



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF MORRIS AND
SUSSEX COUNTIES, INC.

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

This is my Story

**CHANGE A
CHILD'S STORY.™**

Our mission is to be a strong voice for the best interests of vulnerable children who have been removed from their homes or are under court supervision due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

We recruit, train, and supervise community volunteers to be advocates, mentors, and champions for each child on his or her journey to a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.

Because of YOU, we are Changing a Child's Story



Dear Friends of CASA,

We are very proud to be part of CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties, an organization of remarkable donors, supporters, trustees, staff, and volunteers. Over the years we have been very fortunate to meet so many wonderful people through our work at CASA. It constantly amazes us to witness the time, energy, and passion that CASA volunteers give to the children they serve. And, we are consistently overwhelmed by the generosity of those of you who support CASA through your donations.

CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties is the only CASA program in New Jersey, and one of the few in the country, serving 100% of children in foster care in our assigned counties. Our organization answers the call to embrace and protect children exposed to abuse and neglect. We believe that the protection of our children is a moral obligation for our society. We will continue to work each day to ensure that these children receive the attention and services they need to heal. Our CASA volunteers are making a difference, in small ways and in heroic ways... it all adds up to changing a child's story for the better.

As we move into our organization's 33rd year, we will endeavor to keep the best interest of children at the forefront of everything we do. We are expanding the services we provide and piloting new initiatives to give our volunteers and staff the tools and resources they need to take advocacy for children to the highest level. Children in foster care deserve nothing less.

We want to express a heartfelt thank you for your continued support as we all work together to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, and permanent home. With your help, CASA of Morris and Sussex Counties will continue to be a strong force in the community to make this happen.

Sincerely,

Skippy Weinstein, Esq.
Board President

Lisa Barsky Firkser, Ph.D.
Executive Director

OFFICERS

Skippy Weinstein, Esq.
President

Deborah Puskas, Vice
President

Richard Herburger, Treasurer

Michelle Beatty, Esq.,
Secretary

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mindy Beck

Jeanne Bratsafolis, Esq.

John M. Codd

Adam Cossman

Sandra Fava, Esq.

Marian Levinsohn

Diana Manning, Esq.

Lisa Pennella

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Lisa Bromberg, Esq.

Lynn Devereux

Richard Moore

Dianne Robinson

Marilyn Semer

Joan Sturm

Barbara Ward

The Honorable Thomas
Weisenbeck

STAFF

Lisa Barsky Firkser, Ph.D.,
Executive Director

Carol Arnott

Jack Fraebel

Susan Friedman

Donna Gooley

Maureen Lee

Henrietta Nafus

Pat Nolan

Casaundra Pagan

Paula Tyson

Deborah West



**Thank you to our CASA volunteers for your
resilience, passion, and dedication to**

Change a Child's Story

Pauline Alexander

Aviva Arnuk

Ashley Attinello

Roberta Auerbach

Elaine Backer

Linda Baker

Olivia Bakunas

Cynthia Barna

Jill Bellaus

Cheryl Bennett

Michael Bertram

Joanne Bickers

Tracey Biedron

Bill Bilinkas

Pamela Bitner

Miriam Boylan

Susan Brezina

Allyson Brown

Susanne Budofsky

Barbara Buran

Dennis Cannella

Glen Caplin

Ronald Cattafi

Angelina Cavallo

Fran Cirelli

Agnes Clyne

June Colangelo

Maryann Conniff-Perez

Bethany Cramer

Nancy Cunningham

Ralph D'Aries

Paula Davidoff

Lois Davis

Kristen Dawson

Mary Day

Michael Dean

Lisa DeMizio

Karen Deslandes

Catherine DiDonato

Amie Drahos

Stephen Dunn

Jennifer Duong

Wendy Ehrhardt

Amy Evans

Susan Felsen

Kathy Ferrentino

Teresa Finlay

Amanda Fish

Martin Fleming

Susan Friedman

Veronica Garnto

Julie Geyer

Lesley Gibson

Werner Goldbach

Roberta Golub

Kristy Goulart

Doren Greene

Holly Gresko

Aimee Hanlon

Jill Harding

Dianne Hartshorn

Leslie Heller

Meghan Heyert

Marli Horwitz

Elizabeth Huron

Lenor Johnson

Jeffrey Jones

Roberta Jones

Daveen Judge

Jaime Kaiser

Doris Kaplan

Anne Marie Keegan

Thomas Kelleher

Kimberly Kleindienst

Gail Kross

Jason Lamb

Melanie Lawrie

Kathryn Leonard

Arleen Lipsman

Marybeth Lombardino

Cherilynn Louszko

Diane Luzzi

Joan Mahon

Virginia Mahoney

Tina Magarino

Ellis Marples

Christiana Masucci

Susanna Maya

Kathleen McBrady

Debbie McBride

Debra McGrath

Mary Lou McGrath

Amy McHugh

Nancy Medford

Janet Murphy

Dawn Natoli

Olga Netto

Linda O'Brien

Joseph O'Dowd

Mary Owens

Mary Kate Pach

Kathleen Pappas

Diane Penola

Lynn Polan

Lisa Pompey-Smith

Denise Postlethwaite

Cecelia Puglio

Andrea Rascher

Amy Rhinelander

Mark Roffman

Lucille Rosenberg

Mary Jo Saunders

Josie Scanlan

Richard Schlesinger

Jeanne Seigle

Michelle Sharpe

Katherine Smith

Katelyn Stetzel

Denise Surdoval

Debra Terlizzi

Daphne Thomson

Allison Tolpa


Gary Trageser

Elizabeth Vetter

Mary Vohden

Cary Winslow

Christopher Zwingle



MY CASA STORY

"Tell the judge I want to be adopted."

Ethan was just five years old when he was taken away from his mother in a police car. She was arrested on charges of theft by deception and extortion. Ethan's birth mother had a history of mental illness and substance abuse and went on to demonstrate erratic and inappropriate behavior with the court and Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

Ethan was placed in the first of four resource homes and CASA volunteer, Stephen, was assigned as his advocate. When Stephen first met Ethan he described him as a quiet, withdrawn child,

who had difficulty focusing on a game, making eye contact, and who was unable to respond to simple questions appropriately and in full sentences.

This young, frightened child was once again traumatized when weekly supervised visits with his mother were discontinued. The agency supervising the mother-son visits refused to continue the visits due to the mother's belligerent outbursts and inappropriate behavior with her son and agency personnel. After visitations were suspended, Ethan's birth mother disappeared, was in and out of prison, and Ethan never saw her again.

Prior to removal from his mother, Ethan had only met the man who would be acknowledged as his birth father, a few times. When this father was identified through a paternity test, he was minimally compliant with court orders; had a history of DUI violations; and he acknowledged to the court that he was still consuming alcohol, even though ordered to maintain sobriety and attend AA meetings. This birth dad was also inconsistent in his attendance at supervised visitations with Ethan. After a long trial both parents' rights were terminated by the court, leaving Ethan free for adoption.



While Ethan was in foster care, for almost four years, Stephen was a steadfast advocate. He visited Ethan monthly in all of the resource homes, getting to know him and getting down on his level, playing relay races, jumping on the trampoline, building race car sets, and truly finding out what Ethan wanted. This young boy would tell Stephen, "Tell the judge I want to be adopted."

Between each visit with Ethan, Stephen worked behind the scenes meeting with teachers, child study teams, talking to the biological father and resource parents, and making sure he knew every aspect of Ethan's case. Stephen sat through long days of court hearings, attended school and Family Team meetings, and relentlessly advocated for Ethan's best interests.

Encouraged by Stephen's suggestions, the resource parents enrolled Ethan in group sports and activities to both help improve his gross motor skills and increase his ability to socialize with other children. Stephen met with the school personnel on several occasions and then spoke to the resource parents at length to guide them through the decision to have Ethan repeat Kindergarten. Stephen assisted scheduling and in obtaining the CASA organization's funding for Ethan to receive private tutoring each summer to prepare him for the

next grade level. It was Stephen who met with the school's child study team numerous times to ensure that Ethan was properly evaluated and an Individual Educational Plan was initiated for him.

Ethan was growing and thriving in his final placement; the home where he called the resource parents Mommy and Daddy; where he picked out decorations for his own bedroom; and where he longed to be adopted. However, after his birth parents' rights were terminated, Ethan's birth father appealed the termination to the appellate court. This would cause almost one year of anxiety for Ethan as he waited in limbo. The appellate court affirmed the original decision and the resource family prepared for adoption. However, the birth father decided to appeal to the NJ Supreme Court, once again forcing a then eight-year-old boy to wait with uncertainty about his future.



He had not seen his birth mother in almost three years or his birth father in over one year. Stephen found out that the resource father, who was a member of the US military for over 16 years, was eligible under the Post 9/11 GI Bill for funding towards future college costs for any child who was his dependent by July 11, 2019. At that point Stephen contacted all stakeholders in the case with an urgency to get this information to the judge in order to complete the adoption prior to July 11th.

Stephen did not relax in his advocacy to ensure that Ethan's best interests were being met.

On July 3rd a smiling Ethan in a new bow tie, with his forever parents and his CASA by his side, was adopted after almost four years in foster care. The boy who stood by Stephen for a photo was focused, articulate, well-adjusted and comfortable with his family. The new mom and dad loved this little boy from the first day that he entered their home. With the support of one dedicated CASA volunteer, who spent almost four years ensuring that a young boy's best interests were addressed, a family was formed providing love and stability for a once vulnerable child.

CASAs have more interactions with the children, their families, and all parties to the case more than anyone else who appears in my courtroom. The information that CASAs provide is always timely, accurate and very important to the case.

-Family Court Judge

Thank you

To our loyal supporters, together we are changing many children's stories.

BUSINESS PARTNERS

Adviser Investments
Archuleta Builders
Arthur's Tavern
Bressler, Amery & Ross
Briad Group
Britcher Leone
Cohen & Steers
Coldwell Banker Cares
Connect One Bank
Crum & Forster
Day Pitney
Drinker, Biddle & Reath
Einhorn, Harris, Ascher, Barbarito & Frost
Elm Street Group
F & G Insurance
First Hope Bank
Franklin Mutual Insurance
Fulton Bank
Greenberg Traurig
Gruber, Colabella & Liuzza
Hart & Iliff
Investors Bank
Korn Hynes Communications
Lakeland Bank
Langjahr & Low
Levinsohn Textile
Lovas Law
Marketsmith
Marks Paneth
McKirdy & Riskin
Mellinger, Sanders, Kartzman
Mercedes Benz of Caldwell
Morris, Downing & Sherred
Morristown Diner
New York City Regional Center
Nisivoccia
NJM Insurance
Peapack Gladstone Bank
Pennella & Claps
Pomptonian
Porzio, Bromberg & Newman
Prismatic Development
Randolph Diner
RAS Citron Law Offices
RFD Group-Merrill Lynch
Riker, Danzig, Scherer, Hyland & Perretti
RoNetco Supermarkets
Salny Redbord & Rinaldi
Scirocco Group
ShopRite of Lincoln Park
Stella Valentine Salon
Storis
Sussex County Association of Realtors
Synchronoss Technologies
Tolan Machinery
True & Associates
Visions Federal Credit Union

W20
Wells Fargo Advisors
Wells Fargo Financial Network
Wennogle Law
Wiley, Malehorn, Sirota & Raynes

CASA FRIENDS

Robyn Acceturo
Philip Anderson & Ruth Zowader
Harvey & Tammie Applebaum
Francis Arigo
John & Donna Babcock
Sarah Baranik
Sheila Barkow
Lila Barsky
Norman & Agnes Beatty
Daniel & Michelle Beatty
Mindy Beck
Jessica Beck
Robert Beers
Jill Bellaus
Cheryl Bennett
John & Nathalie Berger
Lori Blitz
Thomas Boucher
Jamie Boudin
Lewis Bowman
Jennifer Bowman
Adam & Megan Boyd
Cornelius & Joan Boylan
Sr. Jane Frances Brady
Winston Branch & Bryna S. Watkins
Charles & Karen Brand
Constance Breslin
Tony & Gina Bruno
The Honorable Anthony Bucco
Joy Buchfirer
Irene Burczynski
Bill & Julia Burns
Thomas & Maureen Byrne
Glen & Jennifer Caplin
Christopher Case
Ronald & Marrienne Cattafi
Michael & Carol Chirichello
Fran Cirelli
James Clark & Mary Jane Robertson
Betty Clifford
William & Margaret Clossley
David & Mary Cobb
Nelson & Charlotte Cohen
Rona Cohen
John & June Colangelo
Larry & Mary Anne Condit
Francesco & Leanne Conte
Nancy Cook
MaryBeth Cooney
Manuel & Janice Corte
Adam & Lindsey Cossman
Peter Cotsonas

William Cozine
Thomas Curtin
Susan D'Aloia
Peter & Patricia Daquila
Bernard & Paula Davidoff
Helen Davis
Kristen Dawson
Karen DeChristopher
Richelle Delavan
Eileen Delia
Brian & France Delle Donne
John DeWees & Victoria Felix
Jonathan Dinklage
Diane Dinklage
Susan Dobrinsky
Evelyn Doll
Barbara Dombrowski
William & Irene Donohue
Amalia Duarte
Christine Dugan
Mark & Missy Durham
John & Wendy Ehrhardt
Donald & Desiree Ellerthorpe
Jonathan Epstein
Amy Evans
Joan Falcetta
John & Toby Fanburg
Regina Farlekas
John Farley
Lorens & Kathryn Fasano
Peter & Karen Fertig
Jessica Fiddes
Steve & Lisa Firkser
Barbara Fowler
Steven & Charlotte Frank
David & Jennifer Friedland
Susan Friedman
Roger & Joan Gengaro
Lesley Gibson
Michael & Lisa Gilchrist
Gary & Carolyn Gildersleeve
Susan Newman Gold
Roberta Golub
Doren Greene
Paul & Beryl Greetin
Anthony Giuriceo
Marilyn Haggerty
Phyllis Hantman
Joan Harris
Lauren Healey
Mike & Krisann Henry
William & Joyce Henry
Richard & Margaret Herburger
Norman Hobbie
John & Nancy Hoffmann
Richard & Marcie Holmes
Kenneth & Sheri Horwitz
Marli Horwitz
Robert Howitt

Phil Hunt & Julie McCormick
Sue Idleman
Neil & Anna Intrator
Steven & Davida Isaacson
Janice Jackman
Sidney & Sandra Jacobson
Wayne Jahns
Tom & Eileen Jankunis
Patricia Jasinkiewicz
Jo-Anne Johnson
Jeffrey Jones
Doris Kaplan
James & Carolyn Keegan
Robert & Eileen Keller
Loretta Kelly
Mark & Pamela Kenworthy
Judith Kerr
Joseph & Bette Kessler
H. C. & Judith Kilgore
Alan & Jeannette Ferrara Kleinschrodt
Bill & Kathy Kraiss
David Ganz & Kim Kramer
Linda Kraska
Jeff & Leah Kronthal
Christopher Kull
Kenneth & Anne Kunzman
Jane Kurek
Vincent & Gina Lancellotti
Susan & Frederick Lappin
Stuart Lasser
Lawrence & Phyllis Lazarus
Udo & Gudrun Lehmann
Jeff Leonard
Martin & Audrey Lepelstat
Meg Lesnik
Ronald & Marian Levinsohn
Peter & Marsha Lewin
Gerald & Susan Lichtenberger
Joseph & Lois Livreri
William & Andrea Lovas
Marijane & Chuck Lundt
Diane Luzzi
Joan Mahon
Frank & Theresa Mangravite
Diana Manning
Bob & Carol Marcus
Jack & Meredith Marks
Abby & Linda Mayer
Leonard & Helena Mazur
James & Florence Mazzella
Tricia McCarthy
Paul & Kathleen McDougall
Barbara McElroy
Daniel McFarland
Christopher & Debra McGrath
Kathleen McNamara
Nancy Medford
Francis & Gail Mertz
John & Samantha Mielach

Mark & Chloe Millea
Michelle Miller
Chad & Jill Miller
Barbara Mills
Bernadette Mitchell
Richard & Anne Moore
Kevin & Laurene Murphy
John & Susan Murray
John & Thelma Newman
Patricia Nolan
John & Amy Norton
Fred & Lisa Orlan
Steven Oroho
Heidi Oshima
Albert & Georgina Paganelli
Alan & Joan Painter
Victor & Monica Pandorf
Anthony & Marie Panzera
Kathleen Pappas
Jeffrey Parrott
Nisha Patel
Vivian Perlmutter
Anthony & Mary Perro
Walter Peters & Lindsay Osborn
Margaret Philp
Lynn Polan
Todd Poland & Jeanne Bratsafolis
Charlene & Peter Polomski
James Porfido
Wendy Potter
Dale & Carol Potter
Stephen & Linda Prentiss
Dona Preston
Michael & Deborah Puskas
Anthony & Rosemarie Raiola
Timothy & Suzanne Reilly
Mark Reilly
Richard & Paula Reiss
Todd & Julie Reit
John & Amy Rhinelander
Joseph Robbins
Rob Robinson and Candyce Forster
Michael & Nicole Rocca
Ramona Rodriguez
Sarah Roessler
Mark Roffman
Leo & Carole Rogers
Ferrill & Belinda Roll
Lucille Rosenberg
Alan & Meryl-Sue Rubin
Marissa Ruggiero
Betty Rust
Sandra Ruzicka
Kyle Eileen Sanzone
Michael & Mary Jo Saunders

Richard Schlesinger
Felix & Linda Schletter
Bernard & Ellyn Schoenfeld
Barry & Susie Schub
Matthew & Christine Schuette
Bruce & Beverly Schulman
Stuart & Joyce Schwartz
Jonathan & Barbara Sebir
Laura Sedlak
Ronald & Marilyn Semer
Adam & Joyce Semer
Barbara Shalit
Sheldon & Natalie Simon
Margaret & Glen Skar
Bernard & Antonetta Skown
Eileen Soliman
William & Maureen Stack
Peter Stancato
Ina & Jeffrey Stern
Aaron & Melanie Strout
Lawrence & Deborah Stryker
Gregory & Wendy Supron
Denise Surdovai
Mark & Therese Tallmadge
Alan & Linda Tarr
Debbie Terlizzi
Marcellene Thompson
Scott & Daphne Thomson
Erwin & Mary Tistler
Stephen & Allison Tolpa
Kate Tomlinson
Errol Train
Robert Van Leer
Thomas & Mary Ann Vazquez
Philip & Erin Visicaro
Daniel Vohden
Edward & Linda Wacks
Dorothy Walek
Jim & Barbara Ward
Jeffrey & Abigail Wasserman
Nathaniel Wechsler
Skippy & Nancy Weinstein
Carl & Mary Weinzett
The Honorable Thomas Weisenbeck
Robert & Donna Willis
John & Joyce Wilson
Paul & Catherine Winslow
Susan Yeats
James & Theresa Youngelson
Joan Yurecsko
Sev & Ilana Zaslavsky
Anthony & Barbara Zecca
David & Doris Zuckerberg
Christopher Zwingle

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Chester Lions
Congregation B'nai Emet Synagogue
First Presbyterian Church of Mendham
Green Pond Women's Club
Highlands District Woman's Club
Hopatcong Woman's Club
Kiwanis Club of Greater Hamburg
Kiwanis Club of Greater Parsippany
Kiwanis Club of Sparta
Kiwanis Club of Sussex
National Council of Jewish Women, West Morris
Presbyterian Church in Morristown
Rotary Club of Madison
Rotary Club of Morristown
Thursday Morning Club
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Sussex County
West Morris Junior Women's Club
Woman's Club of Chatham
Woman's Club of Denville/Rockaway
Woman's Club of Hopatcong
Woman's Club of Long Valley
Woman's Club of Montville
Woman's Club of Parsippany-Troy Hills
Woman's Club of Roxbury
Woman's Club of Sparta
Woman's Club of Sussex
Woman's Club of Vernon

GRANTS PARTNERS

Allergan Foundation
Blanche & Irving Laurie Foundation
Community Foundation of NJ
F.M. Kirby Foundation
George A. Ohl, Jr., Trust
Head Family Charitable Foundation
Investors Foundation
John Ben Snow Memorial Trust
John Bickford Foundation
Laura Niles Foundation
Lillian P. Schenck Foundation
Margaret A. Darrin Charitable Trust
MetLife Foundation
Morris County Community Development
New Jersey Natural Gas Charity
Page Hill Foundation
Provident Bank Foundation
Selective Insurance Group Foundation
Sweetie Pig Foundation
Victims of Crime Act
William E. Simon Foundation
Willis & Nancy King Foundation

SCHOOL PARTNERS

Alpine Elementary School
Freedom Township
Jefferson School District
Kiel Elementary School
Knollwood Elementary School
Netcong Elementary School
Pearl R. Miller School
Sandyston Walpack School
Sparta School District
Stonybrook Elementary School
Wantage Elementary School
West Morris Mendham High School, Service Club

IN-KIND DONORS

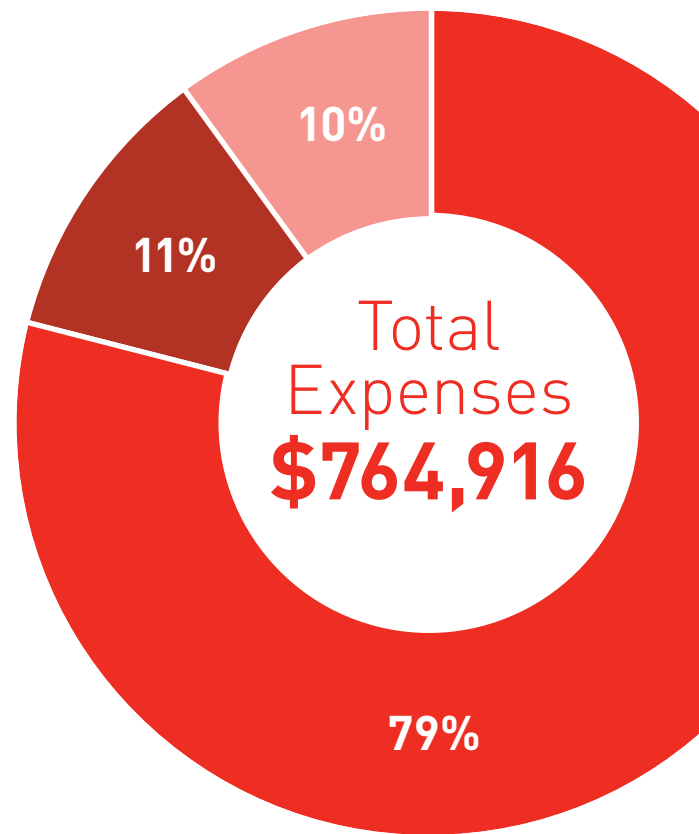
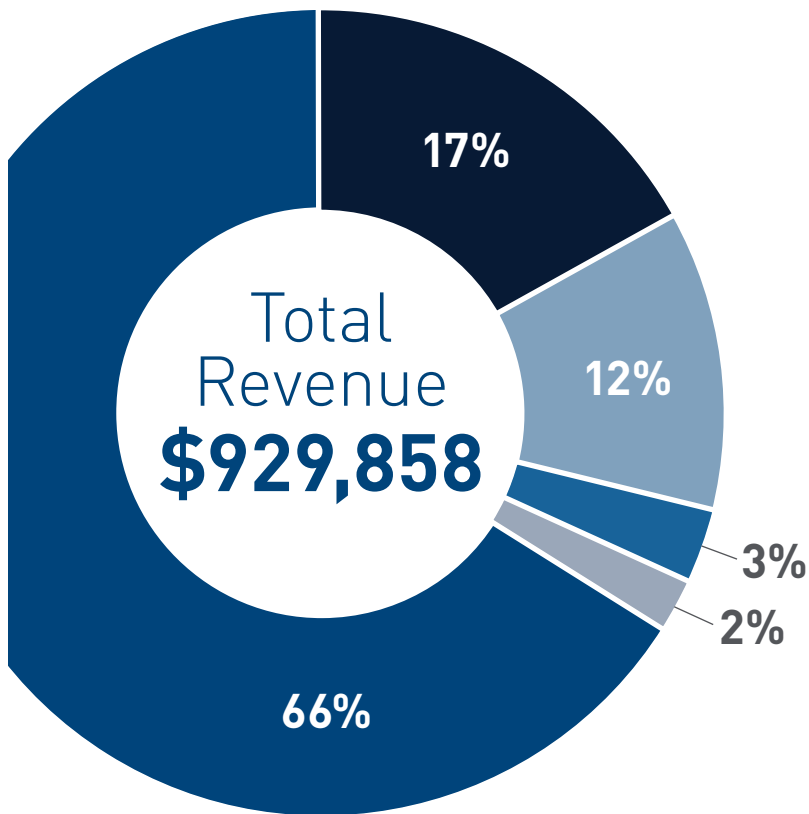
A Birthday Wish
Nancy & Megan Andreasen
Assumption Church
Atlantic Health Systems
Books-A-Million, Rockaway
Briad Group - Wendy's Division
Costco
Georgia Delaney
Eileen Delia
Earrings by Suzann
Grenwolde Investment
Morris County Chapter of The Links
Novartis Pharmaceutical
Piece Partner Quilters
Saint Joseph Church
Santander
Bennett Schwartz
Noah Silverman
Joan Sturm
TelecomPioneers Chapter #99
Toyota Financials
Wound Healing Center at
Morristown Medical Center

A special Thank You to the Team at W20 for donating their time, talents, and friendship to CASA throughout the year. We especially appreciate their creative work to design this Annual Report.



Annual Report

CASA by the numbers for FY 19:
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019



| Expenses | \$764,916 |
|--|-----------|
| Program (Volunteer Training, Child Advocacy/Mentoring) | \$604,266 |
| Development (Fundraising, Marketing, Outreach) | \$84,630 |
| Management (Administrative and Office) | \$76,020 |

| Revenues | \$929,858 |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Grants | \$615,498 |
| Fundraising Events | \$159,738 |
| Individuals | \$109,388 |
| Investment Income | \$29,356 |
| Corporate | \$15,878 |

OUR CASA HIGHLIGHTS

Fostering Futures Program:

Served 45 youth ages 14-20, preparing them for independent living

Five youth accepted to college and 12 youth on the path to college

90% of youth demonstrated improvements in education, employment, housing, life skills, and physical and mental health areas of well being

92% of recommendations made by CASA to the court were accepted to provide services and interventions for youth

Volunteer Program:

41 new community members trained to become CASA volunteers

9,614 hours of service were provided by CASA volunteers

85,278 miles were driven

\$277,072 of advocacy services were provided by our CASA volunteers based on the NJ Independent Sector value of volunteer time

CASA Advocacy:

167 CASA volunteers advocated for 262 children

106 children achieved permanency through reunification, adoption, or independent living

100%

Our organization served 100% of the eligible children in foster care in Morris and Sussex Counties. We are the only NJ CASA program to have reached this success.