

backgrounder



Child Advocates, Inc. is a private, nonprofit organization that 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.

For 25 years, Child Advocates has served as a leader in applying volunteer manpower to ensure that abused children involved in the children's protective system have someone designated to speak on their behalf. The organization was founded to help break the cycle of child abuse in our city and give child victims of abuse a voice. In 1984, when the organization began in Harris County, three volunteers – who acted as both staff *and* court appointed advocates – served 18 children with a budget of \$5,100. Today, we have a projected budget of nearly \$3.2 million, 39 full-time staff, 4 part-time/contract staff, and 610 trained, active court appointed advocate volunteers – who, in 2009, will serve at least 1,850 children.

advocacy

After being appointed to an abused child's case by a juvenile court judge, we provide critical advocacy—from communicating with individuals on the child's behalf (including judges, attorneys, caseworkers, educators, foster parents, etc.) to submitting written court reports to the juvenile court judges detailing the progress of a child's case and making vital recommendations to the courts and children's protective services. Volunteers are not required to have any specific background, education or professional experience, but must complete Advocacy University – Child Advocates' comprehensive volunteer training program – prior to becoming a volunteer. Advocacy University is held seven to eight times annually.

staff leadership

Child Advocates CEO, Sonya Galvan, has more than 20 years experience working with abused children and leads a staff of professionals whose areas of expertise range from child advocacy and volunteer management to marketing, development, information technology and finance.

our accomplishments

Since 1984, Child Advocates has provided life-saving advocacy for more than 16,000 of Houston's most severely abused children. In 2008, court appointed advocate volunteers contributed more than 50,000 hours making a difference in the lives of abused children.

our challenge

Child Advocates is one of the largest of approximately 900 programs of its kind in the nation. Last year, 4,800 abused children languished in foster care in Harris County due to life threatening child abuse. With our current staff, financial and volunteer resources, we can serve less than half of the children who need us. Our vision is to provide a volunteer for every child who needs one.