



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA FOR KIDS

FY 2026 IMPACT REPORT

CASA for Kids

Clay, Clinton & Marion Counties

116 E Schwartz St
Salem, IL 62881
(855) 484-6403

Edwards, Franklin, Hamilton Wayne & White Counties

205 Bailey Lane Suite 2E
Benton, IL 62812
(618) 438-0608

Effingham, Fayette & Jasper Counties

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Effingham, IL 62401
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casa4change.org



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A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Over the past fiscal year, CASA for Kids continued to make meaningful progress in advancing our mission to advocate for children and youth across rural southern and south central Illinois. Through the unwavering dedication of our staff and volunteer advocates, we served **580 children**, representing a **12% increase** over the previous year. As the need for advocacy continues to grow, we remain committed to recruiting, training, and supporting compassionate volunteers who ensure every child has a consistent, highly trained advocate by their side.

Each day, we witness the profound difference a CASA advocate can make in the lives of children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and trauma. Yet this work is not one we can accomplish alone. Meeting the growing needs of vulnerable children requires the collective support of volunteers, community partners, donors, and advocates who share a common belief: every child deserves a safe, permanent, and nurturing home where they can heal, grow, and succeed.

Together, we have expanded our reach to serve eleven counties throughout southern and south central Illinois. In FY27, we will complete our regional expansion with the addition of Shelby County and Wabash County, extending advocacy services to even more children who need a voice. As we look ahead, our commitment remains unwavering: to ensure that every child we serve is given the opportunity to thrive. This is only possible because of community supporters, like you. Thank you for being invested in this important work alongside our staff and volunteers.



With Gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mariah Hayes".

Mariah Hayes
Executive Director



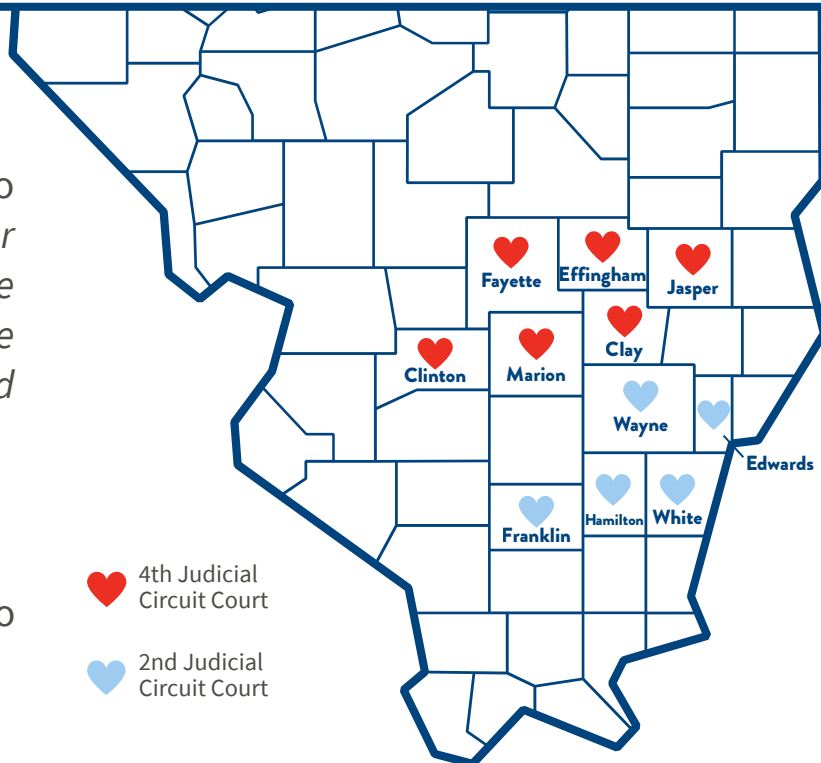
CASA for Kids

OUR MISSION

The mission of CASA for Kids is to *provide court appointed volunteer advocacy for children who have experienced abuse or neglect in the counties we are assigned in the Second and Fourth Judicial Court Circuits.*

OUR VISION

Every child is given an opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.



CASA for Kids is a locally-run non-profit organization that recruits, trains, and supports everyday community volunteers to advocate for the best interest of children in foster care. Volunteers serve children in foster care across a growing service area including Clay, Clinton, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Hamilton, Jasper, Marion, Wayne and White Counties.



BOARD & STAFF



Board

CHRIS ELY

Treasurer, Franklin County

LYNN BRADEN

Hamilton County

DIANE SIMPSON

President, Franklin County

AMY CALCATERRA

Secretary, Franklin County

RENE GOZIA

Marion County

MICHAEL OLIVER

Vice President, Franklin County

WAYNE SHANNON

Ex Officio, Franklin County

JOHN PRUDENT

Franklin County

MARIAH HAYES

Executive Director

MARCI GLOVER

Program Director
Franklin County

LIBBY MOELLER

Deputy Director

Staff

CHER MITCHELL

Fund & HR Coordinator

TAVAN HIESTAND

Program Director
Clay, Clinton, Marion & Wayne Counties

DANNY FARRIS

Case Outreach Coordinator
Clay & Marion Counties

AMBER KING

Communications Director
Trainer

JENNIFER PUMMILL

Program Director
Effingham, Fayette & Jasper Counties

JAMIE WILSON

Case Outreach Coordinator
Effingham, Fayette & Jasper Counties

KATHRYN HOLSTLAW

Dual Status Youth Coordinator
Marion County

DOLLIE VOGLER

Lead Supervisor
Clinton & Marion Counties

ALBERT WEBER

Case Outreach Coordinator
Franklin County

ZOE BRIDGES

Volunteer Outreach Coordinator

ERIKA GIVENS

Lead Supervisor
Fayette County

MICHAEL OLIVER

IT Support

CASA for Kids staff are **direct service focused**, working with children and their families as they navigate the complexities of the child welfare system everyday.



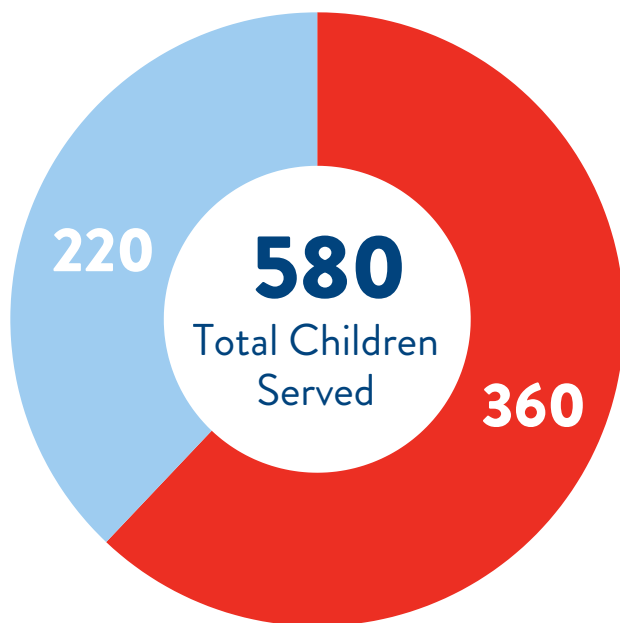
2nd Judicial
Circuit Court



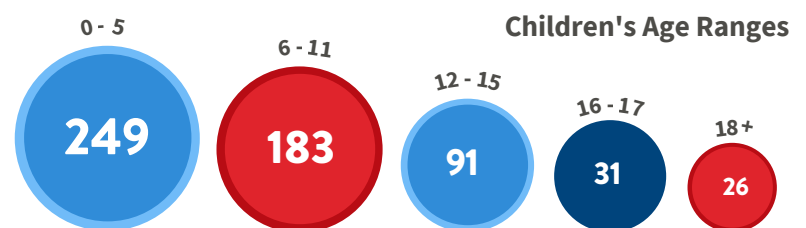
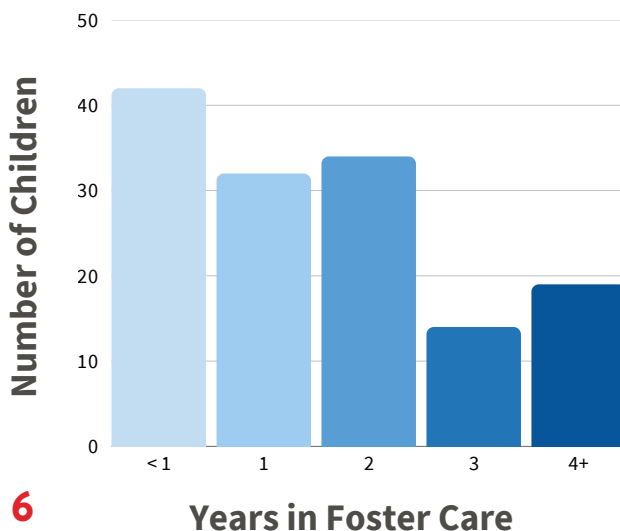
4th Judicial
Circuit Court

Best Interest Advocacy

Every child deserves stability, meaningful connections, and the opportunity to thrive. For children and youth in foster care, these needs are especially critical. On average, children in foster care experience 2.7 placements during their time in care, requiring them to repeatedly adjust to new homes, schools, communities, and relationships. Amid this uncertainty, CASA volunteers provide something truly invaluable: continuity and connection. They help preserve each child's story by understanding where they have been, recognizing where they are today, and advocating for their unique needs, goals, and wishes. While many professionals play important roles in a child's case, **CASA is the only organization focused solely on the best interests of the child.**



Time in Foster Care for Closed Children



VOLUNTEERS

Each name represents an extraordinary individual who decided to use their time and energy to make a difference in the lives of children in their community.



Leslie Aaron	Olivia Edmonds	Katelyn Lidy	Jami Sidwell
Kathryn Adams	Susan Eilman	Isabel Lira	Sarah Simmons
Sasha Althoff	Amanda Emmerich-Shamhart	Tiffany Lucas	Shawna Sprague
Don Austill	Sheila English	Gina Masset	Carolyn Spraul
Marcy Bailey	J (Lyn) Entrikin	Lindsey McCoy Jr	Candi Staples
Leanne Bales	L. Kay Fritch	DeDe McElravy	Amy Strake
Angela Baltzell	Stephanie Gansauer	Shannon McKee	Lisa Strullmyer
Pamela Boyd	Amanda Gatewood	Karissa Moore	Josh Sullens
Amber Boldt*	Karen Geier	Liam Mungovan	Liberty Szczeblewski
Glenna Bragg	Audrey Givens	Sheila Niederhofer	Norma Tackett
Zachary Brandenburg	Cheryl Glover	Sally Niemeyer	Tiffany Toney
Sarah Buhnerkempe	Lindsay Goebel	Destiny Noffke	Ashley Utley
Victoria Buhnerkempe	Meagan Greenwood	Patricia Pierceall	Janet Vahling
Lindsay Burgess	Elizabeth Grueninger*	Rachel Pitcher	Seferina Van Pelt
Traci Burner	Nancy Gulley	Kylie Pool	Samantha Von Bokel
Amanda Cannon	Maureen Habing	Carla Pulliam	Janice Weihe
Jenny Carlson	Megan Henkel*	Amanda Rakers	Glenda Westemeier
Amanda Christian	Elizabeth Hiestand	Greta Rathburn	Carrie Wharton
Cheryl Connelly	Jesse Hinds	Randall Reese	Kimberly Whipple
Lori Connor	Shannon Hinkle	Sharon Reese	Brenda Wilkerson
Kaitlyn Cooper	Darrick Holloman	Kaci Reiss	Steve Woodfin
Lisa Cornell	Rhyta Hooks	Tiffany Rush	Teresa Wortman
Amanda Coryell	Ashley Jansen	Tabitha Rusk	Adrienne Wright
Leslie Cox	LuAlice Kampwerth	Lee Ann Schmidgall	Ashley Wright
Patricia Crawford	Tera Keller	Ashley Scott	Brandice Yates
Stacie DeLong	Alexis Kubina*	Carrie Scott	Sarah Zerrusen
Alexandria Denoyer	Allissa Keoughan	Michelle Scott	Stephanie Zimmerman
Jo Ann Doody	Deborah Kordick	GG Severs	
Susan Dunlap	Tammy Leslie	Elizabeth Shuler	

* Indicates volunteer sworn in during Q1 of FY 2027.



CASA VOLUNTEER IMPACT

CASA for Kids volunteers helped 139 children to achieve permanency in FY26, with half of these children being reunified with their parent(s). Our volunteers continue to provide advocacy and hope for children who have experienced abuse or neglect in their communities.

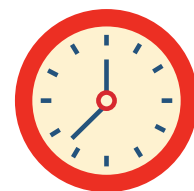
113
Volunteer Advocates

35
2nd Judicial
Circuit

78
4th Judicial
Circuit

30
New
Volunteers
Sworn in

9,492
Volunteer Hours



70%
of Volunteers
Work Full-Time

"It's been a wonderful experience getting to know my appointed kids. I initially decided to volunteer because I wanted to make a positive impact for my community, but I've found that the kids have made a lasting impact on me! They can rely on me to be there every month to visit and check-in."

– Alex, Volunteer

1,271
Court Hearings



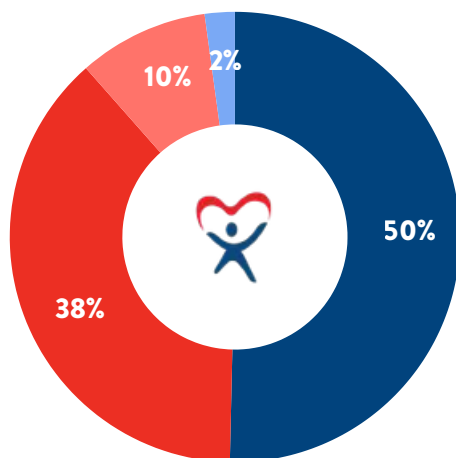
720
Court Reports
Written



3,770
Child Visits

139
Children Achieved
Permanency

- Reunification - 70
- Non/Relative Adoption - 53
- Guardianship - 13
- Independence - 3





In FY 2026, **30** community members completed training, were sworn into the court system, and began their journey as a Court Appointed Special Advocate!



Stories of Hope



THE POWER OF COMMITMENT

How One CASA Volunteer's Consistency Changed a Child's Life

"M" has spent almost his whole life bouncing in and out of foster care. He spent years moving through multiple placements and residential facilities. M watched as his siblings found permanency, as he remained, which understandably left him feeling lonelier and more isolated than ever.

Five years ago, M was assigned a CASA advocate. Through every move, every setback, and every new environment, M's CASA advocate remained. For five years, M's CASA showed up without fail. She built relationships with staff, counselors, and caregivers at every placement. She never missed a meeting, a phone call, a FaceTime, a birthday, or a holiday. When everything else in his life changed, she didn't.

M once displayed behaviors that those around him struggled to understand, and before long his permanency goal was changed to "unable to be provided for in a home environment."

For M, it felt like one more label added to years of pain, loss, and instability. Yet through it all, his CASA remained. With steady advocacy, encouragement, and unwavering consistency, M slowly began to trust, and with that trust, he began to grow.

Today, M is maintaining a job. M has become a mentor to the other youths in the residence he resides in. Recently, during their weekly check-in, M called his advocate to inform her that he has qualified to begin transitioning to independent living.

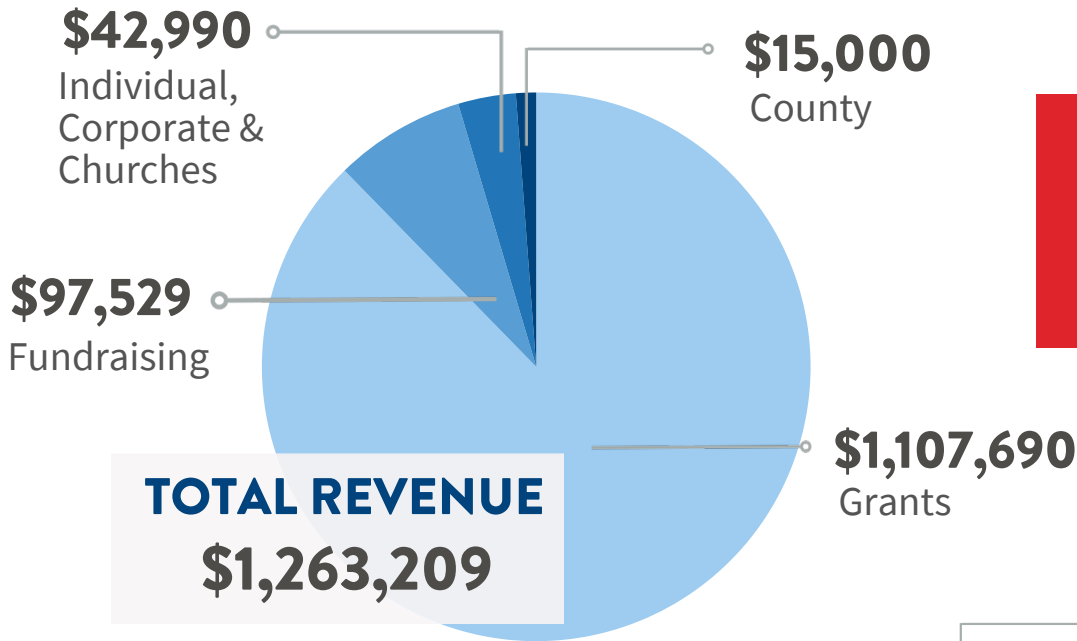
For the past five years, M has only had two people on his call and visit list: whichever caseworker was assigned at the time, and his CASA advocate. The caseworker's name may have changed, but his CASA advocate remained the same. **M's story will always be our reminder that sometimes all it takes is one committed adult to change the entire direction of a child's life.**

ADVOCATING FOR SAFE, LOVING & PERMANENT HOMES

We recently celebrated the adoption of two siblings who had spent three years in care. During their first year, the children experienced multiple placements, including homes that were unsafe and unable to meet even their most basic needs. One placement had no beds for the young children, no food in the home, and neither adult caregiver had a driver's license or reliable transportation. The children also had numerous unmet medical needs. Although the agency initially disagreed with the advocate's concerns, the GAL attended a visit alongside the advocate and witnessed the conditions firsthand. Because of the advocate's calm, consistent advocacy and thorough reporting, the court ordered the children to be removed from that placement.

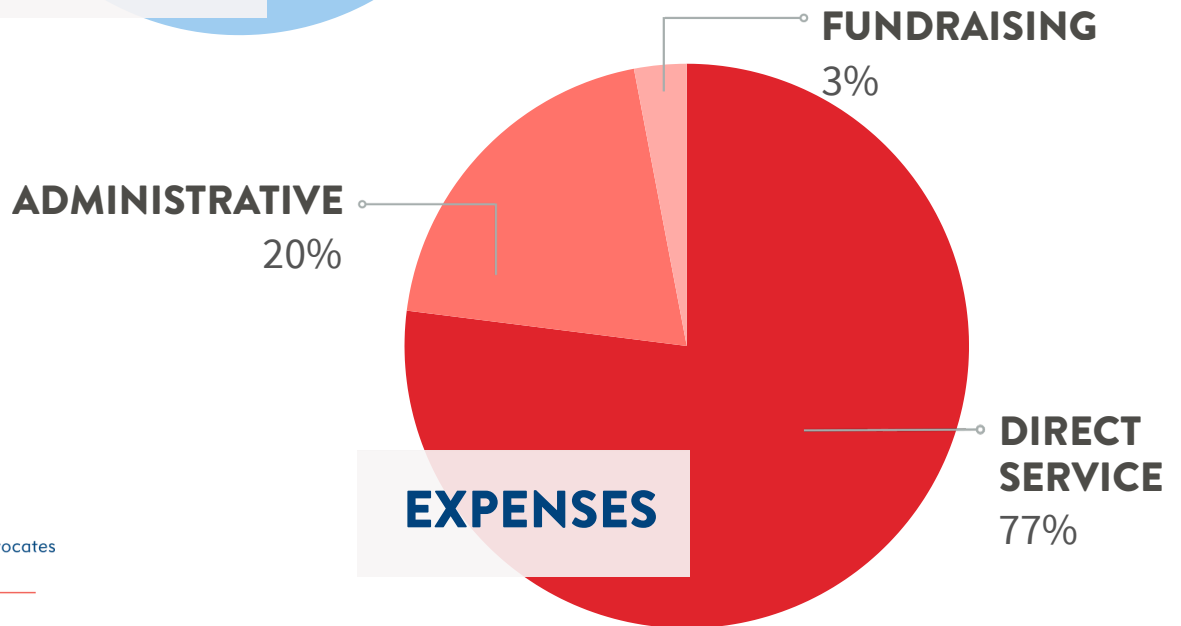


They were moved to a safe, nurturing home where they have been thriving, and both children have now been adopted into a loving family that provides the stability, care, and security all children deserve.



FINANCIALS

July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026



At CASA for Kids, each dollar is stewarded with the same care our volunteers bring to the children they serve. We take our donors' trust seriously, and we're committed to showing our community exactly how their support changes outcomes for kids in foster care. We strive to keep administrative and fundraising costs kept low so that more funds go directly where they matter most: to recruit, train, and supervise CASA volunteer advocates to serve children in foster care.



From July 2025 through June 2026, CASA for Kids maintained a steady calendar of small- to mid-scale fundraising events across all eleven counties we serve. Our signature golf scrambles and bingo/trivia nights continued to be our most reliable and well-attended fundraisers, helping us engage supporters in each community while generating essential revenue for advocacy services. These events not only strengthened local awareness of CASA's mission but also provided consistent, grassroots financial support that directly contributed to program growth, volunteer recruitment, and expanded services in new counties like Clay and Jasper.



in FY 2027

COMPLETE EXPANSION: SHELBY & WABASH COUNTIES

GOAL TWO

BOARD RECRUITMENT

Following our 2026 self-assessment of board capacity, governance practices, and regional representation, CASA for Kids identified a clear priority for the year ahead: building a board that fully reflects every county we serve. In 2027, we will implement a regionalized board structure designed to strengthen local voice, improve oversight across multiple jurisdictions, and ensure that each community has a seat at the table. This work includes targeted recruitment in underrepresented counties, updated governance pathways, and a standardized onboarding process that equips all members with the knowledge needed to support a multi-county CASA program. By year's end, CASA for Kids will have a board that mirrors the breadth of our service area and is prepared to guide sustainable growth, volunteer expansion, and high-quality advocacy for children throughout the region.



Change A Child's Story.™

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Share the story of CASA for Kids with your community to help recruit new volunteers and raise funds so that we can advocate for more children in rural foster care.



BECOME AN ADVOCATE

Volunteer a few hours each month to advocate for a child's best interest.



MAKE A DONATION

Your gift will allow us to recruit, train and support more CASA volunteers.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow for updates, how you can get involved and volunteer stories.



 /CASAforKids

 @casa4change

 CASA for Kids



Create an impact that lasts a lifetime for a child in foster care in your community!

Learn more at casa4change.org.

Serving Clay, Clinton, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Hamilton,
Jasper, Marion, Wayne & White Counties



THANK YOU for your support.

CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA FOR KIDS

casa4change.org