



CASA LAKE COUNTY
Lifting Voices, Changing Lives

**2025
IMPACT
REPORT**

“

Being a CASA is something that anyone can do. It is about listening, providing empathy, and support. Connection is fundamental in creating a level of trust so that children (and their family members) feel safe asking for help when needed.

”

-Kathy Letorneau, CASA Volunteer

Dear Friends,

Every child in foster care deserves a safe, permanent home and an adult who shows up for them consistently. That belief is the heart of our mission, and it is the reason I am proud to share this year's Impact Report with you.

I want to begin with a Lake County milestone a decade in the making. When a child welfare case opens, the first and primary goal is always to get the family to a point where they rejoin a home together. In 2015, 35% of our closed cases ended with children reunified with their families of origin. In 2025, more than half did, reaching 56%. We have moved from a situation where a minority of children returned home to one where reunification is now the most common path to permanency. That progress represents real families restored, and it is what sustained, child-centered advocacy makes possible.

None of it happens without our volunteers. Our CASA advocates speak up in courtrooms where a child's voice might otherwise go unheard, fighting for their best interests, and are often the one steady presence in a young person's life during the most uncertain chapter they will ever face. The achievements in these pages belong first and foremost to them.

To our volunteers, staff, board members, donors, and community partners: thank you. Your commitment is the foundation of everything we accomplish, and it makes it possible for more children to find their way home. The numbers here are encouraging, but they are not a finish line—children are still waiting, and with your continued partnership I am confident the next decade will bring progress greater still.

With deep gratitude,

Terri



Terri Zenner Greenberg
Executive Director

MISSION

CASA Lake County exists to promote and protect the best interests of youth who have been considered to be abused, neglected or dependent. We train and empower volunteers to advocate for them in the courts and in the community to help them safely return to their families, or when not possible, help them achieve safe and permanent homes where they can thrive.



VISION

Our vision is that all children, youth and families are thriving emotionally, mentally, and physically with lifelong connections to caring and responsible adults, a permanent home, and a safe and nurturing environment where they have a sense of belonging.

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

Bronze Service Award Winner: CASA Volunteer Carole Kagan



In 2025, CASA Lake County volunteer Carol Kagan was honored by the **Illinois CASA Association** with the **President's Volunteer Bronze Service Award** at the **Illinois CASA State Conference**.

A retired attorney and CASA volunteer since 2019, Carol has served four children over the past six years. In her current case, she built a powerful bond with a teen who has experienced multiple placements and has been on the run since 2022. Despite the instability, the teen continues to reach out to Carol to let her know she is safe. Carol travels across Illinois—and even to Iowa—to meet her.

Many of their visits take place at McDonald's, where the two share conversations and build trust. During one visit, the teen told Carol, ***"I can't believe I trust you."***

We are grateful for Carol's dedication and the lasting impact she makes in the lives of the children she serves.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: A Milestone for CASA Lake County



Ribbon cutting on Sept. 4, 2024

On September 4, 2024, we celebrated the grand opening of our renovated Vernon Hills office with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking a major milestone—a permanent, modernized space to better serve children in Lake County's foster care system. After leasing our office for many years, we purchased the building in 2019 with support recommended by Senator Dan McConchie and funding from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

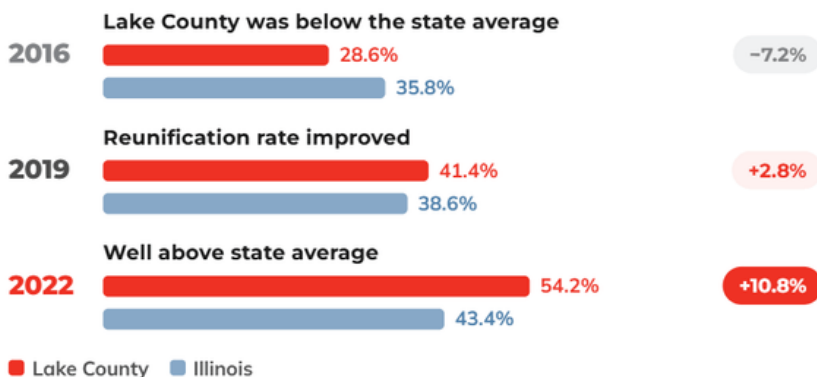
Soon after, heavy rains caused significant damage, requiring major repairs. Through a partnership with Designs for Dignity, the space was fully renovated and completed in July 2024, creating a more functional and welcoming environment. This transformation was made possible thanks to the support of Senator McConchie, John and Kathy Schreiber, The Sammann Family Foundation, the Lake County Board, First Presbyterian Church of Deerfield, Designs for Dignity, and generous in-kind donors. Today, our renovated office provides a collaborative space that helps us better serve children and families across Lake County.

Families Reunified in 56%(!) of 2025 Closed Cases

Since 2015, Lake County has made incredible progress on the #1 goal of child welfare: restoring families in crisis. As one of the few Illinois counties with near-100% CASA case coverage, it's clear that families can thrive with more of the support that CASA Volunteers provide.

REUNIFICATIONS WITHIN 36 MONTHS OF CASE OPENING

Year by year, Lake County is leading Illinois to more reunifications



ALL CASES ENDING IN REUNIFICATION
From 2016-2022 Lake County's reunification rate rose from 40% to 58% while the US rate fell from 51% to 46%

2022
46% ↓
USA -5% pts

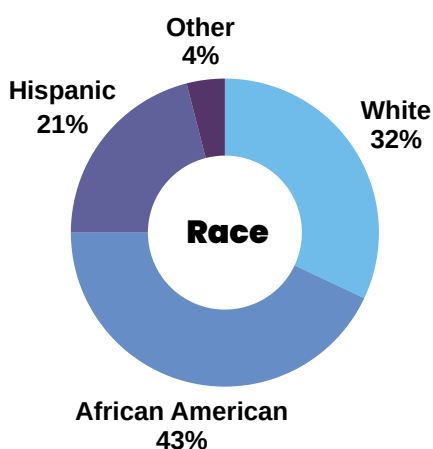
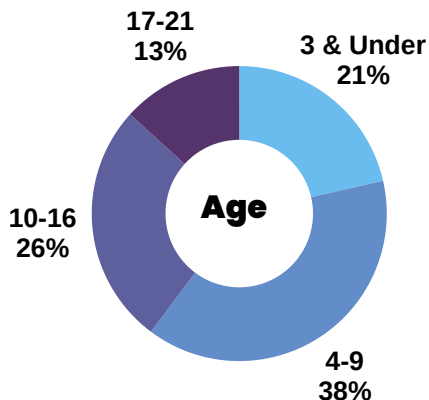
58% ↑
Lake County +18% pts

In most cases the family isn't beyond repair; it's in crisis. Removal is traumatic, even when it's necessary. For most children, the safest lasting outcome is a home that has been made safe, not a substitute. The other options are slow and less certain. Reunification is the initial goal as it's where the parents' rights, the odds of permanence, and the child's best interests usually lie.

CASAs support reunification by sharing helpful services with parents, helping them understand the court process, and encouraging positive parenting skills.

*State and national level data is not consistently available for recent years.

WHO IS A CASA CHILD?



Trauma experienced by CASA kids

- 79% Neglect
- 54% Substance Misuse
- 33% Incarcerated Parent
- 37% Domestic Violence
- 20% Physical Abuse
- 5% Sexual Abuse

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

Duration of Case

- 13% Under 1 year
- 41% 1-3 years
- 30% 3-5 years
- 16% 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

- 61% Family or Relatives
- 29% Traditional Foster Homes
- 7% Residential Institutions
- 2% Other Placements

Case Closure Circumstance

- 55% Reunification with parent(s)
- 10% Guardianship
- 6% Independence
- 28% Adoption



2025 Program Stats

626 children served
308 active CASA volunteers
174 child case closures

42 new volunteers became advocates in 2025!

Top 5 Areas Volunteers Are From

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



Our volunteers dedicated **16,034** hours to our CASA program in 2025, which is valued at **\$549,806!**

WHO IS A CASA VOLUNTEER?

Employment Status Age

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 56% Employed full-time | 3% 20-29 |
| 24% Employed part-time | 11% 30-39 |
| 20% Retired, not currently employed, or other employment status | 13% 40-49 |
| | 25% 50-59 |
| | 46% 60 and over |

Years of Service as a CASA

- 11% Under 2 years
- 51% 2-5 years
- 24% 6-9 years
- 15% 10 years or more



Why did you join CASA?

"Being a CASA is something that anyone can do. It is about listening, providing empathy, and support. Connection is fundamental in creating a level of trust so that children (and their family members) feel safe asking for help when needed."

- Kathy Letorneu, CASA Volunteer

2025 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 **10 years**
5 years **15 years**
20 years

Teresa Abrams
Eman Abuelrub
Patricia Allen
Sara Alvarado
Karen Appel Drazin
Kendra Appling-Rounsaville
Vanessa Baie
Jill Barber
Miguel Barrera
Colette Bellair
Josephine Bentil
Christine Berek
Dawn Bibbs-Morrissey
Lora Blackowicz
Molly Blake-Michaels
LaTrina Blanton
Siovhon Blau
Sandy Blondell
Beth Boehr
Christina Bohn
Caitlin Brennan
Mollie Brundage Suhonen
Lori Bruner
Carolyn Buchholz
Jennifer Bunge
Katie Bushala
Cyndi Byrne
Marni Byrnes
Gregory Carr
Laura Casey
Deeherling Castillo
Marcia Cebula
Donna Chen
Jennifer Cheng
Jennie Christenson
Hannah Clyde
Kathy Cole
Janet Conlon
Cynthia (Cinda) Considine
Julie Corey
Karina Costa Bisson
Kathy Cotter
Brian Coughlin
Elizabeth Coughlin
Marsha Cowles
Lisa Crenshaw
Shanti Crespo
Richard (Rick) Curtis
Julie Dahlberg
Rita Dainko
Ava Daujotaite
Susan DePree
Lindsay DeReadt
Mary Dominiak
Deb Dorsey
Ginni Doshi
Therese Downey
Monica Doxie
Jennifer Drumm
John Duby
Beth Edwards
Sophy Elliott
Catherine Embree
Jamie Epstein
Susan Erickson
Samantha Espina
Charles Ex

Mary Beth Fahrney
Andrea Farrell
Patty Felker
Erin Ferguson
Lindsay Finlay
Amy Fischer
Brendan Fong
Laura Foster
Susan Fowler
Shannon Franklin
Stacy Friedland
David Frisch
Juliana Furlong
Monica Gajdel
Alicia Galarce
Christine Galliani
Susan Garner
Amy Goggin
Lori Golata
Heather Goldhaber
Renee Goldstein
Shel Goldstein
Betty Jo Golladay
Pamela Grad
Guadalupe Granados Medina
Janice Greenawalt
Charles Greskovich
Cheryl Gudella
Leslie Guglielmi
Jody Gullifor
Timothy Hackl
Tressa Harris
Christina Harrold
Andrea Heim
Denise Heimlich
Sandra Hernandez-Aguirre
Ashley Hessing
Carolyn Holtermann
Amy Holtsford
Melanie Horowitz
Denise Houchins
Timothy Hurley
Lori Hurley
Tom Hynes
Susan Isenberg
Lisa Jacob
Lauren Jacobson
Kelly Jakymiw
Yamiley Jean-Simon
Brittany Jenco
Tanya Jenkins
Debora Jensen
Jr. Johnston
Jollene Jones
Adam Jones
Laura Jones
Leslye Jones-Beatty
Carole Kagan
Jodi Kahn
Joyce Kahoun
Karen Kaiz
Dana Karlov
Cheri Kates
Jan Katz
Leah Kazaglis
Gina Keefe
Karen Kelley

Amanda Knight
Michael Knight
Nancy Knight
Diane Koester
Kimberly Kopin
Jeff Kost
Megan Kramer
Noreen Kreda
Isabel Krupica
Lisa Labaschin
Rebecca Labbe
Joanna Lackaye
Lyn LaCrosse
Beth Lahti
Ryan LaLonde
Jennifer Lang
Jennifer Langley
Adina Lapadat
Barbara Laskowski
Helen Lee
Diane Lefebvre
Stephanie Lerner
Katherine Letourneau
Mindy Levinson
Nancy Liberman
Stevee Libert
Lauren Locke
Megan Lombardo
Deborah Lorsch
JoAnne Lowe
Ellen Lubelfeld
Laura Luce
David MacPhail
Mackenzie Magnus
Pamela Maloney
Carol Mammoser
Meg Manda
Catherine Marazan
Christine Markantonis
Kelsey Martin
Lauren Marwil
Sophie Marwil
Nicholas Mast
Andrea Mazzetta
Alice McCaslin
Elizabeth McClurg
Joseph McGann
Anna McMahon
Peggy McNulty
Kerri Melzl
Michael Mendoza
Kimberly Merrell
Cecilia Milotti
Rouha Minnerly
Lee Minnerly
Mimi Mitchell
Patty Mitchell
Margaret Mohr
Florica Mois
Kelly Monahan
Pharah Mondesir
Anne Morel
Jim Morettini
Daniel Mudd
Kimberly Mudd
Sarah Murphy
Courtney Murray

Carol Mysza
Mark Nachbar
Michele Nachbar
Christy Neal
Sandra Nimz
Marcia Nowak
Meg O'Keefe
Lauri Olson
Flavia Orscheln
Karen Ottenheimer
Ourlee Ourun
Des Paden
Mary Ellen Palubicki
Iryna Pantelyuk
Haydon Paquin
Linda Pavalon
Frank Pavelske
Mary "Megan" Pavelske
Sabrina Pavelske
Edy Perisan
Colleen Plant
Antoinette Powell
Marisa Privatsky
Charlie Ramsey
Kathleen Redding
Rosemary Reed
Kathy Reibel
Kelley Reinfelds
Timberly Robinson
K.D. Roesler
Natalie Roloson
Diane Roman
Susan Rote-Kay
Robin Salk
Sarah Saunders
Rebecca Scheuneman
Gretchen Schiltz
Tiffany Schneider
Linda Schnuer
Rachel Schulman
Richard Schulman
Gerald Schulz
Lauren Schwartz
Emily Selbe
Lisa Shirley
Ken Shoemaker
Danny Silver
Debbie Simon
Jeanne Simons
Julie Simpson
Sai Sivakumar
Jon Slaughter
Renee Smith
Star (Nikkia) Smith
Laura Smith
Janna Spriester
Lana Stasek
Betsy Steele
William Steele
Rachel Stein
Susan Stern
Joan Stevens
Sarah Stokes
Kim Struik
Judy Swartz
Candace Tallisman
Randy Thompson

Sharon Thompson
Katharine Thompson
Nichole Tonioni-Greskovich
Trinh (Mary) Tran
Linda Troester
Laura Ulrich
Mary Van Trieste
Meera Viruru
Emily Vizcarra
Amy Voss
Beth Vrioni
Susan Wagner
Martha Wallace
Judi Wallach
Shalanda Walton
Shanette Webb
Barbara Weingarten
Linda White
JoAnne Williams
Jane Williams
Sophia Williams
Carey Woodruff
Robyn Woods
Tracey Wooten
Maureen Zeller
Timothy Zeller
Cynthia Zens

Volunteers listed were active between July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025. 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.

A STEADY VOICE FOR NAYLANI & ARIELLA



In 2023, 13-month-old **Ariella** and her 2-year-old sister **Naylani** were temporarily removed by DCFS from their parents' custody after an incident that occurred as a result of domestic violence left Ariella in the ICU. Once **Ariella's** health stabilized, the girls were placed with their grandparents, and **CASA volunteer Kathy** was appointed to the case. On **Kathy's** first visit she brought books and blankets and checked in with the girls and their grandparents.

By **Kathy's** third visit, the girls excitedly showed her their toys, ballet moves, and costumes, and even peeked into her bag to see what she'd brought. As they played and read together, Kathy checked in about school and observed their interactions during supervised visits with their mom.

What are some things CASA Kathy helped with?



Connecting **Naylani** to early intervention services for a mild speech delay, helping her make strong progress.



Sourcing booster chairs through **CASA Lake County's** donations.



Flagging **Naylani's** sleep struggles in her court report, resulting in court-ordered play therapy

While advocating for the girls, **Kathy** also encouraged their parents--**Natasha** and **Kyle**--as they completed court-ordered therapy, parenting classes, and worked toward reunification.

After completing court-ordered requirements, **Natasha** and **Kyle** were reunified with their daughters in September 2024. Today, the home is safe and loving, the girls are thriving, and the family is even preparing to welcome another baby. In a full-circle moment, **Natasha** now gives back by donating to CASA and is even studying to become a social worker!

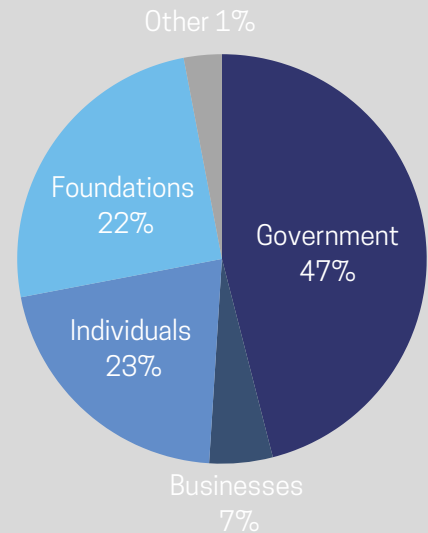
25th Annual Golf for a Child Invitational

CASA Lake County's 2025 Golf Outing was a tremendous success, raising nearly **\$128,000** to support our continued advocacy for children in foster care. These funds will help provide dedicated CASA Advocates to **51 more children** in Lake County this year.

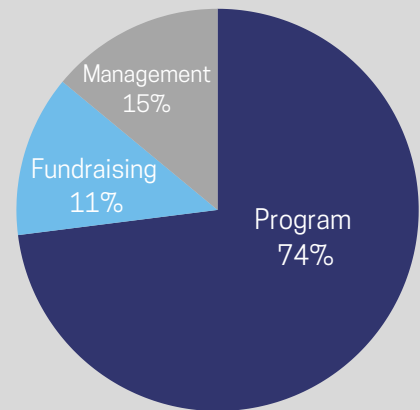


Congratulations to our winning team—Mike Crane, John Flayter, Regan Koetz, and Mike Matthys—and special thanks to former White Sox players Mike Huff and Dan Pasqua for joining as our honored guests!

Revenue: \$2,393,920



Expenses: \$1,987,963



Net Assets: \$4,589, 713

Thank You to our Golf Sponsors!

Event Sponsor



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Judi
Duchossois

Remembering Paul Jenista



As we reflect on the impact CASA has been able to make over the years, we remember those who helped lay the foundation for our work. One such person is Paul Jenista, who was instrumental in launching CASA's first Gala more than 20 years ago. As a former President of our Board of Directors, Paul helped grow that effort into a cornerstone of CASA's fundraising, enabling our program to expand its reach and serve hundreds more children.

Paul was a kind and friendly soul who left a circle of friends wherever he went, and his legacy continues to be felt in the lives of the children and families CASA serves today.

2024 Gala: An evening of impact

At our annual Gala on September 27, 2024, supporters gathered for an evening of impact, **raising an incredible \$480,180 to support children in foster care**. These funds **allowed us to serve at least 192 additional children** in 2025.



A highlight of the evening was a powerful speech from **former CASA youth Sanaii Williams**, now a student at Emory University. Sanaii shared how her CASA volunteers supported her through foster care and helped shape her path forward, offering a moving reminder of the life-changing impact of having a consistent advocate.

The program also included the presentation of the **Terri Zenner Award** to **Joanna Lynn** in recognition of her dedicated service as a CASA volunteer, Board member, and Gala chair for seven consecutive years. The evening concluded with a remarkable moment of generosity, as **Marcus Lemonis** and **Camping World** made a surprise **\$100,000 gift** in honor of Board President **Brent Moody**. Together, our community continues to ensure that every child in foster care has a voice.



Thank You to our Gala Sponsors!

Presenting Sponsor

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Lynn**

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& Chris Heier**

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Thank You to Our 2025 Mission Partners



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Foundation**

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

**Peggy & Steve
Fossett Foundation**

**James & Madeleine
McMullen 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.



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