

## *Abused children can't wait*

Pilot Mel met Sidney at Red Bird Airport in his Beechcraft Bonanza 36 for the short flight to Houston. A short hour a half later, Sydney was on the ground in Houston, visiting with her child and attending a critical meeting regarding her future.

Thanks to Mel, Sydney made it from Dallas to Houston and back in the time she usually spends in the office. "My own family didn't miss a moment with me, and I got to spend four hours with a young girl who has no family and desperately needs to know she is loved.

"What a gift this service and these pilots are. And they don't even know the joy and wholeness they're bringing to hurting kids that need CASA. They are truly angels."

Chad Frymire, a senior CASA supervisor, says having Angel Flight as a partner allows volunteers to reach some of the most vulnerable children CASA serves.

"They've been yanked from their homes in every way, even geographically," he said. "Regular visits just wouldn't be possible without Angel Flight."

On any given day in Dallas, more than 2,000 children are in protective custody. Many are placed outside of Dallas County, making it difficult for their CASA advocate to visit them.

An experienced pilot of 30 years, Mel has been flying missions for Angel Flight since 2002.

"I'm not usually afraid of flying, but I've also never flown in a small, non-commercial plane," Sydney said. "Admittedly, I was mildly afraid but decided I could try it at least once. I could embrace my fear for the sake of my child who had endured so much, one who didn't even have the choice to embrace fear and uncertainty."

Dallas CASA and Angel Flight have partnered three or four times a month this year, but both sides see the project growing in the coming months and years.

