



CASA MATTERS

ANNUAL REPORT

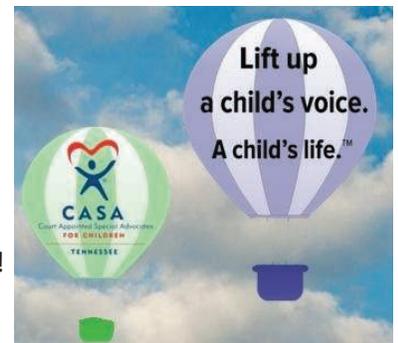
Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) provides a network across the United States of nearly 1,000 programs which support, train and recruit volunteers who serve abused and neglected children. The mission of CASA of the Tennessee Heartland, which serves Anderson, Blount and Scott Counties, is to empower volunteers to advocate on behalf of abused and neglected children in



juvenile court. Through their work, volunteers present recommendations to Juvenile Court Judges for necessary services and appropriate placement for the children we serve.

CASA believes that every child deserves a safe and permanent home in which they can thrive and become their best possible selves. Children in foster care are often the lost children in our justice system, having no voice in decisions that are made for them which leads to a negative self-identity. Best Possible Self is rooted in the belief that every child can reach their full potential with proper guidance and support from someone they trust and respect. Our CASA volunteers work diligently to get to know each child as a person (and not as a case file) their likes and dislikes, future plans and dreams and are passionate about speaking up on behalf of these children to give them hope, a voice and a future. This year, we

implemented an aggressive recruiting plan which led to an increase of 10 new volunteers between our 3 counties which will allow us to advocate for 25 new kids! We are passionate about our mission and will not rest until every child in our community who needs a CASA has one! Thank you for your support of our program and dedication to our CASA kids!



Keshu Snipe

Executive Director,
CASA of the Tennessee Heartland

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our 12th Annual Barbecue and Bluegrass Bash was held on February 20th at 205 Main in Clinton and featured American Idol Finalist Janelle Arthur.



The event was filled with great food,

fine music with Janelle and the Ridge City Ramblers, as well as silent and live auctions.

We held our inaugural CASAblanca event in Maryville on March 5th. Guests enjoyed delicious Mediterranean style food, a belly dancer, henna



tattoos, live piano music and silent auction hosted by CJ of 106.1 The River.

Our Scott County Sportsman Showcase was held on May 7 and featured Travis T-Bone Turner, co-host of Michael Waddell's Bone Collector TV show on the OutdoorChannel. Travis served

as our host helping to raise more than \$10,000 for our program.



WHAT DOES BEING A CASA MEAN?

The following is a story about one of our CASA Volunteers.

Like many people these days, my husband and I made the decision to embrace a new opportunity and move to a new city and state...this time as empty nesters. Mark had been offered a wonderful job in Oak Ridge and we found ourselves leaving a place where we had planted roots. We were crazy happy in that place but with both our children married and living out of the country, we saw this as our own adventure. I left my job directing an early childhood program and I looked forward to some time of peace and quiet under the title of "not currently employed" or as I liked to describe it "retired". But soon after the pictures were hung and I had painted all the walls I cared to paint, I found myself with a brand new challenge...time!

In my past life I had professionally helped families navigate the preschool years. My job gave me the amazing opportunity to really get to know families; not just children but moms, dads, step-parents, mamaws, papaws, nannies, and therapists. The program had financial resources to help families when they found themselves in crisis. It was a very rewarding part of my job and I quickly noticed that I missed that element more than I expected. The awareness of joy that this brought to my life was a major factor in my search for a new endeavor.



With my private quest for soul fulfillment activities in full swing, I noticed I heard the word CASA on several occasions. That word came up in conversations. I knew basically what CASA was about, but I had many questions. I needed to know more about the CASA role and I needed time to figure out if I had the backbone to do this kind of work. It was a conversation with a new friend that led me to call the CASA office and make an appointment. My new friend does volunteer work at the Children's Hospital in the Oncology Department. I told her how much I admired her work and that I wasn't sure I could handle volunteering there. She said, "Lee, it's not about you. It's about those kids!" WOW! She was right. Her words empowered me.

I still chose not to volunteer at the hospital but my perspective on if I could handle being a CASA totally changed. I could use my years of experience and hopefully make a difference. I also realized that my search for MY soul to be fulfilled was off course. Remember, this isn't about me! My soul calls me to love others. To love and serve the least of these. There are few things in this world more heart wrenching than children who are going through an extremely difficult time. They need someone to care enough to speak up for them. They need someone with perspective. They need someone who can see down the road a piece and put things into place that will help them grow into healthy individuals. They need me. They need you.

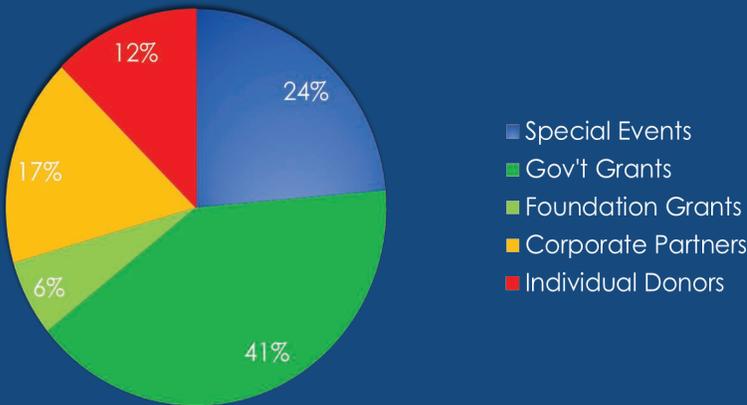
Lee McClure, CASA of the TN Heartland

HOW YOU CAN HELP CASA

- If you know someone who would be a good volunteer, send us their information!
- Invite us to come and speak at your church or civic group.
- Consider making a donation in honor of a friend or family member in lieu of a holiday gift.
- Attend or volunteer to help us with an upcoming event.
- Engage your business with volunteer recruitment for CASA.
- Host a "give back" night for CASA— contact us for more information!

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Funding Sources



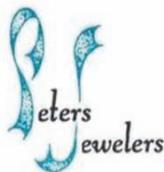
Thanks to continuous financial support, CASA of the Tennessee Heartland is making tremendous strides toward serving every child who needs an advocate. Notable areas of funding include our Corporate Partners, Government Grants and Special Events, totaling 82% of our 2015-16 budget of \$215,000. This shows the communities in our three counties of service - Anderson, Scott, and Blount - understand the importance of the CASA mission. CASA is able to devote 79% of income received to direct program support, which includes recruiting, training and supporting volunteer advocates. In order to increase the program by the necessary 85 volunteers needed to eradicate the waiting list of over 300 children, CASA will need to increase operations by just over \$100,000.

CASA, and more importantly, the children, are most grateful for your continued support in ensuring that every hurting child has a voice.

Kent Strunk
Treasurer of the
CASA Board of Directors



"Linking Technology to Solutions"



STRATEGIC SUMMARY

Message from the President:

I am amazed at all that our organization accomplished last year. Our talented staff worked tirelessly to raise awareness in our communities to reach more potential volunteers so that we could serve more children. Because of their dedication, we added 10 new volunteers who served 25 more children, which brought us to a total of 285 children served in our 3 counties. We made progress but there are still over 300 children on our waiting list. These children will wait... They will wait until we can recruit and train more volunteers, they will wait for the services they need, they will wait for someone who can spend time getting to know them, and they will wait for the voice in the courtroom to speak up for them. We know that children with a CASA advocate are more likely to find a safe, permanent home with better outcomes than children without a CASA. For this reason alone, we cannot rest until we are able to provide an advocate to every child who needs one.



We know that we can reach more children. We have a goal of assuring every abused child in our three-county region has someone in their corner. With the help of our friends and neighbors, that goal can be reached. We have a big hairy audacious goal to increase our budget by \$100,000 in order to recruit and train 85 new volunteers to represent those 300 waiting children. With the cost of \$730 per child we can help break the cycle of abuse and neglect that we see repeated so often in the juvenile court system. But we can't do it alone. We need your help. With your gift of \$730 we can provide an advocate for a child. What a small price to pay for the safety and security of our children. We can also use your support in helping us to reach more potential volunteers, by inviting us to speak at your church or civic organization. Anyone can be a CASA and no special skills are required. You just need to care about our most precious and treasured resource-our children.

Let us know how you can help. We need you and our children need you.

With deepest appreciation,

John Willis,
President of the CASA Board of Directors



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF THE TENNESSEE
HEARTLAND

Program Offices:

Anderson County
100 N. Main St, Rm 115
Clinton TN 37716

Scott County
575 Scott High Drive
Huntsville, TN 37756

Blount County
391 Court St. Rm 212
Maryville, TN 37801

CASA of the TN Heartland
12 Van Hicks Rd.
PO Box 4426 Oak Ridge, TN 37830

NON PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
KNOXVILLE, TN
PERMIT #475

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President
President-elect
Treasurer
Secretary

John Willis
Jeremy Shipp
Kent Strunk
Stephanie Zuleger

Cheryl Cribbet
Karen Henson
Alayne Bowman
Sue Byrne
Kim Harmon
Ron Shelton

SAVE THE DATE

Evening with the Arts
October 14, 2016

CASAblanca
2017

Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash
2017

Sportsman Showcase
2017

STAFF

Executive Director: Kesha Shipe
Operations Director: Maura Vespie
Advocate Coordinators:
Anderson County: Nancy Chrisman
Blount County: Tiffany White
Scott County: Christy Harness

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

