

# The VOICES of

CHILD ADVOCATES OF FORT BEND™

# Review 2024

Inside /  
CEO Update • 2024 in Review  
• Monthly Spotlights • & More!



[Click here to watch 2024 in review](#)



January 2025

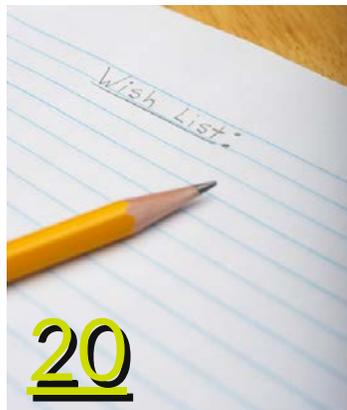
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**Keeping you informed on our mission:**  
*Strengthen the Child's Voice, Heal the Hurt, and*  
*Break the Cycle of Abuse and Neglect for Children*  
*and Families in Fort Bend and surrounding counties.*



**SPOTLIGHTS**



**NEEDS +  
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ROSENBERG, TX 77471  
281-344-5100



[WWW.CAFB.ORG](http://WWW.CAFB.ORG)



# from the ceo

*This is a special time of year here. . .*

Happy New Year!

We are so excited to kick off 2025. We have a great year planned filled with engaging events, expanded services and programs, and transformational initiatives. As we close 2024, I want to share with you a few highlights of our 33rd year at Child Advocates of Fort Bend. We served over **2,500** children and families with **18,500** services in our CASA Program and Children's Advocacy Center. **166** CASA and CAC Volunteers gave their all to advocate and support our children. Children received **2,871** therapy sessions in our CAC. Community Engagement reached **19,016** children, parents, teachers, counselors and community members. We educated our staff, volunteers and community members in a variety of training offerings throughout the year with **37** trainings conducted. We are deeply grateful to our incredibly generous donors and friends who supported

supported us through grants, sponsorships and individual gifts at our Gala, Voices For Children Breakfast, Christmas Home Tour and Forever Angels Legacy Society throughout the year. Thank you for joining us on our journey to provide a voice, heal the hurt and break the cycle of abuse and neglect. Together, we are transforming the lives of children. The ripple affect magnifies our impact for generations. We look for a day when children will be safe from harm and have every opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

For The Children's Sake,

*Ruthanne*

Ruthanne Mefford, CEO





## HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH:

# The Power of Truth and Education

By Renee Johnson, Lead Criminal Court Advocate at CAFB and Rhonda Kuykendall, MSW (Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator, Fort Bend County District Attorney's Office & CAFB Board Member)

January is officially recognized as National Human Trafficking Prevention Month (NHTPM). Human trafficking is a complex and devastating reality, yet much of what the public believes about it is shaped by myths, misconceptions, and viral misinformation. From TikTok's human trafficking hand signs in airports to fears of zip ties on car doors, the narrative we often encounter online distracts us from addressing the real, underlying issues. When our attention is fixated on white vans with dark windows or strangers lurking at Target, we miss the bigger picture: trafficking is rarely about a physical abduction of the body but more often a mental abduction of the mind.

Misconceptions harm the fight against trafficking because they lead people to overlook how victims are groomed and exploited. **Traffickers exploit a person's need for love, companionship, pride, or even ambition.** This is why it's vital to educate kids, parents, and teachers about the signs of grooming and how to create protective factors that empower young people to protect themselves.

### The Role of Communication: Words Matter

The language we use around trafficking has the power to heal or harm. For survivors, words like "rescue" can be alienating. For many, trafficking doesn't fit the dramatic Hollywood version of being locked away or driven off in a van. Survivors may live at home, attend school, and interact with their communities, all while enduring unimaginable control and exploitation. Hearing terms like "rescue" can feel irrelevant or disempowering to those whose realities differ from popular assumptions.

Similarly, phrases like "voice for the voiceless" dismiss the reality that survivors have voices. During trafficking, those voices were often silenced. Traffickers demand that victims have no eye contact. Their independent agency is taken away from them; therefore, survivors reclaiming their voices is a crucial part of healing. Instead of being their voice, advocates must create spaces for survivors to speak their truths and share their lived experiences. Survivors do the hard work of moving from victimhood to survivorhood. True healing begins when advocates focus less on their own

of “saving” and more on amplifying survivor voices. The goal should be trauma-informed, victim-centered, and survivor-led. The most freeing words for survivors are often the simplest: “I believe you.” These words carry the power to lift the weight of self-blame and shame.

### Education and Advocacy: Your Role in the Fight

To combat human trafficking effectively, we must shift our focus to prevention and advocacy. The key to prevention lies in understanding vulnerabilities and reducing risk factors. Traffickers target individuals based on their specific vulnerabilities, whether those stem from poverty, marginalization, or unmet emotional needs.

#### Here’s how you can make a difference:

- **Educate yourself and your community-**  
**Recognize Abusers:** Abusers often look like everyday people, such as mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, close family members, neighbors, schoolmates, and friends. They can be dressed in suits, ties, dresses, jeans, shorts, or even house robes. Those who traffic children, teens, and young adults may appear just as ordinary, though they might be younger. In today’s world, teenagers and young adults may be coerced into trafficking through promises of money, scare tactics, drug addiction, or physical harm. This is why it is vital to pay close attention to the children and teens we encounter.

#### ADDITIONAL RED FLAGS

- Children or teenagers with new clothes, expensive electronics, or money without a job, especially if their parents cannot afford such items.
- Drastic mood changes, such as loners suddenly having many friends who do not attend the same school.
- Associating with an older crowd.
- Changes in behavior noted by friends and family, such as becoming withdrawn, skipping classes, or hanging out with a new, potentially negative crowd.
- A child or teen who is homeless, hungry, alone, and in need of help.

# WARNING SIGN THAT SOMEONE NEEDS HELP



1. Palm to camera  
and tuck thumb



2. Trap thumb

- **Learn how trafficking happens** and share this knowledge with your family, friends, schools, and local organizations. Children and teens who have experienced any form of abuse –physical, sexual, emotional, or drug abuse—are particularly vulnerable. Other signs include trauma, truancy, mental health issues, depression, loneliness, eating disorders, and grief. Teenagers in the LGBTQ+ community are often targeted. Major risk factors include a history of running away, multiple foster homes, and lack of parental supervision. Be alert to children who hang out at friends' houses late at night without parental contact, talk about getting tattoos, or have unexplained tattoos.
- **Mentor at-risk youth:** Research from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University highlights the importance of trusted adults in helping youth build resilience. Mentoring a young person can play a pivotal role in preventing trafficking. That person could be you.
- **Report suspicious activity:** Trust your instincts. If something feels off, note details like license plates or descriptions of how a

person looks and what they are doing, and then report it. Too often, we are concerned about being wrong or not having the full picture. Just imagine, though, what if you are right? Your vigilance could save lives.

- **Department of Family and Protective Services:** 800-252-5400
- **Your Local Police Department:** Contact the police department where the child is. 911, if needed immediately
- **Human Trafficking Hotline:** 1-888-373-7888 or visit Human Trafficking Hotline

## A Final Call to Action

To truly address human trafficking, we must go beyond fear-driven myths and focus on education, prevention, and survivor empowerment. Find your passion, become informed, advocate in your community, and always listen to survivors—they are the experts on their own experiences.

To learn more, watch [TEDx Sugar Land Talk on Familial Sex Trafficking](https://youtu.be/PvjDg0Eoop8?si=XNr9uUxrGbID_gBc), listen here: [https://youtu.be/PvjDg0Eoop8?si=XNr9uUxrGbID\\_gBc](https://youtu.be/PvjDg0Eoop8?si=XNr9uUxrGbID_gBc)



**WINTER**

# Sip & Strolls

**Tuesday, Jan 28**

**5:30 - 7:00pm**

**&**

**Thursday, Feb 27**

**9:00am - 10:30am**

Child Advocates of Fort Bend  
5403 Avenue N, Rosenberg, TX 77471

Join us for a tour through our Davis George Campus. Meet our staff, hear the stories of the children we serve and learn more about the work that we do.

**RSVP to Lisa at [LMoore@cafb.org](mailto:LMoore@cafb.org) or 281-344-5108.**





Click above to watch 2024 in photos and read below to see what we did and what we're planning for 2025

## 2024 Program Highlights and What's Coming Up in 2025

Child Advocates of Fort Bend has had a remarkable year in 2024. As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited to build on our successes and continue making a difference. Let's review each program, highlighting our achievements in 2024 and our goals for the coming year.

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude and pride for the strides we have made in supporting families and advocating for the well-being of children in our community. This, of course, couldn't be done without the incredible support of our community, volunteers, partners and donors who share the passion for supporting children and families in our community.

Our organization has been dedicated to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive in a safe, nurturing environment.

Here are some of the CASA Program highlights from this remarkable year:

In 2024, our CASA Program served a total of 141 children and an additional **282** children through our Courtesy Casa Service. Each of those children had a CASA Volunteer to advocate for their best interests in and out of the courtroom. Combined, our CASA Volunteers spent over **4,490** hours working on their CASA cases and travelled over **35,332** miles. When we say we can't do this work without you, boy, do we mean it!

In April, our CASA Program also kicked off its Court Ordered Services Pilot Program. This pilot program enables our CASA Program to be appointed on Court Ordered Services cases. This year, we were able to serve 16 children

[continued next page](#)

through this pilot. Our CASA Volunteers provided valuable support, advocacy and resources to families to prevent their children from entering the foster care system.

Our NEST and WINGS Programming served a total of **113** youth in 2024!

Child Advocates of Fort Bend became the Lead for the Fort Bend TBRI Collaborative. The Fort Bend TBRI Collaborative as well as our Trauma and Wellbeing Advocacy Team trained hundreds of community members in various capacities in TBRI.

As we look to the future, we are committed to continuing our mission of advocating for and supporting children and families. We have ambitious plans to further expand our services, increase our advocacy efforts, and deepen our community partnerships. With the continued support of our donors, volunteers, and community members, we are excited to what is to come in 2025!

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, we are making a difference, one child at a time.

### **The Children's Advocacy Center had a big year in 2024.**

The CAC welcomed new leadership in 2024. Kristy Gutierrez was promoted to Director of Program Services. Maggie McDougle stepped into the Manager of Forensic Interviewing position which Kristy once held, and Liz Larios became Lead Bilingual Forensic Interviewer. Renee Johnson was also named Lead Criminal Court Advocate.

Our MDT Coordinators diligently reviewed hundreds of intakes each month and contacted partner agencies to ensure children and families were brought through our doors. The interviewers completed **75** interviews each

month, and our Clinical Family Advocates provided crisis intervention and support to those children and caregivers.

The Children's Advocacy Center partnered with Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners to provide onsite forensic medical examinations two days a week and access for families to travel to locate hospitals for medical examinations instead of having the burden of traveling to the Texas Medical Center. We saw an increase in clients receiving the necessary medical care as a result.

The Clinical Family Advocates re-launched groups for our clients this year, facilitating a group for teenagers and caregivers providing another much-needed avenue for clients to receive support and process their trauma. Renee Johnson became the point person for human trafficking victims, survivors, and families coordinating with all critical community partners to better meet the unique needs of this population.

The Children's Advocacy Center also welcomed Jasmine Morales and finally filled the much-needed Bilingual Family Advocate position. She will be supporting the Spanish speaking clients when the first present to our agency for services and during the criminal court process.

As we start 2025, we have plans to continue to create more group opportunities for clients, as well as plans to continue to better support and meet the needs of human trafficking victims, survivors, and families.

**Our Therapy team has seen firsthand how crucial it is to have a variety of tools when helping our children and families learn to cope with their traumatic experiences.**

Every child is as unique as a fingerprint. What works wonders for one might not even scratch

**-continued**

the surface for another. Over the past year, our amazing therapists have received training in multiple evidenced based modalities that support children that have experienced traumatic events. They've learned cognitive-behavioral and psychotherapy techniques to help rewire those tricky thought patterns, play therapy techniques that speak a child's language, and mindfulness practices to ground them in the here and now.

### **The Importance of Flexibility**

Our therapists can modify their approach to match each child's needs. Choosing a therapist with multiple tools in their belt is super important because:

- We can create treatment plans tailored to each child's unique personality and challenges.
- We're not just patching up one part - we're treating the whole child, from their thoughts to their feelings and actions.
- Therapy only works if kids are engaged. Being able to switch things up keeps it interesting and keeps our kiddos motivated.
- As our children grow and heal, their needs change. Having multiple approaches means we can evolve right alongside them.
- Being flexible and trained in multiple evidenced modalities increases the chances of finding an approach that your child really clicks with.

Every child deserves a chance to flourish, regardless of the hurdles they face. By embracing a flexible and comprehensive approach to care, we can provide the support children need to overcome life's challenges and build a foundation for a brighter tomorrow. Our nurturing, individualized methods meet each child where they are, fostering an environment where personal growth is not only possible but actively encouraged.

### **Community Engagement Highlights for 2024 and what's coming up in 2025:**

The CAFB Community Engagement Team has made a significant impact this year, reaching over **19,016** children and adults with vital prevention programming focused on recognizing and reporting child abuse for all ages. By building strong new partnerships with the LCISD Police Department and school administrators, CAFB has expanded its reach through the Child Safety Matters Abuse Prevention program for schools and Darkness to Light Sexual Abuse Prevention training. This included conducting **106** presentations for children and adults and training over **812** educators and faculty members. Additionally, CAFB provided valuable training opportunities for its volunteers and community members, covering topics such as:

- "A Day in the Life of a CPS Caseworker" Training for Volunteers
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Conflict Resolution in the Legal System
- Trauma Informed Care Conference
- Active Shooter Training for Volunteers and CAFB Staff
- Educational Advocacy for the School Year
- Culturally Specific Services Matter with DAYA (non-profit)
- Optima Database and the Importance of Documentation for CASA Volunteers
- "That Is not in MY Town" Human Trafficking Conference
- CAFB Wraparound Services Training for CAFB Staff and Volunteers

This comprehensive approach to prevention and education underscores CAFB's commitment. 2024 also marked a significant milestone for our Prevention Speaking Team! We proudly welcomed new staff and volunteers who have become trainers for the Child Safety Matters

*-continued*

and NetSmartz curriculums, benefiting students, parents, and educators alike. This expansion has greatly amplified our presence across LCISD and FBISD campuses, with growing interest from other districts as well. As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited about the continued growth, especially with CAFB board members expressing interest in joining our dynamic Speaking Team.

We also had an incredible year of continuing education and training. CAFB provided an impressive amount of training for our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and community members. From pre-service training to conferences, lunch and learns, self-care seminars, and pop-up trainings, a huge thank you to our internal experts and field professionals who presented, and to everyone who attended our sessions throughout the year. Get ready for an even more exciting 2025! We're gearing up to bring you training on the topics you've requested, along with extraordinary speakers for our conferences and other continuing education opportunities. Keep an eye on our website for training registration details.

Now let's talk about our incredible volunteers! With various events—from the Volunteer Banquet to potlucks, socials, and new volunteer training—we've had the privilege of connecting with more volunteers than ever before. Watching our volunteers form new friendships and strengthen existing bonds has been wonderful.

We've also deepened our connection with the Fort Bend community. Our goal of providing diverse avenues for involvement has truly resonated. From direct volunteering to community awareness events, Sip and Strolls, and donations... our community has shown incredible support. This outpouring of generosity is a testament to the impact we can make together.

We couldn't achieve our mission without our dedicated volunteers and supportive community. As we look ahead to 2025, we're excited to continue fostering these connections and creating new opportunities for everyone to get involved with CAFB.



*Mark your calendars:*

**YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID**

**January 22, 2025**

9:30am - 4:30pm

Contact Dana to register

**SAVE THE DATE - May 8 + 9, 2025**

Join us for our first conference of the year, featuring speakers from TCU's Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development along with a nationally acclaimed legislative change-maker in child welfare. ~ *You won't want to miss it!*

DAVIS GEORGE  
CAMPUS



# monthly spotlights

*updates on training and MORE!*



## Thank You and Welcome!

Thank you to outgoing Board of Directors President Eileen Akerson for your leadership in 2025. Welcome to Jill Curtis. We're looking forward to working with you in 2025!

We are so appreciative of Vickie Looney for her 17 years of service on our Board of Directors. We will miss you!





## Christmas Home Tour

Ho Ho Home Tour what successful fundraising event it was this year! On December 6th & 7th we celebrated our 33rd Annual Christmas Home Tour. Our fundraising success is due to the passion and giving nature of our homeowners, without whom we would not have a Christmas Home Tour each year. Each home shined with its own uniqueness, gorgeous décor and sentimental stories. Four unbelievable homes were showcased this year and for the first time in quite a while they were all located in close proximity to each other. There were two homes in Venetian Estates:

- **Modern and Merry**, a modern architectural masterpiece tastefully decorated for Christmas in gold, silver, glass, white and evergreens.
- **Home for the Holidays**, a 3-generation-owned home built in 1961 chock full of heirlooms, tributes and tradition. In Alkire Lake.
- **French Country Christmas**, a newly built Acadian style home with many artisan treatments including a Rondel window and custom flooring from a 200-year-old barn. In Sugar Creek.
- **Merry Memories**, a remodeled contemporary home filled with abstract artwork and regional décor.

Once again, talented area youth and adults performed holiday melodies either as singers or musicians. During the chilly weekend many

warmed themselves in front of one of the 12 fireplaces burning. New this year was an Elf on the Shelf scavenger hunt which turned out to be quite a hit for the young, old and especially men!

We sold festive holiday t-shirts and held a raffle that included items to wear, share or show off. And hats off to those who were able to pass on the numerous varieties of cookies or hot wassail offered at the exits. Check out our website or social media pages and see who you know in the dozens of photos taken during those two days. This is indeed one of the biggest fundraisers for our agency and it means so much to have the support from the community. With the help of homeowners, an incredible volunteer committee, over 500 volunteers, local entertainers, generous sponsors and excited patrons, this event was truly one of the best ever as we had the best attendance records and weather in recent years. Did you know that we are able to keep expenses low so that 94% of all dollars raised goes directly to our programs and services? We exceeded our goal and raised over \$200,000. That means that over 1,500 children and families can heal with live-changing resources, children served by CASA will continue to receive court advocacy to help them thrive, and we can continue our vision of ending the cycle of abuse, and educate over 10,000 individuals in the community.

**THANK YOU ALL for sharing in our mission!**



See more photos from this event at  
<https://www.cafb.org/2024-christmas-home-tour-gallery/>



# Community Support During the Holidays

By Jennifer Brown

Words fail to capture the incredible love and support the Fort Bend community has showered upon the children and families served by Child Advocates of Fort Bend.

The journey begins early, with emails fluttering out in September, igniting the spark of excitement as we prepare to gather toys and wish lists. The result of our preparation arrives in December, in a whirlwind of two weeks: one dedicated to the tireless work of our elves - our invaluable volunteers - joyfully sorting and packing the mountains of gifts you've so generously donated for our children and teens. In the second week, the magic unfolds as we deliver these gifts to families across Fort Bend.

One poignant memory lingers: a mother arrived to collect her gifts, her eyes wide with disbelief as she surveyed the toys. She turned, tears welling up, and expressed her overwhelming gratitude. "I usually find myself on the other side," she confessed, "blessing others. But this year has been incredibly difficult, and I didn't know how I would provide a joyful Christmas for my children. I can't believe this!"

Another mother, upon receiving a bike for her son, was overcome with emotion. "This is exactly what he's always wanted," she sobbed, "and I thought it was simply out of reach this year." Thanks to the unwavering generosity of WA Parish, who once again delivered 54 bikes to our doorstep, that little boy will be riding into Christmas Day with pure joy.



**ABOVE:** CASA Volunteer Rubina, shown hugging a staff member was picking up the gifts for the child she advocates for and was overcome with emotion as she realized what a great Christmas it will be for the child. "She's just had such a hard year, and this will mean so much. She will feel loved Christmas morning."

The privilege of alleviating even a fraction of the stress on these caregivers is immeasurable. But witnessing the kindness of our donors - those quiet heroes who give without seeking recognition - is truly magical. These individuals, moved by compassion, contribute with open hearts. Whether it's a single blanket, a gift card, or an entire truckload of gifts, every contribution matters. It brings joy, hope, and a sense of peace to families across Fort Bend.

Child Advocates of Fort Bend could not fulfill this vital mission without the unwavering generosity and compassion of our community.

Whether you donated gifts, volunteered your time to sort and pack toys (a special thank you to TDECU for their dedicated employee give-back day!), or simply spread the word about CAFB and our needs, your support is invaluable.

I could share countless stories of the profound impact these gifts have on children, teens, and, most importantly, their caregivers. But for now, I simply want to express our deepest gratitude. Thank you, Fort Bend, for standing with Child Advocates of Fort Bend and for making a real difference in the lives of families in need.



**Did you know that you can donate cars, airplanes, boats, motorcycles or trucks and select Child Advocates of Fort Bend to receive the proceeds?**

Visit [HERE](#) for questions or contact Lisa at [lmoore@cafb.org](mailto:lmoore@cafb.org)



# Thank You to the Foundations that Support CAFB

Child Advocates of Fort Bend is a nonprofit agency and relies on community support to provide its programs and services. We are so grateful for the support of numerous organizations and foundations who believe in our mission and provide funding. Many of whom have partnered with us for years.

The funding we receive from our grantors directly benefits our clients and the community by allowing us to recruit top professionals, offer competitive salaries, use technology and equipment to support our processes and leverage our expertise to inform and train our counterparts in the industry as well as the broader community. Without the generosity of funders, whether individuals, corporations or foundations, the breadth of our work would not be possible.

The saying goes that it takes a village to raise a child. At CAFB indeed it takes a village to help children heal and recover from the trauma of abuse or neglect. It takes a village of specialized staff, community volunteers, partners in law enforcement, district attorneys and county attorneys, child welfare specialists and medical professionals and other partners to do this work. Grantors are an essential part of our community and the work we provide to help children heal and keep children safe.

These foundations and other supporters have helped close out the fourth quarter of 2024.

Astros Foundation  
Rhett Butler Charitable Foundation  
Charity Guild of Catholic Women  
Cullen Trust for Health Care  
John S. Dunn Foundation  
Fort Bend County Child Welfare Board  
Fort Bend Junior Service League  
Charles A. Frueauff Foundation  
Gulf Coast Medical Foundation  
Halliburton Charitable Golf Foundation  
Indo-American Charitable Foundation  
In-N-Out Burger Foundation  
The Fred & Mabel R. Parks Foundation  
William & Madeline Smith Foundation

**Thank you, grantors!**





## Being Tax-Smart

The creation of the "Forever Angels Legacy Society," the planned giving program of Child Advocates of Fort Bend, was a significant accomplishment for CAFB in 2024. We officially launched the program in November by recognizing 28 individual planned gifts as "stars" on our dedicated donor wall. As the agency looks to the new year, continuing to work with our generous donors to secure new legacy gifts will be a top priority.

The "Great Wealth Transfer," the estimated \$84 trillion that will shift from Baby Boomers to younger generations over the next two decades, has been well publicized in the news. More donors than ever are looking for ways to maximize their philanthropic dollars while creating a meaningful legacy. The desire to implement strategies that reduce a family's tax burden is also a concern.

One of the most popular tax-smart strategies for individuals or couples in retirement are Qualified Charitable Distributions ("QCDs"). Starting at age 73, the IRS requires IRA owners to take annual income withdrawals known as Required Minimum Distributions ("RMDs"). These withdrawals are considered "income" and subject to ordinary income tax. However, taking advantage of QCDs is a strategic way to reduce taxes. At age 70 ½, IRA owners can transfer up to \$105,000 to one or more qualified charities per year. This donation is not reported as taxable income, providing greater tax savings than cash donations.

### Here's how it can work:

#### Case Study:

Steve, a 73-year-old retired petroleum engineer, needs to take his annual RMD. His tax advisor does the IRS calculations and tells Steve he must withdraw \$100,000 from his IRA this year or suffer a penalty. Steve is philanthropic and gives \$50,000 annually to numerous charities. Here's a possible tax-saving strategy:

#### Scenario 1

Steve withdraws the required \$100,000 from his IRA and will be required to pay income taxes of approximately \$17,000 on the amount. Doing simple math ( $100 - 17$ ), he now has \$83,000 left to spend. After donating the desired \$50,000 to his qualified charities (his church, his alma mater, and Child Advocates of Fort Bend), Steve is left with  $(83 - 50)$  **\$33,000 for personal use.**

#### Scenario 2

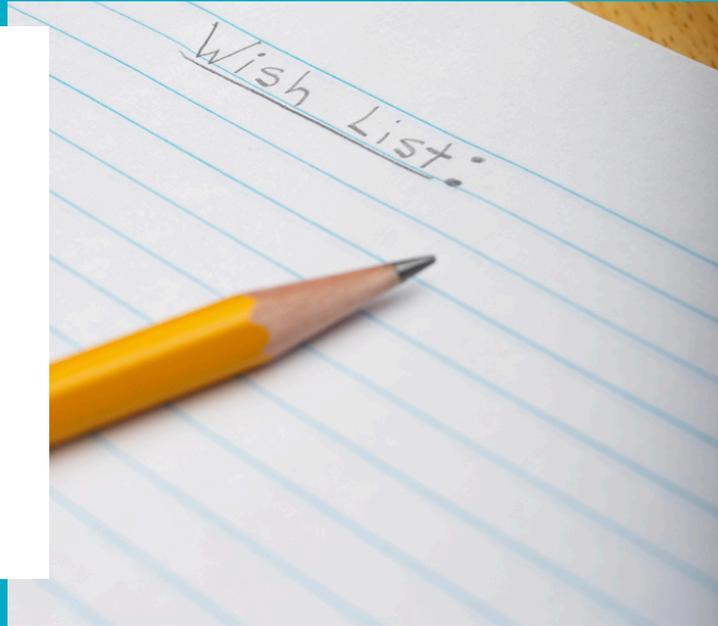
In contrast, if Steve implements the tax-efficient strategy of making the gift or gifts via a QCD, he will cut his tax bill in half. **He still withdraws the required \$100,000 from his IRA, but he has half (\$50,000) go to his QCD and the other half directly to him.** He will only be taxed on the \$50,000 IRA withdrawal. The other \$50,000 from Steve's IRA **that** goes directly to the QCD is not subject to any tax, but still counts against his RMD. The tax bill goes from \$17,000 down to \$8,500. When it's all said and done, Steve is left with  $(33 + 8.5)$  **\$41,500 for personal use.**

We would love to help direct you towards financial experts who can help develop planned-giving strategies that align with your personal goals. If you would like more information about how to become a "Forever Angel" for the children of our community, please email [plannedgiving@cafb.org](mailto:plannedgiving@cafb.org).

# our needs

This month, we have immediate need for:

- **Snack bags:** individual serving bags of goldfish, teddy grahams, and fruit snacks in sandwich baggies
- **Subway gift cards**  
(for children in court hearings)
- **Gas gift cards and UBER gift cards.**  
Walmart, Target and VISA are best.



## License to Help!

Did you know that Child Advocates of Fort Bend participates in the TX CASA Specialty License Plate Program? You can order a custom license plate with the phrase "Big Voices for Little Texans". Not only can you spread awareness and show your support for us but a portion of the cost of the plate goes to Texas CASA and the local programs to increase our statewide efforts to advocate for



every child in the foster care system. To order your plate go to <https://www.txdmv.gov/motorists/license-plates> and search for CASA under specialty plates OR visit your local tax assessor's office and ask for the Court Appointed Special Advocate license plate.



**Mental Health FIRST AID**

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

# YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

## WHO SHOULD KNOW MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

- Teachers.
- School Staff.
- Coaches.
- Camp Counselors.
- Youth Group Leaders.
- Parents.
- Adults who Work with Youth.

## WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and adolescents ages 12-18.

**10.2%**

of youth will be diagnosed with a substance use disorder in their lifetime.

Source: Youth Mental Health First Aid\*\*

**1 IN 5**

teens and young adults lives with a mental health condition.

Source: National Alliance for Mental Illness\*

**50%**

of all mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75% by the mid-20s.

Source: Archives of General Psychiatry\*\*\*

Sources

\* National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Kids. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Kids>

\*\* Mental Health First Aid. (2020). *Mental Health First Aid USA* for adults assisting children and youth. National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

\*\*\* Kessler, R., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, K.R., Walters, E.E. (2005, June). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*. 62(6); 593-602. doi: 10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593

## REGISTER TODAY!

### Delivery Format:

Become a Mental Health First Aider. Spaces are limited for this training so RSVP today!

### Date and Time:

January 22, 2025 - 9:00am-4:30pm, Snacks and Lunch Provided.

### Location:

CAFB Training Center, 5403 Avenue N, Rosenberg, Texas 77471

### Where to Register:

RSVP directly to Dana Mersiovsky at [dmersiovsky@cafb.org](mailto:dmersiovsky@cafb.org)

The course will teach you how to apply the MHFA Action Plan (**ALGEE**):

- **Assess** for risk of suicide or harm.
- **Listen** nonjudgmentally.
- **Give** reassurance and information.
- **Encourage** appropriate professional help.
- **Encourage** self-help and other support strategies.

# save these dates



## January 22, 2025

Youth Mental Health First Aide

9:00am - 4:30pm

Child Advocates of Fort Bend Training Room

Contact **Dana** at [DMersiovsky@cafb.org](mailto:DMersiovsky@cafb.org) to reserve your spot

## January 28, 2025

Sip & Stroll

5:30pm - 7:00pm

Contact **Lisa** at [LMoore@cafb.org](mailto:LMoore@cafb.org) to reserve your spot

## February 4, 2025

Darkness to Light

10:00am - 1:00pm

Contact **Dana** at [DMersiovsky@cafb.org](mailto:DMersiovsky@cafb.org) for details or to reserve your spot

## February 11-12, 2025

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Training

10:00am - 4:00pm

CAFB Training Room

Contact **Alli** at [AWaterwall@cafb.org](mailto:AWaterwall@cafb.org) to reserve your spot

## February 20, 2025

Advocating for Youth with Disabilities Training

11:00am - 2:00pm

CAFB Training Room

Contact **Dana** at [DMersiovsky@cafb.org](mailto:DMersiovsky@cafb.org) to reserve your spot



*“Start over my darling. Be brave enough to find the life you want and courageous enough to chase it. Then start over and love yourself the way you were always meant to.”*

*- Madalyn Beck*

CHILD **ADVOCATES** OF FORT BEND™