

2018 ANNUAL REPORT

A child's voice in the court



Anniversary



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

Thank You

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
Anna Rocha-Gray
Michelle Sargent

CASA Advisory Committee

Herbert Brooks, Jr.
Lisa Ricchio

Honorary Members

Virgie Burse
Bruce Darin
Mike Hilton
Clay Johnson
Cindy June
Kevin Manson
Jarrett Payton
Karen Stratton

CASA Staff

Rita Facchina,
Executive Director

Denise Beran,
Program Director

Melanie Buhle,
Director of Advancement

Kaitlin Larson,
Director of Advocate Development

Amanda Ceja-O'Boyle,
Advocate Supervisor

Rebecca Cullen,
Advocate Supervisor

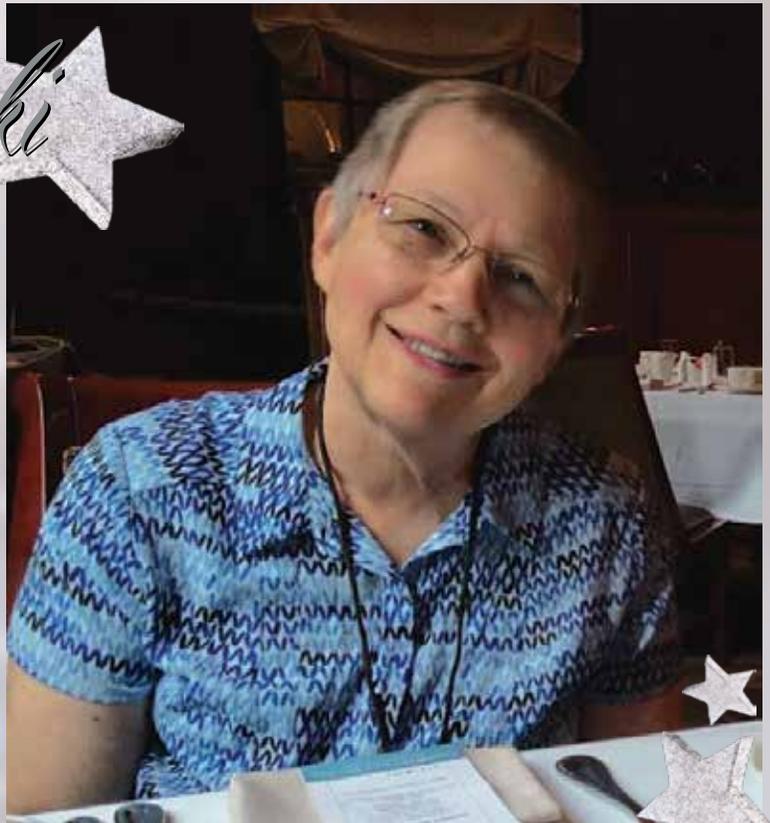
Meg Pennington
Advocate Supervisor

Adrienne Pearl Gimenez
Development & Marketing Coordinator

Susan Majeski

October 7, 1951 – October 29, 2018

In memory of our powerful friend and longtime volunteer Susan (Sue) Majeski. She dedicated her life to children, working as a teacher for 40 years and then spending her retirement advocating for abused and neglected children as a CASA volunteer. From 2014 until her passing, Sue was committed to serving children through CASA. Through her years in CASA, Sue used her voice to speak on behalf of 14 children. Her dedication and passion for children inspires us all. Thank you Sue for all you've done for children and for CASA.



Dear Friends of CASA,

As we gather with friends and family for the holidays, I am particularly heartened to be writing to you in my second year as CASA President, a cause that is very dear to me and one with which I have been involved for a long time in our community.

This coming year we will mark a significant milestone for this organization -- twenty-five years of serving as the voice of the child in the Will County juvenile court system. We are proud of our accomplishments and the many partnerships we've made and especially the lives we have had the privilege of touching over this past quarter century based in Joliet.

But more than just reflecting on where we've been and how far we've come, as your president, I want to make sure that we are here for many, many more years into the future. The children we serve and those that will come after deserve nothing less.

Our program began with no funding, five volunteer board members, a volunteer director, and a few interns. Today, we are serving nearly 340 children that came into our care this year, but there is so much more we need to do. We have built a strong foundation, to be sure, but I hope you'll allow me to dream an even bigger dream.

Today, we have a wonderful staff and strong board members in place to do great things and to continue to reach milestones that we once thought were unattainable. But we can only do it with your help.

There are four pillars that help us to succeed, and you will read about them throughout this report. They are: Volunteers, Individual Donors, Partners and Corporate Sponsors. Each one plays an integral part in what we do, and all are vital to our future.

As you celebrate the holidays with friends and family this year, I ask you to consider where you may fit in as one of those pillars. Perhaps it's a one-time or recurring gift to CASA of Will County? Or, you may be thinking of becoming an advocate volunteer or board member. Or perhaps your business can partner with us with an in-kind service or as an event sponsor. There are so many ways you can make a difference and be the voice of an abused and neglected child in need. Feel free to reach out to me directly with any questions and I'm happy to help you learn more.

In closing, I thank you for your past and future 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
Skye.Bergeson@edwardjones.com



Communities Served

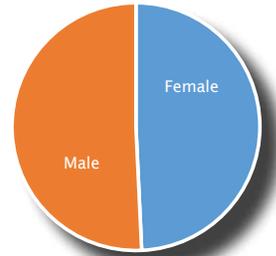
- Beecher
- Bolingbrook
- Braidwood
- Channahon
- Crest Hill
- Crete
- Custer Park
- Elwood
- Frankfort
- Green Garden
- Homer Glen
- Joliet
- Lockport
- Manhattan
- Minooka
- Mokena
- Monee
- Naperville
- New Lenox
- Peotone
- Plainfield
- Rockdale
- Romeoville
- Shorewood
- Steger
- Tinley Park
- University Park
- Wilmington

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

2018 CASA Client Demographics

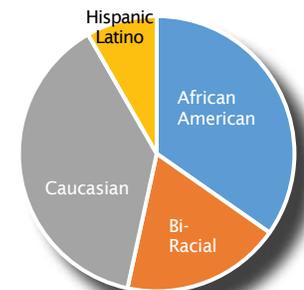
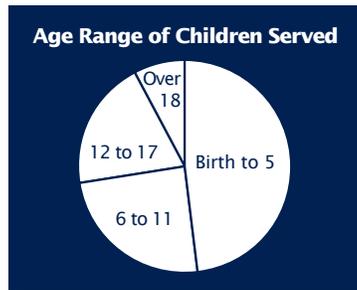
Gender:

Female	166
Male	171



Percentage age groups served:

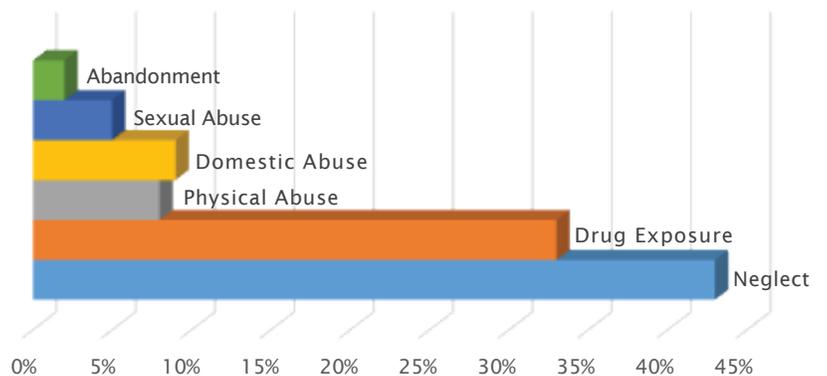
Birth to Age 5	157	47%
Age 6 to 11	89	26%
Age 12 to 17	66	20%
Age 18 and over	25	7%
Total	337	100%



Percentage of ethnicity:

African American	117	35%
Bi-Racial	63	19%
Caucasian	129	38%
Hispanic/Latino	28	8%
Total	337	100%

Children We Helped Came to Us as a Result of



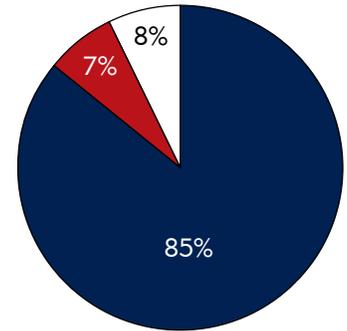
CASA of Will County, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position - Modified Cash Basis

September 30, 2018 and 2017

	2018	2017
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$211,962	\$181,872
Short-term investments	13,547	7,847
Total Current Assets	225,509	189,719
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	\$225,509	\$189,719
NET ASSETS	\$225,509	\$189,719
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	225,509	189,719
Total Net Assets	\$225,509	\$189,719

2018 Functional Expenses



- Program Services
- Fundraising
- Administrative



YEAR in REVIEW

Thank You to Our Sponsors

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

We would like to take a moment as we review 2018 to acknowledge those sponsors who helped make our events a success!

2018 "Have a Heart for the Child" Benefit Auction Gala

Platinum Sponsor

ComEd

Technology Sponsors

Jay and Lori Bergman

"Have a Heart" Presenting Sponsors

D'Arcy Motors, Helm Group, Lewis University, Meijer, Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance Company, Presence Health

Wine Pull Sponsors

ExxonMobil; Jerry Gleason; June, Prodehl, Renzi & Lynch, L.L.C.; and Linda Sticklen

Event raised more than \$105,000

2019 Event Date: February 23



2018 "Golf for the Child" Classic

Luncheon Sponsor

D'Arcy Motors, Strategic Retirement Partners

Golf Cart and Beverage Cart Sponsors

ComEd

"Golf for the Child" Sponsor

DOT Foods, The Mather Group, Jeff and Karen Stratton

Bloody Mary Bar Sponsor

Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Insurance

Event raised \$37,000

2019 Event Date: June 28



2018 "Running 4 the Kids" 5K/10K

Presenting Sponsor

Atrium Family Dental

Champion Sponsors

CITGO, Currie Motors, Triple Threat, WCCQ, MAD Suburban Productions

Silver T-Shirt Sponsors

Chiro One, Dr. Brad Dworsky, ELFCO, Hatchell, Hippleheuser & Assoc., Margo McDermed, Mechanical Equipment, Northern Insurance, NuMark Credit Union, Tower Contracting

Event raised \$18,000

2019 Event Date: October 6



2018 Christmas Express

North Pole Presenting Sponsor

Midland States Bank

Santa's Reindeer Sponsor

Citgo, D'Arcy Motors

Santa's Workshop

Holly Club of Joliet

Santa's Helpers

Shorewood Glen Community

Ballroom Sponsor

Joliet Junior Woman's Club

The 10th Annual Christmas Express took place December 1 and 2, as this report was going to print. It, once again, sold out and is expected to be the most successful event yet!

2019 Event Date: December 7 and 8



Ivy's Story

At CASA of Will County, it is our belief that every child deserves the opportunity to have their needs met and overcome their trauma in a safe and loving home. In order to best help them accomplish these goals, CASA staff and volunteers surround these children with positive support, advocate for their needs both in and out of the courtroom, and assist them in identifying the resources that will help them to thrive. However, our CASA children are amazing all on their own. Their persistence, resiliency, and willpower are an inspiration to everyone they meet.

As many of you know, in 2017, CASA of Will County finalized a partnership with Give Something Back, an organization that offers mentoring services and scholarships to eligible CASA children. The mentoring services help to prepare them for college, while the financial support allows them the opportunity to graduate from college with a bachelor's degree, free of debt. That being said, we are proud to introduce you to Ivy, our first CASA child to receive the scholarship.

The first time Ivy's Advocate Supervisor and CASA Volunteer met her, they both knew there was something special about her. Ivy's case came to CASA after she was abused at the hands of her father and stepmother, and she was placed into foster care. As her CASA team got to know her better, they were amazed by Ivy's kindness, compassion for others, and resiliency. After spending some time in her foster home, family members stepped forward asking for Ivy to be placed with them – they had no idea that she had been abused, and were quick to offer her a forever home.

Ivy always expressed the desire to grow up and help others, either through nursing or through helping other child victims of abuse or neglect. Regardless, college was her goal, and so she applied for the Give Something Back scholarship. After her interview, the staff of Give Something Back informed CASA that she was one of the strongest applicants they had ever seen. Ivy's Advocate Supervisor is also a Give Something Back alumni and mentor, and at Ivy's request, she will be mentoring her throughout her remaining years of high school.



When asked why Ivy wanted to go to college, she stated that her parents had not gone to college, and she wanted to succeed where they had given up. Also, she wants to prove to those who had hurt her in the past that she can overcome what they had put her through and do well. Ivy hopes to use her past experiences to be the person she needed when she was going through her darkest times, so that as many children as possible will have their best chance at a happier future. Ivy also opened up about her time in the foster care system, stating, "The system did good, but I needed to learn to help myself." At first she was afraid to open up about her past experiences, but over time, she made great progress. When asked if there is anything else she would like people to know, Ivy stated, "You're better than your past!"

All of us at CASA are certain that no matter what path Ivy takes in college, that her future is bright, and that she will go on to do great things. Congratulations, Ivy, from all of us in your CASA family!

Focus on CASA Partnerships

Community partners are the unsung heroes who help us day in and day out -- sometimes behind the scenes -- to enhance our services to the CASA children in our program.

Thanks to these community partners our children have access to therapy horses, scholarship opportunities, our Children's Garden, clothing, bikes, blankets, school supplies, toys and toiletries, just to name a few.

We couldn't do what we do without such amazing support from our community. From enriching our volunteer training to donating various gifts, necessities and unique experiences for our CASA children and families, we are profoundly grateful to the following:

- Angel Hooves Healing Hearts
- The Advis Group
- The Big Serve
- Boy Scouts
- Bundlz of Love
- Carter's – Bolingbrook
- Community Development Block Grant
- FnA Bikes
- Give Something Back
- Goodwill
- Happy Place Cafe
- Holy Family Parish
- Home Cut Donuts
- Homer Glen Junior Woman's Club
- Mokena Woman's Club
- Pajama Project
- Panduit
- Project Linus
- Rialto Square Theatre
- Rotary Club of Bolingbrook
- Rotary Club of Channahon-Minooka
- Savarino's
- Selfless Shopping
- Shorewood Glen Community
- Target
- Together We Rise
- United Way of Will County
- University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners
- Will County Community Foundation

Thank you to The Advis Group for their kind donation of school supplies and holiday gifts.



University of Illinois administration and Master Gardener Nancy Kuhajda (second row second from right) pose in the CASA Children's Garden. The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners maintain the garden throughout the year.



Tex and Wally from Angel Hooves Healing Hearts pose with donated bags in our Children's Garden.



Advocate supervisors Kaitlin and Melanie pack school supplies donated from the Shorewood Glen community.



Ron from FnA Bicycles poses with CASA volunteer Frances after donating a bike to her CASA child.



Panduit with Together we Rise donated skateboards, games and bags filled with necessities to CASA.



why we **NEED** your **HELP**



As you read in the letter from our President Skye Bergeson, there are a number of ways you can support our program. Whether you choose to do so through volunteering or financial support, please know that your help makes all the difference. Thanks to the support and generosity from community members like you, CASA has been able to change the lives of more than 3,000 children over the past 25 years, with 337 children being served in 2018! Here's what that looks like:

- Aisha, a two-year-old little girl, was brought into care after her mother, Sarah, was a victim of domestic violence. CASA provided emotional support and encouragement to Sarah while helping DCFS connect her with the community resources she needed to leave her abuser and find a safe home. Aisha and Crystal have since been reunited and are thriving.
- Adam and Jeremy lost both of their parents to the opioid epidemic. Their CASA was not only there for the boys when their parents passed away, but also advocated for these boys to be reunited when they were placed into separate foster homes. Last October, their CASA celebrated with them as they were adopted together into a safe, permanent, and loving home.

Through no fault of their own, these children find themselves in a world of chaos and confusion. CASA eases the burden of navigating the juvenile court system by acting as their voice and fighting for their needs to be met, while utilizing a trauma-informed approach with the child. CASA stands by children from the day their case opens until they find a place to call home.

We at CASA believe that this goes well beyond having a roof over their head. Every child deserves the chance to experience the magic that can only be found during childhood, whether that is found through transforming a cardboard box into a rocket ship, splashing in puddles after a warm summer rain, or curling up with a soft blanket and a good book. Helping them overcome their traumatic pasts and finding them a loving, forever home makes this possible.

It costs \$1,000 to provide CASA services for one child for an entire year. As we celebrate 25 years of protecting and advocating for child victims, we ask you to assist us in raising \$25,000 to reach additional children in need. This means that 25 more children would receive the customized advocacy services and resources that provide children with a brighter future.

Can you help us save a child? No amount is too small. Please consider your pledge based on your ability to give, taking into consideration the following:

- \$1,000 = One child for twelve months
- \$500 = One child for six months
- \$250 = One child for three months

There are numerous ways to donate. Checks can be sent using the enclosed envelope, and donations are accepted online through our website at www.casaofwillcounty.org or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/casawillcounty. In addition, bequests are a wonderful way to support the children of the future. Regardless of your donation method of choice, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Thank you,

CASA of Will County



Let's make sure that 2019 is the year we reach all children in need!



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

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

- CASA Volunteer

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 is to help ensure that every child lives in a safe and permanent home. This could mean reunification with the parents, placement with relatives, or adoption by a loving family.

Help an Abused or Neglected Child Volunteer Today!

2019 Training Sessions*

Session 1: Jan. 26, 29, 31, Feb. 2, 5, 6

Session 2: April 6, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17

Session 3: July 13, 16, 18, 20, 23, 24

Session 4: October 12, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23

* 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!

POWERLESS CHILDREN



need
POWERFUL
friends

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



Like us on Facebook:
[Facebook.com/casawillcounty](https://www.facebook.com/casawillcounty)



Follow us on Twitter:
[Twitter.com/casawillcounty](https://www.twitter.com/casawillcounty)