



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

LAKE COUNTY

CASA Lake County 2024 IMPACT REPORT

Championing Children, Changing Futures

“

It is important to note just how meaningful CASA is to young youth in care. While I had three different GALs (child lawyers) and I can't even count the number of caseworkers, the only person that stayed the same was my CASA, Lynnae. Without her, I would have remained in that terrible foster placement, but I didn't. We fought side-by-side for years and I owe her a debt I know I will never repay.

”

-Kaydra Sutherland, former foster youth

Dear Friends,

It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the problems we see in the world around us. The challenges can seem insurmountable, and it's hard to imagine anything we do will make a difference. It's true that none of us will solve every problem on our own, but we can still make a lasting impact for good. Don't try to fix everything at once. Shrink it down. Think small. You place a brick, and I place a brick. Let's ask our neighbors to do the same, and eventually we'll build a house together. When you support a child as a CASA Volunteer, you lay your brick. When you donate to support that volunteer, you lay your brick.



Terri Zenner Greenberg
Executive Director

This year, I'm most proud of our CASA volunteers for supporting a dramatic increase in the number of our cases ending in reunification of children with their families of origin. Reunification is always the first goal when a child welfare case opens, and other options are considered only after that door closes. Research consistently shows that children benefit when families learn, grow, and repair so that they can reunite. In the last year 60% of our closed cases ended in reunification, a huge increase from about 45% in the prior year, and a massive improvement over the 30% that was common 5-10 years ago in Lake County. That change represents an improved outlook for dozens of kids each year in Lake County. I give credit to the caseworkers, the judges, service providers, but most of all the children and families for making this happen.

I also want to credit our staff at CASA, who have made a long-term effort to equip and focus our CASA volunteers to support reunification. It's not always easy to see the path to reunification when that path starts with trauma, but our team provides training and supervision to help CASAs understand and tenaciously pursue that goal.

Finally, I want to thank our donors for providing the resources to keep our incredible staff equipped to support our volunteers and our CASA families. When we each do what we can, brick-by-brick we'll build a safe, permanent home for every child in our community. Kudos and thank you!

Terri

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.

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.



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FOR CHILDREN
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Silver Service Award Winner: CASA Volunteer Tom Hynes

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



CASA Lake County's very own Tom Hynes was selected by the Illinois CASA Association in 2024 as **President's Volunteer Silver Service Awardee!** As a CASA volunteer for six years, Tom has been providing consistent and thorough advocacy to the five children of his originally assigned case.

"Tom's passion for the CASA mission is unprecedented. Despite many systemic delays and setbacks, Tom has continued his staunch advocacy for the best interests of his CASA children with the belief that they deserve to grow up in environments in which they are able to thrive. He has consistently demonstrated that he will do whatever it takes to improve the lives of these children."

— Advocate Manager Laura Lieberman

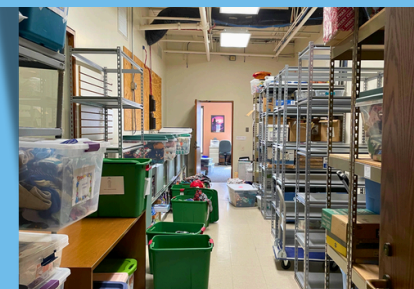
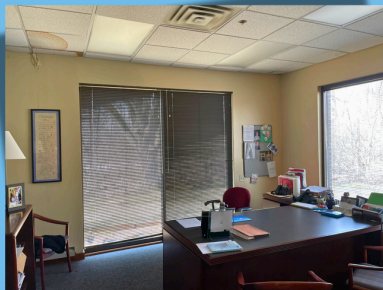
A Refreshed Space for Bigger Impact

Through the work of Designs for Dignity and with the help of generous supporters, we were able to renovate our office, that had flooded and desperately needed repair. It now has a brand new look and feel to help staff, volunteers, and visitors feel more welcome!

Project Goals



1. Add 5 work spaces for our growing staff to serve more children.
2. Create a welcoming space where volunteers will want to come to for training and education.
3. Develop more flexible shared spaces to offer larger training classes
4. Improve storage areas to increase access and capacity for donated items for CASA families.

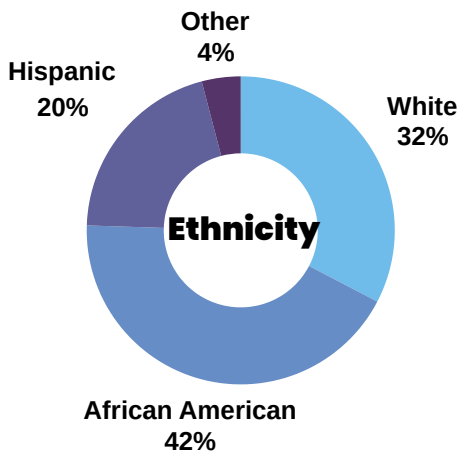
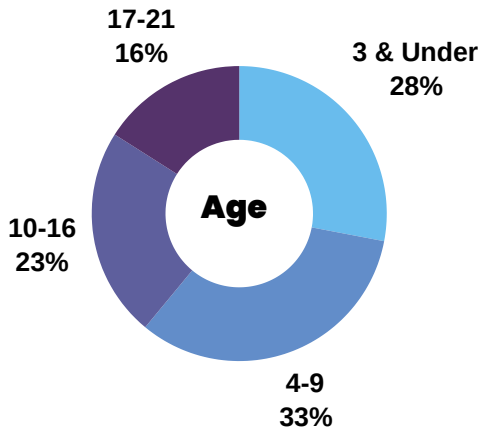


designs 4 dignity

THANK YOU TO OUR PROJECT SUPPORTERS

Senator Dan McConchie
John & Kathy Schreiber
The Sammann Family Foundation
The Lake County Board ARPA Committee
1st Presbyterian Church of Deerfield

WHO IS A CASA CHILD?



Trauma experienced by CASA kids

78% Neglect
56% Substance Misuse
37% Incarcerated Parent
38% Domestic Violence
17% Physical Abuse
3% Sexual Abuse

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

Duration of Case

16% Under 1 year
49% 1-3 years
25% 3-5 years
10% 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
29% Traditional Foster Homes
7% Residential Institutions
2% Other Placements

Case Closure Circumstance

65% Reunification with parent(s)
14% Guardianship
6% Independence
15% Adoption



2024 Program Stats

625 children served
325 active CASA volunteers
138 child case closures

43 new volunteers became advocates in 2024!

Top 5 Areas Volunteers Are From

1. Grayslake
2. Vernon Hills
3. Libertyville
4. Lake Forest
5. Deerfield



Our volunteers dedicated **17,640** hours to our CASA program in 2024, which is valued at **\$590,764!**

WHO IS A CASA VOLUNTEER?

Employment Status Age

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

4% 20-29
11% 30-39
15% 40-49
27% 50-59
41% 60 and over

Why did you join CASA?

"I've been a CASA for 5 years. As a retired educator, this has been a great opportunity for me to continue advocating for the needs of children who need it most."

- Melanie Horowitz, CASA Volunteer

Years of Service as a CASA

20% Under 2 years
48% 2-5 years
17% 6-9 years
15% 10 years or more



2024 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
Tawana Alexander
Patricia Allen
Sara Alvarado
Kendra Appling-Rounsaville
Vanessa Baie
Jill Barber
Colette Bellair
Christine Berek
Dawn Bibbs-Morrissey
Lora Blackowicz
Siovhon Blau
Sandy Blondell
Beth Boehrer
Christina Bohn
Caitlin Brennan
Carolyn Brooks
Mollie Brundage Suhonen
Carolyn Buchholz
Jennifer Bunge
Lori Burns
Katie Bushala
Marni Byrnes
Laura Casey
Deeherling Castillo
Marcia Cebula
Donna Chen
Jianjian (Jennifer) Cheng
Jennie Christenson
Robin Cleek
Hannah Clyde
Kathy Cole
Janet Conlon
Cinda Considine
Julie Corey
Karina Costa Bisson
Kathy Cotter
Brian Coughlin
Elizabeth Coughlin
Marsha Cowles
Lisa Crenshaw
Julie Dahlberg
Rita Dainko
Kelsie Dam
Ieva Daujotaite
Madeleine Davis
Rebecca Deering
Susan DePree
Lindsay DeReadt
Carl Derenfeld
Mary Dominiak
Erin Donaldson
Ginni Doshi
Terry Downey
Monica Doxie
Jen Drumm
Beth Edwards
Sophy Elliott
Catherine Embree
Jamie Epstein
Susan Erickson
Samantha Espina
Chuck Ex
Mary Beth Fahrney
Andrea Farrell

Erin Ferguson

Lindsay Finlay
Amy Fischer
Brendan Fong
Laura Foster
Sue Fowler
Shannon Franklin
Stacy Friedland
David Frisch
Monica Gajdel
Alicia Galarce
Christine Galliani
Cecilia Garcia
Susan Garner
Amy Gibes
Christina Gluch
Amy Goggin
Lori Golata
Heather Goldhaber
Renee Goldstein
Shel Goldstein
Adriana Gomez
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
Nicole Hinckley
Amy Holtsford
Teresa Hooker
Melanie Horowitz
Denise Houchins
Karen Hughes
Tom Hynes
Susan Isenberg
Jennifer Jackson Luth
Lisa Jacob
Lauren Jacobson
Kelly Jakymiw
Yamiley Jean-Simon
Brittany Jenco
Tanya Jenkins
Debora Jensen
Jodie Johnson
Laura Jones
Adam Jones
Jollene 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
Noreen Kreda
Isabel Krupica
Lisa Labaschin
Rebecca Labbe
Joanna Lackaye
Beth Lahti
Ryan LaLonde
Adina Lapadat
Barbara Laskowski
Helen Lee
Diane Lefebvre
Kristin Leonard
Stephanie Lerner-Ernsteen
Katherine Letourneau
Mindy Levinson
Marie Libbey
Nancy Liberman
Stevee Libert
Lauren Locke
Megan Lombardo
Deborah Lorsch
JoAnne Lowe
Ellen Lubelfeld
Laura Luce
David MacPhail
Mirna Magaña
Mackenzie Magnus
Rosina Mahabeer
Pamela Maloney
Carol Mammoser
Meg Manda
Catherine Marazan
Christine Markantonis
Anna Maroney
Lauren Marwil
Sophie Marwil
Andrea Mazzetta
Anne McArtney
Alice McCaslin
Elizabeth McClurg
Joseph McGann
Anna McMahan
Peggy McNulty
Kerri Melzl
Michael Mendoza
Kimberly Merrell
Christine Merrill
Cecilia Milotti
Rouha Minnerly
Lee Minnerly
Margaret Mohr
Florica Mois
Kelly Monahan
Anne Morel
Jim Morettini
Daniel Mudd
Kimberly Mudd
Sarah Murphy
Courtney Murray
Carol Mysza

Mark Nachbar

Michele Nachbar
Christy Neal
Sandra Nimz
Meg O'Keefe
Lauri Olson
Sylvia Oriatti
Flavia Orschlen
Cathy O'Shaughnessy
Karen Ottenheimer
Ourlee Ourun
Olga Pahl
Mary Ellen Palubicki
Iryna Pantelyuk
Haydon Paquin
Frank Pavelske
Mary "Megan" Pavelske
Edy Perisan
Ken Peterson
Valerie Pientka
Emily Polelle
Antoinette Powell
Marisa Privatsky
Linda Racki
Charlie Ramsey
Mayme Ranallo
Kathleen Redding
Rosemary Reed
Kathy Reibel
Kelley Reinfelds
Natalie Roloson
Jayrin Eve Reyes
Debbie Richwine
Anna Roeser
K.D. Roesler
Diane Roman
Suzanne Romeo
Kathi Rosenberg
Susan Rote-Kay
Amy Russo
Marci Sabin
Robin Salk
Rebecca Scheuneman
Gretchen Schiltz
Tiffany Schneider
Linda Schnuer
Rachel Schulman
Gerald Schulz
Lauren Schwartz
Lisa Shirley
Katie Shorr
Michelle Shumate
Danny Silver
Debbie Simon
Jeanne Simons
Sai Sivakumar
Laura Smith
Renee Smith
Star (Nikkia) Smith
Todd Smith
Kate T Solis Silva
Michelle Soriano
Kelli Stanley
William Steele
Betsy Steele
Rachel Stein

Susan Stern

Joan Stevens
Sarah Stokes
Kim Struik
Judy Swartz
Candace Tallisman
Carola Tanna
Julie Teitelbaum
Katharine Thompson
Randy Thompson
Sharon Thompson
Nichole Tonioni-Greskovich
Trinh (Mary) Tran
Linda Troester
Laura Ulrich
Mary Van Trieste
Meera Viruru
Emily Vizcarra
Amy Voss
Beth Vroni
Martha Wallace
Shalanda Walton
Andrea Weingart
Linda White
Sophia Williams
Jane Williams
JoAnne Williams
Janice Wilson
Janet Wolf
Lynnae Wolin
Robyn Woods
Tracey Wooten
Lauren Wu
Maureen Zeller
Timothy Zeller
Cynthia Zens
Jenny Zinser

Volunteers listed were active between July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024. 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.

THE DIFFERENCE A CASA CAN MAKE



Kaydra had never been to school when she entered foster care at age 15. She had experienced deprivation and abuse at home. Despite never having learned math skills up to that point and being self-taught to read, nothing could stop her from finishing high school and going to college. Through remedial classes, tutoring, summer school, determination, and some help from her CASA advocate, Lynnae, Kaydra completed her nursing degree in 2021.

The ways that CASA volunteers help children and youth can vary slightly case to case. In Kaydra's situation, a couple of ways Lynnae helped were:

- Advocating to get Kaydra out of an unsupportive placement.
- Communicating with the court on Kaydra's behalf when she didn't have a GAL at one point.

DID YOU KNOW?



The bond and relationship between a CASA and youth can extend past the closure of the youth's "case".

Lynnae was with Kaydra since the very beginning of her foster care journey. Since she left care, she still makes it a priority to meet with Kaydra at least twice a year and texts her to check in. She still works with some of Kaydra's siblings with active CASA cases. She works tirelessly to make sure their needs are met, while taking time to make sure Kaydra has whatever she needs.

24th Annual Golf for a Child Invitational

On June 24, 2024, we hosted our 24th annual golf outing. Over 100 golfers gathered together at the Kemper Lakes Golf Club to have a fun day of golf while supporting advocacy for the best interest of children who have experienced abuse and neglect. The event raised about \$70,000 to support our CASA kids!



Tournament Winners:

Rod Capiello
Mike DiGrazia
Seamus Fenelly
Brett Schmidt

Longest Putt: Joel Gomberg

Longest Drive, Men: Mike DiGrazia

Longest Drive, Women: Simone Mikaelian

Closest to Pin, Men: Dan Kosiek

Closest to Pin, Women: Emily Selbe

Thank You to our Golf Sponsors!

Event Sponsor



Advisors



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Gold Sponsor

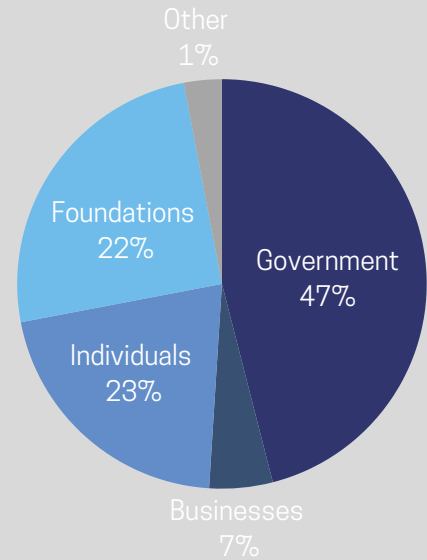


Silver Sponsors

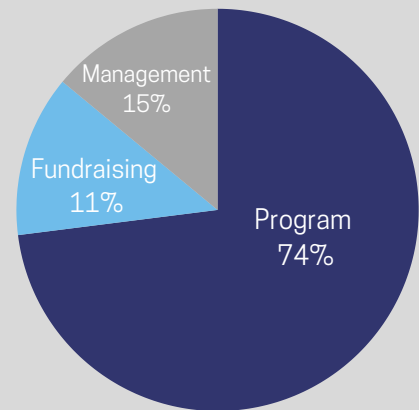


Judi Duchossois

Revenue: \$2,789,636



Expenses: \$1,908,317



Net Assets: \$4,589,713

DONOR HIGHLIGHT



“

I chose to contribute to CASA because I wanted to support an organization that I knew was well-managed and where I was able to see the benefits of my contributions. I knew my donations were going to pay for the staff and infrastructure needed to support the large number of volunteers doing their amazing work with abused and neglected children. Children shouldn't have to suffer because of the adults in their lives and supporting CASA provides these children a real chance for a better life and a brighter future for all of us.

”

-Joanna Lynn, former CASA Volunteer Advocate, Gala chairperson, and Secretary of the Board of Directors

30th Anniversary Gala



On October 13th, 2023 we gathered at The Westin Chicago Northshore for our annual gala celebrating CASA Lake County's 30th Anniversary as an organization. The evening was filled with celebration and appreciation of CASA volunteers and work over the past 30 years. Former CASA youth Kaydra Sutherland shared her story of going from foster care to nursing school with the support of her CASA volunteer, Lynnae. Judi Duchossois and members from the Richard L. Duchossois Memorial Foundation accepted the Terri Zenner Award on behalf of the late Richard L. Duchossois who along with Judi, was a staunch supporter of CASA Lake County for the past 20 years. Guests enjoyed dinner, dancing, cocktails, live music, and a silent and live auction. In total, the evening raised over \$260,000 for CASA's work!



Thank You to our Gala Sponsors!

Presenting Sponsor

CAMPING WORLD®

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The
Hochschild
Family



Jacki Dioguardi
& Chris Heier



Doug & Stacey
Meyer

Advocate Sponsors

Judi Duchossois
Donna & Jack Greenberg

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Mgr.

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Brendan Siegfried
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Olivia Wozniak
Office & Operations Coordinator

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Elizabeth Sammann
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Thank You to Our 2024 Mission Partners



**Gorter Family
Foundation**

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

**Peggy & Steve
Fossett Foundation**

**Brent & Kim
Moody**

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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