



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

2 • 0 • 1 • 7 ANNUAL REPORT

A child's voice in the court



CASA of Will County is a United Way agency, a member of the National CASA Association and a recipient of the Will County Development Block Grant



**POWERLESS
CHILDREN
NEED
POWERFUL
FRIENDS**



Dear Friends of CASA,

I am excited to be writing my first message to you, our supporters, in my first term as president of CASA of Will County. This is a cause that is near and dear to my heart, as CASA is the only organization that trains volunteers from throughout the community to advocate on behalf of abused and neglected children in the juvenile court system, providing a voice to the voiceless.

As a longtime board member prior to becoming president, I am encouraged to see CASA of Will County growing with the support from our community, volunteers, corporate partners and sponsors. As an organization, our ultimate goal is to serve 100 percent of the children who come into care in Will County. Slowly but surely, we are making progress toward this goal.

I am especially thankful for our advocate volunteers as well as the CASA staff, without whom we would not be able to fulfill our vision of increasing community awareness and reporting of child abuse and neglect in our county. There is much more work to be done, and so much more to accomplish – together – and I am inspired by the opportunity that we will one day achieve our goals.

As we come to the end of the year, I want to ask those of you who have considered becoming an advocate in the past, to take some time to reflect on whether this is an opportunity that may be a fit for you. We have training sessions coming up on January, and I urge you to contact the CASA office or visit the “Volunteer” section of our website at casaofwillcounty.org to learn more and to fill out an application.

Also, if it is in your heart to support CASA in a financial way, we would greatly benefit from a year-end, tax-deductible gift to our general fund, or you may make a recurring donation on our website. If you're unable to give of your time or resources, then I ask that you help us spread the word to others. Tell your friends and family about CASA of Will County. Or, like us on our Facebook page at facebook.com/casawillcounty, and share our page with your friends. It makes all the difference in the world to our mission if we are able to increase awareness in our community.

In closing, I thank you again for your support, and it is my sincere wish that you and your families have a joyful holiday season and a Happy New Year!

Best Regards,

*Skye Bergeson, President
CASA of Will County Board of Directors*

Communities Served

Beecher
 Bolingbrook
 Braidwood
 Channahon
 Crest Hill
 Crete
 Custer Park
 Elwood
 Frankfort
 Green Garden
 Homer Glen

Joliet
 Lockport
 Manhattan
 Minooka
 Mokena
 Monee
 Naperville
 New Lenox
 Peotone
 Plainfield
 Rockdale

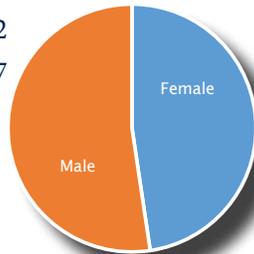
Romeoville
 Shorewood
 Steger
 Tinley Park
 University Park
 Wilmington

*In addition, we serve children that are placed with families outside of Will County.

2017 CASA Client Demographics

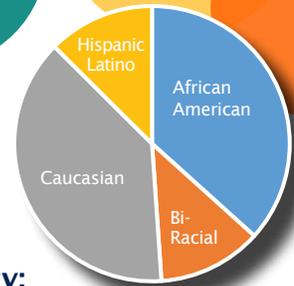
Gender:

Female 152
 Male 167



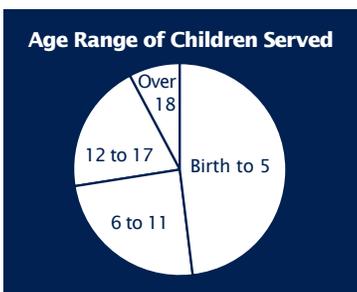
Percentage of ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
African American	117	37%
Bi-Racial	39	12%
Caucasian	123	39%
Hispanic/Latino	40	12%
Total	319	100%

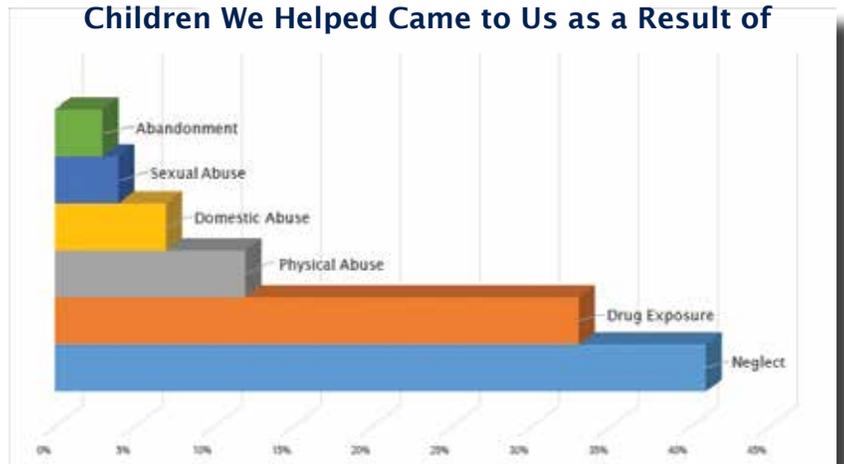


Percentage age groups served:

Age Group	Count	Percentage
Birth to Age 5	154	48%
Age 6 to 11	78	24%
Age 12 to 17	63	20%
Age 18 and over	24	8%
Total	319	100%



Children We Helped Came to Us as a Result of



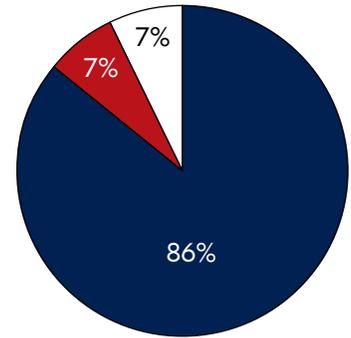
CASA of Will County, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position - Modified Cash Basis

September 30, 2017 and 2016

	2017	2016
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$179,770	\$141,548
Short-term investments	9,733	6,477
Total Current Assets	189,503	148,025
Office Furniture and Fixtures		
Office furniture	3,671	3,671
Computer hardware and software	6,142	6,131
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(9,813)	(9,802)
Total Office Furniture and Fixtures	0	0
Total Assets	\$189,503	\$148,025
NET ASSETS		
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	189,503	148,025
Total Net Assets	\$189,503	\$148,025

2017 Functional Expenses



- Program Services
- Fundraising
- Administrative



YEARⁱⁿ REVIEW

Thank You to Our Sponsors

Nearly 40 percent of our revenue is derived from our fundraising events, and corporate sponsorship plays a key role in not only offsetting event expenses but also maximizing revenue and elevating the profile of our fundraisers.

We would like to take a moment as we review 2017 to acknowledge those sponsors and partners who helped make our events a success!



2017 “Have a Heart for the Child” Benefit Auction Gala

Platinum Sponsor
ComEd



Technology Sponsors
Jay and Lori Bergman and Helm Mechanical

“Have a Heart” Presenting Sponsors
D’Arcy Motors, Johnson Pipe, Presence Health
and Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance

Wine Pull Sponsors
ExxonMobil, Jerry and Corrie Gleason, and
Ted and Colleen Mora

Event raised more than \$100,000

2017 “Golf for the Child” Classic

Presenting Sponsor
Strategic Retirement Partners



Beverage Cart Sponsors
ComEd and Johnson Pipe

Luncheon Sponsor
D’Arcy Motors

“Golf for the Child” Sponsor
The Mather Group

Golf Cart Sponsor
Midland States Bank

Bloody Mary Bar Sponsor
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance

Plus 18 hole sponsors!

Event raised \$40,000



2017 "Running 4 the Kids" 5K/10K

Title Sponsor

Atrium Family Dental

Champion Sponsors

CITGO and Currie Motors

Medal Sponsor

Helm Group

Gold Sponsors

Johnson Pipe / Marco and ReClaim Fitness



Kiddie Run Sponsor

Dr. Brad and Meg Dworsky

Tent Sponsors

Chiro-One and New Lenox Park District

T-Shirt Sponsors

Hatchell & Associates, Hippleheuser & Associates, NuMark Credit Union, Tower Contracting, and Town Center Bank

Event raised \$17,000



2017 Christmas Express

North Pole Presenting Sponsor

Midland States Bank

Santa's Reindeers

D'Arcy Motors and CITGO

Santa's Workshop

Holly Club of Joliet

Santa's Helpers

American Sale, Del Webb and Huntington Learning Center

Ballroom Sponsor

Joliet Junior Woman's Club

Event raised \$70,000



GIVE something BACK foundation



The children that CASA serves come from families that suffer from a variety of risk factors that lead them to the place in their lives where court intervention is required for the safety of the children. These risk factors, which can include substance abuse, mental illness, poverty, domestic violence, generational abuse, and lack of a support system, amongst many others, make it difficult for these families to thrive.

Here at CASA of Will County, our main mission and goal is to give children a voice in court and ensure they are receiving services necessary to heal. Our dedicated volunteer advocates stay with children until the day a child's case has successfully closed. However, we want to make sure that we are working to improve the lives of children as much as possible, and we are constantly working to identify new ways we can help.

One of the biggest struggles our families seem to face is that of poverty. Over 90 percent of the families CASA serves are severely impoverished, with the majority of the households making less than \$20,000 per year. Over the years, as we have formed relationships with the mothers and fathers of the children we serve, we discovered that this problem often spanned generations, with their parents and even grandparents living a

life of poverty. Another risk factor we noted when working with these families was a lack of education. Many of the parents we work with on our cases did not have a high school diploma. Still others never made it past the 8th grade.

CASA realized something had to change. In 2017, we developed a partnership with the Give Something Back Foundation in order to help CASA children overcome their pasts



and have access to a brighter future. The Give Something Back Foundation is a non-profit organization that provides full-ride scholarships to children from low-income families. The children, selected during their freshman year in high school, receive access to a mentor and numerous events throughout their high school years that are designed to prepare these children for college. To date, the Give Something Back Foundation has helped over 1,000 children graduate from college debt-free!

The founder of Give Back, Bob Carr, is extremely excited to branch out this scholarship opportunity to CASA children. When talking about our partnership, Bob stated, "In recent years, GSB has focused special attention on trying to increase the college graduation rates of children who've been in foster care. GSB working together with CASA brings a greater level of personal attention and care to the effort to make college a reality for more foster children."

We at CASA could not be more grateful to be working with the Give Something Back Foundation to help "complete the circle" for children in foster care. By providing these children this lifetime opportunity to attend college debt-free, and be the first person in their family to receive a college diploma, is truly a remarkable opportunity. As CASA strives to place them in safe, permanent, loving homes; GSB provides them the opportunity to obtain a higher education. It is our hope that these children will be able to break the cycle of abuse, neglect, and poverty, as they reach their full potential.



WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

As you read in the letter from our President Skye Bergeson, there are a number of ways that you can support CASA of Will County, through your time (as an advocate) and through your financial support. Here's what that means to the program.

Imagine the child who has been harmed through no fault of their own. It costs \$1,000 to provide a CASA advocate for that child for an entire year. Last year we did a great job in serving 319 children in Will County. That number represents 75 percent of all children who came into care, leaving nearly 100 who were left behind to navigate the court system without an advocate because we lacked the funding to reach them.

It would take an additional \$125,000 for us to reach our goal of serving 100 percent of the children in need. That amount is also the equivalent of nearly THREE additional case managers to oversee those children. That is a lot of money, **but it is attainable with people like you to be a friend to those children in need.**

So how do we achieve our goal? Just as we have all along—step by step. Imagine that the children we are currently unable to serve are the kids in your neighborhood, your children's classmates and friends. In fact, your children. **These children belong to all of us.**

We ask now...who among you is willing to be a friend to those children in need? Can you sponsor a child? Please consider your pledge based on your ability to give, taking into consideration the following:

- \$1,000 = One child for 12 months
- \$500 = One child for six months
- \$250 = One child for three months (or one quarter-year)

Or, perhaps you can sponsor more than one child. Any amount you can give will help. You may send in your check using the enclosed envelope or donate online on our website at www.casaofwillcounty.org or on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/casawillcounty. Please also consider helping the children of our future; inquire about making a bequest to CASA of Will County.

Thank you,
CASA of Will County



Let's make sure that 2018 is the year we reach all children in need!



“It’s about helping a child replace a life of hurt with one of hope.”

- CASA Volunteer

The Role of **CASA** a **powerful** voice in a child’s life...

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained volunteer who is appointed by the Juvenile Court Judge to represent the best interests of an abused or neglected child.

CASA volunteers are appointed as Guardian ad Litem (GALs) and act as the eyes and ears of the Judge by documenting each child’s circumstances and making recommendations for services and permanency. The ultimate goal of the CASA advocate is to help ensure that every child lives in a safe and permanent home. This could mean reunification with their parents, placement with relatives, or adoption by a loving family.

2018 Training Sessions*

- Session 1: Jan. 20, 23, 25, 27, 30, 31
- Session 2: April 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25
- Session 3: July 14, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25
- Session 4: October 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24

* Contact our office or visit our website for more details.

What are the requirements to be a CASA/GAL?

- Anyone 25 years of age or older with good communication and writing skills is welcome to apply (bilingual volunteers needed!)
- Pass DCFS and criminal background checks
- Attend 35 hours of training

What are the expectations of a CASA/GAL?

- Visit children at least monthly
- Interview everyone involved in the child’s life
- Prepare written court reports with findings and recommendations
- Complete 12 hours of in-service training annually

CASA of Will County strives to contribute positive outcomes in the lives of mistreated children. CASA advocates are well-supported by case management, staff, and mentors.

To learn more about the CASA of Will County program, please call us at 815-730-7072 or visit our website at www.casaofwillcounty.org.

We’re waiting to hear from you!

Help an Abused or Neglected Child
Volunteer Today!

THANK Y • O • U

Our *Sincere Thanks*
to the individuals who
work hard year-round
on our behalf:

CASA Board of Directors

Skye Bergeson, President
Sarah Vahey, Vice President
Colleen Mora, Secretary
Mike Noonan, Treasurer
Meg Dworsky
Aleta Finney Pavnica
Jerry Gleason
Clay Johnson
Anna Rocha-Gray

CASA Advisory Committee

Herbert Brooks, Jr.
Lisa Ricchio

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Bruce Darin
Mike Hilton
Cindy June
Kevin Manson
Jarrett Payton
Karen Stratton

CASA Staff
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Program Director

Melanie Buhle,
Director of Advancement

Kaitlin Larson,
Director of Advocate Development

Amanda Ceja-O'Boyle,
Advocate Supervisor

Rebecca Cullen,
Advocate Supervisor

Adrienne Pearl Gimenez
Development Assistant

Alison Green
Development Assistant



UPCOMING EVENTS

Ninth Annual "Have a Heart for the Child"

Benefit Auction Gala

Saturday, February 17, 2018

By popular demand, we are back at Ruffled Feathers Golf Club in Lemont, where we will be officially launching our partnership with Give Something Back Foundation and honoring its founder, Lockport native and businessman, Robert Carr. We are also excited to welcome as our master of ceremonies, NBC 5 and Telemundo reporter Jorge Enrique DeSantiago. Jorge is the father to a foster child and is passionate about issues including child adoption and domestic violence awareness. We're also excited to have as our entertainment, the musical duo Grace and John. Save the date and plan to join us.



Sixth Annual "Golf for the Child Classic"

Golf Outing

Friday, June 29, 2018

The CASA of Will County golf outing continues to be a great way to kick off the summer months. Returning once again to Prairie Bluff Golf Club, we look forward to another great year on the golf course. Save the date and plan to join us.



Fourth Annual Running 4 the Kids 5K/10K Event

Sunday, September 30, 2018

Our run continues to grow, and we have some exciting new expansions and enhancements in store for next year! Watch our Facebook page and website for the latest news.



10th Annual CASA Christmas Express

Saturday, December 1, and
Sunday, December 2, 2018

We reach our 10th year bigger and better than ever, with the event that is the perfect start to the holiday season. Join us on our most popular fundraiser of the year that's fun for the whole family. Tickets go on sale October 1, 2018. Keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates!



CASA of Will County

We are a nonprofit, 501(C)(3) organization that trains volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court System.

Located in the River Valley Justice Center
3200 W. McDonough Street · Joliet, IL 60431
Phone: 815.730.7072 · Fax: 815.730.7073

Sign up for our newsletter at CASAofWillCounty.org



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