

Make difference for local kids on MLK Day

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New Braunfels Herald-Zeitung editorial board

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Central Texas (CASA) is challenging the community to turn Monday's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service into the start of a lifelong difference for abused and neglected children.

That sounds like a great idea.

Each year, more than 700 children enter the region's overburdened welfare system, CASA reports. Last year, less than half of those children had CASA volunteers to help guide them through the system and into safe, loving homes. The volunteers are trained members of the community who provide a voice for these children and work to serve their best interest in court.

"Reverend King said, 'Everybody can be great because anybody can serve,' and that's true with CASA," said Norma Blackwell, CASA executive director. "CASA volunteers are teachers, business people, parents and grandparents. They are everyday people who do extraordinary work for our most vulnerable children in our community."

They're people just like you.

Every child in foster care needs a CASA volunteer who will ensure they do not slip through the cracks but instead find a loving home where they can grow and flourish.

That's where the day of service comes in.

CASA is encouraging interested individuals to take the first step on Monday toward becoming a CASA volunteer.

"Take time (Monday) to visit our website (www.casacentex.org) and find out what a CASA volunteer does for a child in need. While you are there, find out about our training process and download our volunteer application," Blackwell said. "By becoming a CASA volunteer, you can help ensure abused and neglected children find the safe, permanent homes they need to thrive as members of our community."

Last year, CASA served more than 400 children in Caldwell, Comal, Guadalupe and Hays counties but there were still many children who didn't have the voice of a CASA volunteer.

You can help these children.

Becoming a CASA volunteer is a way to make a direct impact in your community one child at a time — and a terrific way to move King's dream closer to reality.

About CASA of Central Texas

Free training is held throughout the year. If you would like to learn more about CASA and the volunteer training, contact CASA at (512) 392-3578 or (830) 626-2272, or visit www.casacentex.org.

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