

# **COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA)/PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FY18 ANNUAL REPORT**





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Between July 2017 and June 2018, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Prince George's County served a record number of foster youth. CASA's dedicated volunteers ensured that youth received more services and advocated for safe, permanent homes. CASA also continued its focus on growing to serve all children in foster care.

# “No one else does what you do”- Pupil Personnel Worker, to a CASA

When a child is so severely abused—left with bruises and broken bones after wetting the bed; neglected—left home alone for days to care for younger siblings; or molested—abused by a person she should be able to trust, the County removes the child from their family. They are then thrust into the foster care system: sent to live with strangers and suddenly expected to trust unfamiliar lawyers, social workers and therapists. That's where CASA comes in.





# Why CASA Matters

Imagine being a 14-year-old child. Things have been bad at home for a long time. You've prayed for your dad to stop being so mean to you. Prayed that he would care about you the way some of your friends' parents seem to care about them. But now you're living with some stranger. All these people you don't know are around you, telling you what to do. And now you have to go to court (isn't court for criminals?) and a Judge you've never met is reading things out of a folder, telling people what is going to happen to you.

Then comes the worst part.

Your dad stands up and says, "I don't want him." Everything after that is a blur. You hear things like, "TPR", "permanency plan," "eligible for adoption"... but all that keeps ringing in your head is, "I don't want him."

After that you just go numb. Stop doing what people tell you to do. Stop doing your schoolwork. Stop getting along with people. Things go from bad to worse.

When a child like Darren comes into foster care, they experience multiple forms of trauma. First, there's the trauma of the abuse or neglect they experienced. Then the trauma of being removed from the only family they've known. Then there's the trauma they experience while in foster care. Like listening to their father say he doesn't want them anymore and wants to terminate his parental rights- in other words, he wants to legally stop being their father.

There's no quick solution or band-aid to heal this trauma. It's a process.

That's where Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Prince George's County comes in. CASA steps in for the long-haul. Never giving up. Always working to protect the best interests of children like Darren.

Always being there, showing them that they have someone in their corner who cares. The path forward out of foster care and towards a safe, permanent home can be long and frustrating but CASA is keeping kids like Darren grounded and willing to trust that CASA will see him through the hard times.

# Reasons to Celebrate

- 197 youth served
- 75% of cases 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). 24 cases closed successfully to reunification, guardianship or adoption.
- 90% of recommendations ordered by the Court, resulting in more services for youth
- 100% of transition-aged youth who elected to stay in foster care until they turned 21 had stable housing when they aged out of foster care
- Recognized at Community Foundation Civic Leadership Awards Ceremony
- Completed study of Transitioning Youth outcomes



# Who we Are

CASA relies on a team of experienced professionals with a wide range of backgrounds to support our dynamic volunteers and solidify partnerships with stakeholders and community resource providers that benefit our youth.

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## Staff:

Ann Marie Foley Binsner, Executive Director  
Sarah Bosken, Lead Case Supervisor  
Kara Bundy, Deputy Director  
Montré Dupree, Outreach Coordinator (new 4/18)  
Jeanmarie Graves, Case Supervisor  
Andrea LaHaye, Case Supervisor  
Phil Lartigue, Case Supervisor  
Michelle Martin, Program Administrator  
Carolyn Monford  
Cheryl Richards, Transitioning Youth Coordinator

## Board of Directors:

LaVerne Byrd  
Michele Dearing  
Bruce D. Edwards  
QC Jones  
Shondriette Kelley  
Dan Klotz  
Keith A. Olfus Sr  
Kara Onorato  
Indika Samarawickreme  
Randall Thomas  
Tami Watkins

Volunteers are the backbone of our direct service staff. These extraordinary volunteer advocates work one-on-one with children, getting to know them, talking to the important people in their lives, working to understand them, not just their legal case. These volunteer advocates then go to Court with them, not only to hold their hand but to advocate for them. They provide written and oral reports to the Court that protect children's fundamental right to live in safety. Volunteer advocates provide stability and certainty at a chaotic time. CASA's volunteers provide over \$500,000 worth of in-kind service annually (based on data from Independent Sector).

**I am for the child<sup>®</sup>**

# FY18 FINANCES

Revenue: \$755,471  
Expenses: \$678,184  
Strategic Reserves: \$71,689



FY18 provided many opportunities for CASA. CASA's Board of Directors continued to grow an operating reserve in order to support CASA's ability to respond to unexpected financial downturns or opportunities for growth. CASA gained some early funding to jump-start our job readiness initiative. Through support from our funders, CASA was able to hire an Outreach Coordinator to professionalize our volunteer recruitment program and expand our partnerships. CASA continued on our plan to grow to serve 100% of youth in foster care by 2023.

# Our Sponsors

**THE WORK CASA DOES WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE  
WITHOUT THE INVESTMENT OF THESE SPONSORS**

Administrative Office of the Courts  
The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz  
Foundation  
Children and Family Capacity-Building  
Initiative  
Clark-Winchcole Foundation  
Council Member Glaros  
Council Member Lehman  
Council Member Taveras  
Foster Care Court Improvement Program  
Community Foundation  
Governor's Office on Crime Control and  
Prevention: Children's Justice  
Act, Maryland Victims of Crime, Victims of  
Crime Act

Harman Cain Family Foundation  
Harry & Jeannette Weinberg  
Foundation  
National CASA Association  
Northrop Grumman  
Philip Graham Fund  
Prince George's County:  
Community Development Block  
Grant, County Council, Office of  
the County Executive  
Stockings from Karen  
Wells Fargo



# World of Wheels

**THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR MAKING THIS THE MOST SUCCESSFUL WOW YET**

Thank you to our presenting sponsor, Pepco; and to Council Member Deni Taveras for sponsoring free admission!

- "Double Wide" Sponsors-  
Pepco, Council Member Deni Taveras
- "Community Vehicle" Sponsors-  
AmeriGroup, Purple Line, Turbo Haul
- "Bus" Sponsor- Asplundh
- "Bicycle" Sponsors: Advocates for Justice, LaVerne Byrd, Michele Dearing
- In-Kind Sponsors- Curtis C3 Photography, DeMatha Catholic High School, Game Truck, Nauticon, Prince George's Child Resource Center, Radio One, Smiley Jump, WTOP



# CASA's Goal

CASA currently sees stronger results in permanency, education, employment, relationships and needs being met. But we do so for only 35% of the kids who need it. **By 2023**, we can be making a difference in the lives of **every child in foster care**.

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Together we can break cycles of generational poverty and abuse. Together we can provide the light of hope in the life of a child.

# Goals for FY19

- Hire additional Case Supervisor to increase number of youth served by 15%
- Hire full-time Outreach Coordinator to professionalize marketing and recruitment program
- Pilot job readiness initiative to improve employment for transition-aged youth
- Create new partnerships to increase number of volunteers
- Increase individual donations, monthly donors and corporate sponsorship
- Increase revenue by 12%
- Apply for accreditation from the Standards for Excellence Institute



# Together we can

When CASA is involved, very real issues get uncovered and addressed. CASA volunteers work hard to establish trust with the youth and very often become the one person in their lives whom they can trust, whom they know will be there for them even if they change schools or foster homes or social workers ... again. **Together we can** reverse a terrible trend and ensure that these vulnerable youth, who have grown up feeling that no one cares, have someone who will speak up for them and that they will finally find a home they can call their own.

[WWW.PGCASA.ORG](http://WWW.PGCASA.ORG)

