

THE POWERFUL VOICE!

News for champions of CASA children

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By the Numbers—2006

National CASA Services

In addition to the numbers of volunteers and children served by CASA programs stated at right, the following figures help to quantify some of the services provided by National CASA to our member programs nationwide in 2006.

Local programs' requests for technical assistance completed by phone/email.....	39,427
Technical assistance publications/documents distributed	16,632
In-person technical assistance or on-site consultations (in addition to trainings)	111
Number of grants awarded to local and state CASA programs.....	321
Dollar amount of grants disbursed to local and state CASA programs.....	\$7,204,097
Training sessions sponsored or presented....	105
Persons trained	4,768
Number of visitor sessions on casanet.org and nationalcasa.org websites	1,881,201

The Value of Your Investment

National CASA is highly efficient in its work on behalf of abused and neglected children. A 2006 US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) audit of the National CASA Association documented our low administrative costs, noting that over 93% of National CASA expenditures went to fund activities directly supporting CASA/GAL programs. (An equally impressive 90% of total income is used for program services.)

Volunteer Perspective: Sterling Marshall



"As a volunteer advocate, I know that I am providing something that is absent in children's lives. For me, there is no greater reward than having that kind of positive impact on the life of a child."

—Sterling Marshall,
Volunteer, Miami, Florida

Read more about a family that Sterling helped in National CASA's 2006 annual report. You can see it online at nationalcasa.org, or call (800) 628-3233 to request your copy by mail.



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CASA Volunteers and Congress Work to Improve the Future for Teens Who Age Out of Foster Care



—Carmela Welte
Deputy CEO
National CASA Association

For most of us, the word *emancipation* evokes a positive image of liberation, of setting free. In the world of foster care, emancipation is a technical and ominous term that refers to the condition of foster youth who are exiting the system without the lasting support of a permanent family.

Emancipation usually occurs at the age of 18, when federal foster care assistance ends, although some states elect to extend this limit with their own funds. This exit from foster care is a dismal passage for the majority of youth, who are left without a caring family and often lack the essential support necessary to succeed. Documented outcomes for foster youth demonstrate the results of these inadequacies. Only 40% complete high school, just 3% earn college degrees by the age of 25, 20% experience homelessness and 25% face jail terms within two years of their "liberation" from foster care.

Studies have consistently demonstrated that one catalyst for future success is the presence of a consistent, caring adult to support teens in foster care and throughout the transition to independence. In many cases, a CASA or guardian ad litem (GAL) volunteer not only serves as that caring adult but also works to connect youth to other supportive adults

in the youth's community. Last year, CASA/GAL volunteers worked with more than 68,000 teens (defined as age 12 and older).

Recognizing the importance of these volunteers' role and their potential to affect the future success of teens in care, the National CASA Association will soon augment its existing training curriculum—which gives volunteers the tools needed to improve educational outcomes for all children they serve—with a specialized curriculum for volunteers working with teens. The additional training will enhance the ability of volunteers to link youth to caring adults, including extended family, teachers, church members and coaches.

The importance of foster youth emancipation support is also being examined by Congress, with the expectation that it will enact federal policies to improve foster care services, support and outcomes. Representative Dennis Cardoza (CA – 18th), appearing before the Ways and Means Subcommittee hearing on July 12 on children who age out of the foster care system, testified:

I am currently working on legislation to ensure that every child has a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)...In the course of the last thirty years, CASA has grown to a network of nearly 58,000 volunteers that serve over 220,000 abused and neglected children through 900-plus local program offices nationwide. However, despite these impressive numbers, more needs to be done. We must do everything possible to ensure that every child has a CASA volunteer. My bill, which I hope to introduce soon, will give incentives to states to guarantee that all children receive the special attention and care that only CASA volunteers can provide. ■

A Personal View on Aging Out

Alexis Owens was still in high school when she aged out of the foster care system in West Virginia. A CASA volunteer helped her realize her life's dreams.

"My CASA gave me the support, counsel, encouragement and the tools I needed for my future. She was the voice I never had. She helped me achieve my goals just by giving of herself and believing in me...My CASA helped me heal, forgive and move on to achieve my greatest dreams."

Today Alexis live in Maryland with her husband, Vincent and children, Elizabeth and Elijah (family pictured at right). She is an attorney in private practice. ■



A CASA volunteer helped former foster child Alexis Owens (pictured with her family today) realize her dreams.

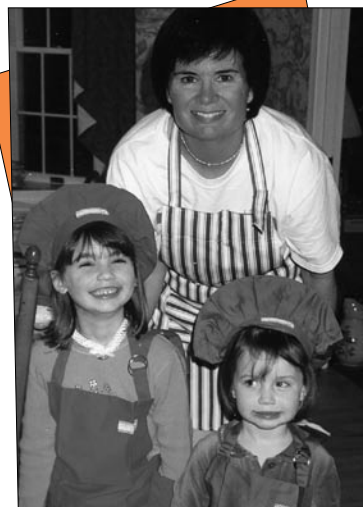
Supporter Finds National CASA Is a Wise Investment

Alice Tobin Zaff is a discerning donor. With a background in financial services and fundraising, Alice is well equipped to assess not only the mission but also the efficiency of a nonprofit organization.

Like many people, Alice first became aware of the CASA cause through the media. She was immediately touched by the organization's work to support abused and neglected children.

"In the mid-90s, I saw a magazine ad and was instantly moved by the idea of children needing a voice. It touched me that caring individuals would volunteer to stand up for—and stand by—children who would otherwise be alone during such a difficult time in their lives."

Alice is the mother of three and grandmother of five, all of whom live close to her home.



Alice Tobin Zaff—pictured with grandchildren Rachel and Ally—has been a National CASA donor since 1994.

In addition to playing an active role in her grandchildren's upbringing, Alice has a busy career as a resource development professional for a private college. While she has often considered training to serve as a CASA volunteer, Alice has chosen instead to contribute to the organization as a monthly donor to National CASA.

"The more I learn about National CASA, the more impressed I am by its leadership, credibility and financial efficiency. Plus, I understand that CASA volunteers are making a significant difference in the lives of children. I have been a donor for 13 years, and I will remain a supporter of CASA because I absolutely believe that

you provide a voice to children who need it most. It is a rewarding feeling to play a part in this important work." ■



CBS Cares Continues Support of National CASA with New Public Service Announcement and Prop Donation

On September 27, CBS television will premier a new CASA volunteer recruitment public service announcement (PSA) during the season premier of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*. The PSA features *CSI* actor William Petersen talking about the importance of safe, permanent homes for children.

In addition to generously airing this PSA before a prime-time audience of approximately 22 million viewers, CBS is also donating an authentic *CSI* scene prop—a miniature replica of Gil Grissom's office—that will be auctioned on eBay beginning September 27, with 100% of the proceeds benefiting

National CASA. The value of the replica is estimated at \$25,000.

We need your help to spread the word about this great opportunity. If you know a *CSI* fan, please share this information with them. Details are posted on nationalcasa.org.

The *CSI* PSA and scene prop are the most recent contributions that CBS has made to National CASA through its CBS Cares initiative. The three-year partnership has also included the airing of public service announcements featuring Simon Baker of *The Guardian* and Danny Pino of *Cold Case*. ■



Give a Child a Chance Campaign Funds Expansion of CASA Services

Thank you for helping to make our most recent fundraising appeal a success. Through the *Give a Child a Chance* matching campaign, a small group of contributors matched the donations of a larger network of donors. The result? More than \$23,000 was raised to support the efforts of local CASA programs to recruit and train more volunteers and increase the number of children served. Thank you for your ongoing support. With your help, we are able to give even more children a CASA volunteer and a chance at a better future. ■

Thank You to 2007 National CASA Conference Sponsors

National CASA thanks the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Newmont Mining Corporation, Casey Family Programs, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Wendy's International, Inc., the Coca-Cola Company and Office Depot for their generous support of the National CASA Conference, which brought more than 1,400 attendees together to strengthen our ability to improve the lives of abused and neglected children. ■

New CASA Pendant Now Available

In partnership with longtime CASA supporter Fred Meyer/Littman Jewelers, the limited edition 30th anniversary CASA Diamond Heart Pendant is now available. The heart-shaped pendant features diamond accents set in 10k white gold. Purchase the pendant for \$99, and \$10 will be donated to National CASA to support nationwide recruitment and training of community volunteers.

Visit shopcasa.org for a direct link to the Fred Meyer Jewelers website. ■



Fred Meyer JEWELERS
"For All Those Special Times™"

Jewelers Continue Partnership, Awarding \$1 Million to National CASA

National CASA and Jewelers for Children (JFC) have worked together to increase the number of children served nationally by CASA programs through the *Champions for Abused Children Initiative* since 2003. The organization is continuing its support in 2007/2008 with a \$1 million award to National CASA—85% of which will be passed through in the form of grants to more than 75 local CASA/GAL programs. JFC is an organization created by leading manufacturers and retailers in the jewelry industry with a mission to raise funds for national charities that benefit children. Their donation has enabled the CASA network to serve more than 3,000 foster children nationwide. ■



JEWELERS FOR CHILDREN
A GIFT OF LOVE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

The National CASA Association, together with its state and local members, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.

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