

Mission Statement:

The mission of the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association, together with its state and local members, is to support and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.

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The mission of CASA Monroe is to promote and support court-appointed volunteer advocacy to represent the best interests of children who find themselves in the court system because of abuse or neglect. We recognize that the welfare of all children should be a priority. The goal of CASA volunteers is to gather critical and objective information to be used by the court in deciding the most beneficial placement of such a child, aiming for a safe and permanent home in which they can grow and thrive.

Vision Statement:

Through the efforts of the CASA Monroe organization and with the support of all local child advocate agencies, within five years (by 2012) we expect to substantially lower the amount of time a child will spend in state custody. In 2006, 107 Monroe County children were placed in state custody.

I would like to help in the following capacity:

Member of Board of Directors _____
Work directly with the children _____
Fund Raising _____
Clerical work _____
Public relations _____
Be on Financial Committee _____
Be on call to help with extra pair of hands _____
Grant researcher/writer _____
Member of Friends of CASA Monroe _____
Other _____
Suggestions welcome: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Best time to call: AM _____ Afternoon _____ Evening _____

For More Information

Please contact:

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CASA Monroe

REPRESENTING THE CHILD'S VOICE
IN COURT

**BE AN
ADVOCATE
FOR THE CHILDREN
OF
MONROE COUNTY**

107 Monroe County Children
in State Custody in 2006



CASA OVERVIEW

What is CASA?

Each year in the USA, more than 500,000 children are placed in some form of foster care and thrust into the court system. They have committed no crime, but are simply child victims who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. It is then up to the judge to decide their futures. The judge must consider the following: did the conditions at home warrant removal? Is the home now safe enough to allow the child's return or should that child be permanently placed in another home?

In the past judges have often had to base these decisions on incomplete information.

Today, more than 50,000 people are speaking up for these children as volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Guardians Ad Litem (GAL).

CASA/GAL volunteers currently advocate for children in over 900 programs in the USA, speaking for the best interests of approximately 229,000 children. Though it is an impressive statistic, that is only about one third of abused and neglected children in the court system.

CASA volunteers provide a fresh perspective to the juvenile court. Their presence on cases helps to ensure that children who were abused or neglected do not receive further abuse at the hands of overburdened child welfare systems.

VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES

What is a Volunteer Child Advocate?

Court Appointed Special Advocates are trained community volunteers appointed by district court judges to speak for the best interest of children who are brought before the court for reasons of abuse or neglect.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer Child Advocate

- *Complete an intensive independent review of each case
- *Report findings to the court
- *Ensure representation of the child's best interest
- *Monitor case following a court hearing or decision as designated by the court

Consult regularly with the volunteer coordinator concerning assigned case, develop a CASA case plan and review progress and reports.

Training

- *CASA volunteers are required to attend 30 hours of pre-service training
- *CASA volunteers follow guidelines established by National CASA Association
- *CASA volunteers will attend in-service training and receive direct supervision and guidance from program staff.

Volunteer Advocates must be 21 years of age and be able to pass a police background check.

Case Load

Each volunteer child advocate is responsible for one child at a time, unless a family of more than one child is involved.

The traditional length of time spent on each case can vary from two to eighteen months.

Preferred Skills /Abilities

- *Ability to keep all information confidential
- *Ability to communicate effectively
- *Ability to relate to people of various backgrounds
- *Ability to transport self to various locations
- *Ability to maintain objectivity

CASA Volunteer Testimony