

annual REPORT 2024



**CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™**





Dear Friends of CASA,

On behalf of CASA of River Valley, I wanted to share my deepest gratitude for the generosity each of you have shown toward our mission to advocate for children who have experienced abuse and neglect.

Because of your generosity, as well as the tireless dedication of our staff and 120 incredible volunteers, we were able to serve 447 children throughout Will and Grundy counties, who desperately needed a voice.

But as you all know, this is a never-ending mission.

Unfortunately, we do not currently have the resources—including the staff and volunteers—to support all the children in our community who have experienced abuse and neglect, a number that only continues to rise year after year. These children are true victims—they have endured countless traumas, often as a result of domestic violence or substance abuse. **Our team is one of the few—if not the only—lifeline these children have available to them.**

We are diligently working to make CASA as resilient and efficient as possible. We have made significant progress in diversifying our funding sources through donations, grants and fundraising events, such as our popular Christmas Express event in December, while also ensuring that the maximum amount of those dollars is spent on services for the abused and neglected children of our community.

But we still need your help.

I hope you will strongly consider continuing to support our mission with either your time or a financial contribution:

- We are always looking for volunteers willing to take up this important work—you can learn more about our training and expectations by scanning the QR code.
- Please consider a one-time or recurring gift to help support our important work—\$1,000 ensures that a child has an advocate for an entire year.



No child deserves to be left behind!

Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

Sincerely,

Meg Dworsky

President, CASA of River Valley Board of Directors





“CHANGE A CHILD’S STORY™”
BRODY’S STORY

In the heart of the mental health crisis in the United States is a stark reality for children in the foster care system. Many face chronic trauma, instability, and limited access to critical mental health services. **Seven-year-old Brody is one of those children.** His journey through foster care began amid his mother’s severe mental health struggles.

Before Brody’s birth, his mother managed her mental health with medication and psychiatric treatment, despite her multiple diagnoses of anxiety, depression, and bipolar disorder. However, when he was three, Brody’s father unexpectedly died of a drug overdose, sending his mother into a downward spiral. She stopped taking her medications and after years of neglect, Brody was placed into the care of DCFS and placed in a traditional foster home.

Brody’s story is not unique. He developed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) due to the trauma he endured at home. That’s when CASA stepped in. **His advocate, Steve, made it his mission to build trust and provide the support Brody desperately needed.**

Steve spent hours listening to Brody, earning his trust, and building a relationship rooted in compassion and understanding. **He took the time to understand Brody’s interests and dreams while helping him navigate the complexities of the legal system.** During their monthly visits, they tossed a football back and forth and bonded over their shared love of collecting Pokémon cards!

As their bond deepened, Steve recognized the extent of Brody’s mental health struggles. Anxiety attacks and emotional outbursts disrupted his foster home and school life. His first foster placement was ill-equipped to address his needs, leading to multiple placements in just a few short months.

Brody’s situation exposed the systemic barriers to mental health care, leaving him in a state of emotional distress.

Steve worked tirelessly to secure a foster placement that could provide the stability Brody needed. Over time, Brody and his mother were connected with individual therapy and psychiatric services. Steve even advocated for an IEP at Brody’s school, ensuring he received additional social work support.

With the help of CASA’s trauma-informed training, Steve helped Brody manage his emotions. As his anxiety lessened and outbursts decreased, he began to thrive. Steve even helped enroll him in a flag football league – cheering him on from the sidelines! He also advocated for Brody and his mother to engage in family therapy, slowly rebuilding their relationship.

Through Steve’s unwavering dedication, Brody learned to trust again.

Because of CASA, Brody found hope and healing – finally breaking free from the chains of his past and embracing a brighter, more hopeful future.

Communities Served

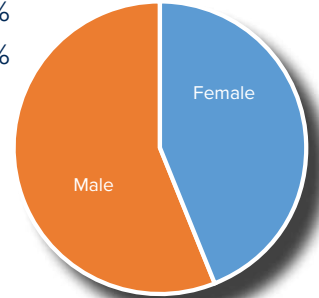
- Beecher
- Bolingbrook
- Braceville
- Braidwood
- Carbon Hill
- Channahon
- Coal City
- Crest Hill
- Crete
- Custer Park
- Elwood
- Frankfort
- Gardner
- Green Garden
- Homer Glen
- Joliet
- Kinsman
- Lockport
- Manhattan
- Mazon
- Minooka
- Mokena
- Monee
- Morris
- Naperville
- New Lenox
- Peotone
- Plainfield
- Rockdale
- Romeoville
- Shorewood
- South Wilmington
- Steger
- Tinley Park
- University Park
- Verona
- Wilmington

In addition, we serve children that are placed with families outside of Will and Grundy Counties.

2024 CASA Client Demographics

Gender

Female	197	44%
Male	250	56%
	447	100%

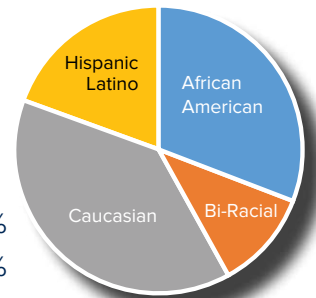


Age

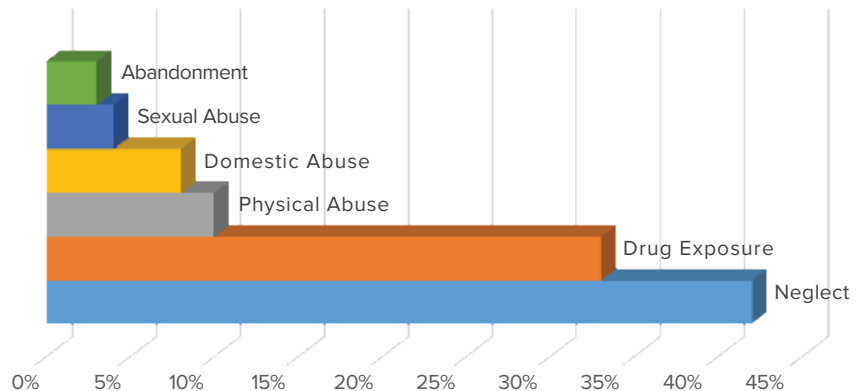
Birth to Age 10	344	77%
Age 11 to 17	89	20%
Age 18 to 24	14	3%
	447	100%

Ethnicity

African American	139	31%
Bi-Racial	49	11%
Caucasian	173	39%
Hispanic/Latino	86	19%
	447	100%



Children We Helped Came to Us as a Result of



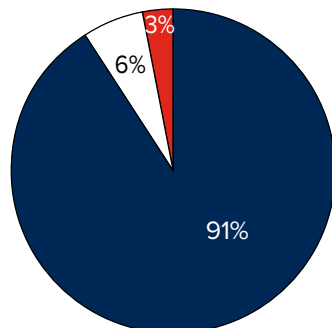
CASA of River Valley, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position - Modified Cash Basis
September 30, 2024 and 2023

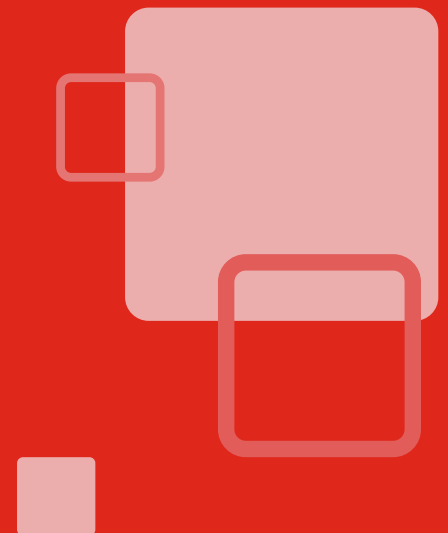
	2024	2023
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 438,296	\$ 505,992
Short-term investments	556,214	317,223
Total Current Assets	\$ 994,510	\$ 823,215
Property and Equipment		
Office furniture	\$ 3,671	\$ 3,671
Computer hardware and software	36,319	30,401
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(33,273)	(28,528)
Property and Equipment, Net	6,717	5,544
Total Assets	\$1,001,227	\$ 828,759
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Due in one year	\$ 7,978	\$ 7,762
Due in more than one year	272,819	280,797
Total Liabilities	\$ 280,797	\$ 288,559
Net Assets		
Net assets without donor restrictions	\$ 720,430	\$ 540,200
Total Net Assets	720,430	540,200
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,001,227	\$ 828,759



2024 Functional Expenses



- Program Services
- Fundraising
- Administrative





LEND YOUR VOICE

Help a child who has experienced abuse or neglect.

Volunteer Today!

What is a **CASA**

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained volunteer who is appointed by the judge to represent the best interest of children who enter foster care due to abuse or neglect.

A CASA volunteer works with an Advocate Supervisor to 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 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.

2025 Training Sessions

Session 2: Mar 8, 10, 19, 22

Session 3: May 3, 6, 15, 17

Session 4: Jul 12, 14, 23, 26

Session 5: Sep 13, 16, 25, 27

Session 6: Oct 25, 27 / Nov 6, 8

Visit our website for the most updated list including session times and topics: casaofrivervalley.org.

Children with a **CASA**

- are half as likely to re-enter foster care
- spend on average eight months less time in foster care
- have opportunities, through a partnership with *Give Something Back*, to attend college
- report significantly higher levels of hope

Requirements to become a **CASA**

- Be 23 years of age or older
- Have good communication and writing skills
- Pass DCFS background checks
- Attend 30 hours of training

Expectations of a **CASA/GAL**

- Visit your assigned child(ren) monthly
- Interview all involved in child's life
- Prepare written court reports with findings and recommendations
- Complete annual continuing education

Scan here to learn more

Or e-mail: casa@casaofrivervalley.org



**Can you dedicate 5 hours per month?
YOU can be the difference in the life of a child!**

Jamey Behringer joined CASA as an advocate in October 2020, driven by a long-held desire to support children in foster care. Her journey to CASA actually began over a decade earlier when she discovered our organization through a magazine article highlighting volunteer opportunities. She knew this was the perfect way for her to serve and support children in need but wasn't in the position to commit at the time. Still, her commitment never wavered - she saved the article, and when the time was right, she eagerly dove into her role!



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Beyond her advocacy role, Jamey stays deeply involved with CASA through fundraising events and book clubs. Her commitment reached new heights in 2023 when she ran the Chicago Marathon for Team CASA – a lifelong goal she had set in high school. Inspired by the resilience of her CASA kids, she trained tirelessly, feeling their encouragement with every step. One of the girls even called her throughout the race and cheered her on as she crossed the finished line. **The marathon became more than a personal achievement; it was a testament to the strength of the sisters she serves.**

Jamey brings a diverse professional background to her advocacy work, starting in the medical industry before co-founding a successful company with her husband, Kyle, where she eventually served as CEO. Together, they have raised two

wonderful sons, Brando, and Baelin, and enjoy skiing, hiking, and being a part of the vibrant Ole Miss community.

As a CASA advocate, Jamey embodies resilience, commitment, and the belief that every child deserves love and support—qualities that shine through in the lives she touches.

Since November 2020, Jamey has worked exclusively with two sisters who entered care at ages 17 and 14. **With her unwavering support, the older sister transitioned to independence by 21, while the younger sister is now thriving in college after graduating high school early.** Jamey has built strong relationships with both girls and will continue supporting the younger sister until she ages out of care. Her core belief – that every child is a blessing deserving of opportunity – drives her advocacy.



Our sincere thanks to the individuals who work hard year-round on our behalf.

CASA Board of Directors

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Heather Voorn
Vice President
Mike Noonan
Treasurer
Julie McNeill
Secretary

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Jerry Gleason
Catherine Katilius
Michelle Sargent
Nan Taller
Chris Uram

CASA Advisory Committee

Joe Boyle
Elizabeth Briick
Denise Winfrey Member Will
County Board - District 6

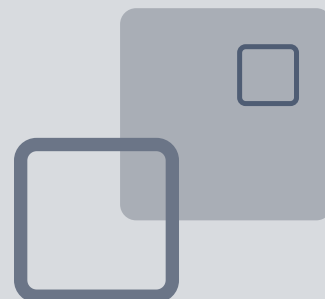
Honorary Members

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Virgie Bursey
Bruce Darin
Cindy June
Kevin Manson
Karen Stratton
Sarah Vahey

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Executive Director
Melanie Buhle
Program Director
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Jessica Chignoli
Abbey Fitzgerald
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Kristina Hauge
Rebecca Howey
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Katie Kopecky
Janice Masokas

Jackie McFedries
Tammie Parrish
Meg Pennington
Hannah Rummel-Chadderdon
Dana Schuster
Rebecca White





Help me find
my happy face.



ways **YOU** can **HELP**

As you read in the letter from our President, Meg Dworsky, we plan to work tirelessly to support the children of River Valley, and we need your continued help. Please consider volunteering your time and talent as a CASA Advocate and/or provide much needed financial support.

Help us to reach our goal of serving 100% of the children in need of a CASA in Will and Grundy Counties.

DONATE

Are you able to sponsor an advocate for a child in need?

Please consider your pledge based on your ability to give, taking into consideration that it costs \$1,000 to provide a CASA Advocate for one child for an entire year.

VOLUNTEER

CASA of River Valley is recruiting volunteers to be the voice for children experiencing abuse or neglect.

Giving of your time and talent will make a direct impact on the lives of children in your community. Together, we can **Change a Child's Story™** and ensure that every child has a safe, loving home.

Visit casaofrivervalley.org to make a difference and be a part of something bigger than yourself.

Let's create a brighter future for all children—they deserve it!
Thank you,
CASA of River Valley

PASS THE WORD

Please share CASA information. Invite a colleague to one of our events, ask a friend about becoming a volunteer or to consider donating. There are many ways to make a difference in a child's life, and we are thankful that you do.



YEAR *in* REVIEW

*Thank you to our
sponsors and partners*

At CASA of River Valley, over half of our funding comes from dedicated corporate sponsors, private donations, and successful fundraising events. Your generous support is vital in helping us serve children in need, and we extend our deepest gratitude on behalf of the more than 400 children we assist. As we look ahead to 2025, we want to take a moment to celebrate the sponsors who have played a crucial role in making our 2024 events a success. With your continued support, we strive to ensure that every child in Grundy and Will County has a voice in court. Thank you for being an essential part of our mission!



“HAVE A HEART” BENEFIT

Presenting Sponsor

CITGO

Platinum Sponsor

Glenwood Academy

Heart of Gold Sponsor

Illinois Bone & Joint Institute

Entertainment Sponsor

The Sargent Consulting Group, LLC – Board Member

Technology Sponsor

JD Bergman Charitable Foundation
Comcast

Whiskey/Cigar Bar Sponsor

D'Arcy Buick - GMC

Dining Sponsor

Bishop's Hill Winery

Event Support Sponsors

Jason and Kassie Bay
BF Tire
Styleline Custom Cabinetry
Weaver Consultants Group

Corporate Table Sponsors

Dr. Brad & Meg Dworsky - Board Member
Edward Jones – Feeney Wealth Management – Board Member
Rita Facchina – CASA Staff
First Secure Community Bank
Hometown National Bank
Jennifer Lynch - Attorney
June, Prodehl, Renzi & Lynch, L.L.C.
Marius & Cathy Katilius – Board Member
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Rodan + Fields – Julie McNeill – Board Member
Ron Tirapelli Ford
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Village of New Lenox
Voorn, Jaworski, & Preston,
PLLC – Board Member
Susan Wiemeyer – CASA
Volunteer



Have a Heart Sponsor

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ExxonMobil
Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Ins. Co.
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Mike and Chris Noonan – Board Member
Schiller, Ducanto and Fleck, LLP
Sterk Family Law Group
Linda Sticklen

Whiskey/Wine Pull

Berkot's Super Foods
Edward Jones - Feeney Wealth Management – Board Member
Wine Cellar

In-Kind

Alpha Media
BreakThru Beverage
David Nelson Jewelers
Impress Printing
SkyByrd Photography

Program Ads

Thank You to all who provided ads to our program book.

**2025 EVENT DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 2025
BOLINGBROOK GOLF CLUB, BOLINGBROOK, IL**

GOLF FOR THE CHILD CLASSIC

Presenting Sponsor

D'Arcy Motors - GMC

Lunch Sponsors

Kevin Manson

Helicopter Ball Drop Sponsor

Strategic Retirement Partners

Golf Cart Sponsor

Voorn, Jaworski, & Preston, PLLC - Board Member

Golf Ball Sponsor

Kevin Manson

On-Course Beverage Cart Sponsor

The Sargent Consulting Group, LLC - Board Member

Play it Forward Sponsor

Marius & Cathy Katilius - Board Member

Bloody Mary Sponsor

Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Ins. Co.

Golf for the Child Sponsor

The Mather Group

Event Support Sponsor

Old National Bank

In-Kind Partners

Breakthru Beverage
Star 96.7
SkyByrd Photography

Hole Sponsors

Thank You to all our Hole Sponsors

2025 EVENT DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 2025

LINKS AT CARILLON GOLF COURSE, PLAINFIELD, IL



BOOTS & BBQ

Presenting Sponsor

Ron Tirapelli Ford Inc.

Entertainment Sponsor

CITGO

"Have a Heart" Sponsors

BF Tire, Inc.
D'Arcy Buick GMC
State Representative Natalie Manley

Whiskey Pull Sponsor

Friends to Elect Jen Lynch

Photo Booth Sponsor

Flynn Parker-Ross & Associates LLC

Dessert Sponsor

Creamery

Thank You to all our In-Kind Partners

2025 EVENT DATE: SATURDAY, SEPT 13, 2025
CORRIGAN'S PUB, SHOREWOOD, IL

TIRAPELLI



CASA CHRISTMAS EXPRESS

Presenting Sponsor

Midland States Bank - Board Member

Santa Claus Sponsor

BF Tire, Inc.

Santa's Reindeer Sponsor

D'Arcy Buick - GMC

Santa's Elves Sponsors

Currie Motors
Holly Club of Joliet

Santa's Helpers Sponsors

Birk Plumbing
Harrah's Casino
Joliet FOP Lodge 58
Family Health Center of Plainfield
Will County Deputies Union

In-Kind Partners

Bin There Dump That
Dottie's Art Studio
Edward Jones - Skye Bergeson
Harald Viking Lodge # 13
LDot Designs
Lockport Township
Ron Tirapelli Ford
SkyByrd Photography
Smokin'Z BBQ
Star 96
Tinley Park Fire Department
Ty, Inc.
Whisk by Morgan
Will County Model Railroad Association

Volunteer Partners

After the Peanut
Girl Scouts
Joliet Central High School
Lewis University
Plainfield Central High School
Romeoville High School
Tinley Park High School
Victor J Andrew High School

2025 EVENT DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6 & SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025

NEW LENOX TRAIN STATION TO HARALD VIKING LODGE, TINLEY PARK, IL

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS FOR THEIR FUNDRAISING ON BEHALF OF CASA OF RIVER VALLEY

2024 Chicago Marathon Runners
Morris Cruise Night
Witch's Night Out Joliet





HOPE NEEDS A HELPING HAND

CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.™





We are a nonprofit, 501(C)(3) organization that trains volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect 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

CASA of River Valley is a United Way agency, a member of the National CASA Association and a recipient of the Will County Development Block Grant. Equal Opportunity Organization

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 Connect with us on LinkedIn:
[linkedin.com/company/casarivervalley](https://www.linkedin.com/company/casarivervalley)

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www.instagram.com/casarivervalley

Sign up for our newsletter at CASAofRiverValley.org/stayintouch | All photos courtesy of National CASA/GAL