



**TOGETHER
WE CAN
CHANGE A
CHILD'S
STORY**

CASA OF ROCK COUNTY

ANNUAL REPORT

2022

A Message from Leadership



It's hard to believe that 2022 is behind us and we closed another chapter, standing in solidarity with our community, to promote and serve the needs of child abuse victims in our county. These continue to be the goals and values we strive for, and they will never change. We know the advocacy work we do is not possible without the courage and commitment of our volunteers, the dedication of our staff and board members, and the support of our allies in the community.

It could be easy to lose hope. To say the problems the children face are too big to conquer. Their wounds and trauma are too deep. Their pain and instability are too much to witness. Their journey to a safe and stable home takes far too long. To give up.

But that is an impossible thing to do when you meet the kids in foster care and their CASA volunteers. They manifest hope in a system that often feels devoid of justice. Their dedication, passion, and shared belief that our society has a fundamental obligation to protect our children is what keeps us going and inspires us to never give up. So, as I look back at 2022, it is with equal parts pride in the work we do, gratitude for our network, and a determination to work all the harder to make 2023 better for the children we serve.

Thank you, for your on-going support.

Sandy Johnson, Executive Director

MISSION

To recruit, train, and support community volunteers to advocate for the best interest of children who have experienced abuse or neglect.

VISION

That every child will have a safe and stable forever family.

About CASA of Rock County

Since 2005, CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Rock County has been recruiting ordinary people from all walks of life to become trained volunteers who step up to assist judges and serve the county's most vulnerable children.

We are there for the child. Whatever their age, children removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect face a frightening and profoundly unknown future. We ensure through the uncertainties, the child's voice is heard and their needs remain a priority. CASA volunteers provide a stable, consistent adult presence in their lives. We advocate for their best interest in the court and the community. As a professional member of the child's team, CASAs get to know the child, gather information from those involved in the child's life and make informed recommendations to the court about what is best for the child.

We are there to help improve the lives of children and to help ensure they reach a safe, permanent, and loving home.

A Message from our Board



Being on the Board of Directors for CASA has been an incredibly meaningful experience. For a little over a year, I've had the opportunity to work closely with our talented staff to develop successful fundraisers and imagine new ways to recruit more Advocates for our kiddos. It's a reward to be able to lend my voice and experience to help those who are often overlooked in society.

My time on the board has allowed me to make new connections in the community to other like-minded heroes committed to aiding children and teens in navigating our court system. Our shared goal is to create outcomes that prioritize what is most important: the safety and well-being of children in need of protection.

In 2022 our efforts saw an outstanding Break the Cycle Luncheon that blew our expectations out of the water. Thank you for raising the bar for us in the best way! Our reimaged Fall Festival was a great opportunity for families to get together for an afternoon of fun fall activities followed by an evening of music and celebration.

I have high hopes for 2023 and everything we have planned. If not for the commitment of our Advocates, volunteers, board members, and supporters, CASA of Rock County would not be able to support the most innocent members of our community in navigating the daunting judicial system. If the work I contribute to the board trickles down to help even just one kiddo per year, that positively impacted life keeps me inspired and motivated to continue working with all these amazing people.

Jonathan Fox-Haines, Secretary of the Board

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Andrea Gonstead

Treasurer
Celeste Fox

Secretary
Jonathan Fox-Haines

Gretchen Burgess

Camilla Owen

Deb McCann

Jordanne Pregont



Pinwheels for Prevention



April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about child abuse and promoting its prevention. We plant the pinwheels because it has become the iconic symbol of child abuse prevention. The pinwheel represents the happy, carefree childhood that all children deserve and reminds us of our collective responsibility to protect and nurture all children. It serves as a visual reminder that every child deserves to grow up in a safe, loving, and supportive environment, free from abuse and neglect.



It is our hope that planting our "Blue Kiddos" around town, along with our garden of 3,000 pinwheels at the Courthouse, will serve as a reminder that together we can work together to ensure that we do not overlook this important issue.

Party for a Purpose

After the pandemic, we were excited to bring back Party for a Purpose in 2022. This is a laid back way to spread the word about CASA with family and friends. The host provides the space, and CASA staff brings the mission and vision to life for the guests.

We can assure you that mixing our mission with good food and great conversation is the perfect way to spread awareness of our mission and the kids we serve.

Please contact us if you are interested in hosting one of these gatherings.



Thank you Jordanne Pregont for hosting and inviting your friends and family!

Volunteer Spotlight



Lorie Ames

Todd Ames

Sara Bailey

Belinda Bauer

Wendy Benkert

Elise Bergman

Erica Boehlke

Kianna Byrd

Marlene Bysted

Tara Chapman

Sharon Coogan

Claire Cottam

Barb Craddick

Stephanie DeLong

Kassi Dixon

Diane Dooley

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Suzanne Hamilton

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Michelle Johnston

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Roy Meyer

Donna Oliver

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Kristi Powers

Toni Rossmiller

Lori Schlemmer

Sidney Schwartz

Sharine Shinkay-

Astin

Megan Snare

Shawna Stevonoski

Suzanne Teske

Anne Tillett

Meghan Snare

Shawna Stevonoski

Suzanne Teske

Anne Tillett

Ellen Vierthaler

Jon Wangerin

Dakota White

Amanda Wilson

Cathi Wnuk

Sharon Wolter

Lynn Wood

Ashley Zummo

Volunteer Appreciation



Volunteer Appreciation is our opportunity to thank our Advocates and Board members for their dedication and hours of service throughout the year. Our volunteers are the "boots on the ground" and we are so grateful for all of their hard work.

Volunteers and their guests enjoy dinner and drinks as staff present certificates, small gifts, and lots of hugs!



Thank you to the Looking Glass for this celebration of our volunteers, once again!

Break the Cycle Luncheon



This year's event was a tremendous success! Author of *Three Little Words*, Ashley Rhodes-Courter, shared her experiences in foster care and how a CASA volunteer made a big impact in her life. Her story is an important one for children going through foster care, as she has survived and become an advocate for other children who are facing similar challenges.

It is her mission to spread the word about advocating for kids that have been abused and neglected and working to find them a safe and permanent home.

The event raised nearly \$50,000. Thank you to all our sponsors and attendees.



CASA Impact Awards

A special part of our Break the Cycle event occurs when we present our Impact Awards. These awards are a way for us to recognize and honor the individuals and businesses that are committed to making a difference in the lives of children. It is truly inspiring to see so many people working to create a better future for our youth. Every year, we are amazed by the dedication and hard work of the recipients, and we feel privileged to be able to celebrate our joint efforts.

Camilla Owen

Working as an at-risk educator in the Janesville School District, Camilla devoted her entire career to the betterment of children. She was a strong supporter of CASA before joining the board in 2021 and has dedicated herself to our mission wholeheartedly ever since. Thank you Camilla!



Diane Dooley

Diane has been a volunteer advocate for five years and in that time she has served 8 children on four different cases.

She brings a warm heart and caring spirit to each case she's involved in. She participates in many CASA activities outside her role as a superior advocate. Thanks Diane!



EcoLab

For many years, CASA has received Ecolab grants that assist with outreach and advertising to recruit quality volunteers throughout Rock County. The Ecolab grant committee is comprised of dedicated employees who invest a significant amount of time to learn about the mission of local non-profits and the problems they are trying to solve. Thank you EcoLab!



We are so grateful for everyone who "makes an impact" in the life of the children we serve!

Fall Festival



In October, CASA held its second annual Fall Festival at The Barn on Prairie. Families enjoyed the children's activities and adults enjoyed the live music. We raised \$37,000 to help carry out our mission and vision. Thank you to all that attended, donated, and volunteered.

Holiday Wish List



When we started the Wish-List event many years ago, we never dreamed it would grow to this level. Once again, our community has pleasantly surprised us with their generosity, giving spirit, and desire to help kids celebrate the season of giving.

With the help of nearly 50 sponsors, we were able to fulfill the Wish Lists of 74 families which included 169 children this year. Thank you to everyone who donated funds, shopped, and wrapped these holiday gifts!

Volunteer Swear-In

In 2022 CASA held three training sessions throughout the year. Before our advocates are assigned a case they have spent more than 30 hours preparing for their new role. After each 10-week training session, Judge Michael Haakenson swears in our advocates as "friends of the court." We are grateful to have so many volunteers in our community and a Judge that support our volunteers and efforts.

In 2022, we welcomed 18 new advocates.



I feel very lucky to have our CASA program. It is extremely well run. The staff and the volunteers are excellent."

-Judge Michael Haakenson



**Active
Volunteers**

51

**Volunteer
Hours**

3,219

**Children
Served**

137

CASA Volunteer Story

She was bounced from place to place never knowing what or when her time would be up where she went. She could never seem to please, never seem to be invisible enough, good enough. She was in 10 different homes, and subsequently ten different schools.

I helped her move once. All her things packed, her whole life all bundled into multiple garbage bags. That is how she felt. Like the garbage put weekly out on the street. She looks at me from the back seat and says "Kristi I don't think I will ever be adopted. They always say I have an attitude. I think I am not adoptable."

I glance back and gently say, "Honey, you are adoptable. You are worthy of a home. You are bright and kind and loving."

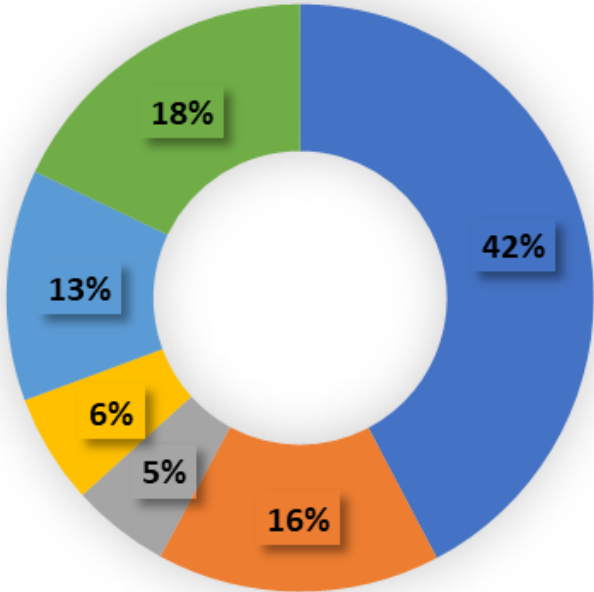
I was there when she was adopted. She was up and down emotionally that day. She snuck away for a while as everyone was congratulating her new family. I found her there sitting in the hallway by herself. The tears gently fall down her face as I start to walk away. "Kristi, thank you. I know I didn't always show it. But I am thankful for you."

As we hug and say our goodbyes I think of all we have been through. The tears, the outbursts, the laughter. It was worth it all, you know. For she found a permanent, safe and loving place to lay her head. She found a home.

Kristi Powers, CASA Volunteer

Financial Summary

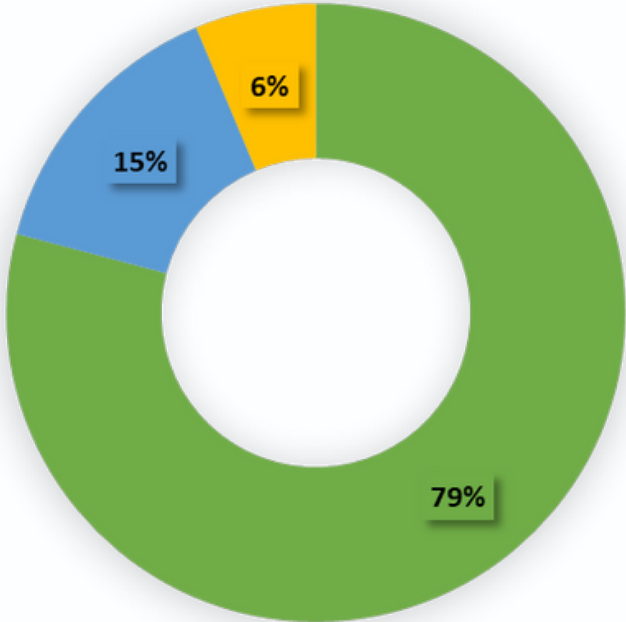
Revenue 2022



- VOCA \$216,742
- United Way \$80,004
- Rock County \$27,625
- Other Grants \$31,000
- Contributions \$65,319
- Fundraising Events \$91,818

In anticipation of cuts to federal grant funding (VOCA), we dedicated more time and energy to diversifying our revenue stream in 2022. We are proud that we increased the money received from fundraisers and contributions by 12%.

Expenses 2022



- Program \$295,092
- Management \$54,350
- Fundraising \$23,579

Staff



Welcome New Staff

Kelly Berg is a former foster parent and joined the staff as the Education and Outreach Coordinator. She lives in Milton with her husband Peter, and their three children, Kolbie, Kasey, and Nevaeh.

Lacey Sonntag, our new volunteer supervisor, has many years of experience in child welfare. She lives in Milton with her husband Jeff, and their two adorable children, Evie and Wes.



The staff had a great time in Galena for our annual retreat. We were able to recharge, reconnect and set some goals for 2023. Oh, and we just couldn't pass up the opportunity to hike with the goats.

Sandy Johnson
Executive Director
Since 2014

Kim Churchill
Advocate Supervisor
Since 2011

Nicole Engleson
Advocate Supervisor
Since 2018

Alyssa Whitney
Finance and Development
Since 2018

Lacey Sonntag
Advocate Supervisor
Since 2022

Kelly Berg
Education and Outreach
Since 2022

Grantors

Office of Crime Victim Services (VOCA)
United Way Blackhawk Region
Alliant Energy Foundation
Col. Robert Morse Foundation
Ecolab Foundation
Green Bay Packers Foundation
Hendricks Family Foundation
Janesville Rotary Foundation
Rock County
Stateline Community Foundation
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of Southern Wisconsin



Thank You!

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*We apologize to anyone we may have inadvertently omitted.

How can you help?



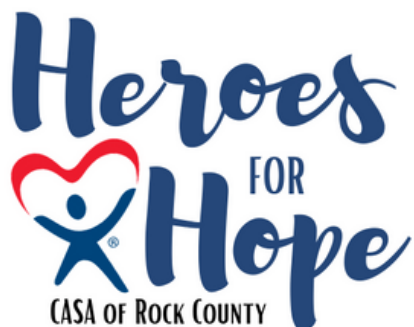
Spread the Word

Follow us and share posts on social media, tell everyone you meet about the important work we are doing, or host a Party for Purpose so we can let your friends and family know what CASA of Rock County is up to.

Volunteer

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of our program. They meet with their CASA Kiddos each week, check in with the child's school, mental health provider and other important people in their life to gather information.

Advocates use this information to share with the court the needs and best interests of children in foster care. Fill out an application on our website today!



It is because of the generous donations from our supporters that we are able to recruit, train, and supervise community advocates to speak on behalf of children that have experienced abuse or neglect in our community.

Donate

www.casarockcounty.org/donate
CASA of Rock County
51 S. Main Street - Janesville, WI 53545

Looking Ahead

April is
Child Abuse Prevention Month
join us for

PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION

Saturday, April 1 | 11 AM
Rock County Courthouse Lawn



CASA NEEDS YOU!

Spring Training
April 4 - May 23
4:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Rock County Court House



Break The Cycle

THURSDAY, MAY 18
5:30 - 8:30
ECLIPSE CENTER
\$75 PER PERSON

Mark your calendar
for **CASA of Rock**
County's third
annual

Fall Festival

SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

THE BARN ON PRAIRIE
5828 S COUNTY RD G



CASA NEEDS YOU!

Fall 2023 Advocate Training
Tuesdays
Sep. 12- Nov. 14
4:30pm - 7:00pm
Rock County Court House



**Thank you for your support in 2022!
Can't wait to see what 2023 has in store.**