



# 2020-2021 IMPACT REPORT

CASA for Kids | Washington County, PA

FALL 2021

*"Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me." – Fred Rogers*

What a privilege to serve alongside CASA volunteer advocates who are helping children in our community; they are true heroes. Having served on the CASA for Kids, Washington Board of Directors for the past 15 years, I have witnessed the difference our volunteer advocates make in helping children. And now, to join our amazing CASA staff, coming alongside them in the role of Executive Director, is a great honor.

We are grateful to Carrie Richardson for the wonderful leadership she has provided to CASA for Kids, Washington. Her compassion for the children that we serve was evident in all that she did. The CASA for Kids, Washington board, staff and volunteers thank Carrie, and wish her the absolute best in future endeavors.

I am excited to share that we will be celebrating 20 years of CASA here in Washington County in 2022. I look forward to collaborating with you to honor those who have helped our program grow and succeed in our community, and to continue to work to ensure that we provide quality, consistent, independent advocacy for the children in the Washington County Dependency Court system. CASA volunteers work tirelessly to advocate for the children that they are assigned to, and they make such a difference in the lives of those children. That is truly something to celebrate!

I hope that you will consider the many ways you can join me in supporting CASA for Kids, Washington. I welcome you to reach out to me to learn more about becoming a volunteer, donor, corporate sponsor, or helping us to spread the word of the work that we do, at CASA for Kids, Washington.



Best Regards,  
*Kelley Swift*

Executive Director  
kelley@casawashington.org

# Who Can Make a Difference? You can make a difference!

## And people like CASA Volunteer "L"...

A 16-year-old girl was placed in independent living because her guardians were emotionally abusing her and taking advantage of her adoptive parents' death benefits.

Although it appeared that the child was mature and ready for independent living, she was unable to maintain her motivation for schoolwork, a disciplined daily routine, and healthy coping skills.

When her case was assigned to me, I spent time with her in person and on the phone, encouraging her to take advantage of services available and responsibility for her own progress. I even sent her a plant so that she would have something to care for.

It was the consistency and unconditional attention that nurtured trust and willingness on behalf of the child to share her vulnerabilities and hope for her life with me.

In my role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, I successfully facilitated conversations and interactions between the service providers, school personnel, and the potential foster parents.



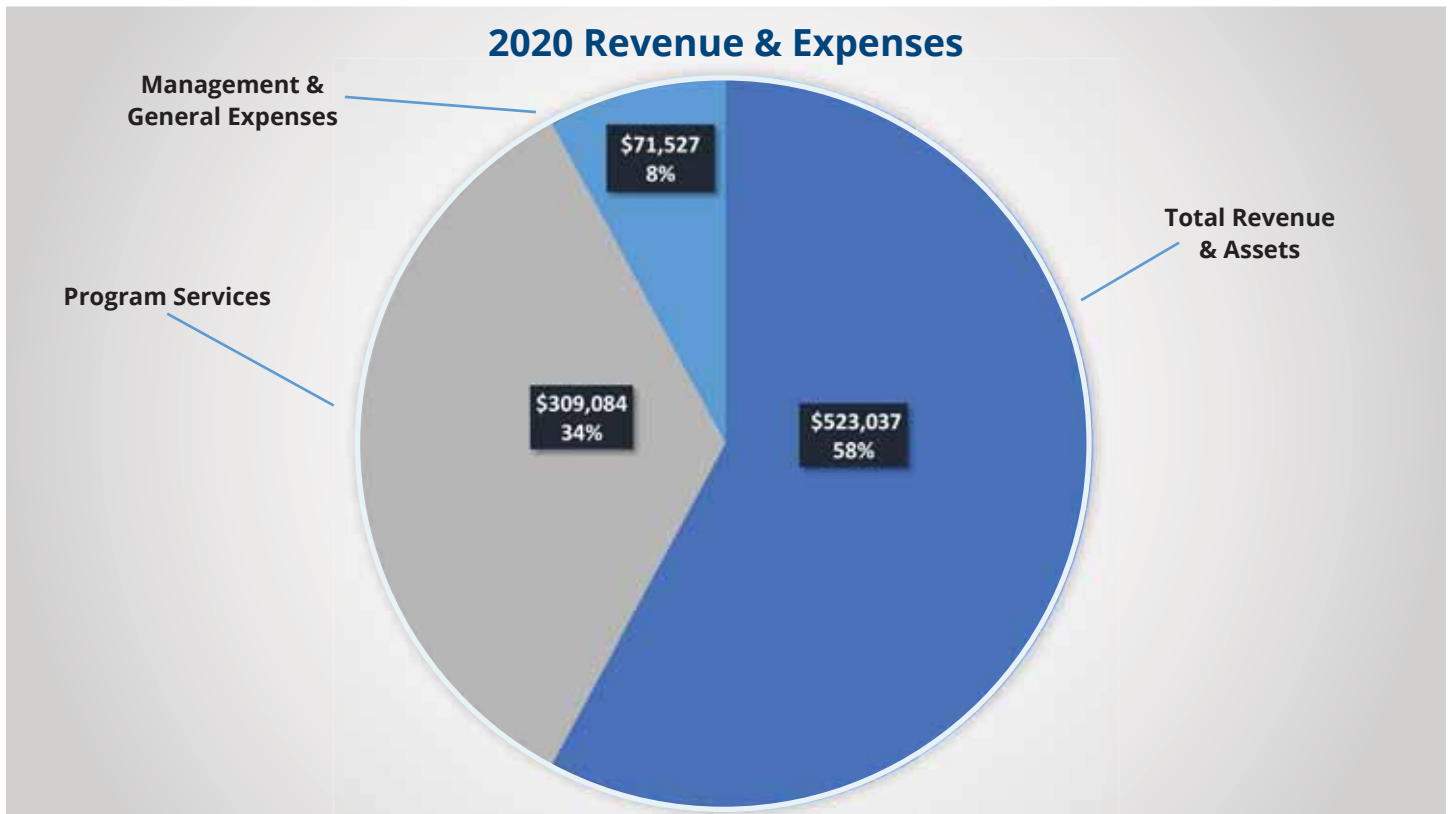
I was able to speak up on this child's behalf in court and the hearing officer agreed with many of my recommendations.

This young lady is living with a loving foster family, has graduated high school, obtained her learner's permit and has been accepted to attend a local community college. She now knows that her life is valuable and promising, and I am honored to know that as her Court Appointed Special Advocate, I was able to play such a significant role.

## Looking for a Volunteer Opportunity? Become a Court Appointed Special Advocate..

CASAs are community volunteers who are trained to fulfill an important role. CASA volunteers work as fact-finders by developing a relationship with the child, their family and others who are a part of their lives.

Volunteers work as the extra set of "eyes and ears" to provide the court with as much information as possible prior to the judge rendering the best decision regarding the child's future.





## OUR 2021 IMPACT

**170**

Children

**61**

Volunteers

**11,000+**

Volunteer Hours

**59**

Children Found a Safe, Permanent Home

▶ It costs approximately **\$1,800 per child, per year for advocacy.**

This includes :

- Volunteer Recruitment,
- Background Checks
- Initial Training
- Continuing Education
- Case Management
- Supervision



## OUR TEAM

- Kelley Swift  
*Executive Director*
- Cindy Hestad  
*Program Director*
- Carol Schuck  
*Advocate Supervisor*
- Amy Metz  
*Advocate Supervisor*
- Sue Caffrey  
*Advocate Supervisor*
- Gina C. Lynn  
*Fundraising & Marketing Manager*
- Peyton Celani  
*Administrative Assistant*

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Karen Hassinger, Esq.  
*President*
- Dave Sphar  
*Treasurer*
- Nancy Moore  
*Secretary*
- Bob Garrity
- Dean Helfer
- John Hopper
- Tony Lombardi
- Dennis Stitch

## Our Mission

The mission of CASA for Kids, Inc. is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the Washington County juvenile court system. By training community volunteers to serve as fact-finders and speak for the children in court, children's needs are met to ensure safety and permanency in their lives.

## Our History

CASA for Kids, Washington, established in 2002 as a 501c3 nonprofit organization will celebrate 20 years of advocacy in 2022. Following the death of a young abused and neglected child in 2002, a feasibility study was conducted by a group of concerned citizens, child welfare agencies, and juvenile court judge, the Honorable Katherine B. Emery to ensure that the voice of the child is heard in the courtroom. Judge Emery recognized a need for an "objective fact-finder for the court" who would focus on the needs and wishes of the child. That fact finder would make recommendations as to the best interests of the child, thus helping the court make more informed decisions.

# Give hope for the holidays.

## MAKE A GIFT TODAY.

CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.™



## Give a Child Hope...

Many of us are looking forward to spending time with our families this holiday season, especially after the isolation and social distancing we've experienced. But for children who have experienced abuse or neglect, the holidays can be a very difficult time of the year. These children may have been removed from the only home they have ever known. They are attending court hearings, adjusting to new foster homes, and transitioning to new schools. That is a heavy burden to carry alone.

A CASA volunteer is a caring, consistent adult who will be there for a child experiencing loneliness and uncertainty this holiday season. Children with a dedicated volunteer by their side have someone who will speak up for their needs and best interests, in the courtroom and the community. Children and youth with a CASA volunteer also have significantly higher levels of hope. When a child has more hope, they are also more likely to succeed in school, have greater self-control, increased optimism, and a higher overall sense of wellbeing. You can give a child hope this holiday season by donating today. Your gift will help us engage, train and support more volunteers.

## GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:

- Recurring Donation
- One-Time Gift
- Employer Matching Gifts
- Donor Advised Giving
- Bequests & Legacy Gifts
- Corporate Sponsorship
- Online Merchandise Store



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

CASA FOR KIDS, INC.

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