



2014IMPACTREPORT  
CASA OF THE RIVER REGION





## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

CASA celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2014 and what a milestone year! As an organization, we reflected on the impact CASA has made in the lives of more than 9,000 children who were paired with a trained volunteer who cared about them and their wellbeing. It was also the year we served the largest number of children to date—559 children with 187 volunteers. Despite this success, there were approximately 400 cases we were appointed that were not served because there just were not enough volunteers. Our vision is simple, to pair a CASA with every child we are appointed. We endeavor to climb this challenge because we know that a CASA makes a difference in the life of a child.

Our story continues as we embark on another 30 years of igniting the passion of a generous community to fill the gaps where so many children fall. CASA's impact would not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of all our volunteers, staff, donors, and supporters. We are very grateful to be a long standing institution that partners with a compassionate community who love their children. Nelson Mandela said it best, "there can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children." It is because of you and your willingness and courage to lift up the lost, broken and hopeless children that we are able to achieve great things. "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" (Sir Isaac Newton). Our children can stand because of YOU, the GIANTS, who fight for them to live free from fear, live with hope and to trust in the goodness of others. I am continually humbled by your generosity. Thank you from all of us at CASA for being our Giants.

**WILLIAM MYERS, CASA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**





## A MESSAGE FROM SALLY ERNY (CASA'S 1ST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR)

When CASA became part of the community 30 years ago, we had no idea the extent to which the program would grow and positively impact the lives of thousands of abused and neglected children. In its first year, the CASA Project of Jefferson County served 72 children with 26 volunteers on an operating budget of under \$29,000. Last year, CASA of the River Region served 559 children with 187 volunteers on a \$500,000 budget.

In the Louisville community, the CASA program is an established presence and trusted partner advocating for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court. With growth into Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble counties, CASA of the River Region ensures exponentially more children are paired with a high quality, trained volunteer.

Traditionally, growth is celebrated and we are celebrating ours. Unfortunately, the CASA program's growth means more children are being abused and neglected. In 1984, the Kentucky Bureau of Social Services documented 32,898 reports of child abuse and neglect with 14,475 of those being substantiated. Last year, the Kentucky Annual Report of Child Fatalities and Near Fatalities logged 64,393 reports of abuse and neglect with almost 20,000 of those cases being substantiated.

Despite the grim statistics, CASA of the River Region has successfully grown and thrived, overcoming increased demand, economic downturns, and funding shortages that have been experienced in the past three decades. Safety and security don't just happen; they are the result of collective consensus and public investment. "We owe our children, the most vulnerable citizens in our society, a life free of violence and fear" (Nelson Mandela).

Today, I have the privilege of working for the National CASA Association and am witness to the incredible impact 76,000 volunteers working through over 900 CASA programs have on over 251,000 abused and neglected children across the country. I have spent my last 30 years committed to and advancing the CASA mission and am inspired by the time and outstanding efforts selflessly given by every CASA volunteer. It is with humbling gratitude that I thank you for continuing your commitment to best interest advocacy for our community's most vulnerable children that we began 30 years ago. Each and every one of YOU is truly for the child.

## SALLY WILSON ERNY, CASA OF THE RIVER REGION, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (1985-1997)



# VOLUNTEER

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## VOICES

### JANIE NORRIS: 20 YEARS

The greatest joy of being a CASA for so long is seeing my former CASA children grow up. I have seen my former children go on and be the first person from their family to graduate from high school. I have even seen some graduate from college. Seeing my former children succeed is why I am still a CASA.

Four times I have thought that I would take a break from being a CASA, but every time I try to stop, I see a case that brings me back. I feel for these children and am overjoyed when a family comes back together.



### CARMEN RIGGS: 1 YEAR

I was surprised by how busy family court was. When I first joined CASA, I thought that the children would have more attention from the state, but often, they don't. The state is overburdened and lack of funding prevents them from adequately dealing with all of their cases. As a CASA, however, I have been able to give my children the attention they need. I spend time with them to make sure they are taken care of.

I picked this case to be my first because I thought it would be "easy." But, I learned quickly. As I got deeper into the case, I kept finding new layers. While this case has been harder than I expected, it has been more enjoyable too. With every new layer I find, I feel like I can better help my child.

## JOANN POTTS: 16 YEARS

The greatest lesson I have learned from being a CASA is to not prejudice anyone. I have found out that every situation is different and must be approached in a unique way. You must take the time to really get to know the people you are helping so that you can truly make a difference.

## LUANN GALBRAITH: 3 YEARS

I was surprised by how much my input meant. For example, when the children [were going to be split up], I told the judge that, the youngest child would be best placed with the family friends so she can still be close to her siblings. My testimony was taken seriously and the children remained close in proximity.

When I first volunteered for CASA, I didn't know much about the organization. Despite my background in social work, I had never worked with CASA. As a CASA volunteer, it has been a great experience where I truly feel like I fit in.

## PEGGY BUECHLER: 21 YEARS

I have had two long cases; one was six years long and the other was 10 years. During both of those cases, the children changed foster parents, social workers, and therapists many times. I was the ONLY person with those children the whole time. Those children came to depend on me as the only constant adult in their lives.

LISTENING makes a big difference. I try not only to listen to the children, but to anyone else that is involved in their lives, whether that is a mother, a father or someone else. By listening, I can truly understand their needs and how I can help them.

## KIM BREWER: 1.5 YEARS

I had worked with adults in troubling situations before, but not with children. I really wanted to work with children because the problems the adults had [sprung] from their childhood. I wanted to help children, so they could be fully functioning adults.

Being a CASA has been a lot harder than I thought. It has been more effort and more challenging, but it has been 100 times more rewarding. Especially when I see the happiness on a child's face after I gave them a shoulder to lean on. It is one of the most rewarding feelings. I know I am helping change a child's life. It lifts me up as much as it lifts up the child.



WE MAKE A LIVING BY WHAT WE GET,  
BUT WE MAKE A LIFE BY  
WHAT WE GIVE.



- ❖ 95 PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEERS INTERVIEWED
- ❖ 73 COMPLETED ADVOCATE TRAINING
- ❖ 62 TOOK ON A CHILD'S CASE
- ❖ 136 ADDITIONAL CHILDREN SERVED



# IMPACT STORIES

“We didn’t have a real home. Some places we stayed in weren’t that clean. I moved schools a lot, but I didn’t go to school much. My mom told me I didn’t need to go. I don’t think she thought school was important. I didn’t know if she thought I was important. I met [my CASA], a nice lady. She spent time with me. After awhile, my mom said that I should go to school. I was so happy when she would make me go, maybe she did care.”

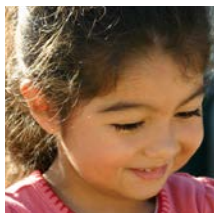
Thanks to the CASA, mom learned the importance of school and how it works. Mom became less stressed because she didn’t have to watch her child all day. With her new view of education, her child in her care. The child is doing much better in school, is happier and feels more secure overall.



**CASA SERVED 559 CHILDREN WITH 187 VOLUNTEERS.**

“My mom died and my dad couldn’t handle all 3 of us without her. Sometimes he would get angry and then hit us. We were taken away, but the worst was my two brothers were sent to a different home. I was scared and sad. But, [my CASA] would pick me up and we would drive to their house and pick them up too. She would take all of us to fun places, like the zoo or park. It was only because of her that we saw each other.”

The CASA advocated for the children to be reunited. Her presence and persistence finally got the children reunited and living under one roof. Their case is still open, but they are healing together.



YOU

“My dad was strict. If we did anything he didn’t like, we knew we had it coming. So, they took me away and I got to live with my grandparents. People kept talking about where I should go, but no one ever asked me. [My CASA] was the only one who ever spent time with me. He took me fishing and even went to see my school concert. I thought maybe if I tell him, he would listen.”

The CASA learned that the child wanted to stay with grandparents and is helping them get permanent custody. The child is doing very well under their care.



ARE

“Daddy drank a lot and so I had to live with grandma. [My CASA] would take me out to eat and play in the park. She told me her job was to make sure I had some fun and that I was safe. Daddy said he got better and the judge said we could go home with him. But it wasn’t better. He was drinking and this time no one knew. I asked Grandma to tell [my CASA]. I’m back with grandma and I really like it.”

After father regained custody, the Cabinet closed the case. CASA cases remain open several weeks to months after the Cabinet closes a case to ensure safety and stability. The CASA learned of the father’s relapse and was able to have the child placed in a safe environment immediately.



THE

“My sister and I had to live with another couple. They were nice. They had a nice house and they both worked. We never had to worry about where we would sleep or what and if we were going to eat. [Our CASA] is very nice. She told us that she would be there for us. My sister was always different and [our CASA] noticed it too. She told me that she used to be a teacher and she had kids just like my sister in her class. She helped me and my sister and now we are both doing really good in school. Oh, that nice couple, they adopted us too!”

The children were removed from the home due to neglect. Parental rights were terminated and the children were adopted by the foster parents. The CASA, a former school teacher, recognized the signs of autism in one of the children. After a formal diagnosis, special education services were established and both girls are thriving in school.



CHANGE

# ANNUAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

## ASSETS

Cash.....	\$519,517
Grants & Contributions Receivable .....	\$6,545
Unconditional Promises to Give.....	\$27,967
Prepaid Expenses .....	\$736
Improvements & Equipment, Net.....	\$599,793
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$1,154,555</b>

## LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES: Accounts Payable .....	\$7,091
NET ASSETS: Restricted.....	\$1,119,498
NET ASSETS Temporarily Restricted.....	\$27,967
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Net Assets .....</b>	<b>\$1,154,555</b>

## REVENUE

Grants & Contributions .....	\$529,987
Investment Income .....	\$5,079
Special Events (net).....	\$200,999
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>768,170</b>

## EXPENSES

Program Services.....	\$480,329
General & Administrative .....	\$46,930
Fundraising .....	\$38,282
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$565,540</b>

# FINANCIALS

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## 2014





# Casa 2014





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