



milestones  
CHILD ADVOCATES, INC.

They mark our progress from a given point.

They are the moments, stages and turning points  
— woven together to make up a history ...

... they are our  
**milestones**





In 1984, three individuals, armed with \$5,000 and using a kitchen table as headquarters, created Child Advocates, Inc. Their vision was to one day help every abused and neglected child in Harris County. Today, our challenge remains: to find the volunteers, resources, commitment and compassion that will allow us to reach our ultimate

milestone.

# 18 children

During our first year of service, Child Advocates provided court appointed advocate volunteers to 18 abused and neglected children. Over the course of our history, Child Advocates' volunteers have served more than 16,000 of Harris County's children.



It was a school day in 2000. Cameron, 8, and his sister Katrina, 9, were called in from playing outside by the woman who babysat them after school.

"I thought we were in trouble for something," remembers Cameron. "But actually it was because some people were there to document bruises we had — bruises that we actually didn't even know we had."

Cameron and Katrina were taken into protective custody that day based on evidence of physical abuse. Eventually there was also disclosure of sexual abuse by their mother and her boyfriend. The children arrived at a group home confused and full of questions. When would they see their mom again? Why weren't they going back to their usual school? Did they do something wrong?

It was during the first few weeks the kids were at the group home that Brenda Tolbert came to visit them.

"At first we weren't sure what to think, we were kind of like 'who is this?' since we had so many new and different adults involved in our lives at that point," says Cameron.

What Cameron came to find out was that Brenda was a court appointed advocate volunteer who had been assigned to his and Katrina's case by the family court judge. Early on, she visited with the kids in the group home, often bringing them books to read. She was also there to help them through the transition of moving into the home of foster mom, Shonna. While Cameron flourished with Shonna, Katrina struggled with her behavior and was eventually moved again.

Behind the scenes, Brenda was ensuring that the children were receiving all the services they were entitled to while in care and facilitating the flow of information between the many parties to the case. Her role as communicator was increasingly critical after

Katrina and Cameron were separated. Eventually, Brenda was instrumental in getting the children's mother to voluntarily relinquish her parental rights — ultimately allowing Shonna to adopt Cameron.

cameron

Child Advocates officially closed Cameron and Katrina's case in 2001. At the final court hearing, Brenda asked the judge for permission to stay involved with Katrina. Over the past eight years, she has been a consistent person in Katrina's life and, as Cameron's adoptive mother, Shonna, puts it "the bridge that has allowed Cameron and his sister to remain in contact and have any kind of relationship to this day."









600+

active volunteers

Last year, more than 600 Houston-area residents spoke up for abused and neglected children as court appointed advocate volunteers.

## RECRUITMENT

We find our volunteers in both obvious and unique places. In fact, our sources of referral range from advertising and public service announcements with major media outlets to word-of-mouth personal recommendations from those already involved with Child Advocates. Whether they come to us via the Internet or their place of work, play or worship, we recognize that volunteers are at the core of fulfilling our mission, and will do what we can to get them involved.



# percent

the percentage of those inquiring about volunteer opportunities who hear about Child Advocates through a personal referral of some kind.

## ORIENTATION

Our one-hour orientation sessions detail the next steps to becoming a court appointed advocate and help individuals learn about the additional volunteer opportunities at

# one hour

the time it takes to attend an orientation session and see how you can make a difference for a child.

Child Advocates. Whether potential volunteers want to give one or 100 hours of their time, we're committed to helping them determine how they best fit within our organization.

## ADVOCACY UNIVERSITY (AU)

We like to think of it as "part-time heroes in training." Advocacy University allows our volunteers to learn about everything from the psychology of abuse to writing important court documents. Held six to eight times each year, this ever-improving, 30-hour training program has become a model for Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs across the country.

## AU GRAD SCHOOL

Knowledge never ends where we're concerned. We empower our volunteers, even after they've completed training and have begun their roles as guardians ad litem. AU grad school covers a range of topics that speak directly to the experiences our volunteers encounter during the course of their service, from working with individuals diagnosed with bi-polar disorder to drug court in Harris County.



## COURT SERVICES PROGRAM

Child Advocates provides mission-critical support and supervision to court appointed advocate volunteers. The court services program makes up the true meat-and-potatoes of our organization and includes diligent search, educational advocacy, reunification services and support to the family. Through the court program, volunteers guide abused and neglected children into safe, loving environments where they can thrive.

## COURT APPOINTED ADVOCATE VOLUNTEERS

Since Child Advocates began in Harris County in 1984, we have trained more than 3,300 individuals to become court appointed advocate volunteers — volunteers who make a difference in the lives of children. These volunteers are assigned to the cases of children who have been victims of life-threatening abuse or neglect and — as a result — have been placed in protective custody.

Our volunteers contact caseworkers, interview parents, ensure the children receive necessary medical care, look out for their educational interests and make recommendations in court regarding their permanent placement. They dry tears and give hugs and throw birthday parties too. Most importantly, they serve as a “constant” person for those children to count on during a very tumultuous time. Essentially, our volunteers do whatever it takes to ensure that the needs of the children are being met while they are in care.



advocates

the number of people — just like you — who we have trained to be court appointed advocates for abused children since 1984.

## ADVOCACY COORDINATORS

Upon completing Advocacy University, our volunteers are paired with a member of the Child Advocates staff called an Advocacy Coordinator (AC). The AC serves as a source of information, advice and guidance for the volunteer during the course of the case, and the collaborative relationship allows the volunteer to feel both empowered and supported at the same time.

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

This much-anticipated annual event allows us to pay special tribute to our court appointed advocate volunteers, who are on the front lines every day in the fight against child abuse. Each year at this event we present our *Rookie of the Year* and *James A. Gwinn Outstanding Court Appointed Advocate of the Year* awards.



program

Fortunately, Catrina doesn't remember her living conditions as they were described in the 1985 CPS case record.

Specifically, the human and animal feces on the floor, axes and lawn tools in bedrooms, roach and fly infestations, pills lying loose on multiple surfaces and piles of trash and rotten food throughout.

Instead, Catrina remembers a happy childhood, full of family, faith and love on a farm in Tennessee. A childhood that both she and her adoptive mother attribute in large part to the involvement of court appointed advocate Carol Appelbaum.

For several years, Catrina lived in foster care while CPS provided services to her family in hopes that they would be able to maintain stable and safe living conditions. Although twice Catrina was scheduled to return home, both times there were breakdowns in her mother's and maternal grandmother's progress, causing plans for reunification to be abandoned.

But in 1987, after ruling out an exhaustive list of potential relative placements for Catrina, Carol learned of Linda and Don. Don, a preacher in rural Tennessee, was the cousin of Catrina's biological father. He and Linda were unable to have children and had already adopted another little girl. When they got the call from Carol saying that she was looking into potential homes for Catrina, they knew their prayers had been answered once again.

catrina

“I'm so thankful for the fact that when I look back, all I can remember is happiness,” says Catrina. “We were always surrounded by family and friends from the church and my sister and I had free roam of this big, beautiful property. I can't begin to imagine how opposite my life has been from the one I was born into.”

Always open about the fact that Catrina was adopted, her mother encouraged her to keep in touch with Carol, especially when she had questions that her mom didn't know the answers to.

“I consider her a part of my family — a part of my history,” says Catrina. “She has always been someone I can talk to who knows a part of my life that I didn't know. She helped me get to a happy place.”

Today, Catrina is living in California where her husband is stationed in the U.S. Navy. She keeps busy raising the couple's four- and five-year-old sons and is considering going back to school to take some classes in child development through the Navy College.

And she still credits Carol with so much.

“My mom has said for as long as I can remember, that if it weren't for 'Ms. Carol Appelbaum in Houston, Texas' that she wouldn't have been blessed with her little girl.”











## CHILDSPREE

It's back-to-school heaven for 400 children served by Child Advocates! Each receives a \$100 voucher and a personal shopper to help select back-to-school clothing, shoes and necessities just in time for the big day.

## HOLIDAY PARTY

"It's the most wonderful time of the year." Nearly 750 children served by Child Advocates and their foster siblings are treated to several hours of holiday bliss at the annual Holiday Party. Dozens of volunteers help produce contests, crafts, food and fun to make the event memorable for all involved.

## YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FOR CHILDREN

Volunteer manpower at its best! The YPC is a group of young professionals dedicated to breaking the cycle of child abuse who provide critical volunteer support for special events benefiting Child Advocates, hold fundraisers to help support the organization's mission, and provide exciting events and activities to help enrich the lives of the children we serve. Recent events include the Rodeo Round-Up, a trip to cheer on the Houston Aeros, the Roller Rink Revelry and the annual Great Pumpkin Party.



the year that the Friends of Child Advocates was chartered.



## events

the number of events our volunteers and staff members produce each year specifically for the children we serve and their foster siblings.

## FRIENDS OF CHILD ADVOCATES

Whether they are producing their signature Angels of Hope Luncheon, recruiting new members, holding their annual Egg Hunt for the children, coordinating logistics for the Childspree or making the holidays memorable for girls who visit their "Ginger's Spa" booth at the Holiday Party, the Friends of Child Advocates is a treasured group of volunteers who support Child Advocates' mission through both fundraising and volunteer hours.









## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Quarterly birthday parties for the children and their foster siblings have become an all-around favorite in recent years. The kids come out for lunch and a party in their honor with themes ranging from a luau to the Wild West. These parties are an example of the tremendous opportunities for both Junior League volunteers and the children served by Child Advocates made possible by the long-time partnership between our organizations. Junior League volunteers work on a variety of special projects designed to inspire positive interactions and build self-esteem for our children.

43

children

the average number of children each year who receive a written and pictorial history of their lives through the Lifebook program.

## LIFEBOOKS

A second option for Junior League members, the Lifebooks program allows many of our teenage children to have a written record of their lives from birth to the present. Essentially a scrapbook, the Lifebook includes the story of why the child came into CPS care, photos, their birth certificate, a family tree, addresses, schools and other details important to the life of that child. These scrapbooks are often the only mementos these children have of their biological families.

## SANTA'S WISH LIST

Fueled by the spirit of goodwill of individuals and corporations, along with lots of hard work, planning and organization by Child Advocates staff members and volunteers, the Santa's Wish List program ensures that over 1,000 children served by Child Advocates receive gifts during the holiday season.

## GILBERT AND RACHEL'S CLOSET: SPECIAL NEEDS ROOM

Diapers, school uniforms, prom dresses, backpacks, eyeglasses, dance or karate lessons, tutoring, bunk beds, baby formula — everyday items that may easily be taken for granted by some. Named after two of the first few children served by Child Advocates, Gilbert and Rachel's Closet opens the door to a host of items that make a huge difference in the lives of our children.

250

sponsors

the number of individual and corporate sponsors who fulfill a child's wish list during the holidays with our Santa's Wish List Program.



childrens events and programs

In early 1991, one-year-old Yesenia was found bruised and severely scratched after being thrown out of a moving car with her mother. It was 45 degrees the morning she was pulled from a roadside ditch where she'd been clinging to her dead mother's body. She was wearing only a diaper and T-shirt.

"CPS took emergency custody," remembers Dody Gwinn, originally the court appointed advocate on the case. "After the emergency hearing, she was placed in a foster home, which is where I first met her."



As the volunteer on the case, Dody worked with her supervisor at Child Advocates to conduct a homestudy on Yesenia's father (who heard about the situation on the evening news and came forward) and on a maternal cousin who was also interested in caring for Yesenia long-term.

Dody ensured that a DNA test was done on the father, but his homestudy was ultimately not approved and Yesenia was permanently placed with her mother's cousin. It seemed like a happy ending — until the woman decided that keeping Yesenia long-term wasn't going to work out after all.

During the same time period, Dody was hired on to the Child Advocates staff as an Advocacy Coordinator. Her husband, Jim, had recently been sworn-in as a court appointed advocate and took over Yesenia's case.

"Jim absolutely fell in love with that little girl," remembers Dody. "He went to work on her behalf with a resolve he usually saved only for very special projects!"

Jim talked to the cousin about other relatives and, at her recommendation, was able to contact another cousin, Sonia. Sonia and her husband Miguel had two grown sons of their own and were thrilled with the possibility of Yesenia joining their family. Jim conducted a homestudy on them and was critical in communicating with the attorney ad litem, the family, CPS and the court during the process. The judge eventually transferred custody to Sonia and Miguel. Yesenia was four years old.

"We are so grateful for everything Jim did for us and for Yesenia," shares Sonia. "Without his help, we would not have her."

In 1996, Jim Gwinn passed away. But Yesenia — who now goes by Jessie — can still remember his smile.

"I was just a little girl, but I can remember what a nice man he was," she says. "I look at pictures and it's easy to tell that we were close. He's my guardian angel still, just like he was then."

Dody agrees.

"Jim would be so happy to see that a little girl who had virtually no chance when she first came to our attention, turned out to have such a wonderful, love-filled life."







## CAR PROS FOR KIDS

Participating auto service providers help raise funds for Child Advocates during the month of February by offering two free oil changes to individuals who visit their shop and make a \$35 donation to Child Advocates. One hundred percent of the proceeds benefit Child Advocates.

27  
shops

the average number of auto service providers and dealerships participating in the Car Pros for Kids program.

## HOUSTON CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

The annual Houston Children's Festival — deemed “the Mayor's official family event” — offers several city blocks of entertainment, complete with games, activities, crafts, exhibits, rides and more to tens of thousands of children and their families each spring.

\$5.7  
million

the number of dollars raised by the Pull for Kids Classic since it began in 1992.

## PULL FOR KIDS CLASSIC

This annual event — the largest of our fundraisers — honors individuals and corporations who have had a pivotal impact in the lives of abused children. The event kicks off on Saturday morning with a sporting clays tournament and concludes on Saturday evening with a festive party that offers live and silent auctions, food, fun and great musical entertainment.

## ANGELS OF HOPE LUNCHEON AND FASHION PRESENTATION

Each winter, this annual luncheon and fashion presentation is the kickoff to Houston's holiday social season. Produced by the Friends of Child Advocates in conjunction with Neiman Marcus, the event honors local philanthropists and longtime Child Advocates supporters. The runway show puts the luncheon on the Houston social crowd's annual “must-attend” list.

## HEROES SOCIETY

The *Heroes Society* Campaign is a targeted ask for unrestricted gifts — our annual campaign — conducted each year in the fall. The campaign is intended to (1) help us serve more children and grow our program, (2) further distinguish Child Advocates from other organizations with 100% participation from volunteers, board members and staff, (3) increase awareness about the importance of annual gifts to our mission and (4) continue to build Child Advocates' legacy.



the year of the original Child Advocates *Heroes Breakfast* — the precursor to our current *Heroes Society*.



the amount it takes for kids to get involved with the *25 for 25* campaign. Hundreds of children have collected and contributed their quarters!

## 25 FOR 25

Just think ... \$25 could: fill your car up with gas (if you're lucky), cover your dry cleaning bill (for a couple of days at least), refill a gift card at your favorite coffee house, buy you a movie ticket, drink and a few pieces of popcorn (but none for your date!) ... OR ... \$25 could help provide a court appointed advocate to an abused child for a week. In celebration of the volunteers who have served abused children through Child Advocates, the *25 for 25* anniversary giving campaign asks people to make a \$25 donation and ask at least 25 others to do the same.

## FORGOTTEN CHILDREN

*Forgotten Children*, part of a National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association campaign, consists of a large display of life-sized cut-outs of children. The campaign was adapted by Child Advocates to build both awareness and revenues during our 25th anniversary year. Support for *Forgotten Children* allows Child Advocates to close the gap between the number of children who need our help and the number of court appointed advocates available to serve them.



## children

the number of children entering foster care each day in the United States.





fundraising events and campaigns





you.

just one of the tens of thousands of individuals, corporations, organizations, community partners and foundations that have made our first 25 years possible. Thank you for continuing to encourage and support us on the way to the many

milestones

in store for our future.

CHILD ADVOCATES, INC. OF HARRIS COUNTY MOBILIZES COURT  
APPOINTED VOLUNTEERS TO BREAK THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF CHILD ABUSE.  
WE SPEAK UP FOR ABUSED CHILDREN WHO ARE LOST IN THE SYSTEM AND  
GUIDE THEM INTO SAFE ENVIRONMENTS WHERE THEY CAN THRIVE.

**childadvocates®**

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HOUSTON, TEXAS

7 7 0 9 8

713-529-1396

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

*This publication was generously underwritten by Brad Robbins, Board Member  
and Marketing Committee Chair, Child Advocates, Inc.*

# financial information 2008\*\*

## REVENUE, GAINS AND PUBLIC SUPPORT\*\*\*

Contributions	\$1,623,054
Financial Assistance	\$549,861
Memberships	\$34,000
Special Events (Net of \$211,725 in event expenses)	
Houston Children's Festival	\$224,837
Pull for Kids Classic	\$548,120
Angels of Hope Luncheon	\$303,913
Other Events	\$175,512
Interest	\$2,223
Other / In-kind	\$6,068

TOTAL REVENUE, GAINS AND PUBLIC SUPPORT \$3,467,588

## EXPENSES\*\*\*

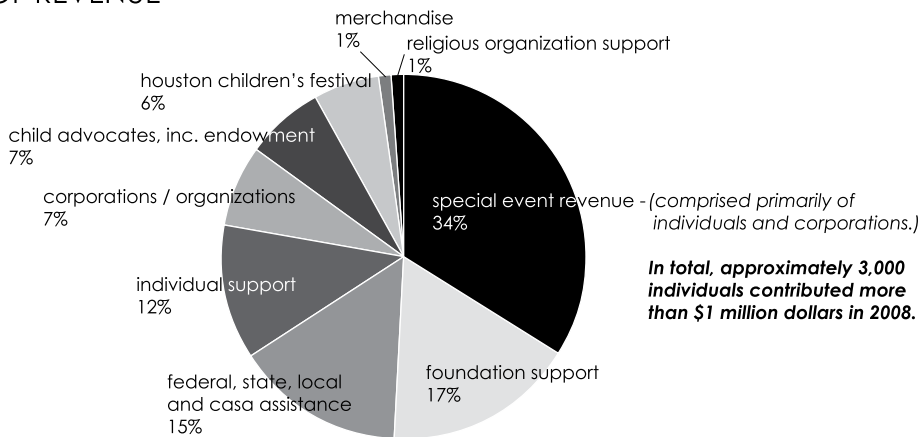
Community Services	\$2,042,063
Professional Education and Training	\$632,575
Management and General	\$306,619
Fundraising	\$322,381

TOTAL EXPENSES \$3,303,638

NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT) \$163,950

ENDING NET ASSETS \$1,269,771

## SOURCES OF REVENUE

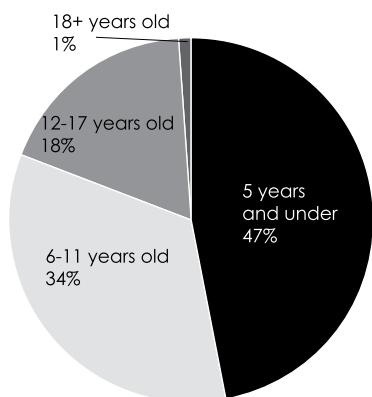


\* All data as of December 31, 2008 unaudited financial statements

\*\* Excludes Child Advocates Endowment, Inc.

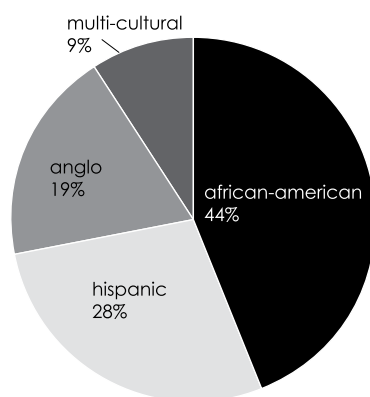
\*\*\* Revenue and expenses do not include in-kind contributions and expenses: advertising - \$1,278,000, Christmas gifts - \$125,000 and volunteer services - \$983,000.

# our children 2008

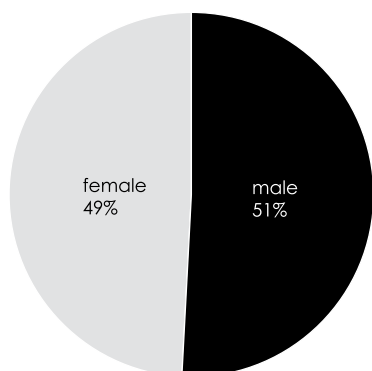


children served  
by age

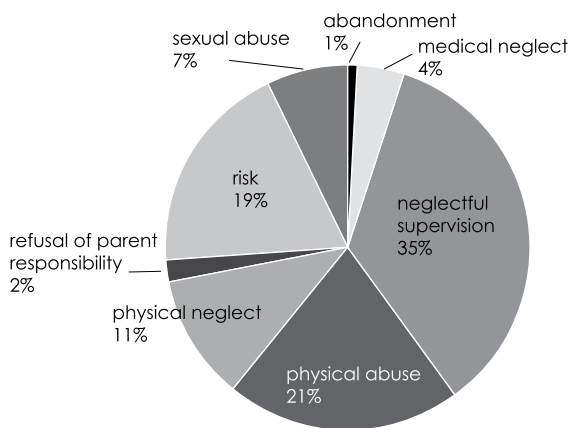
1,782 children served



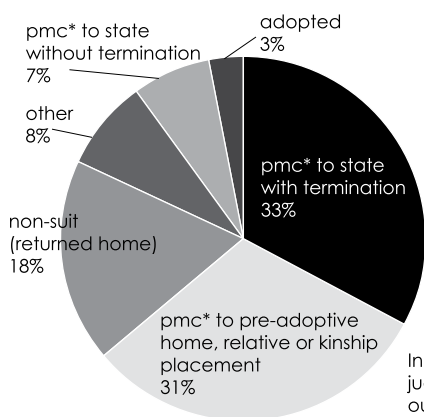
children served  
by ethnicity



children served  
by gender

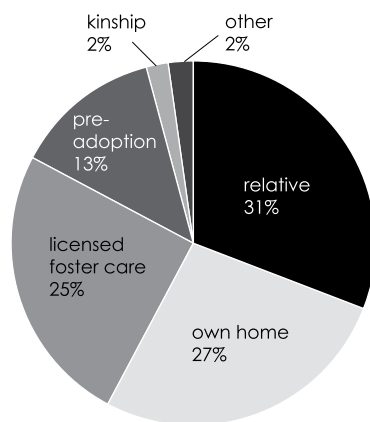


types of abuse



outcome  
of closed cases

In 2008, the family court judges ruled in favor of the outcome recommended by the court appointed advocate volunteer 88% of the time.



placement of children  
at close of case

\*pmc = permanent managing conservatorship



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# stats & facts 2008

## CHILD ADVOCATES, INC. 2008 STATS

provided critical advocacy for 1,782 abused and neglected children  
trained 240 new court appointed advocate volunteers  
worked on 948 cases - 610 volunteers collectively gave more than 50,000 hours of their time (the equivalent of 24 full-time staff members!)  
raised \$3.4 million  
the cost for Child Advocates to serve one child in 2008 was \$1,850

## CHILD ADVOCATES, INC. FACTS

served more than 16,000 children in Harris County since 1984  
is not a United Way agency — thus we rely heavy on donations from individuals, companies, organizations and foundations for nearly 80% of our annual budget  
is a member of the National and Texas Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Associations

## LOCAL FACTS ON CHILD ABUSE

6,365 confirmed victims of child abuse in Harris County in 2008\*  
4,368 children in foster care in Harris County in 2008\*  
a Harris County CPS caseworkers' caseload averages 34 cases\*

## NATIONAL FACTS ON CHILD ABUSE

an average of four children die every day in our nation as a result of abuse and neglect \*\*  
children under the age of four account for 75% of those fatalities\*\*  
in 2007, approximately 3.5 million children were reported as abused and/or neglected \*\*  
an estimated \$103 billion accounts for the direct and indirect annual costs of child abuse in the U.S. \*\*\*

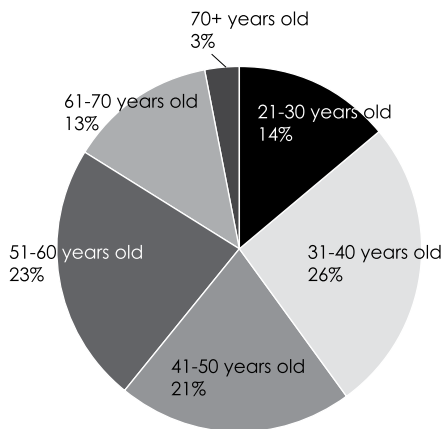
\* source: Harris County Department of Family and Protective Services, *2008 Data Book*

\*\* source: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2007*

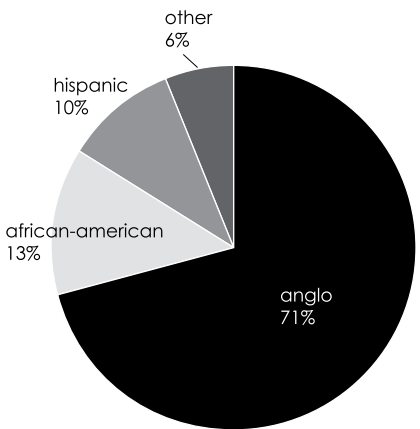
\*\*\* source: [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org)

# our volunteers 2008

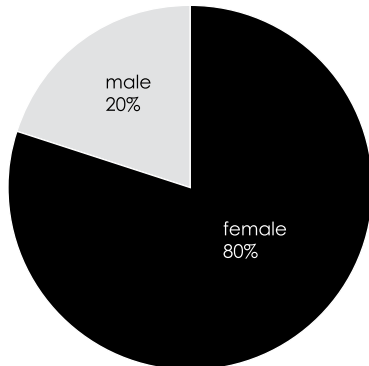
610 volunteers



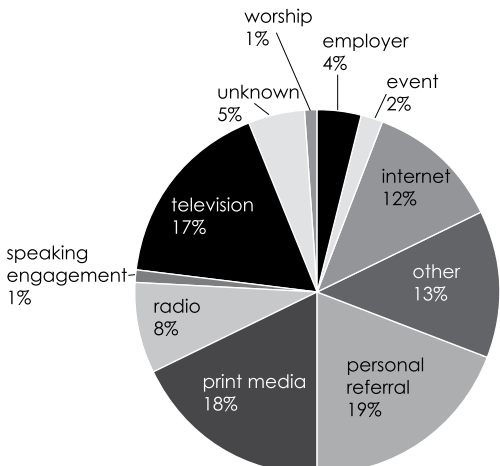
court appointed advocate  
**volunteers by age**



court appointed advocate  
**volunteers by ethnicity**



court appointed advocate  
**volunteers by gender**



**sources of referral**  
for potential volunteers  
(based on 1,282 inquiries)

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# board of directors 2009

Cecil Arnim  
David Baird  
Kenny Baldwin  
Hildegarde Ballard  
John Binick  
James Brodnax  
Rick Burnett  
Mollie Castaneda  
Jane Dabney  
Kim David  
David Davis  
Robert Davis  
Dolly Dawson Thomas  
Eddy De Los Santos  
Judith Farrell  
Terrence Gee  
Amanda Hall  
Quinton Harp  
Ross LeFevre  
Nolan Lehmann  
Ronald Orsini  
Page Parkes-Eveleth  
James Prentice  
Michael Preston  
David Quackenbush  
Brad Robbins  
Barbara Scott  
Cynthia Sebald  
John Storms  
Ellie Sweeney  
Don Taylor  
Suzanne Thomas  
Nancy Thorington  
Lynda Transier  
Mike Van Hoozer  
Milton West