefford, Fiona Remko, John Robson, Shannon Stavinoha

### Our Affiliations:

Child Advocates of Fort Bend partners with 40+ agencies and organizations and is accredited with Texas CASA™, National CASA™, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Inc. and the National Children's Alliance®.



## 2019 was our 28th year serving abused and neglected children.



At Child Advocates of Fort Bend, we serve thousands of children every year – babies with burns and head trauma, young children who are hungry and in desperate need of medical care, and teenagers who have been cast out of their homes and fallen victim to online solicitation and sex trafficking.

### For The Children's Sake Campaign

Every year, the reports of children abuse continue to escalate and 2019 was no different. We served 13% more children and families this past year which was on top of a 53% increase over the past five years. Now more than ever, the services that Child Advocates of Fort Bend provide can be life saving for these children and transformational for families. In response to this growing demand, we executed the largest initiative in our history – an \$8 million capital campaign to fund a comprehensive expansion of services and capacity and double the number of children who can receive services. Our vision has materialized in a fully-remodeled and expanded 27,000 square foot campus which welcomes children, families, volunteers, staff and partners in an open-concept, nature-inspired healing environment. Complete with outdoor courtyards, a butterfly garden, interior design elements featuring nature depicted in trees, streams, and butterfly graphics, we have created a refuge of healing for children and families. Our new Davis George Center features twice the number of forensic interview and viewing rooms where children can tell their stories safely, the addition of family lounges where families meet with social workers for crisis and ongoing support, a full array of therapy rooms so children can heal, the opening of a new Learning and Training Center where more CASA Advocates can be trained so that every child in foster care will have a dedicated court-appointed advocate fighting for their best interests, and collaborative meeting spaces where staff across a spectrum of disciplines work with Multi-Disciplinary Teams to reach the best outcomes for these children. With deep gratitude to our capital campaign donors, we completed our For The Children's Sake campaign in record time and reached our fundraising goal by the end of 2019!

### Provide a Voice

Our CASA Advocates are the backbone of our Court Appointed Special Advocates Program and we again achieved 100% match in 2019 with every child in foster care being matched to a court-appointed advocate. Our CASA Advocates volunteered thousands of hours visiting children and meeting with their teachers, doctors and family members to ensure their safety and well-being. Our Courtesy CASA program, now in its 3rd year, expanded visitations of children placed far from home across 45 counties in Texas to ensure these children did not fall through the cracks. Collaborative Family Engagement located family members and strengthened family ties for children who had lost their family connections. Training in Trust Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) was implemented for staff and volunteers to ensure that we are utilizing the best evidence-based tools and approaches to help these most vulnerable children.

### Heal the Hurt

The healing begins the minute a child enters the doors of our Children's Advocacy Center where they begin their journey from abuse, trauma and fear to safety, recovery and empowerment. The forensic interview is the first step and in 2019, nearly 1300 children received a forensic interview conducted by our professional staff while being observed in an adjacent room by our partner agencies in law enforcement and CPS to ensure that children are only interviewed once. Our team of social workers, clinical family advocates, case managers and criminal court advocates responded to double-digit increases in every service line by staying focused on each child's specific needs, despite the increase in their caseloads.

### Break the Cycle

Our elementary school children thrived under our N.E.S.T. (Nurturing Education and Social Triumphs) programming which focuses on establishing solid foundations in educational achievement and social behaviors which are key predictors of student success in early childhood education and middle school advancement. Many of our children enter the foster care system with educational deficits and behavioral issues due to the trauma they have endured. Our advocates worked intensely one-on-one with these children to prepare them for kindergarten, achieve individual academic and behavioral goals throughout elementary school and reduce dropout rates in middle and high school. Our teens who will likely remain in foster care until they age out at 18 years old learned Lifeskills, traveled to colleges across the state in our Campus Crawls and 100% graduated high school – for the 4th straight year!

### The Need Continues

Child abuse impacts our community in profound ways. Children who have been abused and who have not received help often end up homeless, addicted, incarcerated and without a college degree or vocational skills. The lifelong health impact of adverse childhood experiences are estimated to cost our country \$126 billion annually. Yet, children whose voices are heard and have early intervention and treatment at Child Advocates of Fort Bend are healing, are achieving their academic and social goals, and going on to live happy, meaningful lives.

We thank all our many supporters who make this possible. Thank you for having a heart for children. Together, we are transforming lives.

For the Children's Sake,  
**Ruthanne Mefford**  
CEO