

Annual Report

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

HUDSON COUNTY CASA





Our Mission and Purpose

Hudson County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is an independent, non-profit organization committed to advocating for the best interests of abused and neglected children. CASA works through trained community volunteers to ensure that needed services and assistance are made available to children to enhance their quality of life while helping to move them toward safe and permanent homes. Our volunteers each serve as “a child’s voice in court” making recommendations to family court judges that are in the best interest of the child.

CASA’s purpose is to improve the well-being and future outcomes of foster children through the advocacy of its committed volunteers.



Foster children with CASA advocates are:

- more likely to be placed in permanent homes
- will spend less time in foster care
- receive more services compared to children without an advocate
- do better academically with fewer behavioral issues than foster children without a CASA volunteer



Dear Friends,

Last year was one of celebration! CASA made so many new friends and did more for foster children than any other year. Every day our volunteers confront incredible sadness and heartbreak in the children they serve, making the happy occasions especially meaningful.

There was CASA's first golf tournament, the Keller Williams street party for Red Day, birthday parties thrown by loyal friends and then Celebrate CASA at Battello on June 1! It was a perfect night, highlighted by former foster parent Kristen Knight who described the challenges and joys of adopting a child with serious health challenges.

CASA is fortunate to have so many wonderful supporters and fans. There can be a day in the office that is subdued—a parent has died, siblings are separated in placement—but then someone stops by with new backpacks or a volunteer makes a generous donation through a workplace campaign. Working on behalf of abused and neglected children can be wrenching, but we are always uplifted by the kindness of strangers as well as friends.

Thank you everyone for your tremendous support and generosity. It means more than you could know.

Best wishes,

Beverly

Beverly



Our Volunteers and their Accomplishments

In FY23, Hudson County CASA had 140 volunteers! We had men and women ranging in ages from 24 to 78 years old, representing a variety of experiences and skills, but sharing a dedication to improving the lives of foster children. Consider these statistics:



6,232 hours were donated

by CASA Volunteers working on their cases.



75% of volunteers

are also employed full time.



99% of volunteer

recommendations were converted into court orders.

Hudson County CASA appreciates its FY23 Volunteers!

Corinne Abolafia
Cristina Anastasio
Tanya Anderson
Vanessa Arnone
Angelina Baker
Zoila Barahona
Jennifer Barbuto
Brian Belluomini
Marta Bergamini
Irene Borngraeber
Anetha Brady
Barbara Bravo
Stacey Breen
Kaitlyn Bridges
Alicia Burtha
Julie Chaiken
Mark Chayapruks
Kaleena Cheatem-Webb
Stephanie Chi
Kelle Colyer-Brown
Brook Coppola
Erica Cosgrove
Jamie Costiglio
Nicole D'Angelo-Fox
Anne Davis
Alexandra Deering
Amanda Diamond
Nicole Diaz
Raquel Diaz
Prisca Lao Doh
Colleen Drennan
Suzanne Durney
Katherine Erbeznik
Natasha Espailat
Kristin Fehrenbach
Andrew Fezza
Whitney Dunlap Fowler
Emily Frye
Patrick Gallagher
Natalie Garvin
Jennifer Gawronski
Kara Gibson
Jessica Gregory
Shannon Harknett
Matt Hawkins
Laurie Heins

Eleanor Hendrickson
Suzanna Hyler
Teju Idera
Tina Jacob
Cecily Jeser-Cannavale
Clara Jimenez
Emily Keane
Rosalind Keith
Colleen Kenny
Laurene Kiza
Carol Kobak
Rhea Kulkami
Matthew Kulvicki
Meera Kumar
Jessica Landis
Meaghan Lang
Patricia Laws-Locicero
Ross Leth
Samantha Levien
Brianna Linden
Sofia Lopiano
Juliana Lupinacci
Erin Mandarino
Grayleen Mandile
Mikhaela Maningas
Hope Mansfield
Lucia Marchese
Karen Mateus
Mercy Mbogori
Amy McGrath
Eve Mensch
Hope Miedema
Jolanda Munroe
Meghna Nair
Renee Natali
Daphne Nelson
Andrea Newman
Mikaela Niermann
Jenna Nimar
Charissa Ortega
Brian Osborne
Chadni Patel
Alyssa Pech
Carmelle Phillips
Esther Pong
Lisa Potenza

Anna Priori
Keely Respass
Sangita Rivera
Gabby Robles
Xiomara Roche
Kristina Rogan
Jennifer Rossini
Rachel Rubenstein
Josephine Russo
Lindsay Ryder
Kim Sample
Stephanie Santiago
Diane Sarria
Nicole Schock
Lyndsey Scofield
Dana Shapiro
Kim Shlepakov
Morrissa Silverman
Lori Skoller
Danette Somers
Mark Strickland
Vanessa Style
Uttara Tamhankar
Jillian Tang
Julia Tebor
Martha Torres
MaryJo Trusso-Sabbers
Alicia Ugenti
Lisa Uku
Kirstin Uptegrove
Nicole VanderPloeg
Selina Vargas
Anne Villers
Kristina Vinzon-Baltazar
Kimberly Wai
Kelly Weber
Jacqueline Weimmer
Carly Wender
Katherine Whelan
Kathie-Lee Wilcox
Catherine Williams
Joseph Williams
Regina Won
Mary Wright
Christopher Zingaro

Hudson County CASA could not accomplish its goals without the work of its dedicated volunteers. To find out more about a volunteer's role and the first steps to change a child's life visit: www.hudsoncountycasa.org.

CASA Board and Staff

Board of Trustees

Lindsay Heller, President
Kate Hahn, Vice President
Kristen Gennarelli, Secretary
Diana Cooney, Treasurer
Matt Hawkins,
Volunteer Representative
Dave Brennan
Cesar Chavez
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Suzanne Labombarda
Stephanie Lang
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Alex Mormando
Jhonny Paul
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Diane Rosenshein
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Katie Brownstein, Case Supervisor
Tish Kraszyk, Case Supervisor
Fanny Méndez-Rivero, Office Manager / Grants Manager
Clare Daley, Volunteer Coordinator
Annalisa Leite, Associate Director of Marketing and Development

The Children We Helped

CASA only serves children in out of home placement, who have been abused and neglected.



204 children
were advocated for by volunteers and staff.



52 children
found safe and permanent homes.



63% of children
served by CASA are 11 and under.

Holiday Gifts for Hudson County CASA Kids!

Each Holiday Season, Hudson County CASA hosts a toy drive to provide gifts to the children we serve, and every year it becomes more successful. This past holiday season, so many generous organizations and people in the community reached out to help children in foster care. We received toys from **Quest Diagnostics, BDO USA, UPS, Boutique Realty, Michele Farrell and Women Entrepreneurs Connection of Hudson County, Orangetheory Fitness, Engel & Volkers, Clutch Moto, Hudson Connections, Hudson County School Counselor**



Association, Wendy's, Gianna and Linda Koetter, Emily Jabbour, Nicole DeAngelo Fox, and the Alexander Family. In addition, **Natalina Leite**, a freshman at Seton Hall University, collected hundreds of cookies and holiday candies that were delivered to the foster families and the programs where our children were placed. **Arianna Hughes**, a sophomore at Watchung Hills Regional High School and current leader of the non-profit organization Kindness

4 Kids, also collected hundreds of gift cards for teens.



Thank you to the dedicated volunteers, staff, and loyal supporters who made this year great!



CELEBRATE CASA



My name is **Matt Hawkins** and I have been a Hudson County CASA volunteer for the past 6 years. I am honored to be able to share my CASA story and how I became involved with this amazing organization.

During the Fall of 2016, I began feeling unfulfilled in my career and that I had a responsibility to do more for my community. I knew that my work schedule allowed me to find time to volunteer, but I didn't know where to start, so I started with a simple Google search and stumbled upon CASA. At first glance, I thought that the purpose of CASA was excellent, but I did not think I would be able to manage the responsibilities that came with helping kids in Foster Care. I kept searching and found some great organizations, but I somehow always ended up back at the Hudson County CASA website.



Throughout the past six years at CASA, I have had the privilege of being a volunteer on four different cases for young men ranging in age from 7 to 21. Before starting my first case assignment, I remember being very nervous and hoping that I could make a positive impact on the child's life. While each CASA case differs in many ways, there are some commonalities that I've discovered across all the cases I've seen. Each case features a child who ended up in a bad situation at no fault of their own and are now trying to navigate life through a multitude of challenges that no child should have to worry about.

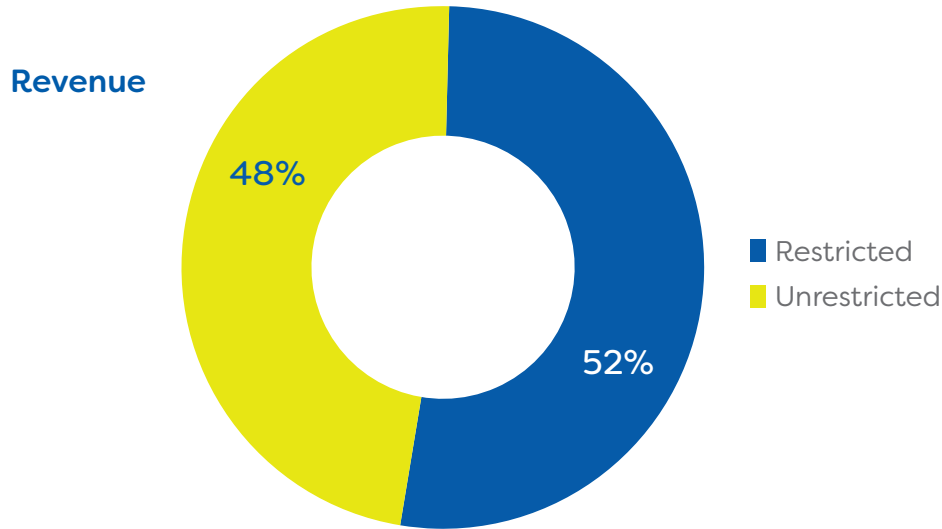
One of my favorite aspects about CASA is that once a case closes, I am still afforded the opportunity to stay in touch with the children who I previously advocated for. In one of my most challenging cases, I was the advocate for a 19-year-old teenager who was set to age out of the foster care system by the time he turned 21. That meant we had two years to come up with a plan to ensure he was able to live independently and grow into a contributing member of society. Throughout those two years, I was able to help him get re-enrolled in a trade school after being expelled, work to find gainful employment, and most importantly I was able to see his growth firsthand and watch him flourish in life. Fast forward four years later and he keeps in touch with me to make sure I know what's going on in his life and knows that I will always be available to help him when needed. My experiences with this case had difficult and challenging moments but seeing him succeed in life and not giving up despite his unfortunate life circumstances made it all worthwhile.

During my tenure with CASA, I've had many successes, some disappointments and have learned a lot about life, the family court system, and myself. CASA has taught me to be more empathetic, patient, and grateful for the opportunities I've been given. Witnessing the positive impact I've been able to have on the children's lives has been incredibly rewarding and continuously motivates me to keep advocating for those who need it the most. I can honestly say that CASA has made me a better person and I will be forever grateful for the opportunities this organization has given me over the years to empower others and make a child's life a little bit better.

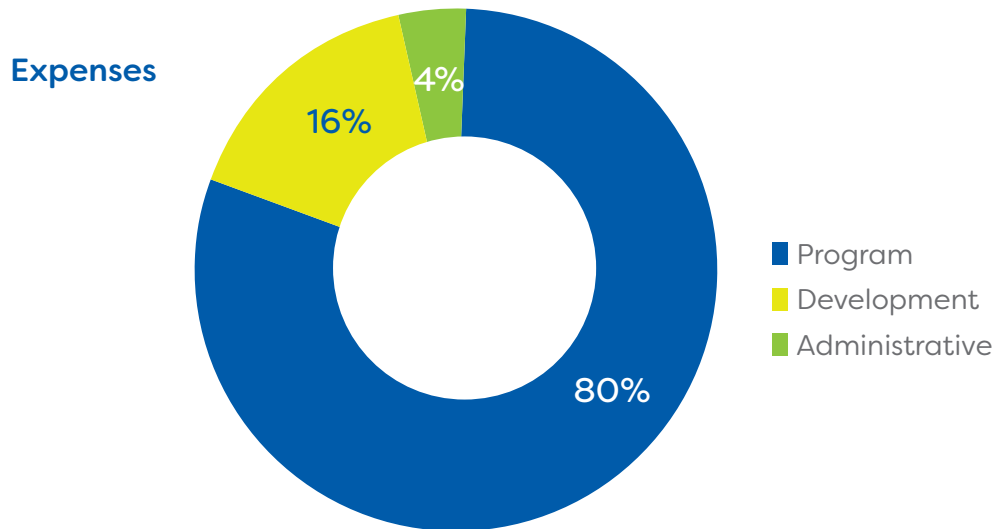
Thank you for taking the time to read about my CASA journey and always remember **#CASAPeopleAreTheBestPeople**.

Highlights of Fiscal Year 2023

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023



Restricted \$409,573 | Unrestricted \$382,254
Total Revenue \$791,827



Program \$666,020 | Development \$131,940 | Administrative \$33,587
Total Expenses \$831,547

FY2023 Donors

\$15,000 +

Community Foundation of NJ
Janet & Elliot Greene
Jim & Alice Kocis
Elizabeth & Esteban Rakela
Turrell Fund
UPS Foundation

\$10,000 - \$14,999

Dave Brennan
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UPS Employees
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Special Friends of CASA

Choc O Pain
Hoboken Girl
Franklin Prado
Guillermo Rivero
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

\$1,000 - \$2,499

Anonymous Donor
The Aarts Urtecho Charitable Fund
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Andrew Valle-Kaleiwahea
Nicole VanderPloeg
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\$500 - \$999

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BDO Employees
John Campbell
Mark Chase & Mary Beth Yates
Clutch Moto
Bob & Beverly Cohen
Courtney Crimmins / Scout Troop
#10855
Nicole D'Angelo Fox
Jacqueline Dipaola
Engel & Volkers
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Amy Ertel
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Momentum USA Inc.
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Jhony Paul
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Nathan & Nancy Sambul
Elizabeth Schmalz
Pat Sherwen / Woman's Club of
Arlington
Morrisa Silverman
Source Atlantique Inc.
Allison Stangeby / New York Football
Giants
Mark Strickland
Susan Sullivan
Tenafly Pediatrics
The Tonight Show With Jimmy Fallon
Renee Trotter
Alyssa & Hauke Vagts
Tom Venedam / CBS-Viacom
Heather Weidt
Joel Weisberg & Jane Aibel
Wendy's Employees
William Blair & Co
Rachel Williams
Patrick Wisely
Regina Won
Kerry Yates / Fox Corporation



Hudson County CASA's vision is to provide an advocate to every child in foster care. You, your friends and family, and possibly your employer can all change a child's life. Consider how you can make a difference:

- Become a CASA volunteer.
- Pay tribute to special people or occasions with an honor or memorial gifts. Your honoree will receive a personalized letter.
- Include CASA in your will or trust or name it as a beneficiary of your retirement account or life insurance policy.
- Make a gift of stock to benefit CASA with a potential tax advantage for you.
- Multiply your donation with a matching gift program. Check with your HR department to inquire if one is available.
- Make an in-kind donation to help meet CASA children's needs.



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