

JANUARY 2025

"The News"



casawestcenter.org

IN THIS ISSUE

- Words from the Director
- Supervisor Tips
- Training, Training, Training
- What's Up in Our Communities?
- Winter Safety
- Advocate Spotlight



WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year! I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported CASA of West CenLA in 2024. As we step into 2025, we are excited to continue our mission of advocating for the best interest of children assigned to CASA of West CenLA. Through the dedication of CASA volunteers, board members, community partners, and supporters, we work together toward a common goal: achieving permanency for the children.

Family connections are essential, both for children and adults, as they shape who we become. CASA volunteers play a critical role in ensuring the best interests of children in foster care by providing unwavering advocacy. The information gathered and the time spent with each child often results in another constant, caring adult in their life—a presence that can make all the difference.

We eagerly look forward to seeing more children placed in loving, nurturing, and safe homes in 2025. This vision is only possible through the collective teamwork of CASA of West CenLA members and the partnerships we have built in Beauregard Parish, Vernon Parish, and Fort Johnson.

Thank you once again for your continued support! Here's to a year filled with progress, hope, and positive change for the children we serve.

~Tommy



SUPERVISOR TIPS

To strengthen your advocacy as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate), focus on thoroughly investigating the child's situation, building strong relationships with all involved parties, clearly communicating the child's needs to the court, actively seeking necessary services, and staying informed about relevant policies and procedures, while always prioritizing the child's best interests.

There are many facets when advocating for children, and on the following pages you will find useful strategies and tips to help strengthen you and your advocacy.



SUPERVISOR TIPS

Key strategies to strengthen CASA advocacy:

- **Comprehensive Case Review:**
 - Conduct thorough interviews with the child, family members, caseworkers, teachers, and other relevant professionals.
 - Carefully review all case documents and records to understand the child's history and current situation.
 - Gather information about the child's needs in areas like health, education, mental health, and safety.
- **Strong Relationship Building:**
 - Establish a trusting rapport with the child through consistent visits and genuine engagement.
 - Actively communicate with the child's foster parent



SUPERVISOR TIPS

- **Effective Court Advocacy:**
 - Clearly articulate the child's needs and concerns in court hearings.
 - Present evidence and recommendations based on your thorough investigation.
 - Advocate for the placement option that best supports the child's well-being.
- **Service Identification and Access:**
 - Identify any gaps in services the child might need, such as therapy, educational support, or medical care.
 - Work with agencies and community resources to ensure the child receives necessary services.
 - Monitor the child's progress and advocate for adjustments to services as needed.



SUPERVISOR TIPS

- **Staying Informed:**
 - Keep up-to-date on child welfare laws, policies, and procedures in your jurisdiction.
 - Attend relevant trainings and workshops to enhance your advocacy skills.
 - Be aware of emerging trends and best practices in the child welfare system.
- **Child-Centered Advocacy:**
 - Always prioritize the child's best interests in all decision-making.
 - Empower the child to participate in their case whenever appropriate.
 - Respect the child's wishes and concerns while advocating for their needs.



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TRAINING - TRAINING - TRAINING

New Advocate Training - Orientation

Date: January 14, 2025

Time: 5:30pm-8:45pm

Location: 113 S. 3rd Street, Leesville, LA

Contact numbers 337-239-1970 or 337-462-4667

Session 1 - January 21, 2025

Session 2 - January 28, 2025

Session 3 - February 4, 2025

Session 4 - February 11, 2025

Session 5 - February 18, 2025

All trainings will be at the same time and location
as Orientation.



Scan the QR Code for more information on
becoming a volunteer.

WHAT'S UP IN OUR COMMUNITIES?

Job Readiness Workshop
Job Seeking 101

Allen Parish Prisoner Reentry Coalition

Presented by:
American Job Center | Louisiana Workforce Commission

LEARN ABOUT:

- American Job Center
- HIRE Account Setup
- HIRE Job Search
- No Cost Services Available

January 29, 2025
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

807 N. 9th Street
Oakdale, LA

REGISTER AT
(337) 942-7815
COMMUNITYOUTREACH@UWSLE.ORG

United Way | St. Landry-Evangeline United Way
Visit our website: www.uwsle.org

Chili COOK OFF

SATURDAY, JANUARY 18

Make the best chili to win prizes

Chili Cook Off Competition will be held at VFW Post 3619 Hwy 27 1115 DeRidder, LA 70634

For more information:
VFW POST 3619
secvfw3619@gmail.com
337-463-3977

JOB FAIR EVENT 2025
Find Your Dream Career!

Join us at our annual Job Fair and explore endless career opportunities.

FREE REGISTRATION

NOTE THE DATE

- Date:** Jan. 14, 2025
- Time:** 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
- Place:** 608 Nolan Trace, Leesville, LA 71446

Fresh Graduates looking for their first job

To register, please contact Grant Bush at (337) 404-4078 or grant.bush@leesvillela.gov

VERNON PARISH KING DAY COALITION PRESENTS

MLK

WEEKEND JAN. 16th - 20th
I Have a Dream

SPELLING BEE • BANQUET • WORSHIP

KING DAY PARADE & RALLY JAN. 20TH 10 AM

ALL EVENTS @ 1003 N. GLADYS ST. EXCEPT WORSHIP 7 PM SUNDAY @ PLEASANT HILL

CALL (337) 238-1779 FOR INFO.

- 1/16 SPELLING BEE/ORATORICAL CONTEST 5:30 PM
- 1/18 BLOOD DRIVE/HEALTH FAIR 10:00 AM
- 1/18 SCHOLARSHIP BANQUET 6:00 PM
- 1/19 KING DAY WORSHIP SERVICE 7:00 PM
- 1/20 PARADE AND RALLY 10:00 AM



DeRidder MLK Day Events
Sunday, January 15, 2023

C & B Community Organization will present the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebration in DeRidder with several events as follows:

On Sunday, Jan. 15, at 5:30 p.m., there will be a candlelight service and wreath ceremony beginning at the Beaugard Parish Courthouse, followed by a group march to flag plaza for the placing of the wreath ceremony.

On Monday, Jan. 16, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., there will be a continental breakfast at Cat's Coffee and Creamery, and at noon, the annual community march will begin at DeRidder City Hall and conclude at Veterans Park. Lunch will follow at Veterans Park.

For more information, call 337-348-1132 or 337-348-6054.

FAFSA COMPLETION WORKSHOPS
Hosted by: LOSFA (Louisiana Office of Student Financial Aid)

FSA ID COMPLETION:
FRIDAY, JANUARY 10, 2025
12-5 PM
Beaugard Parish Library DeRidder Branch

FAFSA APPLICATION:
FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2025
12-5 PM
Beaugard Parish Library DeRidder Branch

DROP-IN EVENT:
No appointment necessary. Just come by and get the help you need!

Get the support you need to complete your FAFSA applications and secure financial aid for college!

FSA ID COMPLETION:
Get assistance with creating your FSA ID, a crucial step for your FAFSA application. (Verification process takes 1 to 3 business days.)

FAFSA APPLICATION:
Receive help filling out the FAFSA form to maximize your financial aid opportunities.

For more information, contact Beaugard Parish Library at (337) 462-6217.
library.beau.org | 205 S. Washington Street, DeRidder

1113 N. 5TH ST. LEESVILLE, LA.

Zak Webb BAND

ISSA VOCALIST OF THE YEAR

9 PM JANUARY 17TH

WINTER SAFETY TIPS

EVEN IN THE SOUTH, WINTER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE NECESSARY. WITH THE EVER CHANGING TEMPERATURES IN A SINGLE DAY, THEY CAN GO FROM 74 DEGREES IN THE DAY DOWN TO 28 IN THE EVENING, IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP SOME SAFETY FACTORS IN MIND.

KEY POINTS FOR WINTER SAFETY IN THE SOUTH:

DRESS IN LAYERS:

EVEN MILD COLD CAN BE DANGEROUS IF YOU'RE NOT PROPERLY DRESSED, SO WEAR LAYERS OF CLOTHING TO ADJUST TO CHANGING TEMPERATURES.

HOME PREPARATION:

HEATING SYSTEM CHECK: ENSURE YOUR FURNACE IS FUNCTIONING PROPERLY AND HAVE IT INSPECTED BEFORE WINTER.

PIPE PROTECTION: TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT PIPES FROM FREEZING BY WRAPPING THEM WITH INSULATION OR HEATING TAPE, ESPECIALLY IN EXPOSED AREAS.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES: KEEP A SUPPLY OF NON-PERISHABLE FOOD, WATER, AND BATTERIES ON HAND.

BE AWARE OF CARBON MONOXIDE RISKS:

IF USING A GENERATOR, ENSURE IT IS PLACED OUTDOORS AND AWAY FROM WINDOWS TO PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE BUILDUP.

CHECK ON VULNERABLE NEIGHBORS:

REACH OUT TO ELDERLY OR AT-RISK INDIVIDUALS TO ENSURE THEY ARE SAFE AND NECESSARY SUPPLIES.

STAY INFORMED:

MONITOR WEATHER FORECASTS AND BE PREPARED TO STAY INDOORS DURING SEVERE WEATHER EVENTS.



ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT



Brenda and David

420 McMahon Street
Deridder, LA 70634
337-462-4667 Phone
337-462-1554 Fax



113 S. 3rd Street
Leesville, LA 71446
Phone 337-239-1970
Fax 337-239-1960