

**CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™**



ANNUAL REPORT

2025



Dear Friends of CASA,

In a world that feels increasingly uncertain, **your generosity has been something children in our community can count on.** On behalf of the entire CASA of River Valley team, **thank you** — deeply and sincerely.

Because of YOU, hundreds of children in Will and Grundy counties have had someone in their corner. For a child caught in the trauma of abuse, neglect, and an overwhelming legal system, **a CASA advocate is often the one consistent, trustworthy adult in their life.** Not a caseworker juggling dozens of files. Not a judge they see twice a year. Someone who simply shows up — every time.

For children who've never known stability, one consistent person can change everything. Right now, there are children in our community still waiting for that person. They've experienced things no child should have to face, and they're navigating it alone. Our team works tirelessly to reach them, but **we can only do so much without your continued support.**

We're doing our part — diversifying our funding through grants, community partnerships, and events like our annual Christmas Express, and making sure every dollar goes as far as possible toward the children we serve. But no child should have to wait for someone to fight for them. With your help, none of them will.

Power the Constant — Donate

Your gift funds the recruitment, training, and ongoing support of volunteer advocates who provide consistent, caring support to children in need. A contribution of \$1,000 provides a child with a dedicated advocate for an entire year. A recurring gift — at any level — gives us the steady, reliable foundation our mission depends on.

Please consider a one-time or recurring gift today by scanning the QR code to the right.



Be the Constant — Volunteer

If you're called to do more, we'd love to have you. Our advocates bring a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and professions to their role. What they share is a commitment to showing up consistently for a child who needs them. To learn more about our training and what to expect, please scan the linked QR code today!



With your support, no child has to face their journey alone. Thank you for being part of ours.

Sincerely,

Heather E. Voorn

Heather E. Voorn
President, CASA of River Valley Board of Directors



Grace's STORY

Across the United States, countless children enter foster care after enduring abuse, neglect, and chronic instability. Many have witnessed violence, lived in unsafe environments, or gone without basic care.

Seven-year-old Grace was one of those children.

From an early age, multiple reports to DCFS documented domestic violence, substance use, and chronic neglect in her mother's home. As Grace grew older, the situation worsened. Violence escalated, her mother's drug use increased, and Grace was often left without proper supervision or basic care. Eventually, DCFS intervened, placing Grace in a traditional foster home where she quickly began to thrive.

Like many children entering care, Grace carried deep emotional wounds and developed symptoms of post-traumatic stress. **That's when CASA stepped in. Her advocate, Paula, made it her mission to build trust and provide the steady, reliable support Grace had never known.**

Paula spent hours getting to know Grace, creating a sense of **safety and connection**. She built a relationship grounded in empathy and encouragement. During their monthly visits, they often colored together, read books, and bonded over their shared love of crafting friendship bracelets.

As their connection deepened, Paula saw how visits with Grace's mother triggered anxiety, nightmares, and behavioral regressions. Meanwhile, Grace's father,

who had not come forward at the start of the case, was later identified. When visitation was introduced, Grace refused to go, overwhelmed by fear and uncertainty. Her behavior worsened both at home and at school.

CASA advocated that visits with both parents were causing more harm than good and should be paused until Grace could begin addressing her trauma through individual therapy and felt ready to proceed. While Grace's mother was unwilling to complete the recommended services, Grace's father committed to change, engaging in counseling and parenting classes. Through parent-child coaching sessions and family therapy, they slowly built trust. **After a year of careful, trauma-informed work, Grace reunified with her father.**

Even after reunification, Grace continued to struggle with anxiety and emotional dysregulation. Paula remained involved, helping her father communicate with the school, securing mental health services, and the support systems that Grace desperately needed.

With CASA's guidance, Grace stabilized, her confidence grew, and she began to flourish.

Through Paula's unwavering dedication, Grace learned that healing was possible. Because of CASA, she found safety, stability, and hope, finally stepping into a future no longer defined by the trauma of her past.

"CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY™"

Communities Served

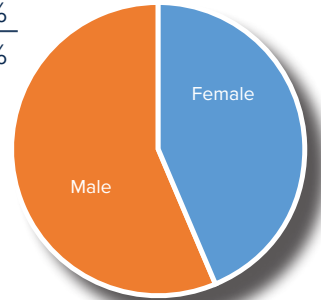
- Beecher
- Bolingbrook
- Braceville
- Braidwood
- Carbon Hill
- Channahon
- Coal City
- Crest Hill
- Crete
- Custer Park
- Elwood
- Frankfort
- Gardner
- Green Garden
- Homer Glen
- Joliet
- Kinsman
- Lockport
- Manhattan
- Mazon
- Minooka
- Mokena
- Monee
- Morris
- Naperville
- New Lenox
- Peotone
- 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.

2025 CASA Client Demographics

Gender

Female	205	44%
Male	263	56%
	<u>468</u>	<u>100%</u>

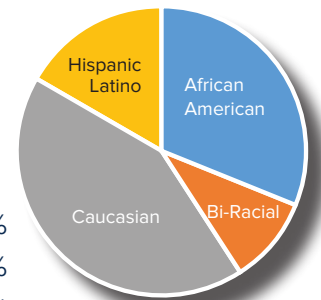


Age

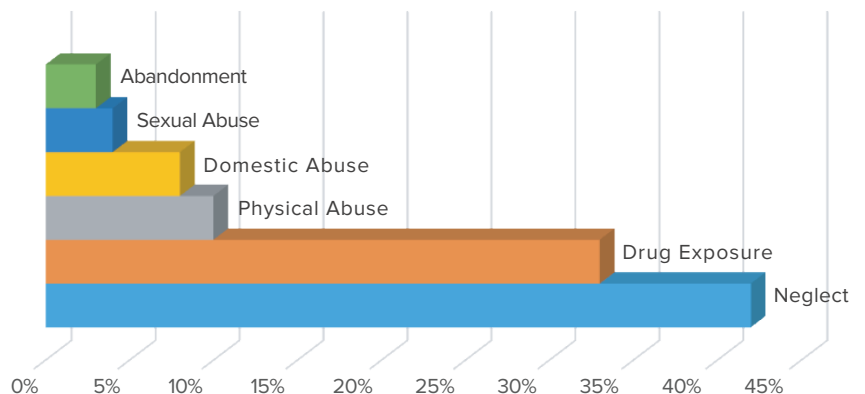
Birth to Age 10	342	73%
Age 11 to 17	114	24%
Age 18 to 24	12	3%
	<u>468</u>	<u>100%</u>

Ethnicity

African American	146	31%
Bi-Racial	46	10%
Caucasian	198	42%
Hispanic/Latino	78	17%
	<u>468</u>	<u>100%</u>



Children We Helped Came to Us as a Result of



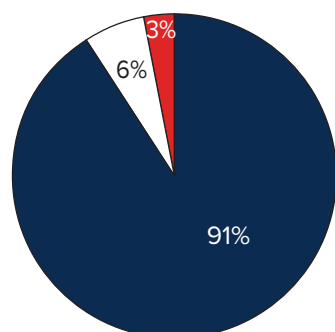
CASA of River Valley, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position - Modified Cash Basis
September 30, 2025 and 2024

	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 535,313	\$ 438,296
Short-term investments	611,955	556,214
Total Current Assets	\$ 1,147,268	\$ 994,510
Property and Equipment		
Office furniture	\$ 3,671	\$ 3,671
Computer hardware and software	36,319	36,319
Less: Accumulated depreciation	(38,018)	(33,273)
Property and Equipment, Net	1,972	6,717
Total Assets	\$1,149,240	\$1,001,227
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Due in one year	\$ 8,200	\$ 7,978
Due in more than one year	264,619	272,819
Total Liabilities	\$ 272,819	\$ 280,797
Net Assets		
Net assets without donor restrictions	\$ 876,421	\$ 720,430
Total Net Assets	876,421	720,430
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$1,149,240	\$1,001,227



2025 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.

2026 Training Sessions

Session 1: Apr 25, 28, May 2, 7

Session 2: May 30, June 1, 6, 10

Session 3: Sep 12, 15, 24, 26

Session 4: Oct 24, 26, Nov 4, 7

Visit our website for the most updated list including sessions, 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 the QR code to the right to learn more
OR e-mail: casa@casaofrivervalley.org



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



of CASA leadership—prepared her for the meaningful role ahead.

Since becoming an advocate, Margie has worked with nine children across six cases, each one shaping her understanding of resilience and the importance of connection. She has also served as a Peer Mentor, supporting new volunteers on seven additional cases involving ten children.

believe in themselves and pursue opportunities they may never have thought possible.

Three of her cases resulted in reunification or remaining safely with a biological parent, and two ended in adoption, one involving a teenager with significant trauma and behavioral challenges. Attending that youth’s adoption ceremony remains one of the most meaningful moments of her CASA service.

Beyond her advocacy role, Margie stays involved with CASA through mentoring, the CASA Book Club, continuing education, and volunteering at multiple CASA events. Her work at CASA is informed by her decades of leadership experience from her career at Harris Bank, where she served as Vice President/Project Manager for Strategic Initiatives.

As a CASA advocate, Margie embodies dedication and compassion. **She believes that even one positive adult can change a child’s life, and she strives to be “that person” for every child she serves during the most uncertain time in their lives.**

Margie joined CASA as an advocate in 2016, fulfilling a longheld commitment she made to herself more than two decades earlier. She first learned about CASA in 1991 and immediately felt drawn to the mission, knowing she wanted to support children in foster care. She promised herself that when she retired, she would step into this work.

She kept that promise. Upon her retirement, Margie enrolled in CASA training, unsure of what to expect, but quickly found that the training—and the steady support

One moment that stands out came early in her advocacy, when she brought a Finding Dory sticker book to a foster home. A young girl looked at her and said, “I hate Dory... because she lost her family.” That simple, heartbreaking statement changed everything. It reshaped the way Margie approached every child, reminding her to slow down, listen deeply, and honor each child’s lived experiences.

Margie’s greatest motivation as an advocate is knowing that her presence empowers children to

Sincere thanks

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

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Julie McNeill
Vice President
Mike Noonan
Treasurer
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Dana Schuster
Kymberle West
Rebecca White
Bianca Wiemeyer



Help me find my happy face.



ways
YOU
can **HELP**

As you read in the letter from our President, Heather Voorn, 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



At CASA of River Valley, more than half of our funding comes from generous corporate sponsors, private donors, and the success of our fundraising events. Your support is essential to our work and directly impacts the more than 400 children we serve each year. As we move through 2026, we are proud to recognize and thank the sponsors whose partnership made our 2025 events such a success and continues to strengthen our mission today. With your ongoing commitment, we remain focused on ensuring that every CASA child in Grundy and Will Counties has a powerful voice in court. **Thank you for standing with us and being an integral part of the change, we create together.**

“HAVE A HEART” BENEFIT

Presenting Sponsor

CITGO

Premier Sponsor

First Secure Community Bank

Heart of Gold Sponsor

Illinois Bone & Joint Institute

Cocktail Sponsor

Ron Tirapelli Ford

Have a Heart Sponsor

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Weaver Consultants Group

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Change a Child's Story Sponsors

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Linda Sticklen

Turk Furniture

Will County Bar Association

Whiskey/Wine Pull

Berkot's Super Foods

Ozinga

Wengler Law Firm

The Wine Cellar

In-Kind

All Occasions Balloons

David Nelson Jewelers

Impress Printing

Shorewood-Troy Public Library

SkyByrd Photography

Star 96.7

Witches Night Out

Program Ads

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

**2026 EVENT DATE: SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2026
BOLINGBROOK GOLF CLUB, BOLINGBROOK, IL**



GOLF FOR THE CHILD CLASSIC

Presenting Sponsor:

D'Arcy Motors - GMC

Social Sponsor:

Strategic Retirement Partners

Ball Drop Sponsor:

DOT Foods

Golf Cart Sponsor:

Voorn, Jaworski, & Preston, PLLC - Board Member

Golf Ball Sponsor:

The Sargent Consulting Group, LLC - Board Member

On-Course Beverage Cart Sponsor:

Edward Jones – Skye Bergeson & Feeney Wealth Management - Board Member

Lunch Sponsors:

Berkot's
Ozinga

Bloody Mary Sponsor:

Minnesota Lawyers Mutual Ins. Co.

Golf for the Child Sponsor

The Mather Group

In-Kind Partners

Home Cut Donuts
Star 96.7
SkyByrd Photography

Hole Sponsors

Thank You to all our Hole Sponsors



CASA CHRISTMAS EXPRESS

Presenting Sponsor

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D'Arcy Buick - GMC
DOT Foods

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Currie Motors

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Birk Plumbing

In-Kind Partners

Bin There Dump That
Dottie's Art Studio
Harald Viking Lodge #13
LDot Designs
Lockport Township
Ron Tirapelli Ford
SkyByrd Photography
Smokin'Z BBQ
Star 96.7
Ty, Inc.
Will County Model Railroad Association

Volunteer Partners

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



2026 EVENT DATE: FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026
LINKS AT CARILLON GOLF COURSE,
PLAINFIELD, IL

BOOTS & BBQ

Presenting Sponsor

Ron Tirapelli Ford Inc.

"Have a Heart" Sponsors

BF Tire, Inc.
D'Arcy Buick GMC
Hometown Bank
Judge John Pavich

Photo Booth Sponsor

Law Office of Theresa Berkey

Bags Sponsors

The Bay Family
Midland States Bank
Serk Family Law

Thank You to all our In-Kind Partners



2026 EVENT DATE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5 &
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2026
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

2025 Chicago Marathon Runners
Full Circle Acoustic
Witch's Night Out Joliet



2026 EVENT DATE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2026
RANCHO LOS GUZMAN, JOLIET, IL

Thank you to our sponsors and partners



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