These record numbers gave Marisa a brighter future

When Marisa was found wandering the streets, she was described as almost feral. She hadn’t been eating, was completely afraid of people and being touched, had not been potty-trained, and had clearly endured extensive trauma in her early years. She was non-verbal and was diagnosed with a developmental disability. CASA helped select a TBRI (Trust-Based Relational Intervention) trained foster family who had experience raising children with trauma. Her CASA volunteer had done TBRI training herself, and worked with Marisa’s new school to give the teacher TBRI materials to help her in the classroom. At the same time, her CASA volunteer spoke her native language of Spanish with her and found her relatives in Guatemala to maintain connections to family and heritage. Now Marisa is talking, knows the alphabet, is writing her own name, and has developed a positive, healthy attachment to her foster parents. When she got to see her grandparents, who travelled from Guatemala to visit her, she ran to their arms and gave them a big hug!
You followed the news, saw the challenges faced by the Texas Child Protective Services system, and you raised your hand to say I want to volunteer or donate to help kids:

- **250** new volunteers took cases
- **$300,000** matching gift challenge met

So when Ally needed help, she got it

When complaints were called in about Ally’s foster home, she was moved to a temporary home over an hour away. CASA called her teacher to let her know about the uncertainty around her foster home and to see if there was any homework she could take for the first days away from school. On this call, CASA found out that Ally would be missing her STAAR prep and testing that week. CASA drove her to and from her far away school that week to keep her from missing the test. CASA’s call with the teacher not only ensured she didn’t miss important educational milestones, it also got the teacher thinking. She offered to become the next foster home for Ally so she could finish up the year in the same school!
When Jack made an allegation of abuse against his caregiver, he was removed from the home. With his high needs, the only place he could go was an emergency shelter. Everyone was concerned about further trauma and wanted to avoid a long-term stay in a shelter meant to be temporary. A residential treatment center offered the environment and therapy Jack needed to heal, but didn’t have an opening for months. CASA got a special hearing called and used the relationships built throughout the case to pull every string possible. Jack got into that home right away, so he could heal in a positive atmosphere, versus languishing in an emergency shelter.

All of your support helped CASA serve 762 new children in 2016 and will ensure more children have the powerful voice of CASA in the future. Continue your support today at www.casatravis.org/donate!
Here’s what your support made happen for Lucas

Lucas had a pattern over his decade in foster care. He would be fine in a home for a few months and then have an outburst or temper tantrum. He would be sent to a psychiatric hospital while a new home was found. The final time this happened, there was no home available to care for his high needs. He spent 20 days in a psychiatric hospital. CASA talked with his family throughout his time in foster care, including his father. He had separated from Lucas’s mother, who was the reason Lucas came into care, and had a stable home where three of Lucas’s siblings already lived. Unfortunately, the father didn’t speak English and lived far away, which had made it difficult for Child Protective Services to work with him in the past. They were concerned about his ability to care for Lucas since he had higher needs than his siblings, and feared distance would make it hard to check on him. CASA believed reunification with his father was in Lucas’s best interest, especially since none of his foster homes lasted long-term and little progress was made towards permanency or healing. With the placement shortage and lengthy stay in the psychiatric hospital, CASA advocated that CPS reconsider. It worked! Lucas moved in with his father and siblings, and CASA built a relationship with local CPS for continued monitoring. After being in foster care for 10 years, he’s reunified with his family and healing.

Look inside for more of what you accomplished in 2016!

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