



# Change a Child's Story

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**





# Mission Statement

## MISSION

Child Advocates – Denver CASA's mission is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in Denver Juvenile Court through the services of specially selected and trained community volunteers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

## VISION

Our vision is that all children will have a life-long connection with caring adults, a permanent home and a safe and nurturing environment where they can thrive because every child has this right.

## OUR PROMISE

Children and youth who have experienced abuse or neglect are among the most vulnerable populations in America. A child in foster care may have faced physical, psychological or emotional trauma and years of uncertainty as they wait to go home, be adopted or simply see what happens next. All that chaos has long-term effects. Young people who have spent time in foster care are more likely to face incarceration, homelessness and unemployment. They are less likely to graduate high school and more likely to be victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

There is a simple and effective solution: A CASA Volunteer. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. A CASA Volunteer is a trained community member who acts as an agent of the court. They work directly with the professionals on the case to make sure that the best interests of the children and youth they serve are always front-and-center. A young person who has a CASA Volunteer has the best chance of a successful outcome.

## DEAR FRIENDS

What does it mean to change a child's story? In the world of child welfare, we often talk about adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The more ACEs a person has by the time they turn 18, the more likely they are to have negative physical and mental health outcomes later in life. However, experts in the field also talk about the fact that just one consistent and engaged adult can make a difference in a child's life and their ability to mitigate those negative health outcomes. We know that creating positive memories for a child are important to their future health. According to researcher Christina Bethell, every moment matters – whether a child is in school, at the doctor's office or in the community – positive interactions with adults help buffer the effects of negative childhood trauma. Positive experiences help build resilience, and that is the crux of the CASA program.

Child Advocates – Denver CASA is committed to advocating for the best interest of all children, and that best interest is a happy, healthy, safe future. When you read this report and see the statistics about our program, think about what 2,944 visits with CASA Volunteers mean to those children and to the future of our community. When a teen runs away from her group home and only calls her CASA to check in and let her know she is safe, we know the CASA Volunteer is helping to change her story. When two CASA Volunteers arranged to come to the holiday party at the same time so their kiddos cousins, could see each other and celebrate the holidays, we know those CASA Volunteers are helping to change childrens' stories.

CASA Volunteers are the lifeblood of the organization. We recognize that our volunteer base needs to be more diverse. In 2019, Denver CASA increased the number of volunteer trainings and varied the dates and times to accommodate the schedules of busy people in an effort to diversify our volunteer base. As a result, we had one of our largest recruitment years in history. We know we have more to do to increase the representation of people of color in our volunteers and look forward to continuing the hard work that we have started.

Being a CASA Volunteer is much more than being a friend or a mentor- CASA Volunteers advocate in the schools, courts, child welfare system and impact the day to day lives of children. We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who makes this work possible, our donors, supporters and volunteers.

Together, we can change a child's story.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caitlin McHugh".

Caitlin McHugh  
Board President

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Silverman".

Karen Silverman  
Executive Director





288  
VOLUNTEERS



11,470  
HOURS OF  
SERVICE



TO  
540  
CHILDREN



TRAVELING  
OVER  
87,000  
MILES



AND MAKING  
2,944  
CONTACTS WITH  
THE CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH  
THEY SERVE



# Volunteer Spotlight

## NAN CLYDESDALE



Nan Clydesdale has been a CASA Volunteer since May, 2009, during which time we have witnessed her dedication, as well as her impact on the young people in our community. It may sound cheesy, but Nan is very special to us here at Denver CASA.

A CASA Volunteer for over 10 years, Nan brings many incredible talents to her work as a volunteer. She is a former educator, as well as a former lawyer, and both skill sets serve her well in her work with our CASA youth and volunteers. In her personal CASA cases, Nan chooses to work with older youth, with a soft spot for young women who have struggled educationally. She has also acted as a Peer Coordinator, a seasoned volunteer who coaches other CASA Volunteers. This year, she was a Peer Coordinator on a uniquely challenging case and stepped in as a CASA Volunteer to provide individual attention to a young man who needed it when it was too much for just one volunteer to juggle. In both of her roles, Nan's advocacy is guided by genuine kindness, understanding, and balance.

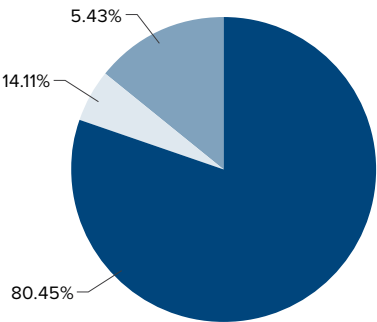
Nan has truly been a gift to our program. She has touched this community through her relationships, advocacy, and guidance as a CASA Volunteer and/or Peer Coordinator on 13 cases. For her, compassion is a way of being, not just something she taps into every once in a while. Her love for learning almost rivals her love for people, and she has a smile that is impossible not to return. Nan embodies the CASA vision statement by building lasting relationships with young people, while using her vast experience to guide CASAs to advocate for safe, permanent situations for children as a Peer Coordinator. It is for these reasons, and so many more, that Denver CASA presented Nan with our 2019 Catalyst for CASA award in recognition of outstanding service.





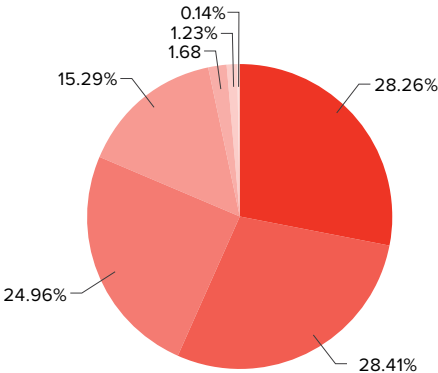
# Financials

Without the support of individuals, foundations, corporations, and government we would be unable to serve the children in our community. We extend our deepest gratitude to our partners who share the Child Advocates – Denver CASA mission and successes. For more information on how to support Denver CASA, visit our website at [www.denvercasa.org](http://www.denvercasa.org)



### USE OF FUNDS:

Program Services. ....	\$ 679,599
Management. ....	\$ 45,868
Fundraising. ....	\$ 119,187
<b>Total expenses: .....</b>	<b>\$ 844,654</b>



### SOURCES OF REVENUE:

Individuals/Corporations. ....	\$ 247,244
Fundraising & Events. ....	\$ 248,560
Government. ....	\$ 218,435
Foundations & Community Groups. ....	\$ 133,842
In-Kind Contributions. ....	\$ 14,758
Net investment income. ....	\$ 10,799
Other Income. ....	\$ 1,244
<b>Total support and revenue. ....</b>	<b>\$ 874,882</b>





# Will You Leave a Legacy?

For over two decades, Child Advocates – Denver CASA has been working on behalf of Denver’s most vulnerable children. You can help shape our future by making a gift in your will, trust, life insurance policy or other planned gift. It’s easy to do and will leave a lasting legacy to help support children in Denver well into the future.

In 2018, the first endowment was created by generous donors Linda Murakami, Joseph Davis, and Jennifer and Shawn Barker. By creating the Catalyst for CASA Endowment, they took the first steps to ensure Denver CASA’s stability and sustainability. You can join them by arranging for your own legacy gift. We encourage you to contact your financial advisor or attorney to discuss the best legacy gift for you.

If you have already created a legacy gift, please let us know. We’d love to thank you now! We will work hard to carry forward your legacy of compassion for Denver’s children.

**For additional information about planned giving, please contact**

**Karen Silverman,  
Executive Director,  
at 303-832-4592 or  
[ksilverman@denvercasa.org](mailto:ksilverman@denvercasa.org)**





*Being a CASA Volunteer gives me profound gratification. Since my appointment to the case, the child I advocate for has rotated through two case workers, two guardians ad litem, six therapists, two youth advocates, three schools, two residential facilities, and five homes. Throughout it all, I am the only constant. There have been times the judge altered the direction of the case based on my perspective. And while it is rewarding to know my advocacy makes a difference for the child's future, nothing compares to seeing the look in her eye and knowing my faithfulness makes a difference in her "now".*

**—LINDSAY ELLIS**

*Being a CASA Volunteer through Denver CASA has afforded me the opportunity to give back to my community while also giving a voice to some of the most vulnerable in our community. While the nature of the role can be heartbreaking at times, it is rewarding to be able to show love and support while making an impact in a child's life. I appreciate that organizations such as Denver CASA exist in order to provide such a critical point of view.*

**—BROOKE HILLER**

*I have wanted for years to volunteer my time as a CASA Volunteer, and only in the last few years have the stars aligned to make that possible in my life. As a student of social work, a mother, a former doula, as well as other positions of serving families, I feel that CASA has opened my heart and eyes to more than I expected. The amazing and heart centered staff, the resources, the understanding, the families, children, learning opportunities and training have all furthered my work as a social worker and a human being. The giving and joy of being a CASA Volunteer is a two way street, and I have received far beyond measure by giving my time as a CASA Volunteer.*

**—JULIE CONRADT**



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# Home Sweet Hope



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DENVER CASA**



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