

Champaign County CASA

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



"I am honored to be part of the Champaign County CASA legacy because...

of the critically important work CASA does for the children in our community. These children are the future of our community, and CASA gives each of them a voice in court. CASA lets its children know they deserve to be heard, loved and protected, and for that I am both proud and grateful."

-Cindi Eustice, Former Volunteer Advocate

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A Message from Our Executive Director

For 30 years, Champaign County CASA has provided dedicated volunteers, staff and attorneys to work side by side with social service agencies to ensure that the needs of the abused and neglected children of Champaign County are satisfied. These children have experienced abuse at young ages and are in court through no fault of their own. All of the individuals associated with the CASA program remain united in our efforts to help these kids through their situations.

Our program cannot do this important work without the support of the community. This Annual Report reflects your generosity in support of our mission to speak up for children. On behalf of the Board of Directors, staff, and attorneys, I say THANK YOU. The work done on behalf of these children can be extremely difficult. However, knowing of the support of the community in helping us achieve this mission is heartwarming.

The first 30 years at Champaign County CASA has seen our case load grow with financial resources becoming more and more important. We increased our staff to meet the needs of the children, and we continued to serve our kids no matter the circumstance. As reflected in this report, this past year has shown that the community believes in the work that we do.

As we move into the next 30 years, we are committed to securing our future for those that follow by continuing to seek necessary resources so that we will always be here for Our Kids.

With your help, we all can achieve that goal.

With great thanks,

Rush Record



WHAT'S INSIDE

Our Mission...	3
Our Work...	4
Our Impact...	5
Our Supporters...	6
Our Financials...	7
Our Legacy and Future...	8

We believe that every child who has experienced abuse or neglect deserves the opportunity to thrive in a safe and permanent home.

OUR MISSION



Standing up for children in the court system who have experienced abuse and neglect.

Right now, approximately **350** Champaign County children are in foster care due to abuse or neglect. As a result, courts are required to make very difficult decisions about their futures. Our trained volunteers, with the help of our staff and attorneys, focus on their situations and advocate for their best interests in court and in the community. CASA volunteers and staff are the only ones in the foster care system who concentrate solely on the needs of the kids - Our Kids - giving them the opportunity for hope, stability, and a safe and permanent home.

The children Champaign County CASA serves range from birth through 21 years of age. 40% are under six years old.



From July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, the Champaign County CASA team of **130** volunteer advocates, **10** professional staff, and **2** dedicated attorneys, with the generous support of **617** individual and business donors, stood up for a total of **466** children who have been in the Champaign County Court system due to abuse and neglect.

OUR WORK



Volunteer Advocates are the backbone of the work we do. Our advocates multiply our effectiveness, reaching many more children much more frequently than our small professional staff could do alone. Every new volunteer completes **27** hours of pre-service training, before being sworn in as a Court Appointed Special Advocate and assigned to a case.

In FY23-24, Champaign County CASA trained **17** new volunteer advocates.

In Champaign County, CASA is appointed as the guardian *ad litem* (GAL) to children with an open court case due to abuse and neglect. We consistently visit every child in their foster placement, and make recommendations to the court based on our findings.

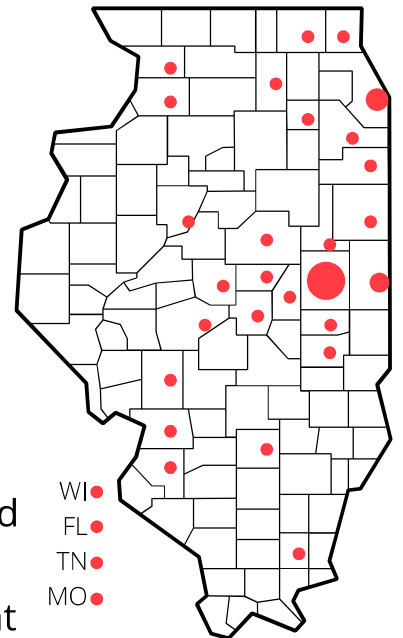
FY23-34 by the Numbers

- 52** New Cases Opened
- 95** New Kids
- 72** Cases Closed
- 116** Kids Closed
- 1,233** Child Contacts
- 199** Court Reports Filed

This past year, CASA attorneys represented Our Kids at **1,050** hearings, standing up for their best interests.

Many of Our Kids are placed in foster care outside of Champaign County, but that does not stop us from seeing each one. In total, **38,129** miles were logged for child visits this year.

Where Our Kids Are



OUR IMPACT



Carolina*

Carolina had missed a lot of school due to her parents moving around and education was not a priority. Carolina was very behind but was also struggling with basic concepts to the point CASA advocated for evaluations with the school to determine if she had learning challenges or if she was just behind due to not being present. Carolina is now receiving appropriate supports and is slowly progressing to achieve more grade-level work.



Tara* & Elle*

Tara & Elle came into foster care due to a parent's paramour sexually abusing Tara whenever the parent was intoxicated. Tara and Elle were placed into a foster home, and Laine* was appointed to be their advocate. Laine advocated for counseling for both children to address their fears and emotions about what had occurred to them and in their home.

Unfortunately, their parent continued their relationship with their paramour and using substances and did not engage in services. Laine saw the children monthly in their foster home and observed them thriving, sharing about their school days, and being open with their foster parent when they experienced issues from their previous trauma. Tara and Elle expressed how safe and loved they felt and were ultimately adopted by their foster parent.

**Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.*

OUR SUPPORTERS



The mission and work of Champaign County CASA is funded because local people are invested in our local organization which serves Our Kids. We all have a role in keeping children safe, and we are grateful for those who stand with us as we stand up for kids in court.

Special thanks to generosity of the

- 542** Individuals
- 75** Businesses/Organizations
- 53** Event Sponsors
- 161** New donors
- 31** Recurring donors
- 11** Donors who gave over \$10,000
- 66** Donors who gave in-kind

2 Champion Sponsors



who have made our work possible!

"I am honored to be part of the Champaign County CASA legacy because... the dedication and the depth of concern for each child that needs their help is truly admirable. There is no end to the work that they are willing to do to keep children safe. I am proud to be associated with such a special organization."

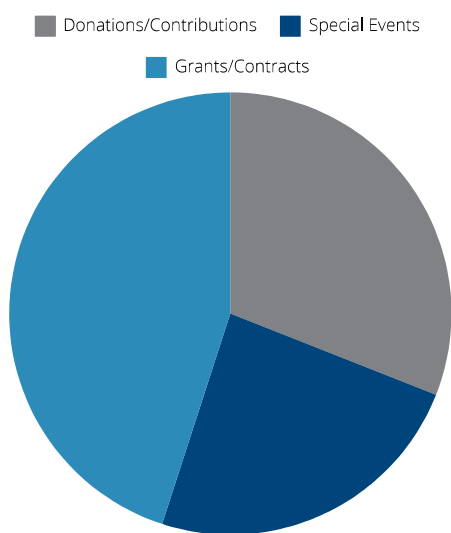
-Maureen Juodis, Supporter and Former Board Member



OUR FINANCIALS

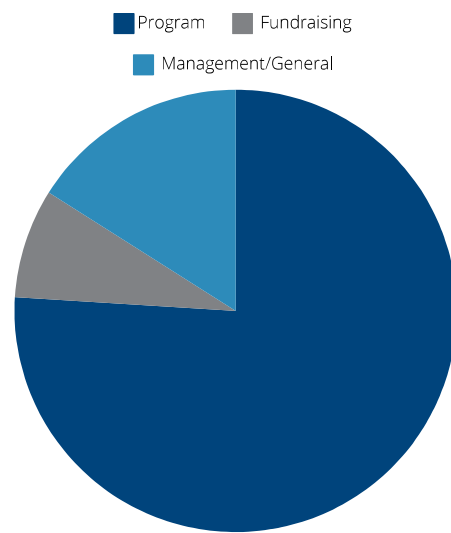


Under the direction of our Board of Directors, Champaign County CASA is a responsible steward of all funds that support the work of the program. Thanks to our generous donors and other funders, we are fortunate that resources were available to meet increasing expenses of the program for 2023-24. CASA is pleased to report that assets are stable and long-term financial stability for the program is at the forefront of our financial vision.



Total Revenue*
\$1,167,424.48

FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024



Total Expenses*
\$932,997.27

*The FY23-24 numbers reported are not yet confirmed by the annual audit.

"We are honored to be part of the Champaign County CASA legacy because... they advocate for the best interests of vulnerable children in the court system, ensure their safety, and help create a path toward stability and healing. Caring for children in need is one of the most meaningful ways to serve our community, and we're proud to be connected with an organization that makes such a powerful difference."

-Hope (Current Board Member) and Josh Whitman

OUR LEGACY AND FUTURE



Honoring Our 30th Year

In 1994, Champaign County CASA was founded. For **3** decades, we have provided unwavering advocacy for Our Kids, and earned the trust and respect of the court system. Over the years, we have trained approximately **750** volunteer advocates who have given voice to almost **4,000** children in a total of **2,100** cases. This has been made possible with the guidance of **80** community leaders who have served on the board, and countless supporters who have given of their time, talents and resources - all for Our CASA Kids.

Continue the Legacy

Volunteer - Advocates provide consistency and a voice for Our Kids.

Donate - Steady funding makes it possible for us to train and support our volunteers, and represent Our Kids in court.

Speak-up - We all have a role in keeping Our Kids safe.

For information about these opportunities and more, go to casa4kids.org

