

# *The CASA Movement*

*1974-1987*

**1974**

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- Concerned with the staggering number of children in foster care, the United States Congress in 1974 enacted the "Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act," which provided financial assistance to states for the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect. The legislation included a requirement for that assistance: mandatory appointment of a guardian ad litem (GAL) to represent the abused or neglected child's best interests in every case which resulted in a judicial proceeding. The legislation did not specify that the guardian ad litem had to be an attorney, but usually it was an attorney who was appointed to fill this role.

**1976**

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- Judge David W. Soukup, then Presiding Judge of King County Superior Court in Seattle, Washington, searched for alternative ways to ensure that the child's best interests would be consistently represented to the court. He found that few court-appointed attorneys had the time or the training to carry on the comprehensive investigation that would elicit the information the court needed. Judge Soukup decided to utilize trained community volunteers who would be asked to make a long-term commitment to a child for whom they would serve as guardians ad litem. Judge Soukup's concept became a successful program in its first years of operation and word of the program spread quickly.

**1977**

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- The first CASA program is launched in Seattle, WA, under the guidance of Judge David W. Soukup.

**1982**

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- Following this early model, similar programs were developed across the United States. By 1982, it was clear that a national association was needed to direct CASA's emerging national presence. The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (NCASAA) was formed that year in Seattle, WA.

**1985**

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- On April 22, 1985, President Ronald Reagan presented the National CASA Association with the President's Volunteer Action Award for "outstanding volunteer contribution, demonstrating accomplishment through voluntary action."

**1987**

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- Charlotte Evans learns about the CASA movement while serving as an advisory member for the Monterey, CA program. She brings the idea back to Kane County, and a steering committee is formed including Charlotte Evans, Greg Hunt, Anne Wray, and Judge Peter Grometer.

## CASA KANE COUNTY

# History Timeline

## 1988-2008

### 1988

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- ☞ A CASA program is established in Kane County as “Friend of the Court”. Chief Judge Gene Nottolini signs the general order. Judge Peter Grometer is the presiding judge in Juvenile Court.
- ☞ Anne Wray is hired as the first Executive Director. Seven CASA volunteers are trained, and represent seven children. Office space is donated by the United Methodist Church in Geneva.

### 1989

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- ☞ In August of 1989, the American Bar Association, the country’s largest professional organization of attorneys, officially endorsed the use of CASA volunteers to work with attorneys to speak for abused and neglected children in court.

### 1990

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- ☞ The U.S. Congress authorized the expansion of CASA with the passage of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 so that a “Court Appointed Special Advocate shall be available to every victim of child abuse or neglect in the United States that needs such an advocate.”
- ☞ Sandy Gannet joins CASA Kane County as Co –Executive Director. The office moves to the basement of the Kane County Courthouse.
- ☞ 501 (c)(3) status is established in May.

### 1991

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- ☞ Hildi Smith is hired as Executive Director. The program grows to 20 CASA volunteers.

### 1992

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- ☞ Peg Travers becomes Executive Director.
- ☞ The legal status of CASA volunteers is changed from “Friends of the Court” to Guardian ad Litem. This change allows CASA volunteers a more powerful role in court, making them a full party to the case with an attorney appointed to represent them.
- ☞ The program develops a mentoring program which utilizes experienced volunteers to work with new CASAs.

## 1994

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- ☞ *The program grows to 80 CASA volunteers. The first annual auction is held in June at the St. Charles Country Club. In December of 1994, the CASA office is relocated to the second floor of the Kane County Judicial Center.*

## 1995

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- ☞ *The CASA office relocates to its current home – the 4th floor of the Kane County Courthouse on Third Street.*
- ☞ *Doris Hunt receives the first annual Volunteer Recognition Award, named in her honor.*

## 1996

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- ☞ *James Skaar receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*

## 1997

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- ☞ *CASA Kane County receives the Governor's Home Town Award in recognition of citizens of Illinois who give unselfishly of their time, money, and efforts to make their communities better places to live and work.*
- ☞ *Jinny Lightfine receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*

## 1998

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- ☞ *CASA Kane County celebrates its 10th Anniversary by planting a tree on the Courthouse lawn.*
- ☞ *The first public, bi-annual conference is held in September. The conference focuses on important issues affecting the child welfare and juvenile court systems.*
- ☞ *The Friends of CASA auxiliary is created, and the first golf outing is held.*
- ☞ *Dee Radtke receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*

## 1999

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- ☞ *The program is not yet able to appoint a CASA to every case involving child abuse and neglect.*
- ☞ *The Hansen-Furnas Foundation donates money to establish the Dottie Lowe Memorial Scholarship Fund in honor of Dottie Lowe a former CASA and school teacher. This scholarship pays for one CASA volunteer to attend the National CASA Conference each year.*
- ☞ *Greg Hunt receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*

## 2000

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- ☞ *In November, the program celebrates reaching its goal of growing to 200 CASAs by 2000! There is now a CASA volunteer available to be appointed to every child abuse and neglect case.*
- ☞ *The first Walk For a Child event is held. CASAs for CASA raises additional money and awareness raffling off custom playhouses designed and built by area builders.*
- ☞ *Robert Morrow and Barbara Riebe receive the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*

## 2001

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- ☞ *CASA Kane County establishes the annual Pro Bono Attorney Award. The first recipient is James Skaar.*
- ☞ *Nancy Malek receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*

## 2002

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- ☞ *Mary Ann Lindquist receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*
- ☞ *John Noble receives the Pro Bono Attorney Award.*

## 2003

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- ☞ *Linda Berny is hired as Executive Director.*
- ☞ *Lou Carter receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*
- ☞ *Rick Furgason receives the Pro Bono Attorney Award.*

## 2004

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- ☞ *CASA Kane County begins serving as GAL on private guardianship cases in Probate Court.*
- ☞ *The office completes a major technology upgrade.*
- ☞ *CASA Kane County is one of nine agencies honored by SBC for making a difference and improving the quality of life in Kane County. CASA was nominated by Illinois State Representative Tim Schmitz.*
- ☞ *The newly redesigned donor newsletter, Impact, is launched.*
- ☞ *Susan Vogus wins the first ever Illinois Advocate of the Year Award!*
- ☞ *Dee Schlagel receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*
- ☞ *Paul Pawlowski receives the Pro Bono Attorney Award.*

## 2005

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- ☺ *The first annual Hands Around the Courthouse event is held in April to acknowledge National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a partnership between CASA Kane County, the Kane County Health Department, the 16th Judicial Family Violence Coordinating Council, and Prevent Child Abuse Illinois.*
- ☺ *CASA Kane County and DCFS partner together to offer monthly “brown bag lunch” seminars in which staff from both agencies, as well as CASA volunteers gather together to learn about issues affecting abused and neglected children.*
- ☺ *Lynn Cali receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*
- ☺ *Bill Parkhurst receives the Pro Bono Attorney Award.*

## 2006

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- ☺ *CASA Kane County is featured in United Way of Elgin’s campaign video, shown to businesses throughout northern Kane County.*
- ☺ *The Case Managers are invited to present at the National CASA Conference in San Diego.*
- ☺ *The Geneva Chamber of Commerce partners with CASA Kane County for its first annual Geneva STOMP 5K, part of the City’s annual Festival of the Vine.*
- ☺ *Erin Blake receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*
- ☺ *Patrick Kinnally receives the Pro Bono Attorney Award.*

## 2007

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- ☺ *Gloria Bunce is hired as the agency’s Executive Director in March.*
- ☺ *The Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley and the Gordon Flesch Charitable Foundation provide grants that pay for additional technology upgrades including new staff computers.*
- ☺ *Mary Kay Rogers receives the Doris Hunt Volunteer Recognition Award.*
- ☺ *Donald Hubbard receives the Pro Bono Attorney Award.*

## 2008

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- ☺ *CASA Kane County celebrates its 20th Anniversary with two major events – Light the Way 20th Anniversary Gala in February at the St. Charles Country Club, and the Volunteer Recognition Evening & 20th Anniversary Celebration in April at the Paramount Theater.*
- ☺ *Charlotte Evans and Doris Hunt are honored with the Founders’ Award. Jim and Mary Ann Lindquist receive the first annual Children’s Champion Award at the annual auctions.*
- ☺ *CASA Kane County has grown to an agency of 212 volunteer advocates serving over 450 children annually.*