

STRONG FAMILIES



STRONG FUTURES



Court Appointed Special Advocates
Guardians ad Litem

FOR CHILDREN

NATIONAL CASA/GAL ASSOCIATION

2023 Annual Report

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2023, I am filled with immense gratitude for the dedication and generosity you have shown to our mission. Your support has empowered us to continue advocating for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect, and together, we have made a lasting difference in their lives.

This year was a year of growth, resilience, and remembrance for the CASA/GAL network. I would like to take a moment to honor the legacy of Judge David W. Soukup, the founder of the CASA/GAL movement, who sadly passed away at the end of 2023. Judge Soukup's vision of using trained community volunteers to advocate for children in the court system revolutionized how we approach best interest advocacy. His legacy lives on through the dedication of over 79,000 volunteers who serve hundreds of thousands of children across the country each year. We are eternally grateful for his leadership and commitment, which have left an indelible mark on this organization and the country.

We are proud to celebrate 41 new or expanded CASA/GAL programs across 20 states in 2023. These programs represent our continued dedication to reaching children in rural, suburban, urban, and tribal communities. The growth of our network reinforces our collective mission to ensure that every child has a voice in court. Our volunteers are changing lives, helping children find safe, permanent homes, and succeed in school.



The stories of success within our network continue to inspire us. In Georgia, we are thrilled to report that CASA programs now cover all 159 counties, ensuring every child in the state has access to our services. In addition, our successes continue with expanded training to address critical issues, such as child sex trafficking, ensuring our volunteers are equipped to advocate for the most vulnerable children and youth.

Your belief in our mission and commitment to our cause has allowed us to grow and thrive, even in challenging times. As we look to the future, we remain steadfast in our goal to serve every eligible child with the high-quality advocacy they deserve.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey. Together, we are changing lives, strengthening communities, and ensuring a brighter future for children across the nation.

With deepest gratitude,

TARA LISA PERRY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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Remembering Judge David W. Soukup

Our founder and friend Judge David W. Soukup passed away in December of 2023. Judge Soukup was a giant of a man in the CASA/GAL network and around court and child welfare innovation. When he started the first CASA program in King County (Seattle), Washington in 1977, the number of children in foster care topped half a million nationally and a new phrase, “foster care drift,” became a way to describe the increasingly long time many children spent in foster care.

Concerned over making decisions about abused and neglected children’s lives without sufficient information, Judge Soukup conceived the idea of using carefully screened and trained community volunteers to speak for the best interests of children in court. In 1977, he created a legacy that continues to flourish today throughout the country and with the dedicated efforts of nearly 100,000 volunteers and staff, serving over 200,000 children annually.

Over the years, when talking about conceiving the vision for the CASA program, Judge Soukup shared, “While sitting at juvenile court, I never got a night’s sleep without waking to wonder if at least one decision I made that day had been the best for a child. It struck me that it might be possible to recruit and train volunteers to investigate a child’s case so they could provide a voice for the child in those proceedings, proceedings which could affect their whole lives.” After retiring from the bench, Judge Soukup became a volunteer and said it was both the hardest—and the best—thing he’d ever done.

For this incredible movement, and the work done



day-in and day-out through state organizations and local programs, we owe a debt of great gratitude to Judge Soukup. His legacy is alive and well through the work of our network of 939 CASA/GAL state organizations and local programs in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Our collective commitment to children and youth is stronger than ever. The world is immeasurably better because of Judge Soukup.

Read The Seattle Times obituary for Judge Soukup here:

[King County judge who advocated for children in courtroom dies at 90.](#)

CELEBRATING 41 NEW AND EXPANDED PROGRAMS

In 2023, new or expanded programs were developed in 20 states across the nation, representing 29 rural communities, six suburban communities, five urban communities, and one tribal community, demonstrating our commitment to supporting children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Local programs recruit and train volunteers, significantly improving outcomes for children, and the impact is profound: children with CASA/GAL volunteers are half as likely to re-enter the foster care system, more likely to succeed in school, and more likely to find a safe, permanent home. Collaboration among national, state, and local entities ensures a strong advocacy model. As the network grows, the goal remains to serve every eligible child with high-quality advocacy, ensuring a brighter future for those in need.



SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA) CONSTITUTIONALITY

In June 2023, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) by a 7-2 vote, affirming its role in maintaining Native children's connections to their families, Nations, and culture. This decision strengthens tribal sovereignty and supports the decades-long efforts of Tribal

Nations to protect Native children's best interests. ICWA, enacted in 1978, requires state courts to follow specific rules for foster care and adoption of Native children, ensuring their cultural heritage is respected. The act applies to every Native American child that is served by a CASA/GAL program.

To learn more about ICWA, visit <https://www.nicwa.org/about-icwa/>.



2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE: STRONG FAMILIES; STRONG FUTURES

Our 2023 Annual Conference was an inspiring event that brought together participants from across the National CASA/GAL network. With nearly 50 keynotes and workshops, the conference focused on advancing our 2030 Strategic Framework goals of reducing the number of children in foster care, strengthening families, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.



The event opened with keynotes from CEO Tara Lisa Perry on the National CASA/GAL Association's strategic direction, and child welfare advocate David Ambroz, who shared his story of homelessness and foster care to highlight the need for systemic reform. Plenary sessions by Judge S. Trent Favre and Darrell Missey highlighted family-centered practices and strategies for reducing foster care populations.



At the Annual Conference we acknowledged the recipient of the 2023 Akerman Academic Excellence Scholarship, Rozi Jurovich, pictured above alongside her CASA volunteer Esta Cain. Rozi is a junior at Boise State University and plans to attend law school after graduation.



Attendees also had access to over 40 workshops covering a wide range of topics, including challenges faced by rural and urban CASA/GAL programs, volunteer retention, and innovative child advocacy techniques. Standout sessions focused on trauma's impact, effective storytelling for CASA/GAL programs, and engaging relatives in foster care cases. The importance of cultural competency and anti-racist practices in child welfare, along with the role of technology in strengthening CASA/GAL programs, were also key areas of discussion.

The conference left participants energized and equipped with practical tools and strategies to enhance their advocacy efforts and continue improving outcomes for children and families in their communities.



THIRD ANNUAL WALK RUN THRIVE ENERGIZES AND CONNECTS CASA/GAL NETWORK

National CASA/GAL's third annual Walk Run Thrive, held from June 9 to 12, 2023, marked a major milestone with the introduction of our first-ever in-person walk alongside the virtual event. Hundreds of CASA/GAL staff, volunteers, and supporters nationwide joined forces to raise awareness for the CASA/GAL mission. The in-person event, hosted in partnership with CASA of St. Louis, CASA of

Southwestern Illinois, and Missouri CASA, coincided with the National CASA/GAL Annual Conference in St. Louis, amplifying attention on the critical work we do to support children and families across the country.



NATIONAL CASA/GAL RECOGNIZED BY THE ST. LOUIS CARDINALS



In June, the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team honored the CASA/GAL network by welcoming over 400 of our conference attendees to a game following the Walk Run Thrive in-person event. Representatives were featured on the stadium's jumbotron and National CASA/GAL Board Chair Jim Rishwain threw out the ceremonial first pitch of the game – a strike!





Our mission

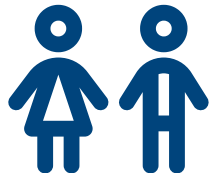
The National CASA/GAL Association, together with state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child who has experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home, and the opportunity to thrive.

Network stories

GEORGIA CASA CELEBRATES 100% STATEWIDE COVERAGE



In May 2023, Georgia achieved 100% coverage of the state by CASA programs, ensuring that CASA advocacy is now available in all 159 counties. This milestone was reached through the dedication of state and local CASA leaders, supporters, and volunteers who have worked tirelessly since the CASA network's inception in Georgia 35 years ago and marked a significant achievement in ensuring children across the state have access to volunteer advocacy in juvenile courts. The milestone is testament to the collaborative efforts of judges, community leaders, and the Georgia CASA network who have advocated for over 200,000 children and supported 47,000 volunteers.

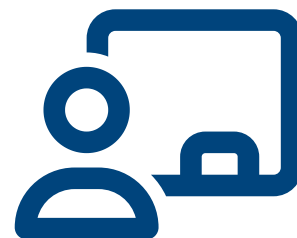


DALLAS CASA ENHANCES TRAINING TO COMBAT CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING

Dallas CASA finished a four-year project that culminated in a specialized training for staff and volunteers to recognize the signs of child sex trafficking and advocate effectively for survivors. Youth in foster care are more vulnerable to being exploited through trafficking, and this new program equips participants with tools to identify at-risk children and work alongside law enforcement and social services to provide critical support.

This initiative enhances the program's ability to protect vulnerable children in the foster care system and ensure their recovery and well-being.

The program features information from groups such as law enforcement and Child Protective Services on how victims are recruited and manipulated. Participants discuss what they would like to see happen in the case for the child's best interest and identify any gaps in services. Overall, attendees highly regarded the experience and requested the simulation be repeated to increase the awareness of the plight of the children and families in need in their community.



By the numbers



79,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF CASA/GAL
VOLUNTEERS



201,000

TOTAL NUMBER OF YOUTH
SERVED



122

MEDIAN NUMBER OF TOTAL
CHILDREN SERVED BY AN
INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM



45

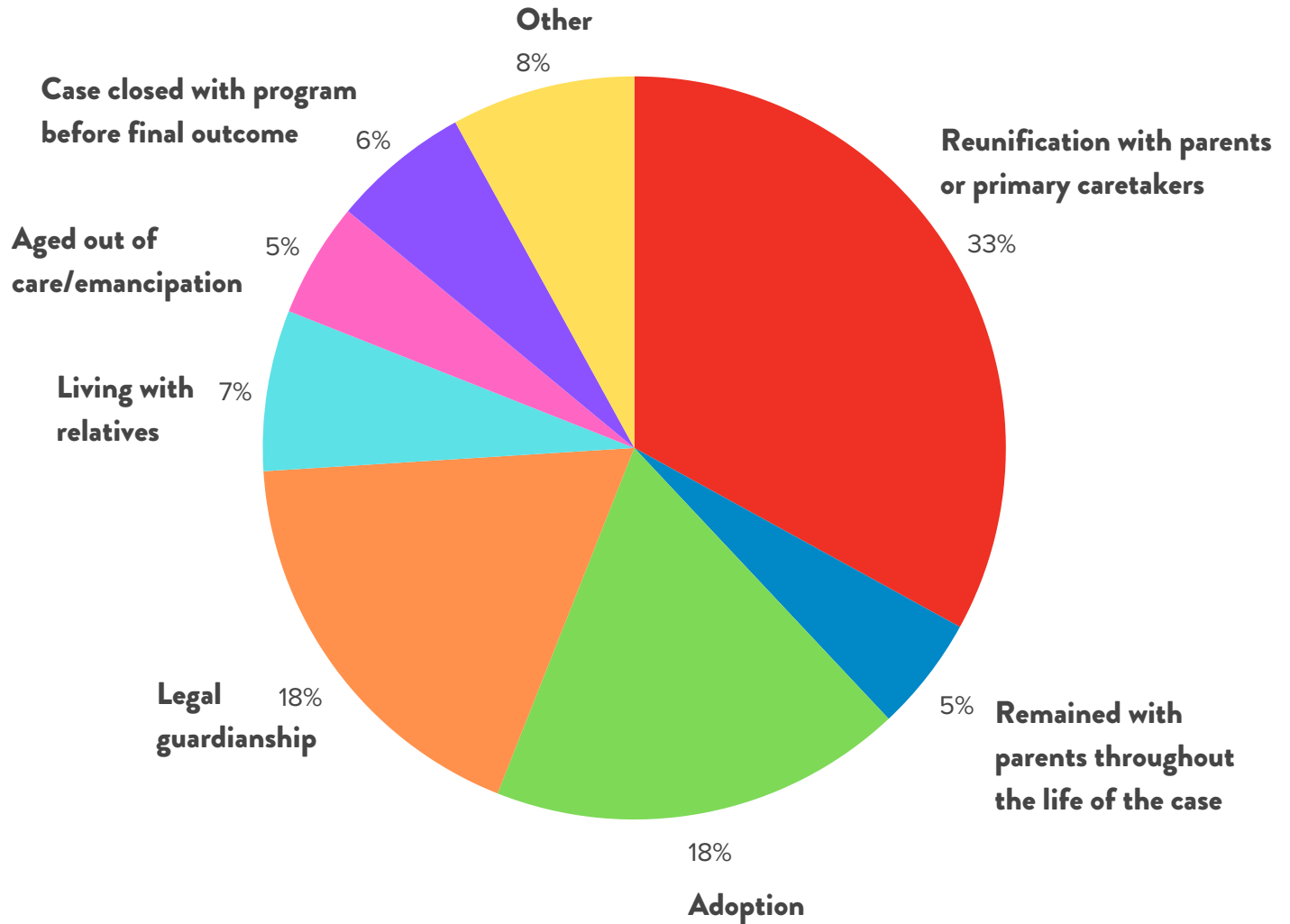
MEDIAN NUMBER OF NEW
CHILDREN SERVED BY AN
INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM



3,354,462

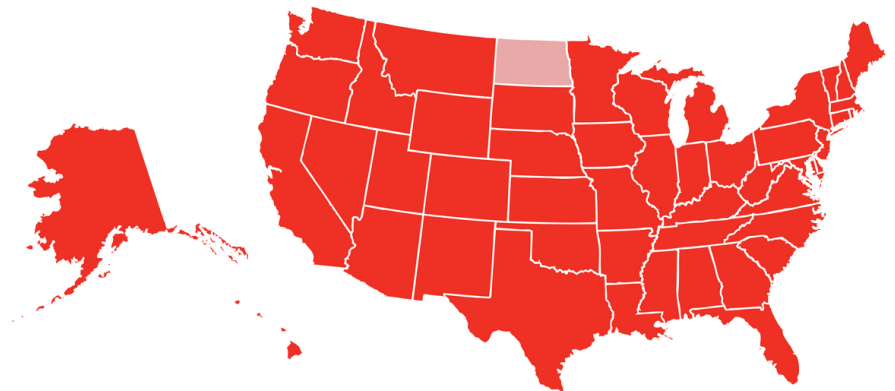
HOURS OF VOLUNTEERS' TIME

CASA/GAL CASE CLOSURES



939

In 2023, there were 939 CASA/GAL member state organizations and local programs in 49 states and the District of Columbia.



2023 FINANCIAL RESULTS

INCOME

OJJDP Training and Technical Assistance Cooperative Agreements	\$6,209,968
OJJDP National Mentoring Grant	\$25,915
Corporate and Foundation Contributions	\$772,386
Individual Contributions	\$1,104,989
Conference Fees	\$626,160
Membership Dues	\$252,798
Net Interest & Investment Income (loss)	\$92,622
TOTAL INCOME	\$9,084,838

EXPENSES

Pass-Through Grant Activities	\$2,671,267
Network Training and Technical Assistance	\$3,860,342
Network and Public Outreach	\$1,039,505
General and Administrative	\$1,549,487
Fundraising	\$695,003
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$9,815,604

NATIONAL CASA/GAL IMPACT PARTNERS



Our deepest gratitude to the Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention. As our largest funder, their leadership and generosity provides critical support for the National CASA/GAL Association and our 939 state and local member programs across the country.

Our supporters

\$100,000+

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Kappa Alpha Theta - Beta Phi Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Epsilon Tau Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Eta Iota Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Eta Lambda Chapter
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Kappa Alpha Theta - Gamma Nu Chapter
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Kappa Alpha Theta - Lambda Chapter

Kappa Alpha Theta - Omicron Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Theta Pi Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Theta Theta Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Zeta Mu Chapter
Kappa Alpha Theta - Zeta Tau Chapter
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Court Appointed Special Advocates
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FOR CHILDREN

NATIONAL CASA/GAL ASSOCIATION

100 West Harrison Street
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Atlanta, GA 30303

800.628.3233
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The National CASA/GAL Association, together with state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child who has experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home, and the opportunity to thrive.



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