

Holiday toy drive benefiting CASA for Children breaks record

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Toys collected from Tulane's uptown campus were delivered to CASA of Jefferson Parish. (Photo provided by Tulane Staff Advisory Council)

Tulanians donated hundreds of toys and a record-breaking \$6,300-plus to the annual Staff Advisory Council Toy Drive benefiting Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children this year.

Online contributions topped the previous record of \$4,170 in 2014, and nearly doubled last year's total of \$3,226.

"I didn't know what to expect this year given the extraordinary circumstances, but we were absolutely blown away by the generosity of the Tulane community," said Trina Beck, assistant dean for the Honors Program at Newcomb-Tulane College, who serves as the community service chair for the Staff Advisory Council (SAC).

CASA for Children is a network of 933 community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. CASA programs in Greater New Orleans serve almost 500 children in foster care,

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ranging from newborn to age 18. Tulane SAC has supported the holiday toy drive since 2008.

Beck shared some of the feedback SAC received from their CASA partners, reflecting the real impact of the gifts:

“I was worried with the pandemic that donations would be down. Tulane has truly come through for our children once again! I’m so excited to give every [foster] family a [gift] card and provide more gifts during this difficult time for our youth.” -*Tanyanika Franklin, CASA New Orleans*

“I must tell you that we were overwhelmed by the generosity of the Tulane staff. Their gifts will make the holidays much brighter for many, many children.” -*Sharon McLane, CASA St. Tammany*

“Because of your donations, we were able to provide a gift to every child appointed to our program by our Juvenile Court Judges. All together we gave out toys to over 170 children in our community. It was so exciting to hear about the smiles on the children’s faces when their CASA advocate delivered their gifts. I know first-hand that for children in foster care, this was the only gift they would receive for the holidays.” -*Rosana Gonzalez, CASA Jefferson Parish*

Beck emphasized that both SAC and CASA for Children are deeply appreciative of the Tulane community’s support.