

THE NEWS

JANUARY 2026

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History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children.

WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Community Members,

Every foster child's journey is unique, but they all share the same hope: to find safety, stability, and a permanent place to call home.

Our work is guided by the belief that permanency—whether through reunification, guardianship, or adoption—gives children the foundation they need to heal, grow, and thrive.

During 2025, our agency advocated for 82 children with the support of 42 dedicated volunteers.

Their commitment makes a meaningful difference in the lives of children navigating the foster care system.

January is also National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, a time to raise awareness and strengthen efforts to protect vulnerable children and youth.

Together, through advocacy and prevention, we can help ensure every child is safe and supported.

To learn more about how you can help, please visit www.gasawestcenla.org.

Thank you for your continued dedication to the children and families we serve.

-Tommy

This is a new year. A new beginning. And things will change - Help make the change for a child in foster care.

SUPERVISOR TIPS

1. Reconnect With Your “Why”

- Take a moment to remember what brought you to CASA.
- Think about one thing you hope to help your child achieve this year.
- Your presence and consistency matter more than you know.

2. Start the Year With Strong Habits

- Schedule your January child visit early to set the tone.
- Block time for documentation right after each contact.
- Review your case notes from last year to refresh your memory and identify next steps.

3. Refresh Confidentiality & Boundaries

- When in doubt about sharing information, pause and ask.
- Keep all child and family details private unless sharing with approved parties.
- Avoid posting anything case-related on social media—even vague references.

4. Prioritize the Child’s Voice

- Ask open-ended, trauma-informed questions.
- Check in on school, friendships, safety, and emotional well-being.
- January can be a tough transition month—your steady presence helps.

5. Essential Communication Skill.

- Keep communication professional, respectful, and child-focused.
- Be consistent and regularly make contacts with collaterals

6. Use Trauma-Informed Approaches

- Remember: behavior is communication.
- Offer choices when possible and validate feelings.
- Avoid leading questions—let the child tell their story in their own way.

The best thing you can give a foster child is unwavering support.

SUPERVISOR TIPS CONTINUED

7. Reach Out Early and Often

- If you hit a roadblock, don't wait—contact your supervisor.
- Bring questions, concerns, or ethical dilemmas as soon as they arise.
- You're not expected to know everything; you are expected to ask.

8. Set One or Two Advocacy Goals

- Examples:
 - Strengthen school communication
 - Strengthen relationships with DCFS
 - Build rapport with the placement
 - Increase meaningful child engagement

9. Take Care of Yourself

- Advocacy is meaningful but emotionally heavy work.
- Set boundaries, take breaks, and ask for support when needed.
- Sustainable advocacy is better than perfect advocacy.

10. Strengthen Documentation Practices

- Submit contact logs within 24–48 hours to keep details accurate.
- Use templates for court reports to stay organized.



Our most important task as a nation is to make sure all our young people can achieve their dreams.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Beauregard Parish

Cub Scout Fundraiser

Date: January 31, 2026

Time: 12pm

Address: 1115 LA 27
DeRidder, LA 70634

Cost: \$10

Vernon Parish

Winter Dinner With the Trucks

GG's Eats and Smacknn Chixken

Date: January 9, 2026

Time: 5pm

Location: Leesville Polk Outdoor Stage

Address: 109 East Texas Street
Leesville, LA 71446



Unfortunately, the clock is ticking, the hours are going by.
The past increases, the future recedes.
Help a child see the future and what it can hold.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

CURRENT ADVOCATES

January 22, 2026
Human Trafficking

February 19, 2026
Cultural Competence

March 19, 2026
Child Development - Age Appropriateness

April 23, 2026
Advocate Appreciation

May 21, 2026
Foster Care Appreciation - QPI

June 18, 2026
Emergency Preparedness

July 16, 2026
School Supply Drive

August 20, 2026
Educational Advocacy

September 17, 2026
Collaborating with Collaterals

October 22, 2026
Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence

November 19, 2026
Attorney Panel

December 2026
Mail Out - no class



The future starts today, not tomorrow.

PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

*January 13, 2026
5:30pm - 8:45pm
Welcome and Orientation*

*January 20, 2026
5:30pm - 8:45pm
Session 1*

*January 27, 2026
5:30pm - 8:45pm
Session 2*

*February 3, 2026
5:30pm - 8:45pm
Session 3*

*February 10, 2026
5:30pm - 8:45pm
Session 4*

*February 24, 2026
5:30pm - 8:45pm
Session 5*



FUTURE PRE-SERVICE TRAINING

*March 10, 2026 - April 14, 2026
May 6, 2026 - June 9, 2026
September 15, 2026 - October 20, 2026*

The strongest of all warriors are these two – Time and Patience.
Be a warrior and advocate for children in foster care.

SPOTLIGHTS

CASA of West CenLA 2026 Board Members

President: MK Dokwal

Vice-Pres: Tiffany Johnson

Secretary: Erin Chesnutt

Treasurer: Renea Boutte

Member: Kevin Blake

Member: Laura Moses

Member: John Satcher



Children are one third of our population and all of our future.

SNAPSHOTS

2025 Snapshot

Volunteers: 46

Children Served: 88

Children Finding Permanency: 28

Volunteer Hours Dedicated to Children: 4,239.50

Miles Driven by Advocates: 13,871.50



Time is the most valuable thing that a person can spend.
Spend it advocating for a child.