



THE VOICE

A NEWSLETTER FOR WABASH COUNTY CASA



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JUST WHO IS CASA? Court Appointed Special Advocate

In court, lawyers know the law and have dozens of kids' files; social workers know the regulations and have dozens of kids' files, but a CASA volunteer has just one file, and what they know is that one child.

Each year, nearly 300,000 children nationally end up in court, nearly 120 are in the local Wabash court system. They have committed no crime. They have been abused/neglected-the forgotten victims of family crisis. It is up to a judge to decide where they will spend their future and the road that leads them there. CASA Volunteers are not attorneys,

they are qualified and trained individuals to speak for the children in our court system.

CASA Volunteers are community members with a passion for speaking up for children. They come from all different backgrounds wanting to make a difference in the life of a child. They become an equal part of the local team that surrounds a family in crisis and works toward what is in the child's best interest.

The CASA Volunteer is guided by the "best interest" principle when advocating for a child. This means that the volunteer knows the child well enough to identify the child's needs. The volunteer makes objective fact-based recommendations to the court

about appropriate resources and informs the court of the child's wishes, and the opinion of the CASA volunteer of what is in the child's best interest.

CASA are 3rd party, non-biased, objective volunteers who are the eyes and ears of the judge. They are appointed by the court. They make fact based recommendations, speak up for the children in court, team meetings and more.

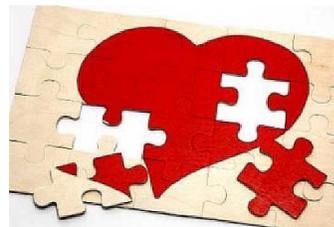
CASA could be you, being the voice for an abused/neglected child that may not have a voice otherwise. Their case goes forward with or without a voice.

Won't you consider speaking up for a child?



CURRENT STATUS WABASH

- 302 Volunteer hours spent advocating for children last quarter
- 64 abused/neglected children being served
- 19 active volunteers
- 53 abused/neglected children on our wait list (or 27 cases)
- 3 New CASA volunteers trained
- 5 New volunteer applications pending



VOLUNTEER HOLIDAY BANQUET

Wabash CASA held our Volunteer Holiday Banquet and Award Dinner last week. We wanted to show our appreciation for our awesome volunteers because they put a lot of care and effort into the work they do with these children. It is nice to be able

to show them a bit of our respect for all that they do. We had dinner catered by Market Street Grill. Thanks was given by 7 year old Elsie O'Brien. We had service awards for the following advocates:

Janet Halderman-9 yrs
Mary Earle-8 yrs
Pat Brubaker-7 yrs
Dick Brewer-6 yrs
Bob Cole-6 yrs
Ramona Forthofer-6 yrs
Jim Smith 5 yrs
We thank each of our volunteers for their dedication to these children.

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Director's Desk

There was an old man walking along the beach one morning. The tide was on its way out, and he was picking up the starfish and throwing them back into the ocean. A young man sat in the sand watching. Curious, He asked the older man, "what are you doing?" The old man replied, "I am throwing these starfish back into the water so they don't die" To that the young man replied, "but there are miles and Miles of beach and hundreds and hundreds of Starfish. There's no way you can save

them all. Don't you see that what you are doing doesn't possibly Make a difference?" The old man slowly bent down, picked up another Starfish and as he threw it back into the ocean, said, "it makes a difference to this one."

This is one of my favorite stories to tell when asked why I do what I do. Our goal is always to serve each and every child in our system. Until we have enough volunteers to do that, we will do what we are able.

We will make a difference, one starfish child at a time.

Dee Joy

CASA CAN!!



CASE SUCCESS

EACH ONE REACH ONE

The children were removed due to drugs usage by parent. The mom was pretty down, talked negative, wasn't complying and didn't think she could succeed. The CASA Volunteer was open minded, supportive, encouraging while holding mom accountable and remained positive in their conversations. Mom did a 180. She obtained her license, got a full time job and began mentoring others, even leading a couple local support groups.

Now she has all her children home with her and she has continued to mentor and encourage others.

"My kid's CASA was inspirational"



kid03011 www.fotosearch.com

JUDGE'S CORNER

Greetings! Let me start where I always do - Thank you for what you do. You definitely make a difference in the lives of our children. Wabash County has been hit hard by the State Administration and Department of Child Services and what I perceive as a lack of concern for the children of Wabash County. Locally, we must step up our efforts to protect our children. We in Wabash know what's best for our children. CASA is a big part of

assisting our children. I hope you all take great pride in what you do because you truly positively impact the lives of our children. I hope you spread the joy you experience in this effort and that you infect those around you with your joy. I think current volunteers are our best recruiters for CASA volunteers. Please, share your experience with someone you know and encourage them to become a CASA. During this time of year we are

thankful for many things. I am thankful for you. I wish you all the very best in this holiday season. Thank you!

/s/ Bob
McCallen





VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Janet Halderman-CASA Volunteer
Advocate since March 13, 2008.

Janet lives in Wabash with husband of 56 yrs Robert. They have 2 children and 5 grandchildren. She attended Wabash high school and then Purdue and Ball State. Janet is a retired school psychologist after 35 years.

Janet says her faith and her family take the highest priority in her life. She enjoys reading, boating, golf, travel, snow and water skiing, exercising and watching most any sport.

Janet has had 9 cases serving 21 kids as a CASA Advocate

Why did you become a CASA Volunteer?

That is quick and easy to answer. I wanted to give back to the community and be able to use the skills that I have with children. I knew CASA would be more of a challenge than anything I have ever done & the kids need me. Wabash is a marvelous place to live & I want to do whatever I can to make it even better.

What is the best highlight you have had from Advocating?

A young man was severely injured in a car wreck at a very young age. He became a quadriplegic. A family in another county, the wife a nurse for disabled kids, took him in and ended up adopting him. I was able to help and be a part of that wonderful ending.

What have you learned as a CASA volunteer?

Humility. And that blessings come from unexpected places.

Why do you stay with CASA?

Because I am physically able to. The Lord has blessed my husband and I so I feel called to give back.

What would you say to the community about CASA?

What a marvelous way to serve abused/neglected children who need someone to advocate for them. I feel sad that people may be intimidated by the time, effort and responsibility so fewer people volunteer than we need.



“What a marvelous way to serve abused/neglected children!”



UPCOMING EVENTS

January

6th 2pm-6pm- Open House for CASA office
Come meet the Program and get more info

20th 5pm-8pm- New Volunteer Orientation
Get registered now!!

Volunteer Roll Call

Karla Akins
Nora Allard
Laurie Allen
Dick Brewer
Pat Brubaker
Terrie Bryant
Bob Cole
Karen Cole
Bonnie Corn
Tom Curry
Mary Earle

Ramona Forthofer
Janet Halderman
Darlene Hunt
Randy O'Brien
Stan Ogan
Mike Ruse
Jim Smith

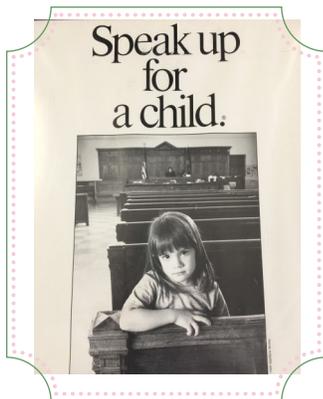


And introducing Tosha Swanson who took her oath on Thursday, December 8, 2016. Welcome Tosha!! We are happy you have joined us!!

Wabash County CASA Program

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A Voice For Children in our Court System

Mission Statement

To provide specially selected & trained community volunteers to advocate for abused/neglected children focused toward safe & permanent homes.

We're on the web
Wabashcasa.org

The only donation we need is your time to read and pass along our information. Volunteering is a bonus for the kids.

CASA Q & A

What is CASA ?

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is a trained citizen who is appointed by a judge to represent the best interest of a child in court. Children helped by CASA volunteers include those for whom home placement is being determined in juvenile court. Most of the children are victims of abuse and neglect.

What is a CASA volunteer's role ?

A CASA volunteer provides a judge with a carefully researched background of the child to help the court make a sound decision about that child's future. Each home placement case is as unique as the child involved. The CASA volunteer must determine if it is a child's best interest to stay with his/her parents or guardians, be placed in foster care, or be freed for permanent adoption. The CASA volunteer makes a recommendation on placement and more to the judge, and follows through on the case until it is permanently resolved.

How does a CASA volunteer investigate a case ?

To prepare a recommendation, the CASA volunteer talks with the child, parents, family members, social workers, school officials, health care providers, and others who are knowledgeable about the child's history. The CASA volunteer also reviews all records pertaining to the child's school, medical and casework reports and other documents.

Is there a "typical" CASA volunteer ?

CASA volunteers are ordinary citizens. No special or legal background is required. However, volunteers are screened closely for objectivity, competence, and commitment. They also receive formal classroom training before assignment to their first case.

How much time does it take?

On average it takes 6-10 hours per month

How long does a case last?

Cases average 18 months

How do I volunteer?

You must be 21, pass background checks and complete the application process.

How long is training?

CASA training is 30 hours, including some court observation.

Then, there is 12 hours per year ongoing.

What if I can't attend a court hearing or meeting?

CASA staff will cover your case for you in case of schedule conflicts, vacations and other personal family needs.

I am not sure, where do I get more information?

Contact the Wabash County CASA office- contact information in this newsletter.