

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF ROCK COUNTY





CASA of Rock County
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(608) 305-0187

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 believe in the rights and dignity of children. We are committed to putting that belief to work for children who have experienced abuse or neglect. And we hold ourselves to the highest standards of excellence in service. Across Rock County today, we serve more than 100 children. Close to 100 more children need our help.

We are there for the child. Whatever their ages, children removed from home because of abuse or neglect face a frightening, profound unknown.

We are there to help improve the lives of children and to ensure they reach safe, permanent homes and loving families. And we do.

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

Every child will have a safe and stable forever family.

OUR VALUES

- Commitment fueled by passion and persistence.
- Relationships strengthened through communication, teamwork, and mentoring.
- The integrity and credibility of our volunteers and pride in the advocacy they do.
- Measurable outcomes through continual improvement and accountability.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR



Hello Friends,

As we say good-bye to 2021 and reflect on what the year brought us, I am once again humbled by the dedication and devotion of our volunteer advocates and the steadfast support of our board, donors and friends. Together we continue to advance CASA's vital mission despite the challenges and obstacles that have come our way.

The unarguable truth is that CASA's active involvement and advocacy in the lives of children makes a positive, meaningful difference. The children we serve never asked to be on this journey. They are there through no fault of their own, and we will never fully understand the depths of their pain or the fears they face. Thankfully, we have quality, trained advocates ready to step up and help to ensure they have someone in their corner, whose sole purpose is to focus on that child and advocate for what is in their best interest, and theirs alone.

As long as we do what we believe is best for the child(ren), without prejudice or bias, we have done what we signed up for. Oftentimes, it tries our patience and breaks our hearts, but even though it's not always easy, it's rewarding to know someone is there who will be a voice for the child and keep their safety and well-being as their focal point.

In a world that is often too busy and self-serving, thank you for your belief in our mission and your commitment to our community's most vulnerable children. Your continual support is what keeps us relentless on our journey to make a positive difference in the lives of the children we are tasked to serve.

Sandy Johnson, Executive Director

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The privilege of being able to impact a child's life is one that I count as a real blessing. You can experience the joy of a child's face lighting up when you show up at their door.

- Deb McCann

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on a year overladen with many stressors, we here at CASA stay focused on the child. For over 16 years, CASA of Rock County has been advocating for children in the child welfare system. We recruit and train volunteers to help with this mission. We want the voices of the children to be heard -- for their need of safe homes, caring adults, the stability of food and shelter and good education. For their need of permanency.

As local conditions and guidelines seem to shift on a daily basis, CASA has adapted and stayed focused. We are the eyes, ears and steady hands for the children put in situations they would have never chosen for themselves. The board members are so proud of the CASA staff and volunteers who continually have a bigger and better vision for the children in need in Rock County. It is a staff that is educated and experienced in the field and cares so deeply about these children.

The board members are also so proud and grateful to our donors who make a difference every single day to meet the needs of these children, either through a monetary donation, or a donation of time or service. We can't thank you enough.

Because we are an ambitious group, we have a long list of goals for 2022! We can't wait to make them happen, with your support.

Dr. Andrea Gonstead, Board Vice President

It is not uncommon when on visits with my kids that someone else refers to me as my CASA kid's mom, to which my CASA kids are quick to state "She's not my mom, she's my friend!" That always brings a smile to my face and reminds me of the importance of my relationship is with these kids.

-Lacey Sonntag, CASA Volunteer

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City of Janesville

Vice President

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Gonstead Chiropractic Clinic

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Branden Jackson

Sauk Valley Bank

Camilla Owen

Retired, Janesville School District

Deb McCann

Retired, Beloit School District

Jonathan Fox Haines

Data Dimensions

PINWHEELS FOR PREVENTION

HOLIDAY WISH LIST



In 2021, we were able to resume our annual Pinwheels for Prevention event and the weather couldn't have been better! In addition to the planting of 3,000 pinwheels at the courthouse, blue kiddos were planted throughout the community to remind our community that April is Child Abuse Prevention month symbolizing the importance of communities working together to create safe kids, strong families and a thriving community.



Once again, we were overwhelmed by the generosity and support we received from the community for the Holiday Wish List Gift Drive. We didn't think it was possible to top 2020, but we did! Collecting personalized gifts for over 150 kids involved with the Rock County Child Welfare System made their holidays brighter! We would like to extend our thanks to all the businesses and individuals who donated.

Thank you... ❤️



FALL FESTIVAL

Goodbye summer, hello fall! In early October 2021, we kicked off our first annual Fall Festival at the Looking Glass in downtown Janesville, featuring the great musical talent of Mr. Nelson's Neighborhood, Colin Brockwell, and Over the Limit. With proceeds from beer sales, raffle baskets, and some amazing pre-sale raffle items, we raised over \$16,000 in unrestricted funds for the program. Thank you to our wonderful sponsors and all the donors and volunteers that made this event an outstanding success!



“Great event and even better cause!”
- Holly Gackstetter

CASA IMPACT AWARDS

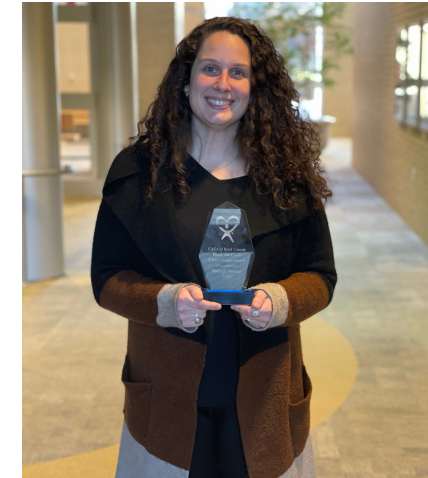
For the second consecutive year, we were unable to host our annual Break the Cycle Luncheon but we still bestowed some extraordinary volunteers and ardent supporters with CASA Impact Awards. In 2021 we recognized:

- Twila Garza, Court Appointed Special Advocate, for her devotion to the children she has served, cultivating a strong bond with the family and assisting with their successful reunification.
- Haleigh Thomas, Initial Assessment Worker at CPS, for her admirable outlook, responsiveness to workers and foster parents, and demonstrating and sharing in a true team approach.
- Lori Stottler, CASA Board President, for believing strongly in contributing her talents to help others for the betterment of our community.
- The United Way Blackhawk Region, funding partner, for its dedication to helping local non-profits serve our most vulnerable community members and their tireless engagement to advance the greater good for those who need it most.

We cannot thank these individuals and businesses enough for all they do for CASA and the hundreds of children we serve in Rock County.



TWILA GARZA



HALEIGH THOMAS



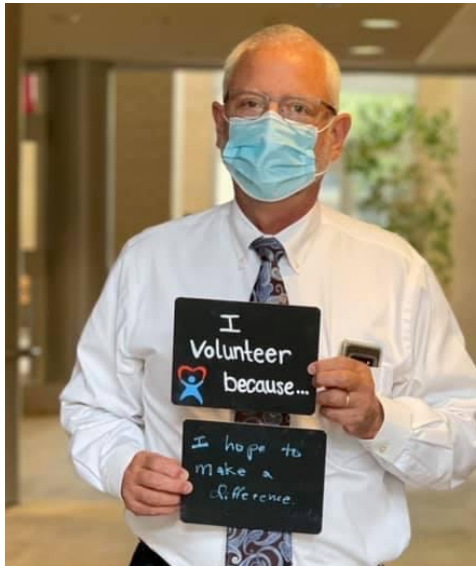
LORI STOTTLER



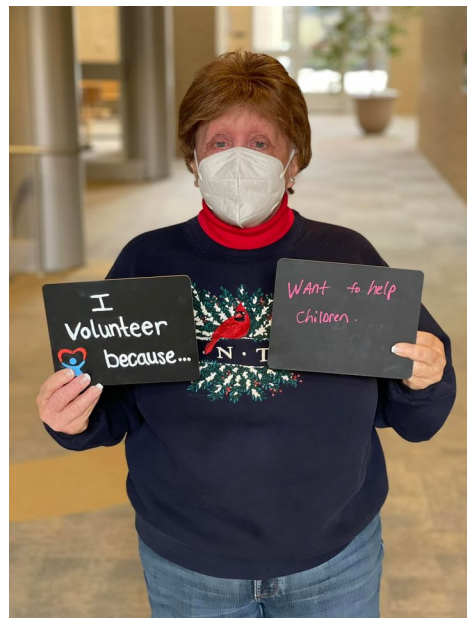
**UNITED WAY
BLACKHAWK REGION**

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2021 ASSIGNED CASA VOLUNTEERS



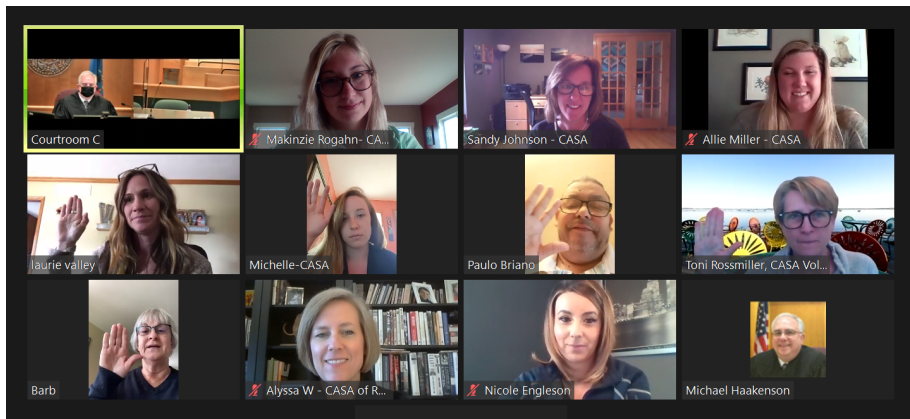
Words can not express our gratitude for all the volunteers who dedicate their time and efforts to helping the youth of the foster care system. These amazing volunteers greatly contribute to the push for better care and the best interests of the children in Rock County. Our volunteers can sometimes be the only constant part of the children's lives as they advocate for their wants and needs. These volunteers provide a friendship, giving them someone they can trust and rely on when they need support. Having this support can - and does - make a great difference in a child's life. We are so grateful for their commitment and we want to give them a huge THANK YOU for everything they do!



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Belinda Bauer | Tammy Kontny |
| Julie Brady | Renee Kuehne |
| Barbara Buhrow | Colleen Logterman |
| Kianna Byrd | Kath Magee |
| Marlene Bysted | Bambi Matzke |
| Tara Chapman | Deb McCann |
| Barb Craddick | Kelly McGuire |
| Kimberly Dennis | Roy Meyer |
| Daniel Dibbert | Stephanie Michiels |
| Diane Dooley | Donna Oliver |
| Erin Evertt | Toni Rossmiller |
| Jaleesa Ferris | Verna Saladino |
| Meagen Flood | Sid Schwartz |
| Jon Flora | Meghan Snare |
| Karen Foley Stauss | Lacey Sonntag |
| Ken Forbeck | Amanda Stefl |
| Nancy Forbeck | Shawna Stevenoski |
| Jane Foreman | Silvia Thiele |
| Twila Garza | Anne Tillett |
| Kayla Guercio | Angel Tullar |
| Jamie Gwaltney | Laurie Valley |
| D Hahn | Ellen Vierthaler |
| Suzanne Hamilton | Jon Wangerin |
| Katlyn Hanover | Dakota White |
| Karyssa Heppner | Lynn Wood |
| Michelle Johnston | |

SWEAR-IN

Swearing in our new volunteer advocates as a "friend of the court" always gives us a feeling of pride! We are grateful for all the support we receive from the county and Judge Michael Haakenson, as we welcomed 15 new volunteers to the CASA family.



"I would tell anyone considering joining the CASA effort that it is a well-run organization of dedicated staff and volunteers focused on helping children when they need it most. You'll get thorough training and support from smart and caring supervisors. And along the way, you'll make a difference in the lives of children who need help."

- Sid Schwartz, CASA Volunteer

APPRECIATION DINNER



2021 DEMOGRAPHICS

CHILDREN SERVED

110

ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

54

NEW VOLUNTEERS

15

VOLUNTEER SERVICE HOURS

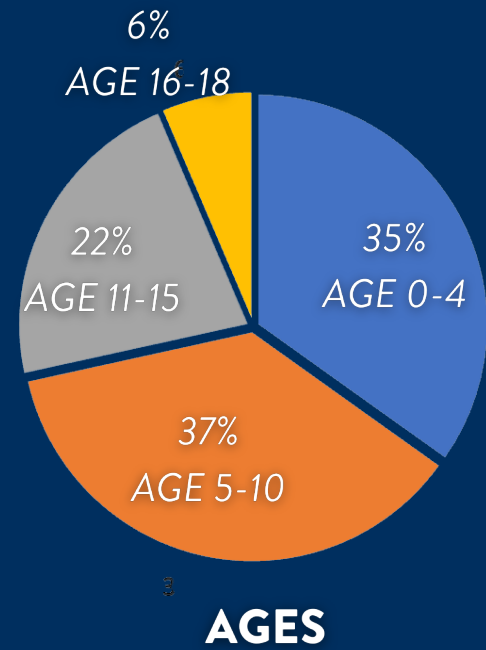
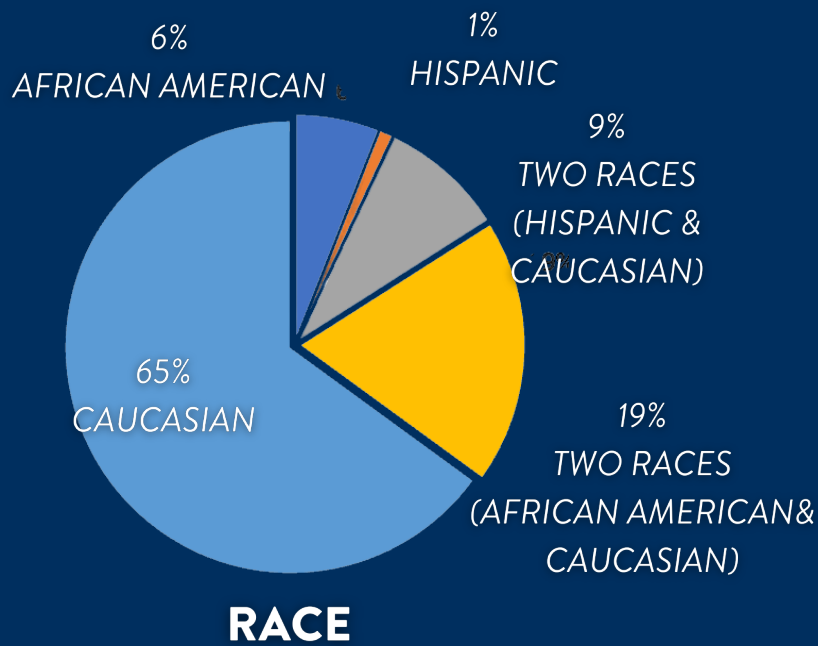
3,274

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact the number of volunteer advocates, both through attrition and a reduction in the number of applicants in training. We also saw fewer children come through the court system in 2020 and 2021 because vulnerable children had less contact with mandatory reporters such as teachers.



NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON OUR WAITLIST

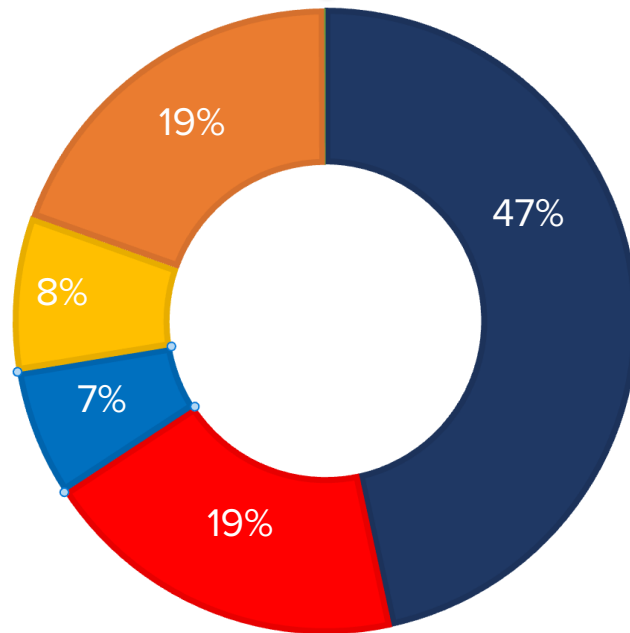
62



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

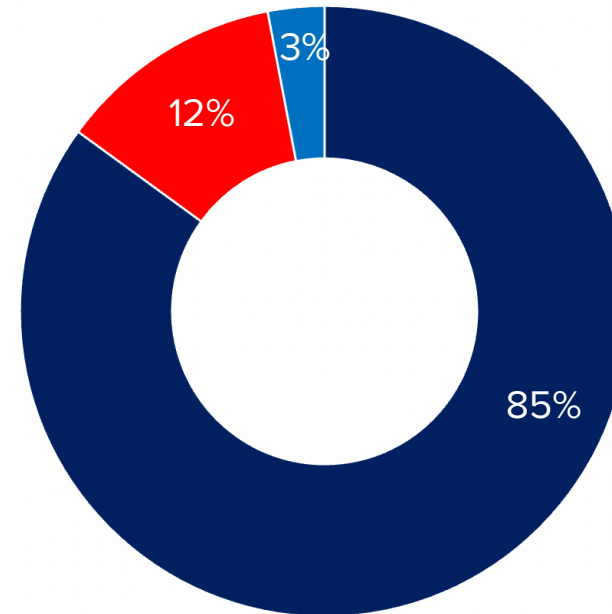
REVENUE 2021

- VOCA
\$194,103
- United Way
\$79,996
- Rock County
\$27,625
- Other Grants
\$33,500
- Fundraising and Contributions
\$81,248
- Other/Misc.
\$273



EXPENDITURES 2021

- Program
\$299,126
- Administrative
\$43,363
- Fundraising
\$11,757



"I have been a CASA since my training completion in spring 2021. I remember being a child taken from a parent struggling with substance abuse and how confusing things were. I wanted to make a difference and advocate for kids like myself but didn't know how. I was so nervous about working with kids and thought I would be overwhelmed. I was so wrong! I am working with three kids and I am so excited when it is time to see them. They make me feel like a kid again. I hope more volunteers join us at CASA!"

- Michelle Johnston

STAFF

Sandy Johnson

Executive Director

Kim Churchill

Child Advocacy Support
Supervisor

Nicole Engleson, MSW

Child Advocacy Supervisor

Allie Miller

Child Advocacy Supervisor

Alyssa Whitney

Administrative and Development
Specialist

Makinzie Rogahn

Outreach and Education
Coordinator



Child Abuse Prevention Month
CASA of Rock County

Welcome Back Allie Miller!

We are so happy that Allie Miller decided to come back to CASA. Her passion for children, criminal justice background, and wonderful personality, will make her a great volunteer supervisor!

Farewell to Kortney Karnok and Makinzie Rogahn

Saying goodbye is never easy, but we wish Kortney and Makinzie the best that life has to offer. All of us at CASA will miss them tremendously!



GRANTORS AND SPONSORS

GRANTS

- Alliant Energy
- Ecolab Foundation
- Janesville Generations Fund of the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin
- Office of Crime Victim Services (VOCA)
- Rock County
- United Way Blackhawk Region



BUSINESSES

- Alongi Santas Moss
- Angus-Young Associates, Inc.
- Apple Hut
- Bellasazi Salon
- Beloit Health Systems Dialysis Staff
- Blackhawk Community Credit Union
- Coldwell Banker Commercial
- McGuire Mears & Assoc.
- Cowley's Family Food, Inc.
- East Point Sportz Pub
- Educators Credit Union
- Festival Foods
- First Class Cosmetology
- Guzman's Supermarket
- Janesville Renaissance Faire
- Johnson Financial Group
- Looking Glass
- Old National Bancorp
- Olive You Create and Shoppe
- PACE, Inc.
- Play Monster
- Sam's Club
- Timber Hill Winery
- Velocity Multi-Sport and Cycling
- Wisconsin Distributors

Thank You!

The pride of our volunteer advocates goes beyond the walls of the courthouse. We are so lucky to have advocates that raise awareness of the need for CASAs in the workplace too!



INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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Alyssa Whitney and Dan Schooff
H Randolph Williams
Cathi Wnuk
Sharon Wolter
Lynn Wood

*We apologize for anyone we may have missed



HOW CAN YOU HELP?



VOLUNTEER

Our volunteers are the heart and soul of the CASA program! Volunteers get to know the child by spending time with their CASA kiddos. They further get to know the children by talking with everyone in their lives. Volunteers also have constant communication with their supervisors to assist them with their cases. They use the information they gather to inform the court of what the children need and want and what is in their best interests for them at that time. Be a Superhero, be an Advocate! Apply now on our website.



DONATE

Support CASA of Rock County by making a one-time or monthly donation. Your sustained support helps us advocate for more children in need. Join our Heroes for Hope monthly giving program! Learn more about our Heroes for Hope monthly giving program and how to donate online.

www.CASARockCounty.org

STAY CONNECTED:

Search for CASA of Rock County on these social media platforms



SPREAD THE WORD

We need people to help create awareness and promote who we are and what we do. This can be done through "liking" our social media pages and sharing posts, posting event notices, or inviting us to speak at an organization or club. To help promote CASA and raise funds, we put on various fundraising events throughout the year, and we could always use extra help!

