

## *Abused children can't wait*

“Sharon is an example of why CASA works,” Dallas CASA supervisor Glenda Taylor said. “She brings the sunlight back out.”

A CASA volunteer for five years, Sharon’s ability to keep all minds focused on the best interests of the children makes her stand out, Glenda says. She holds drama down, stays humble and keeps the kids central to the case.

Sharon has taken laminated photo collages of children in her cases to the judges so the judges could put faces to the cases. She’s willing to transport kids to important meetings, and she’s transferred beds and supplies. By making herself indispensable, she’s proven her value to attorneys and caseworkers alike time and time again.

“It’s the kids that motivate me,” Sharon said. “It’s not within my power to solve all their problems, but it is within my power to make their lives a little better. They know I am there for them – not because I’m getting paid to be but just because I want to be.”

On her last case, with five children and five different parents, she took each child out individually, giving them a chance to talk and connect with her.

“She reminds me of that really good Sunday school teacher you had growing up,” Glenda said. “The kids want to be good for her. She’s calm and unhurried and sets boundaries so they respect her. She brings out the absolute best in the kids.”

For Sharon, her “aha” moment came on her very first case, with a 2-year-old girl who’d been bounced from relative’s home to relative’s home. Once in foster care, the girl had to be moved again and had a new caseworker. Sharon recognized the child needed a familiar face while she made yet another move. When she arrived to help with the move, she found the child screaming uncontrollably. Sharon took the child’s hand, and she stopped screaming and got in the car right away.

“I’m not suggesting my being there made it less difficult to once again adjust to a new home, but I think being with someone she trusted made the experience less frightening for her.

“I knew then why every child in foster care should have a CASA.”

