



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN



H I G H L I G H T S

V O L U N T E E R S

F I N A N C I A L S

D O N O R S



Child abuse and neglect are real problems in Jackson County. Whether it is neglect because parents are struggling with addiction, mental illness, and poverty, or the more horrific cases of deliberate cruelty and sexual abuse that make the news, the question is the same: *What will happen to that child now? Who will help them?*

In more than one-third of all the cases, Jackson County CASA is the answer to that question. Our CASA Volunteers visit the children and work with our CASA Attorneys and Case Supervisors to advocate for the best interests of each child. They work diligently to make sure each of these children receives the educational, medical, and therapeutic support they need. Our goal is that each of them will have a safe, permanent, home, either with a biological parent or relative, or with a new adoptive family.

This year, we launched a new program to help a group of kids who have always been hard to place: our older Foster Youth. These youth, who have no appropriate relatives or adoptive resources, will now have the help of their CASA Volunteer in addition to a new CASA Older Youth Specialist, who can help them secure housing, get health insurance, find transportation, and continue their education and get a job. Now, even after they “age out” of the system, they have someone to call, someone who cares.

CASA will continue to advocate for the best interests of ALL the children we serve. We could not do this work without you. Thank you for your friendship and support.

With gratitude,

Martha Gershun



MESSAGE FROM BOARD PRESIDENT **COLLIN THOMAS**



As President of the Board of Directors of Jackson County CASA, I am pleased to report that CASA is making a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children in our community.

In 2015, Jackson County CASA advocated for 1,149 children who were removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. These children benefited from the advocacy of 364 dedicated CASA Volunteers.

These Volunteers became the experts on their children's cases. They attended trainings, visited and assessed the children's residential placements; talked to their teachers, social workers, and therapists; and accompanied them when they had major medical procedures. They also met with social workers and others to determine the best plans for these children, and they communicated this information to the Family Court Commissioners and Judges. Most of all, they listened to the children. They heard their fears, hopes, and dreams and then conveyed them to the Court. As they worked they received extra training, support, and guidance from the professional staff of Jackson County CASA.

Based on reports from our CASA staff, we learned of the critical need for additional support for older youth who were aging out of foster care without permanent families. To better serve these youth, CASA hired an Older Youth Specialist to work directly with the youth and their Volunteer to help them plan for their medical needs, housing, employment, and education. CASA Volunteers are now empowered to stay in contact with these youth even after they leave the care of the Court, and these youth can continue to rely on CASA for assistance with their transition to independent living. We are excited by the promise this program has shown.

This is just one of the reasons the Jackson County CASA Board is committed to raising resources, recruiting more volunteers, and maintaining staff to provide a trained advocate for 1,200 children in 2016. This will bring us closer than ever to our goal of providing a CASA Volunteer for more than 50% of the children in the Jackson County child welfare system. We are confident that with the generous support of the caring people of Kansas City and more people stepping up to be heroic CASA Volunteers, we will reach this goal.

With your help, Jackson County CASA will continue to improve the lives of the children we serve, both now and in the future.

Collin Thomas

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Executive Director

2015 YEAR-END RESULTS

Your generous support and thoughtful encouragement continue to mean a great deal to all of us at Jackson County CASA. We had another record-breaking year – growing to serve 1,149 children in 2015. Here are our year-end results:



Overall we served

1,149

children, compared to 1,056 in 2014, an increase of 9%.



We accepted Court assignments for

359

new children, the most in our agency's history. This is **7% more** than our 336 new children in 2014.



We trained

95

new CASA Volunteers for a total number of **364 active CASA Volunteers**.

We continue to advocate for permanent, safe homes for our children. In 2015:

117

CASA children were adopted or placed with a permanent guardian, compared to **100 last year**.

199

CASA children were safely reunified with their biological parents, compared to **114 last year**.

All children assigned to CASA received skilled, passionate advocacy for appropriate and timely medical, therapeutic, and educational resources.



We provided holiday gifts for **305 CASA children**, as well as food and basic hygiene items for their families. This is **61% more** than the **190 children and families** we helped in 2014.



We again provided school supplies and age-appropriate backpacks for over **100 school-age children** in the fall.

We launched our new Program for Older Foster Youth in September 2015:



CASA Case Supervisors and CASA Volunteers have already served **160 youth 14 and older**. This is four times more older youth than we anticipated serving with this program.

Our new Case Supervisor for Older Foster Youth (hired in September) has already taken on a caseload of **29 teens and young adults**. She is already having significant success helping them identify goals, secure safe independent housing, begin seeking employment, and (where appropriate) begin the college search process.

THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS

Jackson County CASA offers a volunteer opportunity like no other. As officers of the court, CASA Volunteers are empowered to make a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children.

In 2015, 364 CASA Volunteers advocated for 1,149 children in Jackson County. While this is an impressive number, hundreds more children remain on a waiting list for our services.

Our Volunteers are an amazing force for good, but we need more of them. In 2016, we hope to advocate for more than 1,200 children. With your help, we can reach that goal!

THE VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

People who give their time to CASA come from many different places. Some have years of education and professional experience working for children and families. Some have themselves grown up in the foster care system and felt the anguish of having to move from home to home.

Being a CASA Volunteer does not require any special education or background, simply the desire to help abused and neglected children find safe, permanent homes. Volunteer advocates are asked to dedicate themselves to a case until it is closed (the average case lasts about one and one half years). Advocates work in a team alongside their CASA Case Supervisor and CASA Staff Attorney.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BECOME A CASA VOLUNTEER?

The first step is to meet with a CASA staff member to talk about the program and complete an application.

In addition, every volunteer must pass a background check and participate in an extensive training course.

After successfully completing the training, volunteers are assigned their first case. A volunteer's average time commitment to a case is approximately 10 hours per month.

For more information on becoming a CASA Volunteer please call (816) 984-8204, or visit us online at www.jacksoncountycasa-mo.org.

2015 NEW VOLUNTEERS

Mary Abram	Susan Krass
Robyn Allison	Jenipher Lemons
Danielle Atchison	Margaret Lloyd
Barbara Baker	Todd Lowenstein
Shannon Baker	Lynda Mackay
Theresa Bangert	Jennifer Mansur
Elizabeth Behrens	Ray McDonald
Kelly Bergin	Sherry McGlaughlin
Nicole Bissey	Diana McLarren
Jean Bookasta	Tara McPherson
Cari Bossow-Murdock	Angelyn Miller
Charles Brettell	Jerri Mullally
Joyce Brettell	Kevin Mullally
Melissa Brookshire	AnnElisa Munita
Emily Bullington	Shannon Murphy-Johnson
Jill Burton	David Murray
Michelle Canon	William Nelson
Norma Collins	Adriana Pech Moguel
Rita Davis	Shawne Pennington
Decker Kelsi	Daniel Quarles
Lindsey Decker	Jane Quarnstrom
Melissa Diddle	Amanda Ritter
Dodge Sarah	Michelle Rockholt
Taylor Dunn	Lynn Rosebrough
Adria Edwards	Fabiola Sanchez Corona
Amanda Eisenmann	Jeffrey Sargent
Naomi Ellifritt	Michele Sewell
Wendy Eurek	Laurel Sharpe
Tiffany Foland	Kathleen Sheppard
Kevin Foxworth	Bobbi Smith
Ashley Franden	Stanley Smith
Pat Gaffigan	Vicki Springs
Lauren Gepford	Laura Thompson
Cassandra Gergen	Melissa Todhunter
Willie Giles	Henry Toney
Melinda Graham	Jamie Truitt
Joanna Greenlee	Janine Urness
Diana Groth	Elizabeth Vaughan
Dianna Hedstrom	Dannella Villa
Mary Hernandez	Theresa Wavada
Elizabeth Herron	Justina Weber
Kristina Holland	MaryAnn Weiner
Pamela Hull	Kemora Williams
Leatha Ingram	Lynette Williams
Monica Johnson	Aimee Wilson
Leigh Kay	Philip Winfrey
Marc Krass	Trenton Yakle

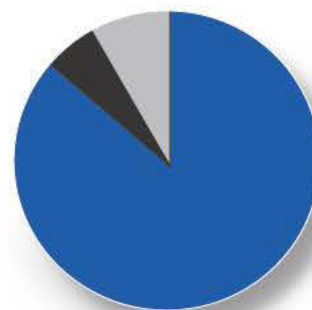


2015 Financial Information:

Total Programmatic Revenue: \$2,249,868

Foundation support.....	\$867,100
United Way/CFC donations	\$110,331
Corporate contributions	\$54,091
Individual and other donations.....	\$199,356
County government support	\$152,944
Federal/State program support	\$82,917
Special events	\$203,480
In-kind goods and services.....	\$578,469
Other	\$1,185

Total Expenses: \$1,858,975



● Program services.....	\$1,517,816
● Fundraising	\$104,444
○ Administrative.....	\$236,715

The staff and board of Jackson County CASA extend our sincerest gratitude to the following friends and supporters who made our efforts in 2015 possible.

\$100,000 & Above

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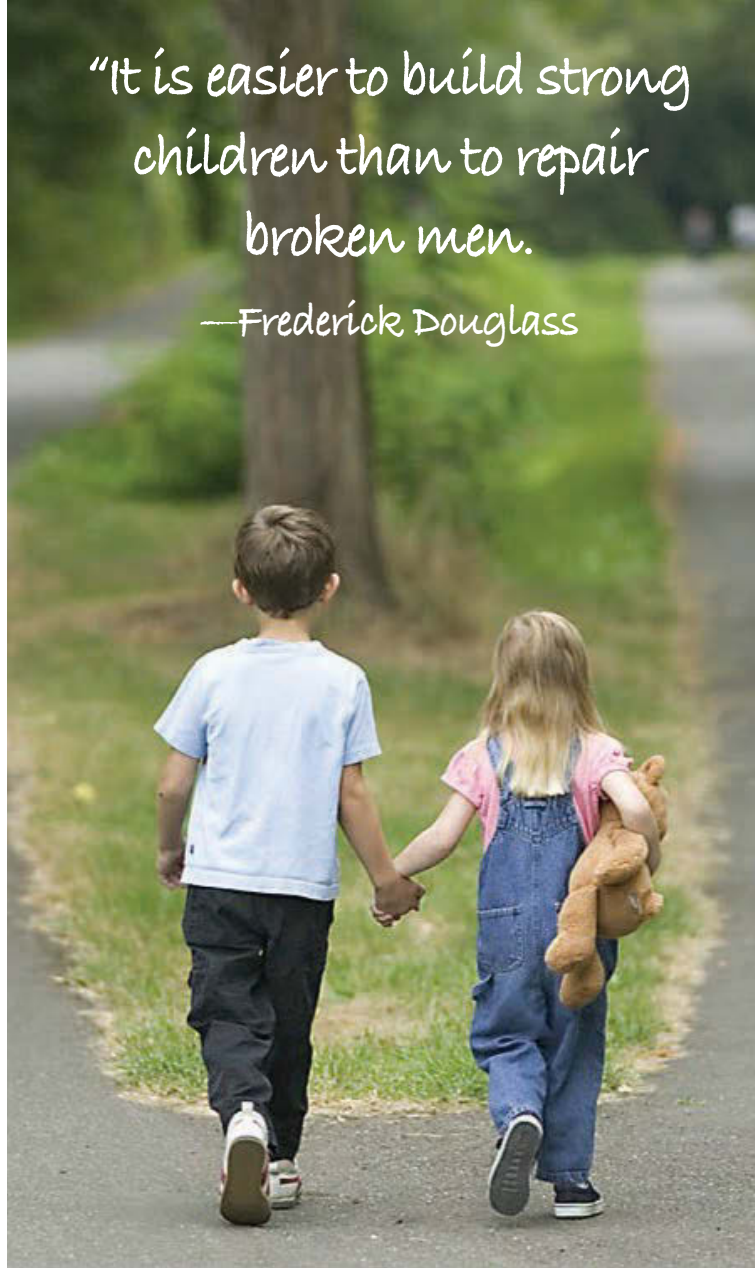
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*"It is easier to build strong
 children than to repair
 broken men.*

—Frederick Douglass



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*“Children are the living messages
we send to a time we will not see.”*

-John F. Kennedy

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