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## Commitment to Quality Underlies Efforts



— Michael Piraino,  
National CASA CEO

Around the National CASA office, there is always a lot of talk about values and mission.

If you are in Seattle, I invite you to stop by the office and join in some of these discussions. We would love to see you.

One of our values has been a consistent commitment to quality, both in our volunteer advocacy and in how our organization is run. Last fall, a researcher expressed it to me this way: "From the start, National CASA has been an evidence-based organization." It felt good to hear that recognition from an independent source.

CASA/GAL programs constitute one of the largest, if not the largest, volunteer advocacy networks for abused and neglected children in the country. Last year National CASA became the first national

organization to receive a Seal of Excellence from the Standards for Excellence Institute, which recognizes nonprofit organizations that operate with the highest standards of accountability and ethics.

One of our strategic goals is to reach 300,000 children annually by the end of this year. But we will only do that consistent with this commitment to you and to the children: CASA volunteers will continue to provide the highest quality of advocacy for abused and neglected children. It's an exciting goal, and we appreciate your help in achieving it.

Since 1981, at least 45 studies have been conducted on CASA and volunteer guardian ad litem advocacy. Here are some of the things we have learned about our volunteers:

- » They work with the riskiest cases.
- » They spend a large portion of their time with the child.
- » They are a consistent presence for the child.
- » Judges value the volunteer's information and recommendations.

Even more important is the impact volunteers have on the children they work with. Children who have a CASA or guardian ad litem volunteer have:

- » More permanence: They are substantially less likely to linger in long-term foster care.
- » More safety: They are highly unlikely to return to the system.
- » More help: Both children and parents receive more services.
- » More success in school: They are more likely to complete all their courses and less likely to have conduct problems.
- » More self-esteem: This gives them a greater sense of control over their own fate.

*"From the start, National CASA has been an evidence-based organization."*

## Corporate Partners Support National CASA

By partnering with the National CASA Association, well respected national corporations strengthen our organization in two ways: they contribute financial support and increase awareness of the CASA cause among their constituents. We thank them for their commitment to providing safe, permanent homes for abused and neglected children.

"One of the most fulfilling aspects of my job is the day at the beginning of the year that I send the Caring for Kids program donation to National CASA. Every year, I look forward to working with the CASA team to figure out new and exciting ways to promote not only the Caring for Kids program but also the wonderful work that CASA programs around the country do within the legal system for our children." —Prudence Helder, All-State Legal

## Partner Spotlight

### ChoicePoint

A new partnership making ChoicePoint a preferred provider of criminal background checks for volunteers and employees of CASA and GAL programs throughout the US will decrease the cost of critical safety screenings. In addition, each time a program runs a background check using VolunteerSelect Plus, an enhanced screening option, ChoicePoint will donate up to 10% of the cost of the search to support National CASA's work on behalf of its member programs.

ChoicePoint provides decision-making technology and information to businesses that reduce fraud and mitigate risk. To learn more about our partner, visit [choicepoint.com](http://choicepoint.com).

### Holland America Line

Another partner to National CASA is Seattle-based Holland America Line (HAL). Last fall, HAL sponsored a lunch for more than 20 members of the Washington State School Retirees' Association and Seattle-area philanthropists and business leaders. On board the docked ms *Amsterdam*, guests enjoyed a three-course meal and presentations by a CASA volunteer and National CASA

CEO Michael Piraino. Holland America has also helped CASA spread the word by donating cruises used as prizes in a 2006 volunteer recruitment campaign.

Holland America operates 13 ships to seven continents and carries nearly 700,000 cruise passengers a year. To learn more about our partner, visit [hollandamerica.com](http://hollandamerica.com).

### All-State Legal

Since 2005, National CASA has been the exclusive beneficiary of the holiday card program of All-State Legal (ASL).

The company donates 50% of the profits of its Caring for Kids cards to National CASA. Last holiday season, the company expanded its involvement, partnering with National CASA to engage local CASA and GAL programs in the fundraising effort. Participating programs benefit by receiving 50% of ASL's donation.

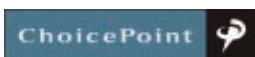
ASL has provided office supplies and office systems to law firms across the country for more than 50 years. To learn more about our partner, visit [aslegal.com](http://aslegal.com).



### Organic Bouquet /Organic Style: This May, Honor Thy Mother—Earth

National CASA is once again partnering with Organic Bouquet this Mother's Day. Proceeds from the sale of each seasonal selection (or any product purchased using the special link found on our website) support our nationwide recruitment and training of community volunteers advocating for foster children. Send someone a beautiful organic bouquet or gift this Mother's Day and support safe homes for children.

Visit the partner page on [nationalcasa.org](http://nationalcasa.org) or [ShopCASA.org](http://ShopCASA.org) to view this season's featured product. Be sure to use the special link directly from our site to ensure that 10% of your purchase goes to support our work. To learn more about our partner and read about their newest venture—Organic Style—visit [organicbouquet.com](http://organicbouquet.com).



**Photo on the left:**

Judge David Soukup pictured with Lori Larcom Irwin, King County Dependency CASA program attorney.

**Photo on the right:**

Founding Judge David Soukup swears in CASA volunteers as part of a 30th anniversary celebration of the first program's founding.



## National, State, Local CASA Organizations Collaborate to Celebrate 30th Anniversary of First Program's Founding

In 1977, Seattle Judge David Soukup, frustrated that the child protection system did not provide children adequate representation in court, conceived the idea of using trained community volunteers to speak up for the children's best interests. He worked with others to found the first CASA program serving King County, WA. Thirty years later, there are more than 940 CASA and GAL program offices serving more than 220,000 children each year.

In honor of the recent 30th anniversary of that first program's founding, Judge Soukup, now retired, returned to perform the official swearing-in of the November 2007 volunteer training class for the King County CASA program. The event was held on November 9 at the Seattle Art Museum. Present to witness the occasion were government officials including representatives from senators Patty Murray's and Maria Cantwell's

offices, Representative Jim McDermott's office, Washington State Chief Justice Bobbe Bridge (ret.) and King County Council Member Kathy Lambert, as well as a number of local judges, attorneys, community volunteers and business leaders.

Following is an excerpt from remarks that Representative McDermott delivered before the US House of Representatives to commemorate the anniversary:

*I am enormously proud to rise in celebration of the 30th anniversary of one of Seattle's finest start-ups, one that is valued throughout the country today. Not Boeing, or UPS, REI or Starbucks. Rather, it is the CASA movement— Court Appointed Special Advocates.*

*I thank Judge Soukup for his inspiration. He must feel enormously rewarded by the knowledge that his idea has helped provide better outcomes for two million children today. I applaud the National*

*CASA Association for its leadership in expanding that single program in Seattle to nearly 950 offices in 49 states today. Congratulations to the King County Dependency CASA program and the Family Law CASA program on this 30th anniversary. I salute Washington State CASA, also located in Seattle, for undertaking the largest expansion of CASA ever in the state of Washington. Finally, I congratulate and thank the hundreds of thousands of citizens who have served as CASA volunteers over these last 30 years for their steadfast advocacy to ensure that the child's interests and needs remain the focus of our child welfare and court systems.*

The 30th anniversary celebration was a year-long collaborative effort among National CASA, Washington State CASA, King County Dependency CASA and Friends of CASA—King County.

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### Foundation News: Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation Helps National CASA Reach Hispanic Audience

A new grant from the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation will help National CASA reduce the discrepancy between the number of Hispanic children in the foster care system and the number of Hispanic volunteers. Currently 17% of children in the foster care system are Hispanic/Latino, in contrast to only 4% Hispanic/Latino CASA volunteers nationwide. The grant will fund a national satellite television

tour with Danny Pino, star of the CBS television series *Cold Case*. Audiences of both general-interest and Hispanic television will learn about the work of CASA and GAL programs and how they can get involved as volunteers. Kappa Alpha Theta has been a longtime supporter of National CASA, contributing financial and volunteer support to CASA programs around the country for nearly 20 years.



## CASA Cause Inspires Longtime Community Activist

Moe Whitaker was newly retired and looking for a way to help children in need when he heard that a new CASA program was forming in his community. Impressed by the innovative concept of volunteers advocating for abused and neglected children in court, he quickly signed up and became the fledgling program's first volunteer.

Whitaker was no stranger to community activism. He marched against a large California winery's labor practices in 1968, participated in a lettuce strike with Cesar Chavez in the 1970s and served dozens of organizations during a 35-year volunteer career. In 1984, he was recognized for his volunteer work by his local Junior League and received the Gerald Phillippe Award for Distinguished Community Service from his former employer, General Electric. Despite this long history of community involvement, when Whitaker signed up as a volunteer with Child Advocates of Santa Clara County, he never could have predicted that he would go on to advocate for 60 families over 17 years and also work as a staff member for 12 years.

Beginning with his first case, Whitaker saw the difference that a CASA volunteer can make in the life of a child. He was advocating for a baby girl with a difficult

### CASA donors

Moe and Betsy Whitaker (center) support National CASA as donors because they want to see the organization grow to serve every child who needs a CASA volunteer.



case of fetal alcohol syndrome. In the end, the child was placed in an adoptive home. Her grateful adoptive mother sent him Christmas photos every year as the young child grew up. A few years ago, he received her high school graduation photo.

“You see the impact of your involvement in many ways, and that is rewarding,” says Whitaker. “I think that the most important function that a CASA volunteer performs is to give the judge a first-hand look at the circumstances. On my last case, the judge told me that I was the only one in his courtroom who made a difference for that child.”

Today, although Whitaker is no longer a CASA staff member or volunteer, he and

his wife Betsy remain connected to the cause as donors to National CASA's annual campaign, which they began supporting in 1994. They hope that their contributions will help provide CASA volunteers for more children who need them.

“As a CASA volunteer, I understood the difference that I was making in these children's lives,” says Whitaker. “And as a staff member, I saw that there were never enough volunteers to go around—there were always more children in need than people to help them. Betsy and I support National CASA as donors because we want to see the organization grow to serve more children—all of the children who need a CASA volunteer.”

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## Making a Lifelong Difference: Holiday Giving Campaign a Success

Thank you to everyone who responded to National CASA's 2007 holiday appeal, which raised more than \$106,000. These funds will help increase awareness of the CASA cause and recruit and train additional volunteers to join the nearly 58,000 volunteers who are currently serving children across the country. On behalf of our CASA network and the children we serve, thank you. Your support is bringing us that much closer to serving 300,000 children annually by the end of this year.





## Upcoming Events

### APRIL

#### Child Abuse Prevention Month

Visit [nationalcasa.org](http://nationalcasa.org) during the month of April to learn how you can help raise awareness—and ultimately help to prevent—child abuse and neglect in your community.

### MAY

#### Foster Care Month

Find out how you can help raise awareness of children in foster care in your community. This month, [nationalcasa.org](http://nationalcasa.org) will feature a listing of foster care advocacy organizations.

#### May 19 - 23 Forgotten Children of Foster Care Demonstration

National CASA hosts a stirring display on the Mall in Washington, DC to help the public understand the needs and numbers of children in the foster care system.

### JUNE

#### National CASA Annual Conference

##### June 7 - 10 *How Are the Children?*

Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC. For more information, go to [casanet.org/conference](http://casanet.org/conference).

##### June 10 *CASA Meets Congress*

CASA volunteers, staff members and supporters bring foster children's needs to the attention of members of Congress.

## What Do You Give Someone Who Has Everything?

Wondering what to give someone to commemorate a special occasion? Or maybe you were told, "No gifts please," but you still want to do something.

Acknowledge a birthday, anniversary, wedding, graduation or special person who has passed away with a gift to the National CASA Association. Your friend or loved one will receive a note card stating that a gift was made in their honor. The card will include a brief description of National CASA and the work we are doing on behalf of children. We'll also include your contact information, unless you choose to remain anonymous.

An honorary gift can be made by going to our website at [nationalcasa.org](http://nationalcasa.org) and clicking on "Donate Now."

You can also support the work of National CASA through online services. For example, the I Do Foundation was created to help couples raise money through their wedding celebration ([idofoundation.org](http://idofoundation.org)). Network for Good matches donors with charities and volunteer opportunities ([networkforgood.org](http://networkforgood.org)).

## Mission Statement

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.

## Diversity Statement

The National CASA Association believes that embracing diversity and inclusiveness strengthens the status of children and their families and that it is vital to achieving the organization's vision, mission and development initiatives.



## The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association

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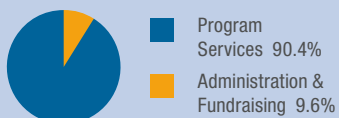
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welcome. You can email us  
at [staff@nationalcasa.org](mailto:staff@nationalcasa.org).  
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## A Powerful Voice in a Child's Life®

### How Your Contributions Are Spent

As a donor to the National CASA Association, you can take pride in being part of one of the leading volunteer organizations serving abused and neglected children. CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of more than 220,000 children across the country each year. You can also be assured that your gift is used efficiently, with more than 90% going directly to program services such as funding, training and technical assistance to CASA and GAL programs.



**"Honestly, I do not believe I would have made it without my CASA volunteer and some of the social workers I had. I really think I would have ended up as a statistic." –Hasani Lee, former foster youth**

