

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

CASA Lake County 2023 Impact Report



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

LAKE COUNTY

“

“Janet is selfless, 100% caring, and cares about the whole picture. She was amazing to have as our CASA! We felt we could always count on her. I'm thankful that CASA exists. I would not have been able to be a strong foster parent without Janet.”

-Stefanie, Adoptive Mother

”

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to share this report on the inspiring, life-changing work of CASA Lake County's board, staff, supporters, and Volunteer Advocates during our 2023 fiscal year. Each of these many individuals chose to give something precious—time, money, energy, or emotional investment—to a child and family they had never met before joining our cause and mission. I'm grateful for the thousands of people who have made that choice since our program began in 1993.

We know in our hearts that this generous spirit has changed the lives of countless youth throughout our community. We have heard about that impact from the judges in our courts. We have read about it in letters from caregivers. We have seen it through the growth and transformation of the children we serve. However, we have often had difficulty recording, quantifying, and reporting that impact. It is a challenge that faces all CASA programs along with every other agency serving youth in the child welfare system.

With that in mind, in 2020 we began an effort to create a new logic model and data tracking system linking the work of our Volunteer Advocates to the challenges commonly facing the children they serve. Over two years, we identified 21 outcomes that represent the highly varied types of support and advocacy that CASAs provide to youth and their families. We then created a system of surveys to collect data about our CASA kids as cases open, annually as they progress, and at the point of case closure. We rolled out this system in 2022, and by the end of 2023, we had collected a complete year of data across our 21 new outcomes.

We have begun to use this data to explain the critical work of our advocates. We will continue to refine these new methods in the years ahead, improving the transparency and accountability our program offers to the community that so steadfastly supports us. Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, we can build a brighter future for the children of Lake County.

With heartfelt appreciation and best wishes,



Terri Zenner Greenberg
Executive Director

MISSION

CASA Lake County exists to promote and protect the best interest 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 it serves. 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?



1

After a child is placed in foster care, a judge appoints a CASA volunteer.



2

The CASA volunteer gets to know the child and their individual needs.



3

The CASA volunteer sets up regular meetings with the child.



4

The CASA volunteer communicates with everyone involved in the case.



5

The CASA volunteer advocates for the child's best interests in court.



6

The CASA volunteer supports the child through transitions.



7

The CASA volunteer continuously works to find the child a permanent home.



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
LAKE COUNTY

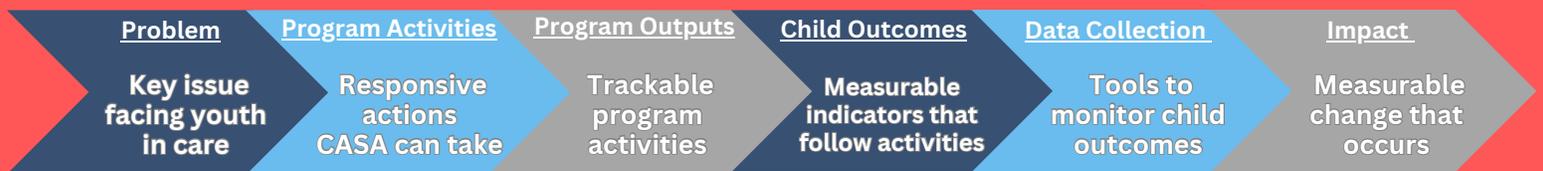
Using Logic for Impact

Over the course of 2020 and 2021, CASA Lake County staff designed and produced a new logic model to reflect and shape the way that we do our work with an ultimate goal of offering greater positive impact for the youth we serve. These new systems were implemented in 2022, and in 2023, we received our first data through newly-designed child assessments.

Child Advocacy Types



Follow the Logic Steps -->



CASA Lake County determined 21 different outcomes that it aims to achieve annually. Progress is measured through a series of child assessment surveys that are completed at case opening, closing, and annually for every child.

CASA Volunteer Amy Voss: Silver Service Award Winner!

CASA Lake County's very own Amy Voss was selected by the Illinois CASA Association in 2023 as **President's Volunteer Silver Service Awardee!** A CASA volunteer for five years, Amy has been providing consistent and thorough advocacy to the child of her originally assigned case.

"Amy has devoted countless hours to improving the life of her CASA child, and her work is always accompanied by a smile and great enthusiasm. Amy's belief that every child deserves to be happy, safe, and nurtured has been demonstrated repeatedly by her actions throughout her CASA involvement. She has had a profound impact on the life of her CASA child and on our CASA program."

— Advocate Manager Laura Lieberman

We were very proud to have her join staff at last year's state conference to be recognized. Congratulations, Amy for your dedication and many years of serving as a CASA!



Check out what we've been up to!



Summer
Volunteer Social



Thanksgiving Baskets



Spring Volunteer
Social



North Shore Exchange
Grant Award Reception

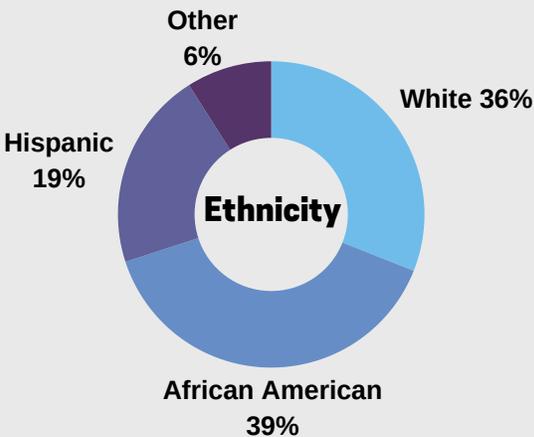
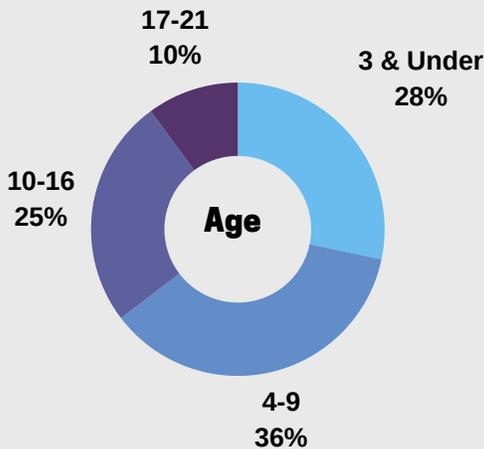


Fall
Volunteer Social



Antioch
Easter Parade

WHO IS A CASA CHILD?



Trauma experienced by CASA kids

- 72%** Neglect
- 57%** Substance Misuse
- 35%** Incarcerated Parent
- 27%** Domestic Violence
- 21%** Physical Abuse
- 2%** Sexual Abuse

*Children can experience multiple issues that cause their entry into care

Duration of Case

- 29%** Under 1 year
- 35%** 1-3 years
- 24%** 3-5 years
- 12%** Over 5 years

Just Imagine...

Try to remember how long 2 years is for a child. It's an impossible amount of time at that age. Still, more than half of our children have cases that last longer.

Placement Type While in Care

- 62%** Family or Relatives
- 30%** Traditional Foster Homes
- 6%** Residential Institutions
- 1%** Other Placements

Case Closure Circumstance

- 60%** Reunification with parent(s)
- 11%** Guardianship
- 9%** Independence
- 20%** Adoption



2023 Program Stats

672 children served

344 active CASA volunteers

167 child case closures

57 new volunteers became advocates in 2023!

Top 5 Areas Volunteers Are From

1. Libertyville
2. Vernon Hills
3. Grayslake
4. Northbrook
5. Deerfield



Our volunteers dedicated **19,799** hours to our CASA program in 2023, which is valued at **\$647,031!**

WHO IS A CASA VOLUNTEER?

Employment Status

- 57%** Employed full-time
- 23%** Employed part-time
- 20%** Retired, not currently employed, or other employment status

Age

- 6%** 20-29
- 13%** 30-39
- 14%** 40-49
- 28%** 50-59
- 38%** 60 and over

Why did you join CASA?

"CASA appealed to me because there are many children that need a voice. If there is anything I can do to ensure that no child gets neglected or abused again, then I feel my volunteer work with CASA can help prevent neglect or abuse.

- Michael Mendoza, CASA Volunteer

Years of Service as a CASA

- 13%** Under 2 years
- 58%** 2-5 years
- 18%** 6-9 years
- 10%** 10 years or more



2023 CASA VOLUNTEERS

We are so grateful for the hundreds of volunteers who shared their time, energy, and support with their CASA children and families. Thank you!

Help Us Celebrate Some
Special Milestones!

2 years
5 years
10 years

Teresa Abrams
Eman Abuelrub
Nancy Agajeinian
Tawana Alexander
Patricia Allen
Sara Alvarado
Kendra Appling-Rounsaville
Alifiya Arastu
Christine Arreola
Vanessa Baie
Jill Barber
Allison Batcho
Rachel Belk
Christine Berek
Michael Berger
Dawn Bibbs-Morrissey
Morag Bishop
Lora Blackowicz
Siovhán Blau
Sandy Blondell
Juliann Boardman
Beth Boehrer
Christina Bohn
Bridget Bourbon
Carolyn Brooks
Carolyn Buchholz
Jennifer Bunge
Lori Burns
Katie Bushala
Marni Byrnes
Handy Cabrera
Connie Capone
Laura Casey
Christopher Causey
Mary Causey
Marcia Cebula
Donna Chen
Jianjian (Jennifer) Cheng
Megan Chin
Jennie Christenson
Robin Cleek
Hannah Clyde
Kathleen Cole
Janet Conlon
Cinda Considine
Julie Corey
Kathy Cotter
Brian Coughlin
Elizabeth Coughlin
Diane Covert
Marsha Cowles
Jessica Cox
Lisa Crenshaw
Riley Cummings
Julie Dahlberg
Rita Dainko
Ieva (AVA) Daujotaite
Madeleine Davis
Rebecca Deering
Susan DePree
Lindsay DeReadt
Carl Derenfeld
Mary Dominiak
Erin Donaldson
Jill Doppelt
Ginni Doshi

Monica Doxie
Jennifer Drum
Beth Edwards
Sophy Elliott
Catherine Embree
Jamie Epstein
Susan Erickson
Samantha Espina
Mary Beth Fahrney
Andrea Farrell
Patty Felker
Erin Ferguson
Lindsay Finlay
Amy Fischer
Kathleen Flaherty
Brendan Fong
Minerva Foster
Susan Fowler
Shannon Franklin
Jennifer Frentzel
Stacy Friedland
David Frisch
Monica Gajdel
Lee Galarce
Christine Galliani
Cecilia Garcia
Susan Garner
Judi Gettleman
Amy Gibes
Jillian Giovannetti
Christina Gluch
Amy Goggin
Lori Golata
Heather Goldhaber
Renee Goldstein
Sheldon Goldstein
Adriana Gomez
Manoj Gopi
Guadalupe Granados Medina
Janice Greenawalt
Charles Greskovich
David Griffin
Tina Grubestic-Ibrisevic
Cheryl Gudella
Leslie Guglielmi
Jody Gullifor
Inez Hanan
Brian Harbison
Tressa Harris
Christina Harrold
Andrea Heim
Denise Heimlich
Ashley Hessing
Nicole Hinckley
Amy Holtsford
Teresa Hooker
Melanie Horowitz
Denise Houchins
Karen Hughes
Thomas Hynes
Stephanie Isaacson
Susan Isenberg
Jennifer Jackson Luth
Lisa Jacob
Lauren Jacobson
Kelly Jakymiw

Brittany Jenco
Jodie Johnson
Rita Johnson
Laura Jones
Leslye Jones-Beatty
Deborah Jurs
Carole Kagan
Jodi Kahn
Joyce Kahoun
Karen Kaiz
Dana Karlov
Cheri Kates
Jan Katz
Leah Kazaglis
Gina Keefe
Karen Kelley
Virginia Kelley
Amanda Knight
Michael Knight
Nancy Knight
Barbara Korobkin
Cheryl Koronkowski
Karen Kos
Jeffrey Kost
Noreen Kreda
Isabel Krupica
Lisa Labaschin
Rebecca Labbe
Joanna Lackaye
Beth Lahti
Ryan LaLonde
Jennifer Lang
Barbara Laskowski
Suzanne Lavin
Diane Lefebvre
Kristin Leonard
Stephanie Lerner-Ernsteen
Katherine Letourneau
Mindy Levinson
Marie Libbey
Nancy Liberman
Stevee Libert
Natalie Lindahl
Lauren Locke
Megan Lombardo
Deborah Lorsch
Katharine Love
Ellen Lubelfeld
Laura Luce
David MacPhail
Mirna Magana
Mackenzie Magnus
Pamela Maloney
Meg Manda
Catherine Marazan
Christine Markantonis
Anna Maroney
Lauren Marwil
Sophie Marwil
Anne McArtney
Alice McCaslin
Elizabeth McClurg
Amelia McDonough
Joseph McGann
Ashley McGinn
Anna McMahan

Peggy McNulty
Kerri Melzl
Michael Mendoza
Kimberly Merrell
Christine Merrild
Cecilia Milotti
Rouha Minnerly
William (Lee) Minnerly
Mimi Mitchell
Florica Mois
Kelly Monahan
Nadine Montcalm
Jim Morettini
Daniel Mudd
Kimberly Mudd
Carol Mysza
Mark Nachbar
Michele Nachbar
Christy Neal-Garcia
Diane Neuroth
Sandra Nimz
Claudia Ochoa
Meg O'Keefe
Lauri Olson
Sylvia Oriatti
Cathy O'Shaughnessy
Karen Ottenheimer
Ourlee Ourun
Odie Pahl
Mary Ellen Palubicki
Iryna Pantelyuk
Haydon Paquin
Jin Park
Debby Parry
Frank Pavelske
Mary "Megan" Pavelske
Edy Perisan
Paul Perri
Ken Peterson
Kristin Pitts
Antoinette Powell
Kathy Powell
Marisa Privatsky
Linda Racki
Charlie Ramsey
Mayme Ranallo
Deborah Rashman
Kathleen Redding
Rosemary Reed
Kelley Reinfelds
Terrie Reinhard
Natalie Rempala
Jayrin Eve Reyes
Linda Rich
Debbie Richwine
Anna Roeser
Diane Roman
Suzanne Romeo
Kathleen Rosenberg
Susan Rote-Kay
Amy Russo
Marci Sabin
Robin Salk
Melissa Santoyo
Hilary Saurer
Cindy Savaiano

Margaret Schaefer
Patricia Schaefer
Rebecca Scheuneman
Gretchen Schiltz
Miranda Schmidt
Tiffany Schneider
Linda Schuener
Rachel Schulman
Richard Schulman
Gerald Schulz
Lauren Schwartz
Emily Selbe
Sondra Serrao
Katie Shorr
Michelle Shumate
Priscilla Sienko
Debbie Simon
Jeanne Simons
Shweta Singh
Sai Sivakumar
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Renee Smith
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Michelle Soriano
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Joan Stevens
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Kim Struik
Candace Tallisman
Carola Tanna
Julie Teitelbaum
Katharine Thompson
Randy Thompson
Sharon Thompson
Donna Tickman
Barbara Tolbert
Nickie Tonioni-Greskovich
Krystal Topps
Trinh (Mary) Tran
Linda Troester
Laura Ulrich
Mary Van Trieste
Cindy Vargas
Meera Viruru
Emma Visee
Emily Vizcarra
Amy Voss
Beth Vrioni
Catherine Wagner
Martha Wallace
Debra Ward
Andrea Weingart
Linda White
Jane Williams
JoAnne Williams
Janice Wilson
Lynnae Wolin
Robyn Woods
Tracey Wooten
Lauren Wu
Timothy Zeller
Cynthia Zens

Volunteers listed were active between July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023. We do our best to reflect volunteers accurately and apologize for any errors or those we may have omitted. If you would like to request a change to your volunteer information, please contact Nicoleta Girloanta, Communications and Development Manager, at ngirloanta@casalakecounty.com.

CASA LAURA JOINS MELODY'S TEAM



Melody

Melody was born in a basement with drugs in her system. There were no records of Melody having been born, and she didn't receive any medical care for almost the entire first year of her life. At 11 months old, Melody was removed from home by DCFS due to her mom's ongoing struggles with substance abuse. She was placed temporarily with Tara - a friend and coworker of Melody's grandmother. Tara has three older biological children of her own (Joey, 22; Maddie, 19; and Blake, 18) and later also became a licensed foster parent. When Tara assumed care of Melody, Melody was underweight, neglected, and had had ear infections that ate her eardrum away. She had to get tubes within 2 months of being placed with Tara, and eventually will need to wear a hearing aid in the future to compensate.

CASA advocate Laura was assigned to the case and through her consistent visits, was able to build a strong relationship with Melody and Tara. During her visits, Laura read books to Melody, played with her, and sometimes took her to the local park. "When Laura came by it was the only time Melody got individual attention from an outside party," said Tara. Laura also kept Tara informed. Tara sometimes couldn't go to court because she had to work, but she said she knew she could on Laura to help her understand court procedures.



Melody, her family, and Judge Reginald C. Matthews at the adoption ceremony.

"I'm so glad we had Laura through this adventure – she knew a lot of things to help guide me, give me advice, and she really helped to encourage me when the process was delayed or felt difficult...she just knew how to put herself in my shoes."

Laura was also instrumental in helping Tara navigate safety issues with Melody's biological parents. They had intermittent engagement with Melody during the case, and at one point, the biological mother even made a threat to kidnap Melody. Laura really helped Tara to cope with these issues and report the incidents to the proper authorities. All of this was very stressful for Tara and Laura was a major source of support for her. Over time, Laura became family to Melody, Tara, and the rest of the family. "Laura is like family to us now -- we even send her family holiday cards" Tara said.

"When the adoption process happened and I officially adopted Melody, I felt like Laura and I had really accomplished it together. "I would trust Laura with my children if I had to leave."

Today Melody is six years old, doing great, and is described by Tara as being a very happy little princess living her best life in a two-household family, with both Tara and Tara's ex-husband Chris, who has taken Melody in as his own. Melody is wonderfully supported by both Tara and Chris, and she even calls Chris "daddy." The support from Tara, Chris, and Laura has made all the difference in helping Melody to thrive.

Golf for a Child Invitational

On June 20, 2023, we were thrilled to host our 23rd annual golf outing. It was a great opportunity to come together and have fun while supporting children from Lake County who have experienced abuse and neglect.

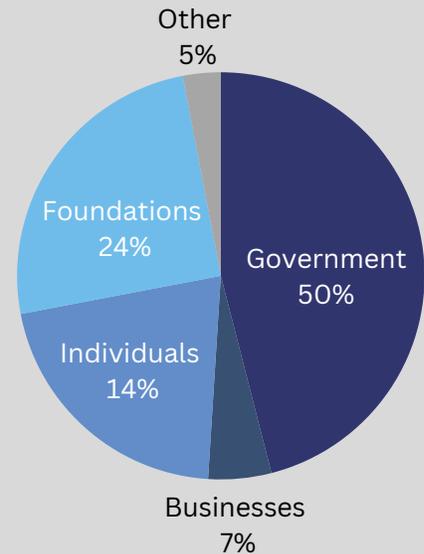
The 2023 golf outing was sponsored by The Cooper Meyer Group of Wells Fargo Advisors. Over 100 golfers gathered at Kemper Lakes Golf Club for the day, and the event raised over \$100,000 to support our CASA kids!



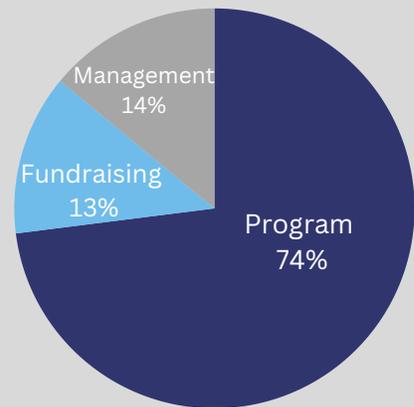
Longest Putt: Tyler Anders
Longest Drive, Men: Colton Wagner
Longest Drive, Women: Jane Lambesis
Closest to Pin, Men: Ryan Ford
Closest to Pin, Women: Susan Ardell

Tournament Winners:
Scott Keegan
Adam Linberg
Ben Moody
Brent Moody

Revenue: \$2,003,875



Expenses: \$1,827,598



Net Assets: \$3,708,394

DONOR HIGHLIGHT



Bill and Cindee attended their first CASA Lake County annual gala over 20 years ago and were touched by the heartfelt stories told by young people whose lives benefited by having a CASA volunteer. They made their first donation that same night. Bill and Cindee have continued to support our CASA program since then — first through *Heartland Produce* and more recently, through *the Heartland Children's Foundation*. When asked what has motivated them to continue giving, Bill said:

“ I feel that investing in children is the best investment we can make. Supporting programs that give children access to health care, nutrition, education, and a safe environment all fit into that. CASA does a huge service to children who get caught in the foster care system and need an advocate. The Heartland Children's Foundation was created with these objectives in mind.

”

2023 FISCAL YEAR SUPPORTERS

\$50,000+

Food Depository Fund w/in the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley
IL Criminal Justice Information Authority - VOCA
Illinois CASA Association
Illinois Office of Attorney General - VCVA
John and Kathleen Schreiber Foundation
North Shore Exchange
Richard L. Duchossois Memorial Foundation
State of Illinois - DCEO

\$25,000 to \$49,999

AbbVie Foundation
Camping World
Gorter Family Foundation
The Lake County Community Foundation
19th Judicial Circuit Court
Brent and Kim Moody
The Healthcare Foundation of Highland Park
Trustmark Foundation
Lake County Community Development Video Gaming

\$10,000 to \$24,999

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Heartland Children's Foundation
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Anonymous
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CID Yousefi

\$500 to \$999

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Brian Ripes
Edward and Kathleen Ryan
Michael and Diane Simmons
Hank and Kim Struik
Beth Vrioni
Walton Enterprises
Barbara A. Weiner
Wildwood Presbyterian Church

Thank you!

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Maia Davis-Singleton

Donna Greenberg

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Thank You to Our 2023 Mission Partners

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benefits beyond benefits

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SCHREIBER FOUNDATION

**CAMPING
WORLD**



**Gorter Family
Foundation**

**Food Depository Fund within
the Community Foundation
for the Fox Valley**

**Richard L Duchossois
Memorial Foundation**

**Peggy & Steve
Fossett Foundation**

WAIT!

This report's job isn't done.

Pass it along to a friend or loved one. You know someone with a heart as big as yours. The simple act of sharing this report could become the reason that a child's life changes forever for the better.



CASA Lake County
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Vernon Hills IL, 60061

www.casalakecounty.com

(847) 383-6260



@casalakecounty