

**Program Evaluation Hill Country CASA
February–March 2016**

Emailed evaluation link to 108 individuals & received 62 replies (57% response).

I. Judges - 2 total –2 responded (100%)

100% positive response, 20 responses

#4 “Strongly Agree”– (20) – 100%

#3 “Agree” – (0)

#2 - “Disagree” – (0)

#1 - “Strongly Disagree” – (0)

Written comments by Judges:

I wish HCCASA and/or CASA volunteers would:

- “I love Hill Country CASA!”
- “Stay exactly like they are!! Wonderful & a tremendous asset to my court.”

II. Attorneys Ad Litem –27 total – 11 (41%) responded

100% Positive Response, 96 responses and 3 skipped responses

#4 “Strongly Agree”– (65) – 68%

#3 “Agree” – (31) – 32%

#2 - “Disagree” – (0)

#1 - “Strongly Disagree” – (0)

Written suggestions from attorneys:

I wish HCCASA and/or CASA volunteers would:

- “Not communicate with the judges directly unless all parties are present”
- “Keep doing what they're doing”
- #6 - "Could do better" #8 - "Could be better sometimes especially if sent sooner" #10 "Talk to ad litem more"
- “Proof all reports to make sure the information contained within is factual and objective”
- “Get more respect and cooperation from CPS personnel”

III. Volunteers – 79 total - 49 (62%) responded

99% positive response, 343 responses

#4 “Strongly Agree”– (258) – 75%

#3 “Agree” – (50) – 15%

*#2 - “Disagree” – (4) – 1%

#1 - “Strongly Disagree” – (0)

N/A in regard to travel reimbursement – (31) or 9%

Written suggestions from volunteers:

I wish HCCASA would:

- Make other supervisors/seasoned volunteers available so volunteers feel more comfortable.
- Host classes at 4pm
- have voice mail at the office so we can leave messages.
- Keep up the excellent work.
- They are doing great!
- Team up seasoned volunteers with new volunteers to help with 'on the job' training
- Have no need to exist! Not that I don't like everybody there ??
- Have more brown bag continuing ed meetings
- Stay like it is!
- Have a social something where volunteers could meet other volunteers in a casual setting.
- Keep doing what you are doing! Thank you.
- Have a warm month get together for CASAs

“Suggested Training Topics”

- Understanding the affects of medication and dosage in our children
- PAL
- working with school resources
- Transition program updates for older children!
- Drug trauma in newborn infants
- How to better encourage families who find themselves in the CPS system
- How the CPS process of removal affects the children
- Judge Morris Brown Bag
- Court testimony
- Child Advocacy
- Interaction with my CASA child, caregiver, teachers.
- Services available for clients
- Types of RFTs, criteria for such
- Understanding psychological reports
- How to balance communication/connection with ALL the parties involved in a case.
- Available Resources for families
- all available
- Mental Health
- Child abuse, sexual or otherwise
- Dealing with Reactive Attachment Disorder
- Teens
- Teens in Foster Care/Aging Out/Benefits
- CASA's participation and expectations in court
- Interested in all
- No suggestions -- all topics presented seem relavent.
- Psychotropic medications
- Autism
- Understanding PALS and assisting young teens successfully
- aging out
- understanding medical needs of child
- Current court procedures dealing with child advocacy!
- What is the state going to do about the closing of so many RTC's. RTC's
- Tools for locating families members for possible placement. Once the names are given to CPS what happens next?
- Knowing when the placement is a good one
- AdLitem Seminar
- Court reporting
- Ad Litem Seminars
- CASA responsibilities & rights
- Role CASA plays in relationship with CPS.
- Fetal alcohol syndrome
- Anything offered

- Legal and DFPS Terminology
 - Continuing to be an effective CASA
 - Domestic Violence
 - Aftercare
 - What is the legal role of a CASA-GAL
 - working with difficult foster/fictive kin/kinship caregivers
 - Read or attend training to gain more insight in being a more effective casa!
 - Licensing and investigations of RTC's.
 - Helping the children with their issues
 - Youth Mental First Aid
 - Foster care
 - Boundaries of confidentiality of case with foster parents and grandparents.
- How much CASA can share. How close of a relationship is appropriate.
 - Child psychology
 - Hear from (older) kids who either still have a CASA, have been placed with family, adopted, or aged out of the system . Their perspective of CASA.
 - Illegal Drug Use
 - Higher Education options for Foster kids

Many surveys returned by volunteers rated the program with straight fives (Strongly Agree). Our volunteers are certainly supportive of the program and staff. As we seek to continue to improve our program, the following responses indicate a need for attention. Being that there were no 1 (Strongly Disagree) responses, all of the 2 (Disagree) responses are listed below. These represent all 1% of Disagree responses in this year's evaluation.

Question 3 *In the course of my advocacy work, staff provides me assistance and guidance in working with the courts and CPS (one response, rated 2)*

Response: In 2015, we received one “disagree” response to this question, as we have this year. CASA staff are putting together a CASA Field Guide (working manual) that will assist CASAs in their advocacy work. Additionally, staff will be spending less time with seasoned volunteers, to allow for weekly check in with new volunteers while they learn the ropes navigating their first case.

Question 4 *CASA staff respects my opinions and are supportive of my work as decisions are made in cases I am involved with. (one response, rated 2)*

Response: While staff are always supportive and deeply appreciative of volunteers' efforts and expertise regarding their case, there are times in which the CASA's recommendation is not aligned with our program goals and mission. In these instances, we have honest and open discussion with the volunteer; explaining limitations while being supportive of their efforts. Additionally, we'll be focusing on staff spending appropriate time with volunteers so that they are supported throughout the process, rather than staff taking a front seat in the process. This should help volunteers to know that their work and opinions are not only valued, but the basis on which the HCCASA program (together with volunteers) make best interest recommendations to the courts.

Question 5 *The CASA office keeps me informed about court settings, staffings, mediations and other meetings regarding my cases. (two responses, rated 2)*

Response: The Executive Director puts out a monthly calendar with all known dates of all types of CASA meetings that are occurring the following month. Particularly in regard to CPS meetings, the schedules

have been coming later in the last several months. The ED will speak with CPS supervisors to get dates earlier. As staff continue to refine their schedules, spending appropriate time mentoring and supervising volunteers, staff and volunteers will have clearer and more regular communication and these sorts of issues should resolve.

One concern noted in the 2015 evaluation scored very well this year indicating improvement in the issues below:

Question 2 *CASA staff helps me identify any services or resources that might be available to children/families so I can better work my cases (all responses Agree or Strongly Agree)*

CASA put out social services resource lists, both by email and currently available on our website to volunteers. Staff also put focus on inter-office communication and resource sharing to help children throughout the caseload, and the volunteers' response shows the staff were successful in this endeavor in 2015-2016.

The results of the February-March 2016 program evaluation were very favorable among all categories of respondents.

The overall response rate dropped 5% from 2015, but the number of AAL respondents grew 10%.

The volunteer pool decreased over last year by 6 people (8%) and we had an overall 10% decrease in volunteer response to this year's survey.

Comparisons over the last ten years are as follows:

- **Judiciary:** 100% positive response from 2004 to 2016
- **Volunteers:** 100% positive in 2004, 2005, 2008; 2009, 2010, 2011-12, 2014, 2015; 99% positive in 2006, 2007 and 2016
- **Attorneys:** 91% positive response 2004; 94% positive in 2005; 96% positive in 2006; 97% positive in 2007; 98% positive in 2008, 97% positive in 2009, 98% positive in 2010
99.5% positive response in 2011 and 2012
100% positive response in 2013 and 2014
99% positive response in 2015
100% positive response in 2016

Total Evaluation Response:

61% in 2004, 63% in 2005, 68% in 2006, 72% in 2007, 70% in 2008, 66% in 2009, 66% in 2010
72% in 2011, 71% in 2012 and 61% in 2013, 55% in 2014, 62% in 2015 and **57% in 2016.**