



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates

FOR CHILDREN

CASA KANE COUNTY

THE VOICE

Change a Child's Story™



WINTER
2019-20

SAVE THE DATE
CASA'S ANNUAL GALA
SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2020

Go to Page 3 for More Information!

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Sometimes our work feels like an uphill battle, and not every story ends with an overwhelmingly positive outcome. But, we are energized and encouraged by the success stories that we do see - the girl who catches up academically with her class even after losing four months of school because she moved three times in the last year, or the teen who receives a scholarship even though only 20% of foster youth go to college, or the boy who is finally reunited with his parents after a year in care because they received the help that they so desperately needed.

These success stories are possible when caring adults are active in a foster youth's life. With a supportive team that includes child welfare professionals, teachers, therapists, foster families, the family courts, and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers, the foster youth can achieve all of their hopes and dreams. This whole team is crucial to ensuring that foster youth reach their fullest potential.

This is hard work, struggling with ripped families and children in clouds of pain, anger dancing round their heart in the turmoil of a world made crazy. Yes, this is caring but also what is just, what should be demanded and why CASA exists. It takes love and a certain measure of courage, and in the simple act of person helping person, it becomes extraordinary.

Thank you for being the extraordinary supporter helping to Change a Child's Story.

Fondly,

Gloria Kelley
Executive Director

Greetings,

It's that time of year again when we're busier than we should be and often forget to slow down and enjoy the many gifts that this time of year brings. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the CASA organization, we would like to take a minute to share with you what the gifts of your time, talents and treasures has made possible. The word extraordinary comes to mind when we think of all you have devoted to ensure children are protected and provided the resources that they so desperately need and deserve.

A former foster youth and author, Josh Shipp, says that "Every kid is just ONE caring adult away from being a success story." Our National CASA organization just changed all of our taglines to read, "Change a Child's Story." We love it because you and I have the power to make that change and we are doing it every day!

In 2018, CASA advocated for 508 children in abuse/neglect and probate courts and 2019 is very close to that same number. Kids from birth to twenty-one were provided a caring, trained and sworn-in CASA/GAL volunteer to advocate for their best interests.

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THANK YOU TO OUR MISSION PARTNERS



Roly & Jackie Orama



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SAVE *The* **DATE**

Saturday

03.07.2020

*CASA Kane County's
Annual Gala*

*grow a
healthy
child*

**Q-CENTER
ST. CHARLES, IL**

CHILDREN'S CHAMPION CELEBRATION

CHILDREN'S CHAMPION COUPLE
Anton and Beth Engelmann

HONORARY CHAIR COUPLE
Tom and Beth Mooncotch

Grow a Healthy Child – every flower of tomorrow are in the seeds of today!

Join us for our Annual Children's Champion Celebration Gala as we come together to change a child's story.

Proceeds will support the advocacy and resources for children in the foster care system.

TO SPONSOR, ADVERTISE OR ATTEND:

Contact Stephanie Marlatt at **630-444-3108** or **stephaniem@casakanecounty.org**

330 Children were served in Abuse and Neglect Court

184 Children were served in Probate Court

17,445

CASA/GAL Volunteer hours contributed to advocate for children



80%

Children in Abuse and Neglect Court resided in 3 or few placements



41%

Cases closed resulted in reunification



What Your Dollars *Made Possible* **in 2019**



10

CASA University Colleges



99%

Children didn't experience a recurrence of abuse or neglect during CASA's involvement in court



37%

Cases closed resulted in adoption

225 Active CASA/GAL volunteers advocated for a total of 514 children

88% Children had no change in their CASA/GAL volunteer



END OF YEAR

Giving

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS

By, Kristi Wano

*CASA Board Member
Vice President, Sr. Wealth Advisor
Calamos Wealth Management*

If you're age 70 ½ or older, consider using your IRA for qualified charitable distributions (QCDs).

For individuals or couples that are age 70 ½ or older with individual retirement accounts, Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) may provide a convenient and efficient option for donating to your favorite charitable organizations. For those individuals, distributions from an IRA which are made directly payable to most 501(c)(3) organizations can benefit both the charity and the donor in several ways.

The amount donated can be counted toward satisfying your Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for the year.

The amount donated lowers taxable income of the donor; unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA.

Keeping your taxable income lower may impact certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare.

QCDs don't require that you itemize, which means you may decide to take advantage of the higher standard deduction, but still use a QCD for charitable giving.

The maximum annual amount that can qualify for a QCD is \$100,000 in aggregate across all charities to which you donate. However, if you file taxes jointly, your spouse can also make a QCD from his or her own IRA within the same tax year for up to \$100,000.

There are some exceptions in the type of IRA and the type of organization that qualifies. For example, private foundations and donor advised funds do not qualify. Therefore, it's a good idea to check with a tax advisor to help you determine if both your IRA and charity qualify for QCDs.

For more information please contact Vicki Shaw at vickis@casakanecounty.org or call 630-444-3100.

ADVOCACY CORNER

A CASA Story

CASA/GAL Volunteer Jody T. presented her CASA child with a backpack for school, which the young boy was thrilled to receive. As the CASA/GAL volunteer ended the visit, the boy's foster mother asked him what he had to thank CASA for? The boy thought about it for a few minutes and responded,

“ Thank you
for the **joy**
& **love** you
brought to
me today! ”

*Change a Child's
Story & Become
a CASA/GAL
Volunteer Today!*

VISIT CAsAKANECOUNTY.ORG



CASA KANE COUNTY THE 10 POINT PERFORMANCE MODEL



Strive to meet the **needs of all children** in the Kane County Juvenile Court system.

Train the **highest quality of CASA/GAL volunteers** from our community.



Exhibit significant organizational efforts to **demonstrate cultural competency & sensitivity.**



Heighten community and public awareness for the needs of children in the child welfare system.



Advocate for the best interests of children to **achieve permanency** in the quickest amount of time.

Collaborate with other agencies and organizations inside and outside the jurisdiction to **achieve best interest results for children.**



Partner with the Judiciary to meet the needs of Abuse/Neglect, Probate and Juvenile Courts.



Maintain the **quality standards** of the National CASA Association.



Provide a **dedicated, committed, and caring presence** for every child to ensure they receive the needed services.



Sustain the **highest quality** program structure.

LEGAL NEWS

By, Nydia Molina

Director of Case Management/GAL Attorney



Did you know...

Twice a year, we require any CASA/GAL volunteer that serves on probate cases predominantly to participate in a probate training class. This class reviews the foundation of our representation in probate court and serves as a means of informing volunteers of any procedural changes in the process.

Since 2004, the 16th Judicial Circuit appointed CASA Kane County as the Guardian ad Litem in guardianship proceedings under the Probate Act. In 2018, CASA Kane County had 116 probate cases, serving 184 children. Typically, the Court appoints CASA Kane County on two different kinds of probate cases. The first is where a family member of a child petitions the Court for guardianship of the child. The second is where a parent asks the Court to terminate the guardianship of a child from a family member. In a probate case, the parties will provide the court evidence to show they should have guardianship of the minor. The Court has the responsibility to determine what is in the minor's best interest.

CASA provides the Court with the necessary and relevant information to assist the Court in making this critical decision. Our CASA/GAL volunteers, acting as the Court appointed Guardian ad Litem, interview family members, school personnel, medical professionals, children and any other relevant individuals able to provide the Court with information to be able to determine what is in the child's best interest. Asking a Court to make the potentially life-altering decision on guardianship, without the independent facts brought through the work of CASA/GAL volunteers, severely impairs the Court's ability to make a fair decision and ultimately what is best for the child.

An interesting distinction between abuse and neglect cases and probate cases is the lack of Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) involvement. DCFS provides neither case management nor oversight in probate cases. The importance of CASA/GAL volunteers dramatically increases as the CASA/GAL volunteers are the only eyes and ears for the Court.

However, through our experience in abuse and neglect cases, together, CASA staff and volunteers possess the knowledge and expertise to identify cases and children that may need referral to DCFS for further investigation or case management.

For example, in medically complex cases, we have provided the Court with more detailed and accurate information of children's medical needs that may shed light on the minimal parenting a child is receiving, thus forcing the court to terminate a guardianship.

So far, 2019 marked a significant change in how CASA Kane County delivered services in probate cases. After carefully reviewing our protocols, and in trying to promote consistency in all of our courtrooms, CASA determined that all advocate supervisors in our organization handle probate cases. CASA Kane County also hired a full-time staff attorney to assist our staff and volunteers covering probate cases as well as providing recommendations to the Court. Without a CASA/GAL volunteer assigned to each probate case, the Court would not benefit from an experienced team of volunteer and staff to provide the court with facts and recommendations advocating for what is in the child's best interest.

ENSURING — OUR

Future

CASA Kane County has embarked on an Annual Fund and Operational Endowment campaign that will provide the much needed level of annual income to our operational budget to ensure we can maintain the

quality that our court and community expects. It will also help provide for long-term sustainability of the organization in responding to the needs of the children served, regardless of external environmental factors.



YOUR DOLLARS WILL *Provide*

- *A caring person who will advocate for what is in that child's best interests.*
- *Experiences for all children to attend a concert or theatre.*
- *Suitcases and incidentals to meet basic needs.*
- *Education and training for better outcomes to serve 100% of every child from birth to 21.*
- *Technology to assess and meet the needs of every case, child and volunteer.*
- *Helping victims of child abuse and neglect.*
- *Creating greater awareness to prevent child abuse and neglect.*
- *Providing court referred treatment programs for at-risk families.*
- *Recruitment to qualify and quantify CASA/GAL volunteers.*
- *Case and advocacy supervision for the best interests of our children in foster care.*

Call our Advancement Office today at **630-444-3100** to learn more!

DONOR Story

A local couple that goes above and beyond.



Tim and Marcia Kellenberger - Elgin, IL
Board of Directors Member and Donors

If you have a conversation with Tim and Marcia Kellenberger, it won't take long to identify some common threads that run through all they do. Their commitment to their Christian faith, their love for their family, and the desire to serve others, especially children at risk, provide direction for their lives.

Tim and Marcia have always had a heart for serving at-risk kids in the local community and beyond. Additionally, Tim has been a Kid's Hope USA volunteer, mentoring an at-risk first grade student at Davis Elementary in St. Charles. It seemed a natural fit for Marcia to join

**“
Love your
neighbor as
yourself.”**

the U-46 Game Changers as a mentor for students at-risk of dropping out of high school. Additionally, she is now a volunteer crisis counselor with the Crisis Text Line, a national organization supporting and communicating with youth and adults in crisis.

As members of Christ Community Church (CCC), they participate in various aspects of youth ministry. In 2015, Tim and Marcia traveled to Bangladesh with the church's Go Team to support the work of Christian Service Society as they care for 400 young girls. Tim worked to secure funding for CCC to construct an additional orphanage to house 100 girls.



In light of their mission and focus, getting connected with and supporting CASA Kane County and the work it does was a perfect fit for the Kellenbergers. Marcia became an active CASA/GAL Volunteer in 2013 and Tim has become an active champion of CASA, serving as Secretary on the Executive Team, Board of Directors.

Tim and Marcia were recognized as the 2016 Children's Champions, a couple whose mantra is "love your neighbor as yourself." Their passion and enthusiasm for helping those at-risk is infectious.

“ WHAT **JUDGES** ARE SAYING ”



“ Most citizens do not know what goes on behind the closed doors of the juvenile and family courts of this nation—but CASA/GAL volunteers do. They see the pain and trauma of the child first-hand. They understand the law and the court process. They guide the child through the labyrinth of the system and give the child comfort during a traumatic time. The CASA/GAL volunteer appears in court... to hold the system accountable for the best interest of each child. ”

Retired Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Judge

“ When a judge appoints a CASA/GAL volunteer to advocate for an abused or neglected child, that judge must be assured that the volunteer is well trained in the law and legal procedures; that the volunteer will fulfill all court-ordered duties in a timely and professional manner; that the volunteer will advocate effectively for the child’s best interests within the legal system; and that the volunteer and the program will abide by all standards imposed by the National CASA Association. Anything less is not acceptable. ”

Retired Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Judge

“ WHAT OUR **CASA LEADERSHIP & VOLUNTEERS** ARE SAYING ”



CASA BOARD MEMBER

“ Tonight I go to sleep knowing that years ago I’d lay my head down excited for “my day,” my birthday. I was always blessed with a family that celebrated life and love. As a child I knew I was loved dearly, safe and comfortable in every way. I now am devoting my time and energy to spread the word about CASA Kane County, whose mission it is to advocate for those less fortunate children struggling with such unbelievable situations, none of which they asked for. Will you help us, change a child’s story? Thanks dear friends! The children thank you. ”

Kit DeWitt
KDI Design

CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS

- “ The class itself was comfortable with regards to the pace and expectations, and the information was presented in a way that made it easily understood and relatable. ”
- “ The training is very detailed. When you complete the training you will have learned so much that will help you successfully advocate for a child/children. This is a fantastic opportunity to make a difference in the life a child. ”
- “ The training is intensive and complex. Be ready to explore your inner feelings and biases. Be accepting and willing to challenge your beliefs and work with others. ”

CHAIRMAN'S ADVISORY PANEL

A group of community minded professionals
that provide support to CASA's mission.

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Bob Runke, Co-Chair
Nancy Belmont
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Mike Burkholder
Kim Byrne
Erin Brown-Carter
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CASA KANE COUNTY

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Geneva, IL 60134

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CASA Kane County is a non-profit, volunteer organization
that advocates for the best interests of abused and
neglected children within the Juvenile Court system.



P: 630.232.4484

F: 630.232.4562

casakanecounty.org

SAVE THE DATES 2020

CHILDREN'S CHAMPION CELEBRATION GALA
Saturday, March 7 | Q Center, St. Charles

HANDS AROUND THE COURTHOUSE (HATCH)
Thursday, April 9 | Kane County Courthouse Rotunda, Geneva

GOLF FOR A CHILD INVITATIONAL
Monday, August 17 | St. Charles and Royal Fox Country Clubs, St. Charles

CLAYS FOR KIDS
Friday, September 25 | Max McGraw Wildlife Center, Dundee

SUPER HEROES LUNCHEON
Thursday, November 5 | Q Center, St. Charles

*For further event information visit casakanecounty.org/events