







4

”

Resilience is not all or nothing. It comes in amounts. You can be a little resilient, a lot resilient; resilient in some situations but not others. And, no matter how resilient you are today, you can become more resilient tomorrow.

KAREN REIVICH

5

The road this past year



Under Construction

Potholes

Twists & Turns

Roadblocks



6

Our Journey through the Conference

We are all on a road together, riding along.



Who are we?

Where are we?

Where do we want to go?

It's best to travel with each other.

7


Road to Resilience

Who are We?



8

Tennessee CASA -- Vision and Mission




VISION

Where every child who has been abused and neglected in the State of Tennessee is given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

MISSION

To support, develop, expand and unite local CASA programs in recruiting and training volunteers to advocate for Tennessee's children who have been abused and neglected.




9

History of CASA Nationally

- In 1977, Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle, WA saw the difficulty in making decisions for children with complex issues in a short period of time.
- "As a judge, I had to make tough decisions. I had to decide whether to take a child from the only home he's ever known or leave him somewhere he might possibly be abused. I needed someone who could tell me what was best for that child-from the child's viewpoint. That's what CASA does."

—Hon. David Soukup, Founder of CASA

- There are CASA programs in 49 states and the District of Columbia
- There are 950 programs nationwide




10

Role of National CASA


The role of National CASA/GAL Association is to strategically establish, promote and support the formation, recruitment, training, development and activities of highly effective member programs.

- **96,929** dedicated volunteers
- **276,809** children
- **Every year**



11

History of CASA in Tennessee





- The Tennessee CASA Association was formed in 1988 to support local CASA programs.
- Today 31 CASA programs serve 57 counties across the state. This leaves 38 counties **without** a CASA program.
- There are over **8,000 children** currently in state custody due to **abuse and neglect** in Tennessee.
- Another **20,000 children** are being monitored in their home by DCS, at risk of coming into custody and going to Juvenile Court.

12

The Role of Tennessee CASA

- All programs in Tennessee operate in accordance with National and Tennessee CASA Standards
- Technical assistance and training for new and developing programs, including directors and staff
- Start-up, support and continuation of CASA programs across the state, ensuring compliance with standards
- Legislative advocacy and representation for children in the statewide child welfare system




13



ANJANETTE EASH
Expansion Coordinator

- Developing and expanding CASA programs
- Manages TN CASA's OCJP funding
- Coordinates TN CASA participation in Judicial Conferences




14



CAITLIN VASSER
Technical Services Coordinator

- Technical assistance with VOCA funding
- Assistance with utilizing TN CASA online training formats
- Program and training evaluations




15



DEANDRA GREEN
Marketing/Communications Coordinator

- Print/Digital Publications
- Social Media
- Websites
- Volunteer Recruitment Campaigns

16



KIM PEER
Quality Assurance Coordinator

- TCCY reporting, monitoring, and contracts
- NCASA reporting, membership renewals, and standards
- CASA Manager and obtaining additional licenses
- Assistance with document templates
- New Directors Orientation

17



WENDY SPENCE
Program Services Coordinator

- Training of Facilitators
- State Conference
- Annual Meeting
- TN CASA Membership
- Manages training opportunities

18



LYNNE FARRAR
Executive Director

- Consultation with local programs
- Develop state funding for network
- Chief Spokesperson
- Public Policy & Legislative Advocacy
- Administrative, financial and program oversight


19

CASA Authorization Statute

37-1-149. Guardian ad Litem - Special Advocate - Appointment

(a) (1) The court at any stage of a proceeding under this part, on application of a party or on its own motion, shall appoint a **guardian ad litem** for a child who is a party to the proceeding . . .

The court, in any proceeding under this part resulting from a report of harm or an investigation report under **37-1-401 – 37-1-411**, shall appoint a guardian ad litem for the child who was the subject of the report. A party to the proceeding or the party's employee or representative shall not be appointed. . .



20

CASA Authorization Statute (cont.)

(2) Any guardian ad litem appointed by the court shall receive training appropriate to that role prior to such appointment.

(b) (1) **The court may also appoint a non-lawyer special advocate trained in accordance with the standards of the Tennessee Court Appointed Special Advocates Association (CASA) to act in the best interest of a child before, during, and after court proceedings.**

(2) **The court-appointed special advocate shall conduct such investigation and make such reports and recommendations pertaining to the welfare of a child as the court may order or direct.**

(3) Any guardian ad litem or **special advocate** so appointed by the court **shall be presumed to be acting in good faith and in so doing shall be immune from any liability** that might otherwise be incurred while acting within the scope of such appointment.

21

The Court Appointment Order

The Court Appointment Order, by statute:



- Gives the CASA Volunteer and CASA Staff the authority to talk to anyone involved in the child's life and access to all records on behalf of the child.
- Requires a comprehensive, written report from the CASA Volunteer with full information about the child and the family situation and best interest recommendations for the child.
- Requires Confidentiality in every aspect of the work.

22


CASA Volunteers are carefully selected and supervised:

CASA Volunteers are required to:

- Submit detailed application with references
- Obtain background checks
- Participate in an extensive interview

CASA Staff is dedicated to providing the support necessary to help the CASA Volunteer to:


- Navigate the child welfare system
- Obtain services for the child and family
- Write court reports



23

CASA Volunteers receive comprehensive training:

- **30-35 hours of pre-service training and court observation** utilizing the 2017 National CASA Pre-Service Volunteer curriculum tailored for state and local laws and practices
- Topics include:
 - CASA Volunteer Role and Court Report Writing
 - Well-Being of the Child and Case Studies
 - Trauma, Resilience, and Communication Skills
 - Mental Health and Poverty
 - Substance Abuse and Domestic Violence
 - Cultural Competence and LGBTQ Youth
 - Educational Advocacy and Older Youth
- **12 hours of In-service training annually**




24

What CASA Volunteers Do:

➤ CASA Volunteers conduct an intensive investigation and make reports and best interest recommendations pertaining to the welfare of a child as the court may order.

CASA Volunteers speak to:

- ☐ The child
- ☐ Parents and extended family members
- ☐ Foster parents
- ☐ DCS and contract agency workers
- ☐ Guardian ad litem
- ☐ Teachers
- ☐ Clinicians and counselors
- ☐ Anyone involved in the child's life



➤ Monitor that the child remains safe, with all needs met. The goal is that the child achieves permanency as quickly, and with as little disruption, as possible.

25

Role of CASA Volunteer in Court:


Fact Witness. The CASA Volunteer tells the court what they **saw, did, and heard**. This is why it is so important that the CASA Volunteer hears and sees things, such as visits between parents and children.

Recommendation Maker. The CASA Volunteer gathers information to make recommendations to the court regarding what is in the best interest of the child based on facts and observations.



26




FACT	OPINION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be proven • Dirty house with overflowing trash in the floor, ashtrays with cigarette butts, rotted food on the tables • The parents attended all the visits with the children and have complied with plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal belief or feeling • The house was too filthy for children • The parents wear ratty clothes and are covered in tattoos



27

A CASA Volunteer **DOES NOT**:


- Investigate the abuse of the child
- Provide direct services or give gifts
- Transport children for any reason (not allowed by National CASA policies)
- Make any promises to the child regarding placement or services

28

Confidentiality

- CASA submits objective, comprehensive reports to the Court and the parties with information gathered from all sources.
- CASA distributes the report to – DCS, parents, attorneys, and Guardian ad litem – the parties of the case.
- While we can share information about the child with the Foster Parents, we can't share the CASA Report.




29

Relationship within Child Welfare System

While CASA functions as “extra eyes and ears” for Juvenile Court –
CASA also functions as “extra arms and legs for DCS.”


Working within the “TEAM” is vitally important to achieve the best interests of children.



30

Benefits of CASA

- ❖ A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to find a safe, permanent home. . .
- ❖ . . . and less likely to be bounced home to home. . .
- ❖ . . . and half as likely to re-enter foster care.
- ❖ Children with CASA volunteers spend less time in foster care.
- ❖ Children with CASA volunteers do better in school



31

Benefits of CASA

- ❖ Children with CASA volunteers get more help and services while in the system...
- ❖ ... and are more likely to have a consistent, responsible adult presence.
- ❖ Volunteers spend significantly more time with the child.

“Every Kid Is ONE Caring Adult Away from Being a Success Story.” – Josh Shipp

32

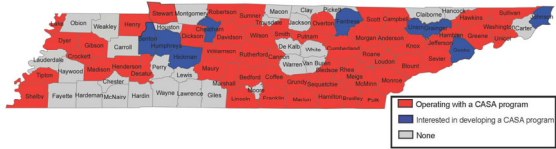
Road to Resilience

Where are We?



33

TN CASA Network Map




Legend:

- Operating with a CASA program
- Interested in developing a CASA program
- None

34

Serving the Need in Tennessee

- Year ending June 30, 2020, 1,550 CASA volunteers advocated for 5,230 of Tennessee's children who have experienced abuse and neglect.
- We believe that every child has the right to the safe embrace of a loving family.




35

Evidence of Effectiveness

At case closure,
90% of the CASA recommendations are implemented by the Court.

90% of children remain safe six months following case closure because less than 10% re-enter juvenile court in less than six months.



36

Partnership with TCCY

- Strong Partnership
 - ❖ Regional Councils
 - ❖ Regional Coordinators
 - ❖ Excellent Training Opportunities
- Funding and Quality Assurance
- Legislative Advocacy & Budget Requests






37

Road to Resilience


Where Do We Want to Go?



38


Strategic Plan – The Roadmap to the Future

- ❖ Past Accomplishments
 - ❖ Be for the Child -- volunteer recruitment campaign
 - ❖ Providing CASA Manager to all programs
 - ❖ Increased state funding
 - ❖ VOCA funding



39

GROWTH

- ❖ Network Growth Trends
 
 - ❖ Number of Programs -- 28 – 31 -- **+10%**
 - ❖ Number of Counties -- 47 – 57 -- **+21%**
 - ❖ Number of Volunteers -- 1,345 – 1,550 -- **+15%**
 - ❖ Number of Children -- 5,559 – 5,230 -- **-6%**

40

Goals for 2025



- ❖ Network Growth Trends
 - ❖ Number of Programs -- +2 for total of 33
 - ❖ Number of Counties -- +5 for total of 62
 - ❖ Number of Volunteers -- +10% for a total of 1,705
 - ❖ Number of Children -- +10% for a total of 5,753

41

Goals for 2025


- ❖ More volunteers
 - ✓ Recruit through Be for the Child
 - ✓ Increased website, social media, online presence
- ❖ More staff
 - ✓ Money
 - ✓ Training
- ❖ More money
 - ✓ Fundraising ideas
 - ✓ Board development



42

Why?

- ❖ Our work is Urgent and Imperative
- ❖ 20,000 children need a CASA Volunteer
- ❖ Every child who has been abused and neglected deserves a CASA Volunteer to ensure that the child has a safe, permanent, loving home.



44

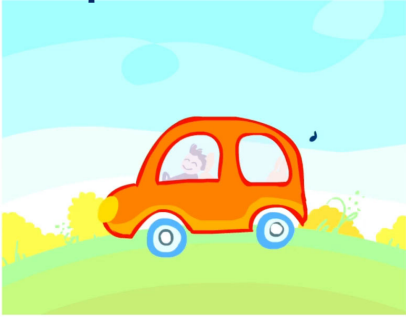
First Lady Maria Lee Video

www.tncasa.org
www.beforthethechild.org



44

Road Trip



45

Contact Information:



Tennessee CASA Association Inc.
745 S. Church Street, Suite 401
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

Lynne Farrar lynne@tncasa.org

Office: 615-220-3990, ext. 112
Cell: 615-517-4613

This project is funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee.
