



“

"When I explain what a CASA is to others outside the system, I say a CASA is someone who visits the kids and advocates for what children need. The value of observing things at home, school, etc. creates an ability to see things others may not be able to observe."

”

-Former foster and now adoptive parent

Dear CASA Lake County Friends and Supporters,

It is our job to advocate for the best interests of children in the juvenile court system, even during a global pandemic. Child abuse and neglect did not cease in 2020; therefore, CASA Lake County continued to advocate for and support our children while the foster care system grappled with the impacts of COVID-19. With court hearings delayed and in-person visits on hold, our volunteers remained committed to their cases. They embraced creativity, and they adapted.

Our volunteers displayed tremendous resilience while the pandemic also impacted them personally, pivoting to meet the new and intense needs of the children and their families.

Through it all, our community wrapped its arms around these children in need of support, helping our program grow to serve 624 children—more than in any other prior year.

We want to thank our community—especially our volunteers—for their unflinching support for our mission during an extremely challenging and unpredictable year. We could not have continued providing services and advocacy for our vulnerable children and teens without our caring community of supporters. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for helping us to continue to fulfill that mission.



Terri Zenner Greenberg
Executive Director

MISSION

CASA Lake County exists to promote and protect the best interests of children who have been abused or neglected, by training volunteers to advocate for them in courts, in schools, and in our community to help them find safe, permanent, and loving homes where they can thrive.

VISION

A community where all children who have experienced abuse or neglect are given the opportunity to reach their full potential in safe and loving homes.

ETHICS

It is CASA Lake County's duty to promote the safety and well-being of the children we serve. We shall protect children from abuse and from practices that are emotionally and physically damaging, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating.



What Does a CASA Do?



A court case begins when a child suffers abuse, neglect or dependency



Judge appoints a CASA volunteer



CASA volunteer meets with child to learn more about them

"I am so grateful for the dedication and commitment my volunteers showed this year. They went above and beyond in ensuring their CASA children were safe and were having their needs met. I was inspired daily by their work."

- Elizabeth Sammann, Program Manager



CASA volunteer sets up regular meetings with child

"I remember when Tanya, one of my CASAs, called when COVID was at its worst. Right at that time she said 'I figure CASA could use help.' That is the type of organization we are and that is the type of people we attract!"

- Debby Parry, Advocate Manager

foster parents

biological family

DCFS worker

doctor



teacher

therapist

CASA volunteer communicates with everyone involved in the case

child's attorney



CASA volunteer advocates for child's best interests in court



CASA volunteer continues working to find child a permanent home

moves to different foster home



CASA volunteer supports child through transitions

starts a new school

DCFS caseworker changes



Resilience Through a Time of Uncertainty

Even as our CASAs were impacted personally by Covid-19, our volunteers displayed tremendous resilience by pivoting to meet the new and extremely different needs of the children and their families.

Food insecurity, economic instability, and housing needs became key issues for children in care in a way that we have never seen before. Additionally, perhaps one of the most demanding aspects of the work of CASAs in 2020 was the critical educational advocacy and support provided in the remote learning world. For so many of our children, it was the CASA who made sure they had access to technology so that children in foster care didn't fall even further behind. In addition to meeting the most basic needs of children in care, CASAs have zeroed in on addressing the mental and behavioral health needs



Organizing Thanksgiving meals donated for CASA families

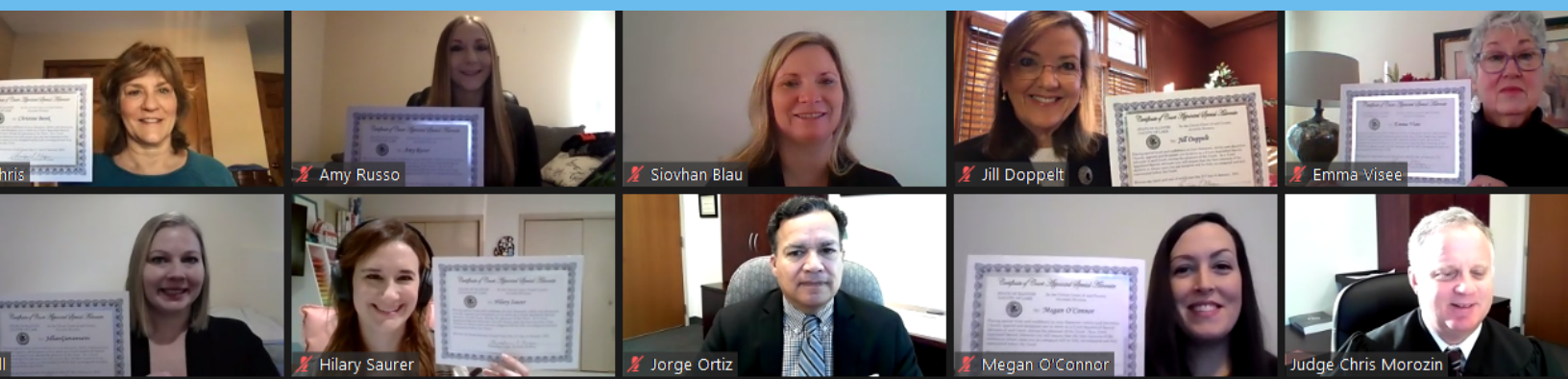


Starbucks employees supported our kids and families throughout the last year

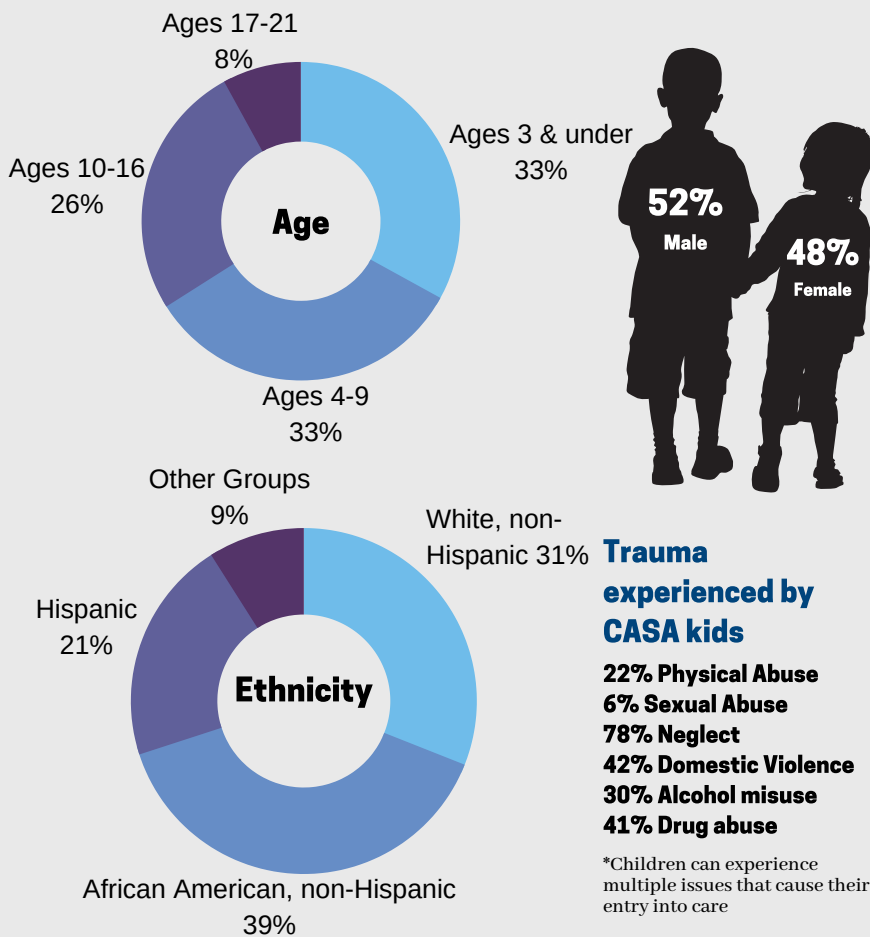
of children, which were compounded by the devastation of Covid-19. CASAs stepped in providing stability, creating structure, and offering the consistency of a caring adult despite the chaos of the outside world.

During this time of great need, our CASA program has responded in so many creative ways. CASAs used every type of device and software available for virtual visits with children.

They practiced social distancing through living room windows and car windshields. CASAs brightened dark days by dressing up in costumes. They helped families find and move to new homes. Volunteers sourced food and other essential needs for families that lost jobs and income. They delivered school supplies, computers, holiday gifts, and more to help our CASA children stay connected to school and experience a sense of normalcy.



WHO IS A CASA CHILD?



Among the children we served in 2020...

44% had cognitive disabilities or delays, physical disabilities, or clinically diagnosed behavioral or mental health needs

29% had depression, PTSD, anxiety, bipolar disorder, or a similar mental health diagnosis

13% had medical challenges such as heart conditions, neurological disorders, respiratory problems, or physical disabilities including vision or hearing impairment

37% had ADHD, developmental delays, speech impairment or learning disabilities

9% had prenatal drug exposure, fetal alcohol syndrome or shaken baby syndrome

Placement Type While in Care

- 63% Family or relatives
- 31% Traditional foster homes
- 6% Residential institutions

Duration of Case

- 51% 1-3 years
- 16% 3-5 years
- 9% over 5 years
- 24% Under 1 year

Case Closure Circumstance

- 61% Reunification with parent(s)
- 19% Adoption
- 8% CASA discharged or case transferred
- 6% Guardianship
- 6% Independence

Just Imagine...

Try to remember how long two and half years is for a child. It's an impossible amount of time at that age. Still, half of our children have cases that last longer than that.

624 children served
281 active CASA volunteers
148 child case closures

148 total children served with a volunteer had cases close in 2020, a 29% increase from 2019

WHO IS A CASA VOLUNTEER?

Employment Status

- 48% Retired, not currently employed, or other employment status
- 35% Employed full-time
- 17% Employed part-time

Age

- 39% 60 and over
- 32% 50-59
- 15% 40-49
- 11% 30-39
- 3% 21-29

Why did you join CASA?

"CASA appealed to me because there are so many children who need a voice to support and defend them. I want my volunteer work with CASA to help ensure that these children won't suffer any more."

- Michael Mendoza, Court Appointed Special Advocate

Years of Service as a CASA

- 70% Under 3 years
- 15% 3-5 years
- 15% 6 years or more



2020 CASA VOLUNTEERS

We are so grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who gave of themselves during this difficult year to support their CASA children and families. Thank you!

Suzanne Brunner	Mary Beth Fahrney	Laura Jones	Cecilia Milotti	Patricia Schaefer
Nancy Agajeenian	Patty Felker	Deborah Jurs	Kara Mishler	Cary Schawel
Patricia Allen	Mary Fenchel	Carole Kagan	Mimi Mitchell	Sheila Scheer
Kimberly Baker	Lindsay Finlay	Jodi Kahn	Chloe Moore	Rebecca Scheuneman
Patricia Baker	Amy Fischer	Ashley Kaltinger	Renee Morris	Richard Schulman
Jill Barber	Mary Ann Forness	Missy Kanter	Diane Naftzger	Gerald Schulz
Allison Batcho	Susan Fowler	Jan Katz	Jeffrey Nagel	Laura Schwartz
Alice Battle	Roxy Freel	Gina Keefe	Joanne Nagel	Lauren Schwartz
Alice Berger	Jennifer Frentzel	Rosemary Kehr	Elaine Nekarda	Emily Selbe
Michael Berger	Stacy Friedland	Karen Kelley	Lisa Nesbitt	Sondra Serrao
Claudia Berman	Lynn Froy	Erin Kerpel	Sandra Nimz	Julie Sexton
Juliann Boardman	Monica Gajdel	Kim Keywell	Wendy Noonan	Katie Shorr
Beth Boehrer	Alicia Galarce	Michael Knight	Meg O'Keefe	Priscilla Sienko
Janet Breum	Christine Galliani	Nancy Knight	Cathy O'Shaughnessy	Cindy Sievers
Sarah Brown	Judi Gettleman	Barbara Korobkin	Claudia Ochoa	Patricia Sima
Gail Brown	Kristyn Gibson	Karen Kos	Lauri Olson	Debbie Rimon
Carolyn Buchholz	Ziomara Gil	Jeffrey Kost	Sylvia Oriatti	Jeanne Simons
Katherine Buller	Jane Glover	Alison Kotlarz	Louis Orlando	Tanya Singh
James Burt	Amy Goggin	Diane Kovarik	Karen Ottenheimer	Roseann Sinkovitz
Katie Bushala	Lori Golata	Inga Krueger	Olga Pahl	Ellen Skolar
Marni Byrnes	Heather Goldhaber	Isabel Krupica	Mary Ellen Palubicki	Renee Smith
Colleen Campbell	Holly Goldsmith	Lynn Kubichan	Haydon Paquin	Todd Smith
Connie Capone	Renee Goldstein	Veronika Kudina	Jin Park	Emily Soltwisch
Amy Carletti	Sheldon Goldstein	Martha Lahti	Ellen Paton	Amy Stanczyk
Peg Carlson	Patty Gonzales Vandergrift	Ryan LaLonde	Frank Pavelske	Linda Steen
Marcia Cebula	Janice Greenawalt	Deborah Lancaster	Mary (Megan) Pavelske	Maria Stein
JoAnne Celba	David GriffinGail Grossman	Jennifer Lang	Charles Persico	Rachel Stein
Donna Chen	Tina Grubestic-Ibrisevic	Jeanne LaRocca	Lynn Persico	Susan Stern
Megan Chin	Jody Gullifor	Barbara Laskowski	Ken Peterson	Joan Stevens
Danielle Cizowski	Amanda Gunn	Suzanne Lavin	Jennifer Pfeifer	Kim Struik
Robin Cleek	Marissa Haas	Amanda LeGrand	Julie Phipps	Candace Tallisman
Helen Coleman	Melissa Hall	Kristin Leonard	Valerie Pientka	Carola Tanna
Janet Conlon	Inez Hanan	Mindy Levinson	Linda Piepenbrink	Julia Tanneberger
Barbara Connet	Christina Harrold	Nancy Liberman	Kathy Powell	Katharine Thompson
Julie Corey	Jane Haynes	Laura Lieberman	Linda Racki	Shannon Tierney
Kathy Cotter	Deborah Heidecke	Lisa Lissner	Charlie Ramsey	Nichole Tonioni-Greskovich
Lauren Crane	Andrea Heim	Paul Lively	Deborah Rashman	Laura Topel
Susan Creager	Lisa Henderson	Deborah Lorsch	Loyal Rassas	Krystal Topps
Dane Cruz	Rosita Hernandez	Ellen Luberfeld	Kathleen Redding	Mohsen Torabi
Julie Dahlberg	Sandra Hernandez-Aguirre	Laura Luce	Rosemary Reed	Laura Ulrich
Madeleine Davis	Lisa Herrin	Sharon Madaus	Terrie Reinhard	Lisa VanErden
Rebecca Deering	Amy Holtsford	Pamela Maloney	Natalie Rempala	Amy Voss
Sylvia Dekiremandijan	Teresa Hooker	Meg Manda	Ingrid Richards	Debra Ward
Susan DePree	Shannon Hubert	Christine Markantonis	Stephen Robertson	Dia Weil
Lindsay DeReadt	Thomas Hynes	Shar'mane Martin-Wilson	Anna Roeser	Andrea Weingart
Carl Derenfeld	Susan Isenberg	Lauren Marwil	Diane Roman	Rory Welch
Mary Dominiak	Lisa Jacob	Pamela Masticola	Lynne Rosenbaum	Roxanne Wichlin
Erin Donaldson	Lauren Jacobson	Anna McCartney	Ann Ross	Jane Williams
Ginni Doshi	Jocelyn Jaramillo	Shannon McBride-Bromberg	Cathy Ross	JoAnne Williams
Monica Doxie	Dennis Jennings	Joseph McGann	Susan Rote-Kay	Yolanda Wisnionski
Beth Edwards	Harjeet (Hera) Johal	Kerri Melzl	Robin Salk	Lynnae Wolin
Sophy Elliott	Jodie Johnson	Venetia Miles	Margaret Schaefer	Robyn Woods
Jamie Epstein	Rita Johnson	Barbara Miller	Jamie Schaefer	Tracey Wooten
				Jenny Zinser

LAYLA'S STORY OF HOPE



In May of 2018, newborn baby Layla was taken into the foster care system due to drug exposure at birth. For many children, this is just the beginning of an arduous journey through the protective care system. Luckily, Layla was able to be placed immediately in a loving foster home, which would eventually become her adoptive family two years later. Layla won't remember her time in foster care, but her adoptive mother and father certainly will.

Throughout her time in foster care, Layla had a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) with her. Maddie served as Layla's CASA for the full two years that Layla's case moved through the court system, supporting the foster parents, making sure Layla and her family had all of the necessary resources available. It took two years for the adoption to proceed, even with no involvement from the natural parents. Through it all, Maddie stayed connected with Layla and her foster mother, Nicole, to ensure the best possible outcome for Layla.

"CASA is a needed service. It is like a bridge between the caseworkers and the courts to the family."

Throughout the duration of Layla's court case, which was prolonged due to COVID-19, Maddie connected Nicole with many community resources for food, clothing, diapers, and more. When asked about her experience with CASA, Nicole says "Maddie is absolutely wonderful. She always made me feel very comfortable whenever she came over to visit. She made me feel a lot better. Maddie was constantly communicating with me to see if I needed anything and made sure I was involved and aware of resources and CASA programs."

Now, more than two years after newborn baby Layla first entered foster care, Layla's whole family can finally celebrate her adoption date of August 6, 2020, after many months of waiting. Nicole sends photos and plans to keep in touch with Maddie, stating, "She is Layla's honorary Grandmother...It's like she's family. As far as moving forward, we are taking it all in and enjoying being a family."

It's not easy for nonprofit organizations to raise funds during the best of times. During a pandemic, it's more than daunting.

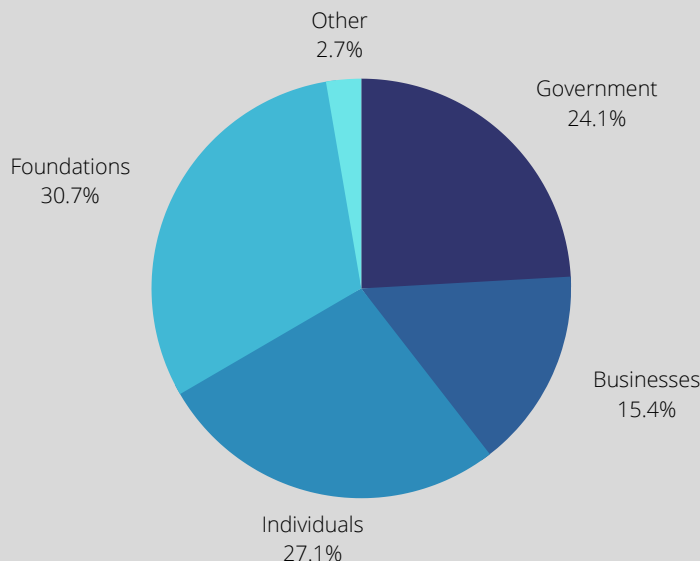
No celebratory dinners. No golf tournaments. No in-person meetings. And in 2020, this meant no annual CASA Lake County gala for the first time in more than 15 years, which has traditionally been our largest fundraising event each year.

Deprived of traditional fundraising tools and avenues to connect with our community, CASA Lake County was fortunate to be able to turn to our loyal, local supporters for a special fundraising effort. Led by Assertio Therapeutics, Inc., based in Lake Forest, Camping World Holdings, Inc., in Lincolnshire, and The Keywell Foundation, in Chicago, the 2020 Advocacy Always campaign that was created raised over \$320,000, helping us to achieve our annual goals.

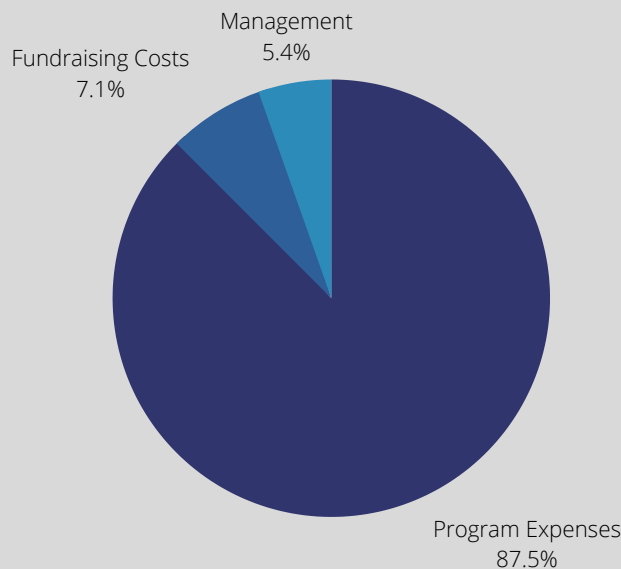
"We have long known the deep empathy and generosity of the individuals, companies, and foundations that support the work of CASA, but that has never been more evident than during our hour of need this year. We are so grateful," said Executive Director, Terri Zenner Greenberg.

Our work has taken on renewed importance as the number of children in foster care in our region has soared by thirty percent in the last three-four years, and the needs of those children have grown substantially during the pandemic crisis. At the peak in 2020, more than 100 children were on our waiting list in need of a CASA volunteer of their very own. With the addition of several new program staff, the waitlist decreased substantially since that time. Thank you to our donors for making this possible!

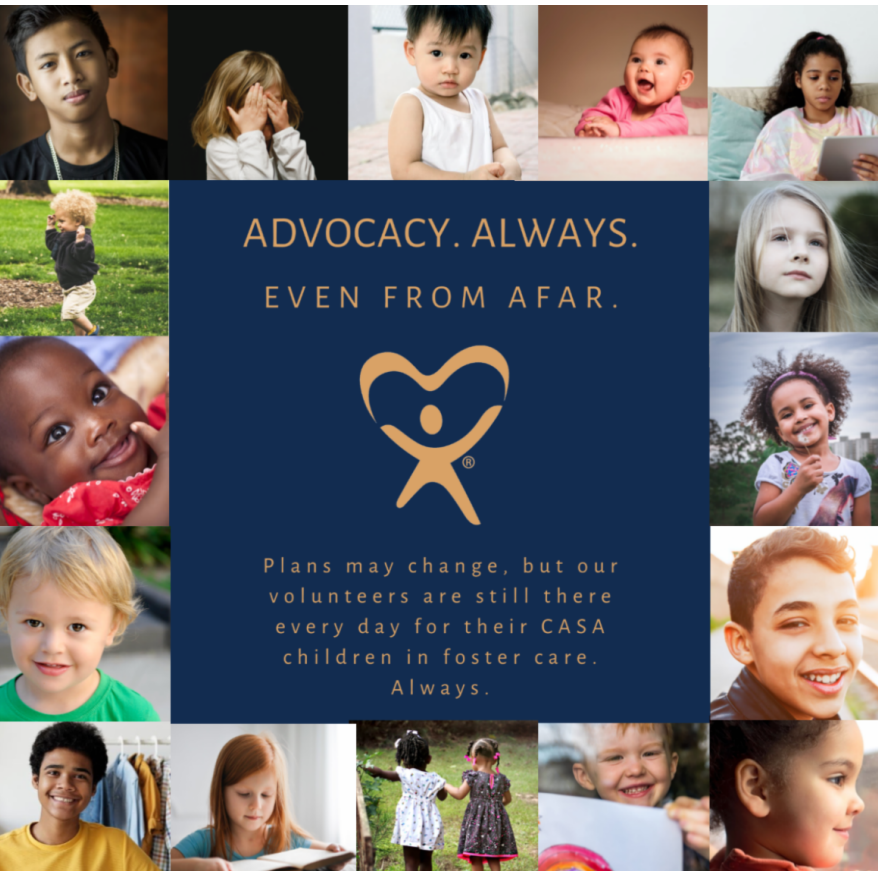
Revenue: \$1,391,665



Expenses: \$1,294,951



Net Assets: \$1,484,022



ADVOCACY. ALWAYS.
EVEN FROM AFAR.



Plans may change, but our volunteers are still there every day for their CASA children in foster care.
Always.

"[Our CASA] was able to provide a steady presence across homes, foster families, case workers, counselors, etc. She guided us as parents in identifying patterns and needs to better provide care."

-Parent of CASA Child

2020 FISCAL YEAR SUPPORTERS

\$50,000+

Illinois CASA Association - DCFS
IL Criminal Justice Information Authority - VOCA
Peggy & Steve Fossett Foundation

\$25,000 to \$49,999

AbbVie Foundation
Anonymous Fund - Community Fnd. for the Fox Valley
Gorter Family Foundation
Keywell Foundation
Lake County - CDBG
North Shore Exchange
The Healthcare Foundation of Highland Park

\$10,000 to \$24,999

Alight Solutions
Assertio Therapeutics, Inc.
Camping World
Emily & John Chen
Chicago Bears Football Club Inc
Grace A. Bersted Foundation
Jack and Donna Greenberg
Heartland Children's Foundation
Horizon Therapeutics
The John R. Houlsby Foundation
Illinois Attorney General - VCVA
ITW
The Edward and Wanda Jordan Family Foundation
Joanna and Bill Lynn
Stacey and Doug Meyer
Brent & Kim Moody
National CASA Association
Elizabeth & Derek Sammann
St. Joseph Catholic Church
Susan and Abraham Stern
The Lake County Community Foundation
Trustmark Foundation
Noga and Antonio Villalón
Eric and Sherri Zion

\$5,000 to 9,999

Brent and Kathy Arnold
Caring Women's Connection
Joanne Celba
City of Waukegan - CDBG
Conagra Brands
First Bank of Highland Park
First Presbyterian Church of Deerfield
Robert and Jennifer W. Frentzel
Janice and Andy Greenawalt
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Jim and Suzanne Kenney
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Emily Reusche Selbe
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Vernon Township
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\$2,000 to 4,999

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Winnetka Congregational Church

\$1,000 to 1,999

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\$500 to 999

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Sanjeev Arora
Steven Bonnes
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United Methodist Church of Libertyville
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\$250 to 499

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Jeffrey Smidt
Shawn and David Tiemeier
Amy and Andy Voss
Wildwood Presbyterian Church
Zurich American Insurance Co.

"I give to CASA Lake County because this is an organization that thoroughly educates and supports its volunteers. Advocates learn how to establish a relationship with children based on trust. This is the work of CASA Lake County."

-Janice Greenawalt, Volunteer and Donor

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CASA Thanks Our 2020 Mission Partners



THE LAKE COUNTY
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Companies

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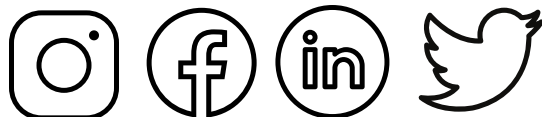
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