



CASA OF FRANKLIN COUNTY REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

**Safety.
Security.
Compassion.
Trust.**

Many children in our community do not have safety, security, compassion, or trust. They do not have consistency or a caring presence in their lives. They have been abused and neglected by the people who are supposed to care for them. Over 2,700 children in 2016 found themselves in situations out of their control, left without hope. 826 of these children, however, found CASA, and their lives changed forever.

OUR MISSION

To provide a powerful and consistent voice in court for abused and neglected children.

OUR VISION

To ensure that every abused and neglected child has a voice in court in order to make a positive impact on the child and community.



LETTER FROM KATHY KERR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Supporters:

Since its creation 25 years ago, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Franklin County has become one of the most effective programs of its kind. Over the years, CASA has been able to serve thousands of abused and neglected children, innocent victims who experienced hurtful and frightening times in their young lives. CASA is a unique blend of public/private support, public need, and the kind of people-power that comes from more than 200 volunteers committed to making sure children do not fall through the cracks in an overburdened court and child-welfare system.

CASA is able to exist because of our volunteer Guardians ad Litem (GALs)—trained, committed, and passionate members of the community who have chosen to give back by helping provide abused and neglected children a voice in court. They monitor the children while they are in the system, make sure they receive all of the court-ordered services, and are a constant adult presence in the children's lives until they are in a safe and permanent home.

This 2016 annual report reflects the extraordinary work, commitment, and leadership by CASA/GAL volunteers and staff, along with members of our nonprofit board of trustees, who together served 826 abused and neglected children in Franklin County. Our work is becoming more daunting each day, further complicated by an accelerating opioid epidemic pushing the number of children in foster care higher. CASA trained a record-number 95 volunteers in 2016, but our work is far from done. We aspire to recruit, train, and pair another 95 volunteers in 2017 with Franklin County's most vulnerable children going it alone in the foster care or court system.

We are honored to do this meaningful work alongside you every day and to reach for the common goal of serving every child who needs our voice and advocacy. Thank you for your tireless commitment – from volunteerism to funding our work – and all you do in support of building a brighter future for abused and neglected children.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Kerr". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathy Kerr,
Executive Director
CASA of Franklin County

P.S. Consider volunteering your time to change a child's life. Nobody longs for a safe and loving family more than a child in foster care. As a CASA volunteer, you are empowered by the courts to help make this dream a reality, and in doing so, you will enrich your life, as well.



THANK YOU: FROM A CASA YOUTH TO HER ADVOCATE

“When I entered the foster care system, everyone expected me to fail. They figured I’d wind up behind bars just like my mom. They said the only way a 14-year-old foster kid could do right by her baby girl was to give her away, to let her get a fresh start in life. They assumed I couldn’t give my daughter the love and support I never had growing up.

“Then I met Lisa, my CASA volunteer. She believed in me like no one ever had before. For the first time in my life, someone made me feel hopeful about my future.

“CASA of Franklin County makes that kind of hope possible every day by recruiting, training, and supporting over 230 court appointed special advocates like Lisa who stand strong for more than 800 children in Franklin County that have been abused and neglected.

“Sometimes I wonder how I would’ve beaten the odds if it hadn’t been for Lisa. My mom cooked meth. My dad wasn’t around. Everyone seemed to think I wouldn’t amount to much more than either of them, but Lisa saw something in me.

“When I’d cradle Amber in my arms, kiss her head to toe, sing sweet lullabies as I rocked her to sleep, Lisa called me a natural.

“One time, a judge questioned whether I had what it took to care for my baby. She asked me to show her everything I had stocked in my diaper bag. Lisa was right there by my side, looking on proudly as I took out a bottle, an ample supply of formula, bibs, diapers, wipes, a burp cloth, a change of clothes – everything Amber needed.

“It took some time, but Lisa helped me find the closest thing I’ve ever known to a ‘forever family.’ My foster mom and dad helped me out with Amber so I could study hard, work, and do “normal” teenage things like go to prom. Lisa stuck with me every step of the way. She and my foster parents were as proud as they could be when I graduated with honors. I was proud, too.

“Today, I’m the mother of four happy, healthy children. I’m pursuing a degree in criminal justice and dream of becoming a lawyer who stands up for people others try to put down.

“Thank you CASA for giving me hope.”

-Amanda, Former CASA Child



Julia assumed the role of a parent at a very early age. Her mother—consumed by her addiction to alcohol and drugs—was seldom home to take care of Julia and her four siblings. Julia fell behind at school and started to hang out with the wrong crowd. And then she found CASA.



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A CASA ADVOCATE'S STORY OF SURVIVAL



“I am a survivor of child abuse and neglect by the hands of my mother and her boyfriend. At the age of 5, I was removed from my mother’s home and was awarded to Franklin County Children Services until the courts decided, with the help of my CASA GAL, for my father to get custody of me. My GAL made me feel safe during a time when there was total chaos all around me. I recall that although we were constantly at the courthouse and I hated being there, I knew why we there because my GAL kept me well informed.

“After years of therapy and meditation, I was able to give back by joining CASA.

I am emotionally ready to assist another child the way I was helped! Throughout the years, I thought of my GAL and am thankful for him showing me that there are caring people in the world that will think of my wellbeing and not have anything to gain from it so I know it is pure.

“I am excited that I am working with an organization that will help shape the future of children, the future of our world.”

-Danielle Seck, CASA of Franklin County Volunteer GAL



“If I didn’t have my CASA, I would be in a shelter somewhere. Family was not an option.”

-Caitlain

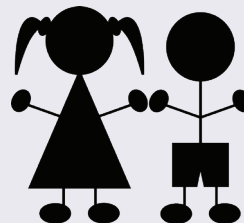
Research clearly shows that children who have a CASA volunteer as their GAL find greater happiness in life!



They spend less time bouncing from one foster home to the next.



They are more likely to perform better in school.



They are more likely to be placed with their siblings.



They are more likely to be adopted by a loving family.

IN 2016, CASA:

Served
826

Child Victims
of Abuse & Neglect

Was the Guardian ad Litem on

401
Cases

Through the help of

243
active volunteers

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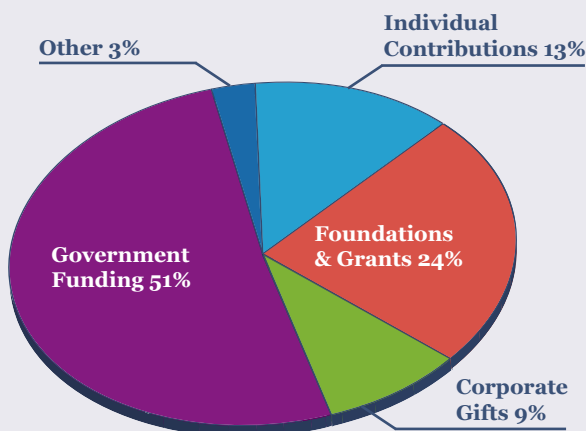
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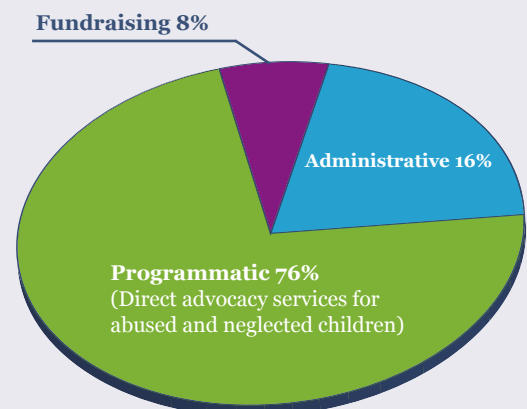
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REVENUE



2016 Revenue: \$776,678.13

EXPENSES



2016 Expenses: \$817,387.41
End of the Year Net Assets: \$340,587

2016 DONORS (JANUARY 1, 2016 - DECEMBER 31, 2016)

As a non-profit agency, CASA of Franklin County relies on the support and generosity of its donors to be able to provide a voice for more child victims of abuse and neglect. **THANK YOU DONORS** for making a difference in lives of the abused and neglected children in our community.

\$10,000+

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Introducing the CASA of Franklin County Major Giving Societies!

These two groups recognize the generous giving of those major donors who give \$500 or greater annually. The CASA Crusader's Society recognizes those who give \$1,000 or greater throughout the calendar year. CASA's Circle of Honor Society gives thanks to those who contribute \$500-\$999 throughout the calendar year. We extend a special thank you to our Major Giving Society members!



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(we apologize for any omissions to this list.)

HOW CAN I HELP CASA?

Learn: CASA of Franklin County offers Voice of the Child Tours on the third Thursday of each month at 10:30 a.m. at the CASA offices. During these tours, you can learn more about CASA, including how to become a volunteer, what happens in our Courts, and more about abused and neglected children, amongst other subjects.

Volunteer: Join the CASA volunteer Guardian ad Litem team today! To get started, visit our website and click the VOLUNTEER tab to be directed to the online volunteer application. From there, our Director of Volunteer Management will guide you through the rest of the process!

Contribute: CASA of Franklin County is a 501(c)3, non-profit organization. We rely on the generosity of our wonderful donors in order to sustain our operations year after year, and we continue to provide a voice to the innocent child victims of abuse and neglect in our community. You can contribute to our mission by clicking the DONATE button on our website or by mailing your contribution to 373 S. High Street, 15th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215. CASA also participates in the Kroger Rewards Program and Amazon Smile, is a member of Community Shares, and accepts donations through many employee giving programs. Should you have any questions on your preferred giving platform, please contact Shelley Backs at 614-525-5067.

Share: Help CASA spread the word about the work we do by “liking” and sharing our Facebook and Twitter posts, forwarding our Quarterly Newsletters, and simply starting a dialogue with your friends and families about the mission of CASA.



Children still in
need of a CASA

70%



Children served by
a CASA volunteer

30%

CASA STAFF

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While in county protective care, Johnnie was moved 15 times in two years. A child used to no rules was forced into strange houses, three hospitals, emergency care facilities and residential treatment centers in five different cities. And then CASA found him.

59%
of CASA
Children found
permanency
within 16 months
of their case
opening.



Tiffany Quattlebaum

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The Speak Up For CASA Award is given to one volunteer each year at the Volunteer Recognition event. This award is reserved for the individual who had the greatest impact on CASA and advocacy for children in the last year.

The 2016 Speak Up For CASA Award was given to Tiffany Quattlebaum. Tiffany was trained in October of 2013 and has served as a GAL on two cases. Tiffany's first case involved a baby who was born drug-addicted. As with many drug-positive baby cases, this case was very straightforward with a mother who was not engaging in treatment. Tiffany and the CASA staff learned that the children on the case were going to be placed outside of the state, and Tiffany volunteered to travel to the placement to do an assessment of the home and its occupants so CASA could give their strongest, most valid opinion in court. Even though the other state approved the placements, Tiffany returned with several areas of concern that CASA felt could put the child at risk. As a result of Tiffany's report, the Court stopped the placement and referred it to trial. Over the course of seven months, Tiffany sat through eight solid days of trials as the mother, relatives, agency, and foster parents took different positions on the case. In the end, the trial was settled in a manner that supported CASA's position. The staff attorneys were amazed at how well Tiffany prepared each day of the trial. It became clear quickly that Tiffany knew more about the children than anybody involved on the case! She ensured that the children involved on the case were placed in a safe, loving, and secure home CASA's mission at work!

Photo Below: The 2016 Fall Training Class after they were officially sworn in by Magistrate Michael McAllister of the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, Division of Domestic Relations and Juvenile Branch. This was the largest class in CASA history with 40 new volunteer joining the CASA team!



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CASA OF FRANKLIN COUNTY
FOR CHILDREN
Court Appointed Special Advocates

