



CASA MOBILIZES COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TO ADVOCATE FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

L.A.'s 30,000 CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM NEED OUR HELP!

There are over 30,000 children in the Los Angeles County foster care system, many having been removed from their homes because of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. These children are forced to move from home to home and each time adjust to new caregivers, new schools, new teachers, and a new social circle. Many of them deal with this alone. Without the proper support, less than half of these children will finish high school and a significant number will end up homeless or incarcerated.

Founded in 1978, CASA of Los Angeles is a non-profit organization that recruits, trains, and supports volunteers to transform the lives of abused and neglected children in the foster care system. CASA is the only organization with volunteers appointed by the dependency court to advocate for children. A Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer is sworn in as an officer of the court and is one of the very few unpaid adults supporting a foster child at this crucial stage in their lives. Every day, CASAs work to secure the services necessary for the survival and success of these children.

For a child in the foster care system, being paired with a CASA means:

- Spending fewer years in foster care
- Receiving more individualized services
- Experiencing more stability in placement
- Being more likely to have a plan for permanency
- Having a better chance of being adopted

In FY15:

- 5,495 children received day-of-court assistance
- 867 children received ongoing individual advocacy
- 489 community members volunteered their time as CASAs
- CASAs completed more than 100,000 volunteer hours valued at over \$4.2 million

THE REALITY OF FOSTER CARE

- 33% of California's foster youth currently reside in LA County
- 73% of foster youth have spent two or more years in the system
- 38% of youth have had five or more foster care placements
- Less than 50% of foster youth graduate from high school and only 3% graduate from college
- 33% of girls in foster care become pregnant at least once by age 17
- 25% of youth aging out of foster care will be incarcerated within two years
- At age 19, 60% of former foster youth are unemployed
- 27% of the homeless population spent time in foster care

"I have seen CASA volunteers help find services for children that I was told were not available and I have seen them find permanent placements for children when our system faltered in that regard. In many instances, the efforts of CASA volunteers were absolutely heroic."

– JUDGE MICHAEL NASH
Presiding Judge (retired),
Los Angeles Juvenile Court

WHAT DO CASAs DO?

A CASA volunteer is paired with a child and, unlike others in the system, works **one-on-one** to advocate for his/her best interests in both the courtroom and the community. Volunteers' advocacy activities focus on three priority areas: safety, permanency, and wellbeing. They are instrumental in facilitating access to the material, educational, and physical and mental health services necessary for each child to flourish.

While volunteers agree to at least two years of service, many have been serving foster youth through CASA for ten years or more. Some of our volunteers have been with us for over 20 years, finding their advocacy work to be a meaningful way to contribute to their community.

SERVING MORE CHILDREN

In FY16, CASA strives to expand our impact by serving more than 1,000 foster youth with ongoing advocacy and over 6,000 youth with day-of-court assistance. To do this, we will enhance the training and volunteer specialization components of our program to further promote the goals of: ensuring the safety and security of children during their time in foster care; facilitating permanency through placement with parents, other family members, or through adoption; and promoting enhanced well-being for children and youth of all ages.

CASA is driven by the dedication and expertise of caring community members, who contribute their time, energy, resources, and experience to having a lasting impact on a young person's life. Learn more about how you can support CASA's work by visiting www.casala.org or attending an information session for prospective volunteers. Please call 323-859-2888 x6303 to sign up.