

CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
CASA OF ATLANTIC &
CAPE MAY COUNTIES, INC.

Annual Report Fiscal Year 2019



When a child's life hangs in the balance, we are there.

Eighteen years ago, we began a journey to help every child living in foster care feel safe, loved and placed in a permanent home. We started with a \$30,000 grant from the National CASA Association, five CASA volunteers and one staff person in July of 2001. By June of the same year, we had served 30 children.

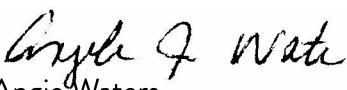
Today, we are proud to say - thanks to our volunteers and supporters - that we have reached our milestone of providing an advocate to every child in care who needs one! For the second year in a row, CASA volunteers were appointed to 94% of all new cases that came before our family courts, and in 2019 fiscal year, a CASA volunteer was assigned to 681 children and youth living in foster care, helping facilitate a permanent home for 273 children and youth.

Unfortunately, reaching this milestone does not mean that our work is done - each year we need to meet the needs of new children entering the system. We must enhance our advocacy services to ensure that each child has the tools that they need to become successful. Children and youth who have experienced abuse or neglect are among the most vulnerable populations in America. A child in foster care may have faced physical, psychological or emotional trauma and years of uncertainty as they wait to go home, be adopted or simply see what happens next. All that chaos has long-term effects.

Even as we celebrate the successes - a teen receiving a full scholarship to college, a mom and dad successfully completing drug counseling, and a 12-year-old girl going to school for the first time - the realities of foster care run deep. These at-risk children lose their families, friendships and fall behind in school. For some, a 'forever home' is never found. Sadly, they end up navigating the world with little education, and few advantages or skills. Young people who have spent time in foster care are more likely to face incarceration, homelessness and unemployment. They are less likely to graduate high school and more likely to be victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Your commitment makes it possible to ensure that every child in foster care has a CASA volunteer. Having a caring, consistent adult to listen and put a child's best interests before all others' can make all the difference. CASA volunteers are there to change lives at the most challenging time in a child's life, and they do.

We are grateful to the people and businesses who have dedicated their lives, time and donations to children in need. With that support, our budget is now over \$1,000,000. We support 298 CASA volunteers, a staff of 14, and will provide a CASA to nearly every child in care this fiscal year. We have reached every milestone with you right beside us and we hope that you will continue to provide a helping hand to those children who need it most.


Angie Waters

Executive Director


E. David Hieb
Board President

*"To give a child a CASA is to give them a voice.
To give them a voice is to give them hope, and
to give them hope is to give them the world." -
Former foster youth Pamela Butler*

AtlanticCapeCASA.org

Why Your Support Is So Vital

CASA is not funded by the courts. Although we receive state and federal funding, it is not consistent. In any given year, state or federal budget cuts can set CASA funding to zero. Like most non profits, CASA relies on community support, grants and individual donations.

Today, even as we are appointed to 94% of all new cases, we still have much more room to grow with enhanced advocacy services and programs, especially for older foster youth who may be in danger of aging out of foster care without the necessary security nets or support in place.

The only way to provide these essential next-step services is to increase our community financial commitment to these children and youth.



“I have come to rely on the work of CASA volunteers. Their reports to the court are clear, factual, and insightful. Most importantly, the CASA volunteers offer practical solutions and recommendations for very difficult situations.” - Family Court Judge.

Positive Wellbeing Results for Children and Youth with a CASA volunteer

98% of CASA children were current with well-visits and immunizations

95% of CASA children were connected with at least one positive adult role model other than their CASA volunteer

93% of CASA children attended school regularly

91% of CASA children were on target to advance to their next grade

86% of CASA children exhibit positive self image

Sustainability Through Balance

CASA’s revenue is distributed between individual, corporate and community groups (19%), state (30%), federal (20%) and local grants (9%), private foundations (18%) and special events (4%). CASA’s 2019 fiscal year budget totaled \$1,035,000 divided as follows: 83% program, 12% administration and 5% fundraising.

CASA advocacy reduces the State's cost by reducing the amount of time children spend in foster care. CASA programs throughout the state received about a quarter of our funding from the State Budget, yet combined services save the state more than \$7 million each year.

It costs the organization \$1,263 to place one child with one CASA volunteer during the course of a fiscal year, well below the state average of \$2,453.



THEY ARE
more likely
to find a safe, permanent home



THEY ARE
more likely
to succeed in school



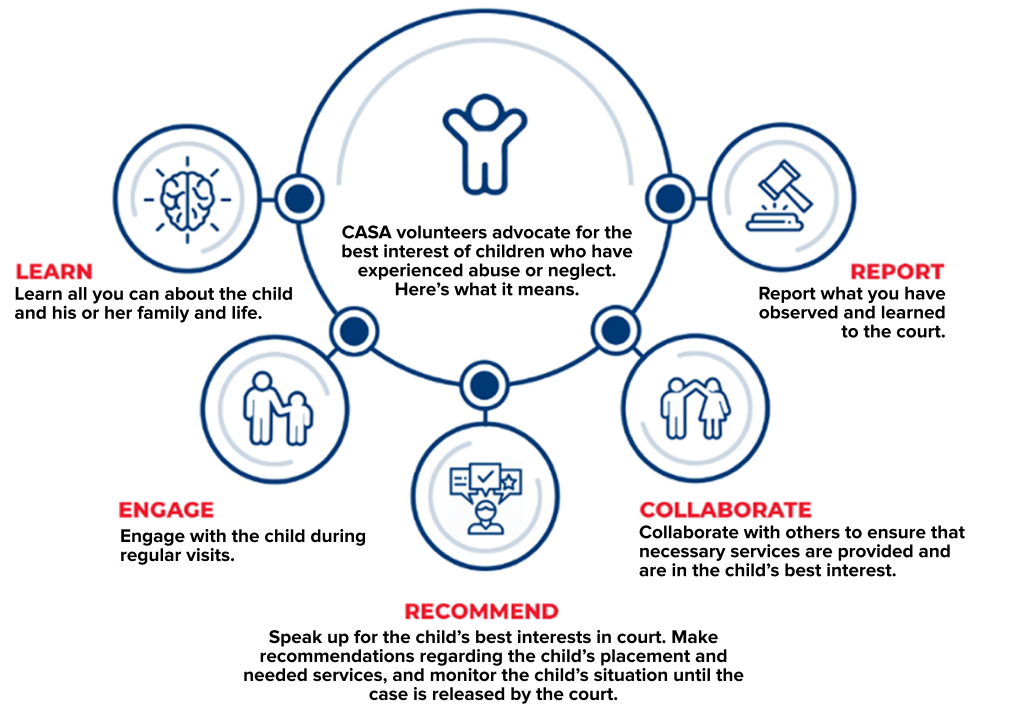
THEY ARE
half as likely
to re-enter the foster care system

“I would like to say thank you for all the help CASA provides. It’s like having an angel at the other end of the phone. It’s like having hope when everything else you are trying is failing. We, the foster parents, are not alone anymore.”
- Foster mom of 12-year-old Megan

The CASA Model

Judges appoint CASA volunteers to advocate for a child’s best interests. They work with the child until their case closes and they are in safe, permanent home. Volunteers work with legal and child welfare professionals, educators and others to ensure that judges have the necessary information to make potentially life-changing decisions for each child.

Best-Interest Advocacy



CASA By the Numbers

298 active volunteers served
681 children and youth

83 new volunteers were trained and assigned a child

39% of the children are reunited with family

30% of children are adopted

26% of children are placed with family

5% of youth transition to independant living, are in long-term special care or move out of our region

1 in 3 children are removed for neglect