

# Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. FY17 Annual Report

Join the **I am for the child**<sup>™</sup> movement by ensuring that every child in foster care has a **CASA** by their side! It costs \$3,000 to advocate for one abused child in foster care...we are here to help give every child a fighting chance to be a child!



*lift up a  
child's voice...  
a child's life.*

*. one child at a time .*

*. one life at a time .*

*. one future at a time .*

Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County • 8 Church Circle, Suite H-103 • Annapolis, MD 21401

**410.267.7877 • [www.aacasa.org](http://www.aacasa.org)**

*Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. is a private 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.*



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CASA, INC.

# Help Us Reach Every Child

The majority of abused and neglected children  
do not have a CASA volunteer by their side.  
You can help change that.

Join the **I am for the child™** movement!



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY CASA, INC.

CASA is central to fulfilling society's most fundamental obligation by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will fight for and protect a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to learn and grow in the security of a loving family.

**VISION:** The premier organization advocating for and supporting all abused and neglected children in the court system.

**MISSION:** To advocate for and support abused and neglected children in the court system to ensure their right to safe, stable permanent homes.

# WHAT IS A CASA?

Every day in this country, 1,900 children become victims of abuse or neglect, and four of them will die. Every day. CASA is part of a network of 949 community-based programs that recruit, train and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities. Volunteer advocates - empowered directly by the courts - offer judges the critical information they need to ensure that each child's rights and needs are being attended to while in foster care.

Volunteers stay with children until they are placed in loving permanent homes. For many abused children, a CASA volunteer is the only constant adult presence in their lives.



# WHAT DOES A CASA DO?

- Visits with the child regularly
- Reviews the social service agency and Court records
- Gathers information about the child from parents, caregivers, social workers, teachers and anyone else important in the child's life
- Identifies family and community resources that can help meet the child's needs
- Problem solves with the professionals involved in the child's case
- Prepares written reports to the Court and participates in hearings
- Ensures that the child's wishes are known to the Judge
- Keeps the focus on the child until he/she is in a safe, stable, permanent home
- Maintains confidentiality at all times
- ALWAYS advocates for the best interests of the child



# HOW THE CASA MOVEMENT BEGAN

The CASA concept was created in 1977 by Seattle, Washington Superior Court Judge David Soukup. Judge Soukup felt he did not have the critical information he needed to make decisions for abused and neglected children, and as a result, he trained lay people from the community to gather that additional information. He stated “As a judge, I had to decide whether to take a child from the only home he’s ever known, or leave him where he might possibly be abused. I needed someone who could tell me what was best for that child ~ from the standpoint of that child’s needs. That’s what CASA does.”



From that first program has grown a network of 949 CASA programs that are recruiting, training and supporting volunteers in 49 states including our local program which began serving children in July 1997. Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. is a member program of the National CASA Association and the Maryland CASA Network which consists of 16 CASA programs serving 21 out of the 24 jurisdictions throughout Maryland.

# CHARLIE'S STORY

Healing...a strong family...stable communities...and a place in this world for every child. What are these worth to you personally?

You can change the world for the better...right now...with your gift to Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. The holidays are a magical time for you and your family. But not for everyone ... I'd like to share with you the story of fourteen year old Charlie, the oldest of ten children.

Charlie's young life was chronicled by severe neglect. Charlie's mother suffered significant mental health issues and, being the oldest, he was expected to care for his younger brothers and sisters. He often found himself caring for his mother as well. One day, his mother's boyfriend beat Charlie so badly, he had to be hospitalized. That is when Charlie, along with his brothers and sisters, entered foster care.

Charlie's journey was a difficult one. He was used to being in control, being the adult and being the disciplinarian. Because of his behaviors, he was moved from one foster home to another. Then he met Jerry, his CASA volunteer. When yet another move was being planned, Jerry spent a great deal of time talking with Charlie about the kind of family he would like to be with. He accompanied him as he met different possible families, helped him to ask questions and talked with him about how he felt about each.

This spring, Charlie moved in with his new foster family. Jerry kept in constant contact with Charlie and his foster parents. When Jerry learned that Charlie wanted to try out for his high school football team, he started taking him to the gym to prepare for tryouts. Even though he is now a junior in high school, he had never participated in an organized sport. He made the team and they made it to the playoffs! Charlie is making friends, keeping his grades up and even went to the Homecoming Dance. He told Jerry, **"I feel like this is a dream ... I'm going to wake up and it's all going to be gone. I love it here."** Charlie's gift this holiday season is the gift of a family who loves him. Charlie's foster parents want to adopt him and Charlie, for the first time ever, *wants* to be adopted.

# CHARLIE'S STORY

Many of the abused and neglected children we serve do not find the holidays magical. Living in group homes or foster homes, they are separated from their family, and feel hurt, angry and scared. The support, encouragement and advocacy they receive from CASA volunteers like Jerry increases the likelihood that they will become well-adjusted, productive members of our community. Without it, these children are at a greater risk for drug and alcohol abuse, involvement with the criminal justice system, dropping out of school, and homelessness.

This past year, Jerry and 99 fellow CASA volunteers stood by 117 foster children in Anne Arundel County. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, there were 86 other children in foster care that did not benefit from having a CASA. While Charlie's life has completely changed, our job is not yet done. The need is greater than ever. And your support matters more than ever. You can join us in our efforts to care for abused and neglected children by making a donation today. Your gift can help change the course of a child's life forever.

With your help, we can provide each and every child in Anne Arundel County's foster care system with a CASA volunteer. Somebody who will overcome every obstacle ... who will fight endlessly for that child's best interests ... and ensure that child gets what every child deserves – a safe, stable and permanent home.



# PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Anne Arundel County CASA, Inc. has grown steadily, increasing its volunteer cadre, number of children served and fund development capacity to support annual goals, as described in the chart below. Since our inception, 478 exceptional CASA volunteers have worked diligently to improve the lives of over 640 children in need in our community. Our dedicated volunteers contribute over 9,794 hours of their time annually to help these children who are unable to help themselves. This translates to an annual contribution of \$262,381 (Independent Sector - value of volunteer time for Maryland 2016 \$26.79). While some children's cases are closed within 12 months, others remain active for several years.

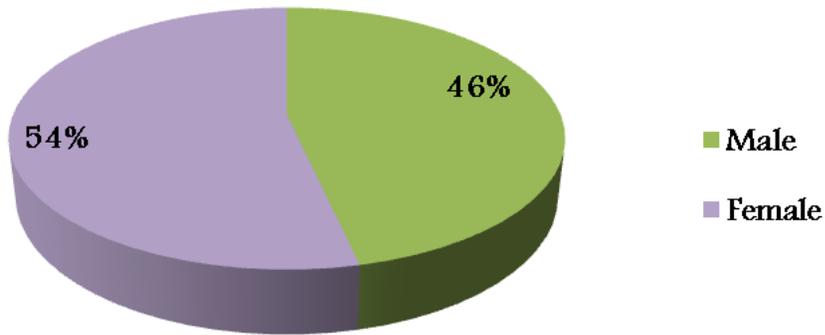
FY	CASAs Assigned	Children Served	Staff (FTEs)
FY 98	20	28	1.5
FY 99	30	42	1.5
FY 00	36	60	2.5
FY 01	50	72	2.5
FY 02	54	85	3.6
FY 03	56	89	3.8
FY 04	68	109	3.8
FY 05	69	109	3.9
FY 06	66	101	3.9
FY 07	69	87	4.5
FY 08	82	100	4.6
FY 09	99	120	4.6
FY 10	90	104	4.6
FY 11	96	112	4.4
FY 12	96	122	4.4
FY 13	99	145	4.4
FY 14	103	145	4.6
FY 15	99	129	4.6
FY16	99	117	4.6
FY17	95	114	4.2

# ANNUAL OUTCOMES

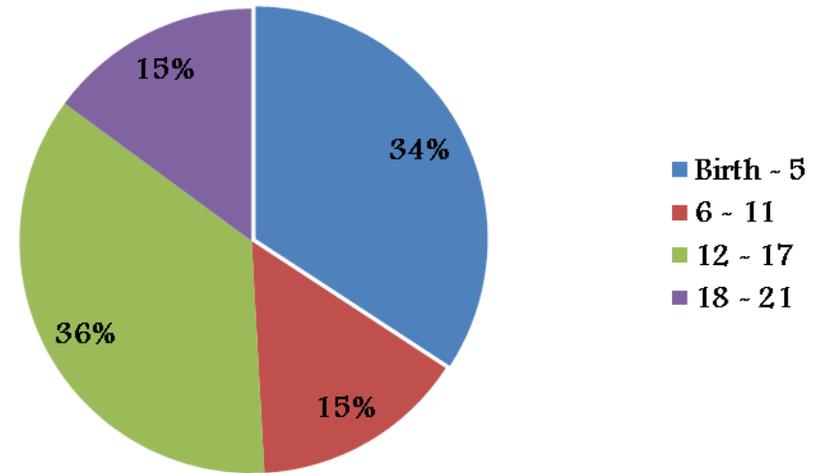
	Performance Model	FY17 Goals & Evidence of Success
1	Meet the needs of the children in the child welfare system.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> To serve approximately 130 abused and neglected children. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> 95 CASAs advocated for 114 children.
2	Train high quality CASA volunteers.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> 50 CASA applications will be received, two 35-hour pre-service training sessions will be held, 20 new CASAs will be trained and 20 hours of in-service will be provided. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> 78 CASA applications received, 56 potential CASAs were interviewed, two pre-service training sessions were held, 35 new CASAs were trained, and 48 hours of in-service was provided.
3	Meet the Court's needs.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> 100% of Judges who hear CINA cases will report that CASAs increased their ability to make well-informed decisions about the children present before them. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> 100% of the Judges reported that the CASAs increased their ability to make well-informed decisions by providing verbal testimony and thorough, unbiased written court reports.
4	Collaborate with other organizations inside and outside the jurisdictions to achieve good results for children.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> 85% of the CASA court reports will be accepted by the court and 75% of the recommendations (educational, medical, psychological, familial, etc.) will be ordered by the court for the child and family. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> 100% of the court reports were accepted and 78% of the recommendations were ordered.
5	Provide a committed, caring presence for each child and ensure that children receive needed services.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> 95% of children served will receive advocacy services that respond to their physical, cognitive, emotional, and permanency needs. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> 100% of the children received CASA advocacy services from their CASAs that responded to their overall needs.
6	Advocate for children to reach permanency.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> 85% of the children served will be living in a permanent home at case closure. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> Of the 28 cases that closed, 100% were living in safe, stable permanent homes.
7	Heighten public awareness of the needs of the children in the child welfare system.	<b>FY17 Goal:</b> 140 requests for information, three fundraising events - Annual Gala, Barristers' Ball and Golf Tournament, 20 presentations to organizations and 3,000 website hits. <b>FY17 Outcomes:</b> 123 CASA volunteer inquiries; Annual Gala, and Golf Tournament were held; 22 presentations were made, and 114,321 website hits. 3,800 contacts in donor database. Marketing campaigns: email, website, radio, TV and print media.

# DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

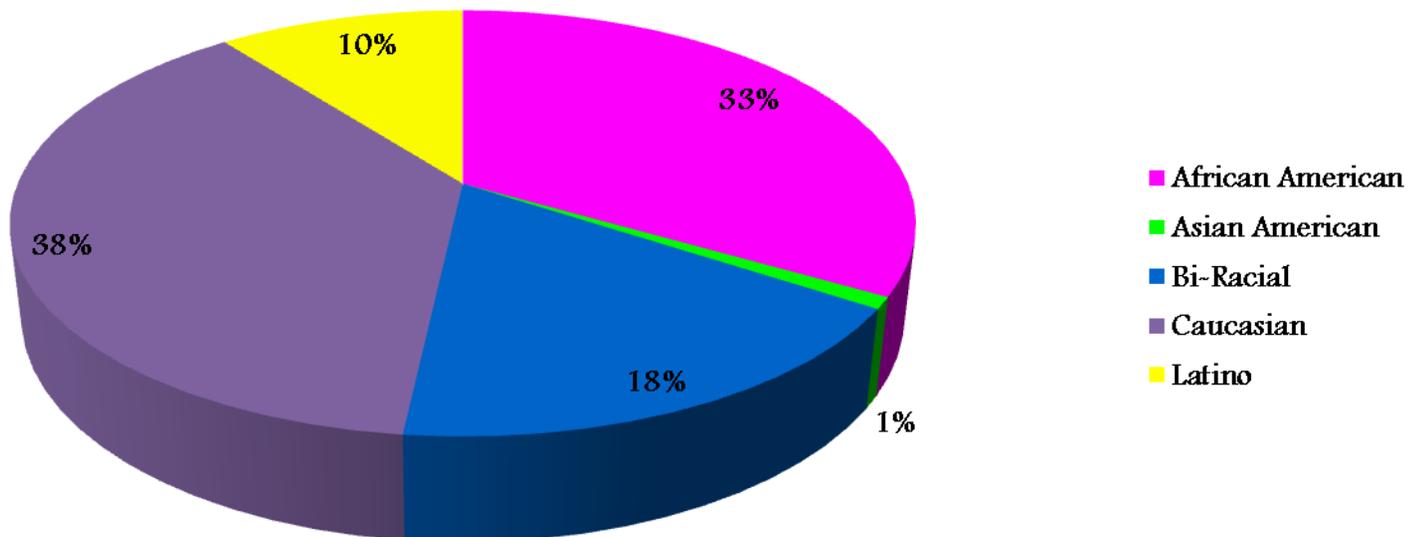
## Gender of Children



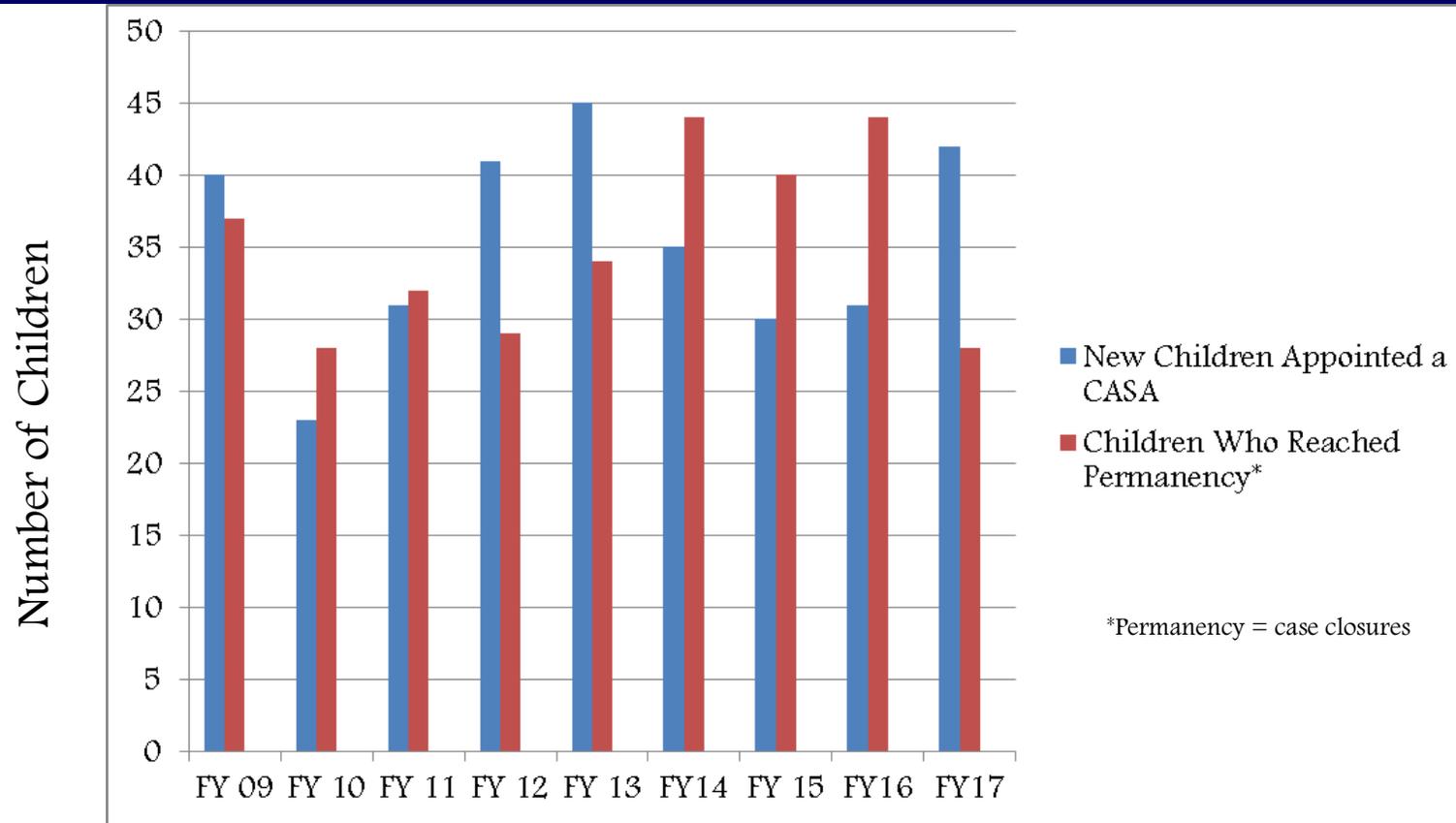
## Ages of Children Served



## Ethnicity of Children



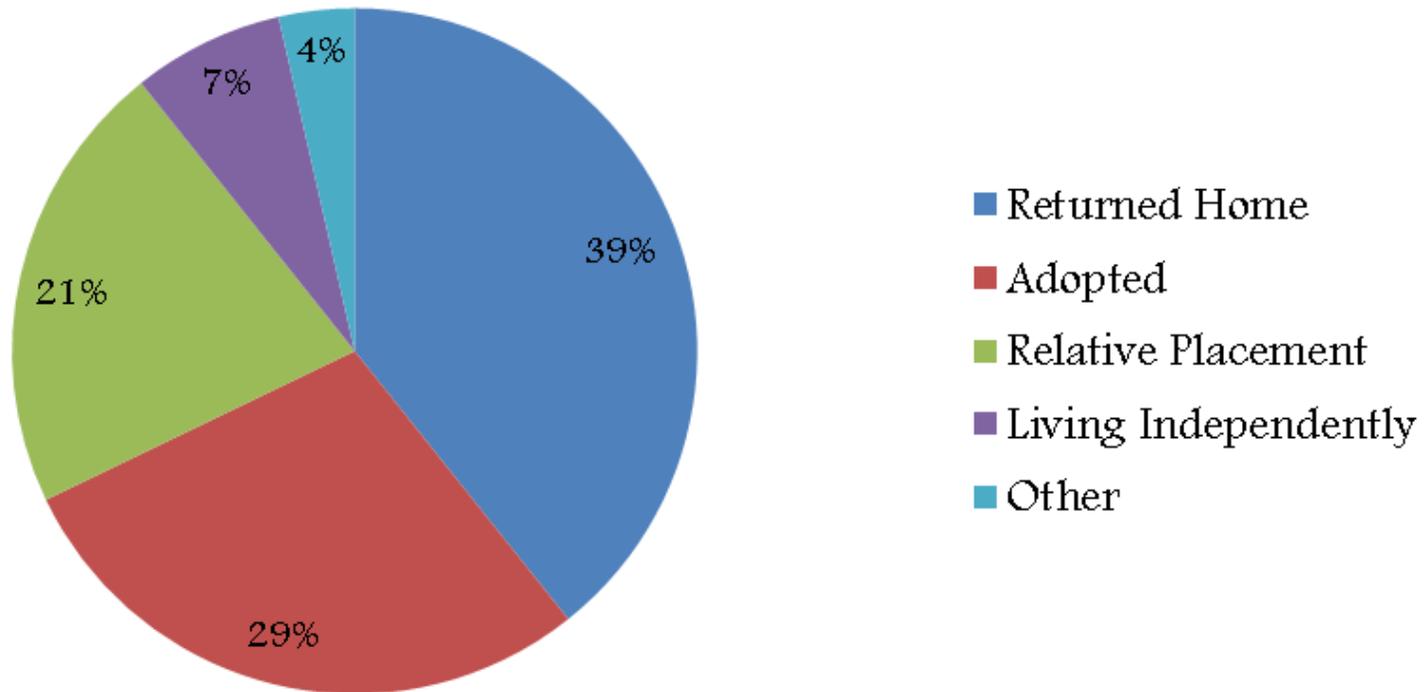
# NEW CHILDREN APPOINTED A CASA



- At the end of FY17, 100% of children served during the year received advocacy services from their CASAs that addressed their overall needs (educational, psychological, medical, etc.)
- Of the 28 cases that closed, 100% were living in safe, stable, permanent homes
- 100% of the Judges/Masters reported that the court reports that they received from the CASA volunteers contained the most thorough, accurate, unbiased information and that this increased their ability to make well-informed decisions about the children before them
- 42 new children were assigned to a CASA volunteer

# CASES COMPLETED

## Children Reach Permanency



# ROLE OF THE CASA

## TRAINING

To fulfill their complex role, CASAs must have a keen understanding of the chaotic and painful lives of abused and neglected children, their families and of the overall child welfare system. The training of child advocates is essential to AACCASA's ability to fulfill its mission and provide effective advocacy, as well as to enable the program to make steady progress toward meeting its long-term goal of serving all of the 203 children in care who need a CASA.

**Pre-Service Training.** In order to be appointed by the Court, each CASA completed a 35-hour pre-service training curriculum. AACCASA's training series was scheduled twice during FY17. The series included a wide range of topics that prepared CASAs for their highly complex role. Thirty-five community members were sworn in as advocates during FY17.

**In-Service Training.** AACCASA also provided an additional 48 hours of in-service, advanced training to volunteers during the year, which is necessary for the continuing education of our volunteers. Volunteers are required to complete 12 hours of in-service training annually.

Last year, more than 76,000 CASA volunteers helped 251,000 abused and neglected children find safe, permanent homes across the country.

*Listening is key in a  
CASA's role.*



Joe Sternberg, CASA Volunteer, and Matt, 17 years old

For Matt, life before and after meeting Joe are incomparable. "I live a normal life," he says. "I live a life that I am happy with. After spending time talking with Joe, it is easier to talk to other people. I figure, Joe turned out to be great; other people can't be all that bad. I used to be droopy, but Joe got me to open up and understand who I am. I am one of the charismatic people."

If Matt could say one thing to Joe, it would be: "Keep doing what you are doing. You helped make my life a whole lot better."

Story is courtesy of the National CASA Association

# CASA SWEARING-IN CEREMONIES

Training Class #44: November 17, 2016



Training Class #45: June 1, 2017

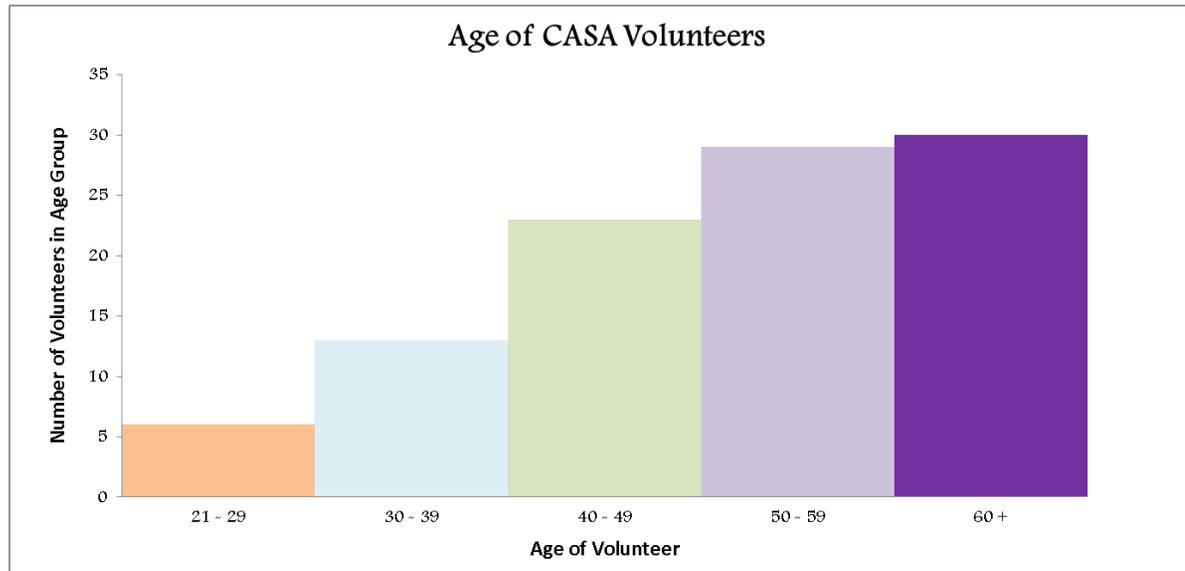


# VOLUNTEER DEMOGRAPHICS

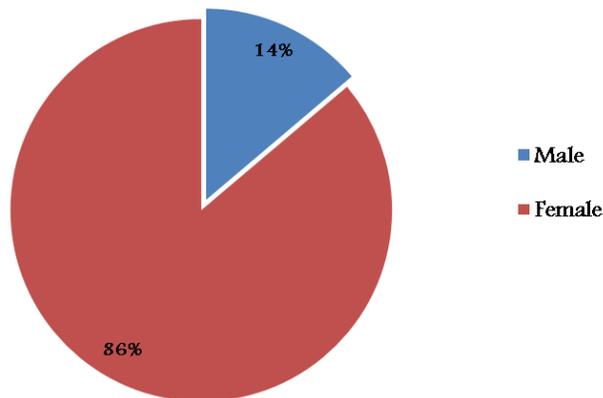
CASA Volunteers are men and women who possess a sincere concern for the well-being of children. They are mature adults who have the ability to empathize, to communicate and above all, to be objective and nonjudgmental.

Volunteers come from all walks of life. They have a variety of professional and educational backgrounds. No special experience is required - just a desire to help children in need. CASA volunteers devote an average of 10-20 hours per month to their assigned child's case.

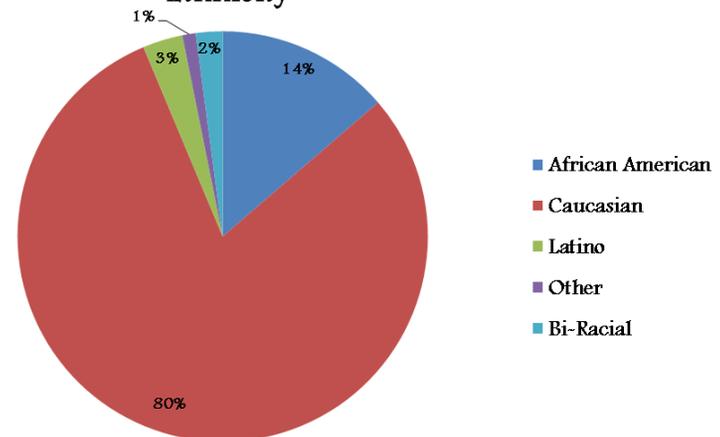
AACCASA is actively working to diversify its pool of volunteers to meet the demographics of the children in foster care.



### Gender



### Ethnicity



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## CARYN WEAVER

**Work Experience outside of CASA:** My background includes being a Vice President of a Direct Marketing company, doing graphic designing with an emphasis on marketing, branding and direct mail.

**How did you hear about CASA, and what made you decide to volunteer?** I had an interest in local volunteer work and did a Google search for non-profit organizations in my area. I was not aware of the program, and never heard of CASA. After doing research, and reading all about the CASA program, I knew it was exactly what I was looking to do and it would be a perfect fit.

**Describe your current case:** My volunteer work with CASA began in the office assisting them with graphic designing, fundraising efforts, and whatever else they needed. Then I started my court training, was sworn in, and received my CASA certification in June of 2015. As part of my training, our class went to court to observe a case. I was sitting directly behind a little boy who was in his sixth foster home. After the court hearing, my supervisor pulled me aside and asked if I would be interested in taking his case, as well as two of the other siblings in his family. I immediately knew I was in the right place at the right time and said yes. He is a sibling in a family of several children, each of whom were removed from their home due to neglect and poor living conditions. It's a horrific story with a long case history, and it broke my heart reading the myriad of case files. I wasn't sure if my heart was going to be able to handle this kind of work, yet I knew I had to try, and was determined to put my all into it. I will never forget my first visit with this little boy; he was standing at the top of the staircase looking down at me with the most beautiful big blue eyes. He was all bundled up in a big winter coat that was zipped all the way up and tied at his neck exposing only his eyes. At the time it was summer and about 95 degrees outside. He was so frightened. He was getting ready to be pulled from his current foster home and moved into what would be his seventh foster home. I remembered as I looked up at him, I wanted to cry, but fought back the tears and gave him a great--big smile. I said to him, "my name is Caryn, but you can call me by my nickname 'CARE' -- that way you can always remember that I'll be here for you and I will always CARE". His younger brother, (my other CASA child), was recently moved into his ninth foster home; and their baby sister, (my third CASA child), was removed from her mother immediately after her birth and is currently living with a foster family that is going to adopt her.

It definitely has not been easy work, and there have been times when the situations have been intense, challenging, frustrating, scary and sad. But when my CASA child said to me for the first time, "I love you Care", and every time he goes to give me a hug – it makes all of the hardships worthwhile. Without a



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**What sorts of activities do you and your CASA child/youth like to do together?** Since I have two little CASA boys, I like to do things outside and stay active when the weather cooperates. We play miniature golf, walk around the park, see movies, play video games, and I also always take them somewhere to eat. One of my CASA boys does not have a computer in his house, so I often take him to use the computer at the library and work with him on his typing skills, and how to use the Internet. I also try to get my two CASA boys together as often as possible. The three of us recently attended the Lego convention and had a wonderful time.

**What is the most rewarding part of being a CASA volunteer?** Words cannot describe the feeling of getting to know what were once little--lost--scared--souls, uprooted from their families and home, and having been through so much – and then being there to support them as they get some sense of their lives back. It truly is a gift to witness your CASA child ‘really’ smile again, and be able to have a chance at a childhood that is safe, nurturing and loving -- as every child deserves. While this work is not easy, it has filled my heart with so much joy to know that I’m making a difference in the life of a broken--down child.

**What is one thing you would say to someone else interested in volunteering?** If you have the time and the heart to do this kind of work, you should do it. I have been on the board of two non-profit organizations and have done volunteer work for four others, but none have come close to the experience of being a CASA Volunteer. If you go into it with an open mind and open heart, it will be the experience of a lifetime for both you and your CASA child. It’s not a perfect system, as with anything you will find flaws. There are a lot of problems and things broken within the foster care system, and sometimes you have no control over situations. But if you stick with it, it will force you to grow as a person more than you can imagine, and it will make you stronger.

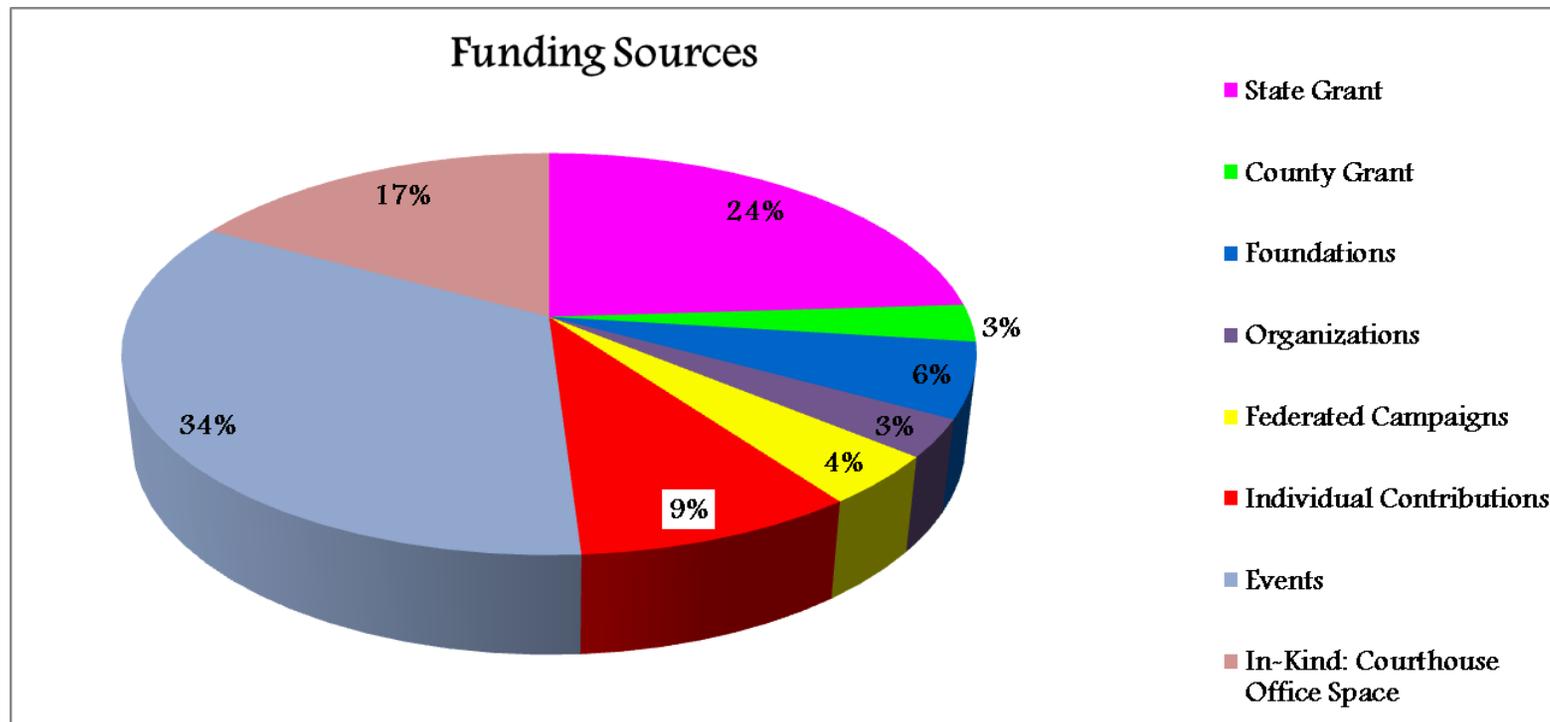
**What are CASA volunteers doing to help overcome the challenges faced by today’s youth?** By being a voice --- a support system -- a consistent-nurturing adult – and a constant in a child’s life that otherwise would not have one. There’s not enough being done in today’s society to help innocent abandoned children that are scared, neglected and have no one in their corner. They’re alone in the world and don’t have a clue what to do. CASA Volunteers help them overcome the hurdles and challenges that they will be faced with living in the foster care system. Every child deserves to be safe and loved, and there currently are not enough CASA Volunteers for every child in foster care. A caring steadfast adult who looks out for kids living in foster care -- that is something that every foster child needs and deserves. By being a CASA Volunteer and giving your CASA child a voice...you are giving them a chance at life. Children are our future, and all children deserve the chance to thrive by being loved and supported.

# FUNDING

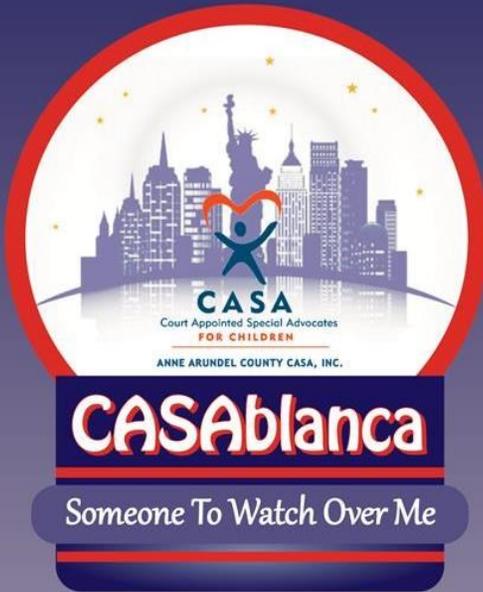
The cost to our organization of advocating for each **child is approximately \$3,000 per year**. In FY17, 23% of our revenues were generated from competitive government grants from the State of Maryland, which is a dollar for dollar matching grant, and Anne Arundel County. Special events, contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, service organizations and other granting sources compose the remaining funding base. Expenses were allocated in FY17 using the following percentages:

Program Services	94%
Management and General	2%
Fundraising	4%

Expense Allocation: Directly identifiable expenses are charged to programs and supporting services. Expenses related to more than one function are charged to programs and supporting services on the basis of periodic time and expense studies. Management and general expenses include those expenses that are not directly identifiable with any other function but provide for the overall support and direction of the Organization.



# CASA EVENTS



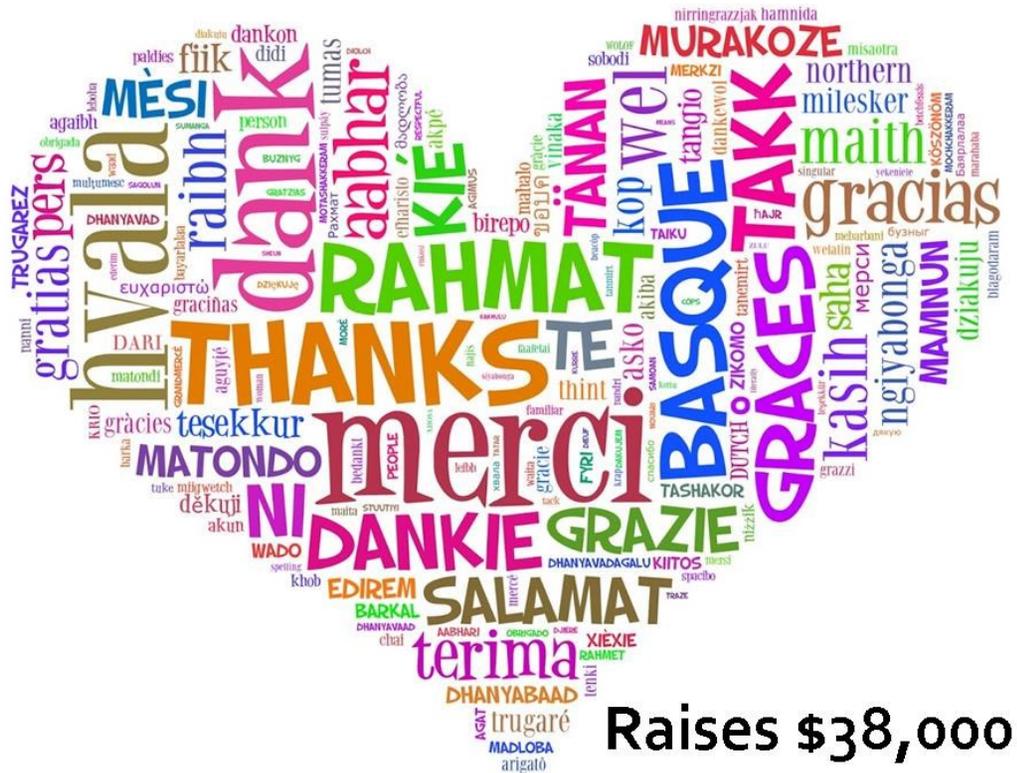
**Raises \$89,000**

We would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to all who were instrumental in ensuring that our annual gala was an amazing success!

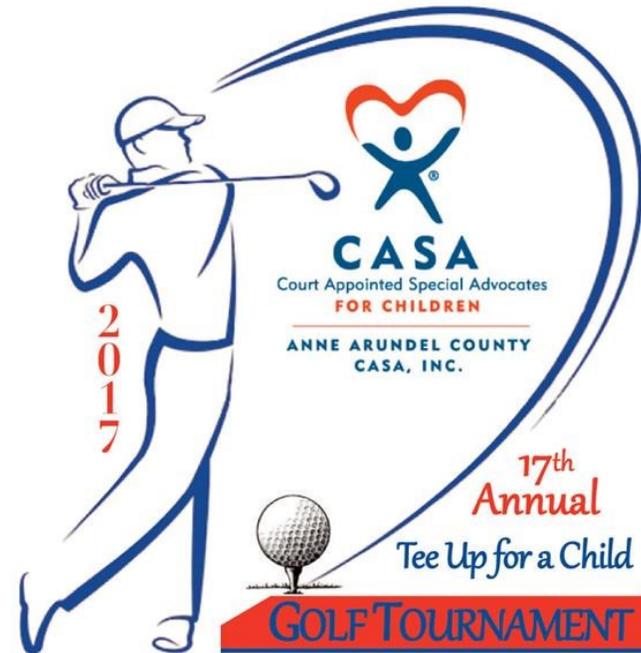
This funding will enable us to serve children who would not otherwise receive a CASA volunteer.

Thank you!

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**November 4, 2017**



**Raises \$38,000**



We would like to extend our heartfelt thank you to all who were instrumental in ensuring that our golf tournament was a **SOLD OUT SUCCESS!**

It is with the support of **First National Bank**, our presenting sponsor, along with the generosity of our numerous corporate sponsors, individual golfers and donors, we are able to serve the most vulnerable children in our community.

Thank you for making this event one for the history books!

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**May 3, 2018**  
**Eisenhower Golf Course**

# STAFF AND BOARD

## STAFF

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Rebecca Tingle

### Administrative & Volunteer Coordinator

Nikki Yapi

### Training Coordinator/Child Advocate Specialist

Tracey Lane

### Child Advocate Specialists

Christine Acton

Mary Ellen Barnes

Libby Barrett

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Tara Dulaney, Board Secretary, ASRC Federal InuTeq  
E. Wesley Adams, Anne Arundel County State's Attorney  
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Alvin "Al" Collins, ACC Explorations, LLC  
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Rachel Frentsos, Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc.  
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Join the **I** am for the child™ movement by ensuring that every child in foster care has a **CASA** by their side! It costs \$3,000 to advocate for one abused child in foster care...we are here to help give every child a fighting chance to be a child!

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