



*Providing a Voice for  
Abused and Neglected Children*



*Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Prince George's County,  
Inc.*

*Annual Report  
June 2015-July 2016*



CASA's primary work is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children. Each case is assigned to a CASA volunteer, who takes on the case of only one child at a time, and gathers information used to develop an independent report containing recommendations to the Juvenile Court as to the child's best interest. CASA volunteers are trained and supervised by professional staff that each supervises the work of no more than 30 volunteers to ensure a high level of support and professional services to the children served by CASA volunteers.

In addition to advocating for abused and neglected children, CASA provides additional training and support to our volunteers and staff working with youth preparing for emancipation through our Transitioning Youth Program. Through this program, we are advocating for effective transition planning and ensuring that youth are stably housed and ready to live independently when their cases close.

CASA currently serves approximately 30% of the nearly 500 children living in foster care. CASA feels that all children could benefit from a volunteer as all children need a strong advocate who is consistently on their side. Children in Prince George's County spend an average of 54 months in foster care before being placed in a safe, permanent home. In order to meet the needs of the juvenile court, even more volunteers must be recruited, trained and supported by a professional staff. With your support, we will continue to build our organization until we are able to match every child in need with a CASA.

**Staff:**

Ann Marie Foley Binsner, Executive Director  
 Jeanmarie Albert, Case Supervisor  
 Sarah Bosken, Lead Case Supervisor  
 Kara Bundy, Deputy Director  
 Benjamin Ebeigbe, Case Supervisor  
 Andrea LaHaye, Case Supervisor  
 Emma Ravdin, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Cheryl Richards, Transitioning Youth Coordinator

**FY16 Board of Directors:**

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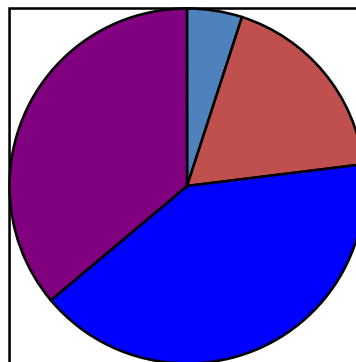
**Mission Statement:**

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Prince George's County, Inc. is a volunteer-based organization that partners with the juvenile court to improve the lives of abused and neglected children living in foster care. With a strong commitment to diversity, CASA trains and supervises volunteers from the community who advocate for the best interest of children, recognizing and respecting each child's individual needs. By providing a voice to children in the foster care system, it is our goal to promote the timely placement of the children we serve in safe, permanent homes.

**Children and Youth Served, by Age**

**Who We Serve**

- About 30% of children in care in Prince George's County are assigned a CASA
- 56% have a permanency plan of Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA)
- Though CASA serves children 0-21 years old, 76% of youth served are 12-21 years old



■ 0-5 years old

■ 6-11 years old

■ 12-18 years old

■ 18-21 years old

## Highlights from FY16

- CASA volunteers advocated for 162 children
- 33 cases closed, 29 of which closed to permanence (i.e. reunification with biological family, custody and guardianship to a relative or non-relative, adoption or youth successfully living on their own)- 88%.
- CASA volunteers make recommendations in each court report that is presented. In FY16, CASA volunteers submitted 293 reports and 1,621 recommendations for service. Those recommendations were ordered by the court 86% of the time, resulting in CASA children receiving more services.
- 64 new volunteers completed the rigorous 37-hour pre-service training.
- 156 different volunteers served children during the fiscal year.
- CASA received the Governor's Service Award for our Volunteer Program
- Received a Civic Leadership Award from the Community Foundation in Prince George's County
- CASA was one of only 46 nonprofits to receive funding through the first year of the Fund for Children, Youth and Families which is administered by the Community Foundation of the National Capital Area.
- Held our most successful World of Wheels fundraiser yet, raising \$15,000

## Transitioning Youth Program

CASA continues to focus our efforts on the Transitioning Youth Program that improves outcomes for older foster care youth preparing to transition out of care to independence by providing specialized training and support to our volunteers and staff working with youth preparing for emancipation. Through this program, we are advocating for effective transition planning and ensuring that youth are stably housed and ready to live independently when their cases close. 12 youth being served by a CASA volunteer aged out between July 2015 and June 2016. Ten were stably housed in their own home or in adult services, if appropriate. Eight of the 12 youth had obtained their high school diploma or equivalent (67%). Nine of twelve were employed or pursuing post-secondary education (75%).

At emancipation, all youth are connected with safety net services. They receive the Emancipation Manual which was created by this CASA program. The manual is given to each youth and contains a thorough list of resources, tools and advice that the youth may need once emancipated from the foster care system. With the expansion of the Affordable Care Act to include former foster youth, all youth have Medicaid until they are 26 years old and CASA is working with them to ensure they understand how to maintain it. Volunteers matched with a youth 14 -20 are provided 12 additional hours of specialized training that supports their ability to work with youth on the development of future planning and the creation of transition plans.

## **An Example of Impact**

*The five Williams siblings were removed from their home and sent to five different foster families. When physical and sexual abuse effects families in Prince George's County, 75% of kids are not placed in the same foster home as their siblings. In the case of the Williams family, the four girls and one boy—aged 9 to 15—suffered abuse at the hands of their father. Their mother was deceased. For the close-knit children, being separated made a tragic situation even worse. Brenda, the youngest, was 10 when Brenda and her siblings were rescued from the abuse. She loved her family and only wanted to live with her siblings and her aunt. Because the abuse was so severe that child protective services thought it might be unsafe to place the children with their abuser's sister, the children were not allowed to live with their aunt.*

*Each Williams sibling was assigned a separate CASA volunteer. Volunteers secured the significant care that supports child abuse victims, including individual and family therapy. Those volunteers also arranged visits among the siblings, as well as weekend visits with their beloved aunt. They provided rides to their siblings' birthday parties and holiday celebrations to maintain family traditions. One of Brenda's sisters went on college tours and got connections to her first job thanks to her CASA volunteer. The regular refrain from the children was their desire to live with each other...and their aunt.*

*Just before Thanksgiving, Brenda appeared in court to finalize living arrangements with her aunt. After much research and advocacy by CASA, the court deemed that aunt a loving and safe home. Three of the Williams siblings are now together, and all are living with family.*

***None of the five siblings is still in foster care.***

*After that final court hearing, less than two weeks before Thanksgiving, Brenda was in court with her siblings, dressed in their best clothes, witnessing the steps that formalized their aunt's guardianship. After the hearing, the family celebrated with lunch and the start of a joyous holiday season—with many more to come.*

## Financials

### Income:

Government Grants	\$331,141
Foundations	\$159,300
United Way/CFC	\$13,116
Events	\$14,860
Individuals	\$14,199
Corporations	\$6,000

**Total Income:** \$538,616

**Total Expenses:** \$531,253

**Difference:** +\$7,363



FY16 provided many opportunities for CASA. Having ended FY15 with our first ever surplus, CASA's Board of Directors created a reserve policy and has directed the organization to grow an operating reserve in order to support CASA's ability to respond to unexpected financial downturns or opportunities for growth. Through support from our funders, CASA was able to hire an additional Case Supervisor thereby expanding our capacity to serve. CASA participated in several capacity building projects that are expected to provide continued financial strength and growth of the organization.

## Future Planning

In the past year, CASA leadership participated in four important capacity building projects. CASA staff and board continue to work with a consultant to improve our ability to develop resources from individual donors. The consultant provides training, coaching, material development and research on prospects. CASA's Deputy Director participated in the Spin Academy, funded by the Community Foundation. This provided training and individual coaching on marketing and public relations. CASA's Executive Director, Deputy Director and Board Treasurer participated in the Financial Leadership Institute funded by the Meyer Foundation. This provided 22 hours of training and 2 hours of consultation in the areas of financial management. Finally, CASA's Executive Director and Deputy Director worked with a consultant of the Community Foundation on creating a *Thriving Pathways Design* to help us put in motion our plan to expand to serve all the children in foster care. Funding to support a new Case Supervisor has been secured for FY 2017 increasing our capacity to 180 volunteers. The new Case Supervisor will be hired in the first half of 2017.

CASA thanks all of our sponsors for making what we do possible!

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Foster Care Court Improvement Project  
Governor's Office on Crime Control and  
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**Thank you to the following sponsors who  
helped to make our 5th Annual World of  
Wheels a success:**

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Pepco  
Prince George's Child Resource Center (in-  
kind)  
Sheila Edmondson  
Smiley Jump (in-kind)  
Knights Healthcare Consulting  
Turbo Haul  
WTOP (in-kind)

### ***Foundation of Hope***

*The Foundation of Hope is a CASA donor leadership circle. Foundation of Hope members make it possible for CASA to truly have an impact in our community by investing at least \$500 per year to provide a voice for abused and neglected children.*

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