



# CASA of Maricopa County

## Facts & Figures



### **What is a CASA?**

- CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. A CASA is a volunteer role that is assigned to walk with and advocate for a child in foster care, ensuring their best interests are met while living in out-of-home care.
- By giving 15-20 hours a month of your time as a CASA volunteer, you can be the difference between a child languishing in foster care and finding a permanent home.

### **What is the role of the CASA?**

- The role of a CASA volunteer is different than a mentor or friend. Advocates make thorough inquiries into a child's case by speaking with all parties and professionals involved and submit formal written reports to the court that include recommendations that affect the child's life and future.
- The CASA volunteer's role is to consider what is in the child's best interest and to make sure that each child's individual needs are met while they are in out-of-home care.
- The goal of a CASA volunteer is to move children efficiently through the child welfare system into safe, permanent homes where they can grow to be successful adults.
- The CASA serves as the eyes and the ears of the judge. The CASA works independently from all other people in the child welfare system and provides an unbiased perspective for the child's well-being.

### **Who would be a good fit for the CASA Program?**

- CASA of Maricopa County needs a diverse group of volunteers who can relate to the many children involved with the child welfare system. This gives children the opportunity to remain connected with their backgrounds and to develop healthy racial, cultural and ethnic identities.
- All CASA of Maricopa County volunteers go through an extensive training process, so it doesn't matter what your experience is as long as you have the passion and the time to help a child in need.

### **How do children in foster care benefit from CASA volunteers?**

- The CASA volunteer is commonly the only consistent person in the child's life, who advocates solely for the child's best interest for the sake of stability and permanency (finding a permanent, safe home).
- Judges have noted the value of the information that a CASA brings to the proceedings and are appreciative of the unique perspective presented by CASA volunteers that help get a better understanding of the child's needs.
- In addition, national studies show that a child who has been assigned a CASA volunteer is:
  - More likely to secure needed services in a timely manner
  - Moved from placement to placement less frequently
  - More likely to have his/her case reviewed regularly by the court
  - Has a better chance of living in a safe, permanent home than those who do not have CASA representation

### **How many children are in foster care?**

- On average, more than 20 children enter care each day in Arizona.
- There are thousands of abused and neglected children in Maricopa County. Currently, 700 CASA of Maricopa County volunteers are providing advocacy services for nearly 1,000 children in the county.

Fill out the CASA application at: [MaricopaCASA.org](http://MaricopaCASA.org) / Questions? Email [Recruitment@VoicesforCASACHildren.org](mailto:Recruitment@VoicesforCASACHildren.org)