



About Fairfax CASA

Every year, nearly 400 children in Fairfax County are victims of abuse and neglect at the hand of their parents or caregivers. These children need support from the child welfare system and our community to heal and thrive. CASA volunteers are part of the solution. Appointed by judges, these trained citizen volunteers look out for children under the court's protection, advocating for their best interest in the courtroom and the community. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer will be the one constant adult presence in their lives.

Fairfax CASA is a 501 (c) 3 public charity, which recruits, trains and supervises more than 175 CASA volunteers each year as they help abused and neglected children find safe and loving homes.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends –

It is with great excitement that I write my first letter for the Annual Report. Joining this organization has been an honor. The staff, Board of Directors and the CASA Volunteers all work tirelessly to better the lives of every child with an open abuse and neglect case in Fairfax County, and they do it so very well.

Fairfax CASA had another strong and successful year, with many accomplishments. In FY14, our CASA Volunteers once again worked to ensure that the children they served had a voice in court. 174 volunteers advocated for 378 children from 218 families, and spent 20,349 hours diligently working on their cases. Most important of all, the volunteers contributed to the closing of 157 cases where children achieved safety and permanency by returning to their home, being adopted or by a family member being awarded custody.

We are proud to report that for the second year in a row, we were able to assign a CASA volunteer to **every** child referred by the Court. It is our goal to continue on this path for the years to come, as every child deserves a voice in the court protection system, from the beginning of their case until the very end.

Our positive results were the product of a community-wide team effort. The staff offered high quality training and support to the volunteers, thus assuring that each child living under the court's protection received the most effective advocacy possible.

Our Board of Directors governed sensibly, providing the organization with a solid foundation. Our community partners—the judges, child welfare specialists, legal, school and mental health professionals—all worked collaboratively to widen the safety net for the children we serve.

Finally, through the generosity of individual, corporate, and foundation supporters, we were financially able to provide each child with a highly trained and dedicated advocate. We thank them all for making our community better and being a partner in our mission.

This year also marked a historic event. During the July 2014 General Assembly Session, legislation was passed clarifying the ability of judges to continue the appointment of CASA volunteers on cases when a young adult opts to receive independent living services beyond age 18. Looking ahead, we are thrilled that our CASA volunteers may remain on cases with these youth and continue relationships that support the transition to adulthood.

We look forward to another year full of success as we and our community partners as we serve the children of Fairfax County.

Sincerely,



Darcy Cunningham

Executive Director, Fairfax CASA

BY THE NUMBERS

Numbers that Count

174
Volunteers
Served

378
Children from

218
Families

OUR CASA VOLUNTEERS MAKE SURE THAT EVERY CHILD HAS A VOICE AND THAT THE VOICE IS HEARD, ENSURING THAT THE CHILDREN REMAIN THE FOCUS OF THESE DIFFICULT CASES.

-Darcy Cunningham, Executive Director

THE DETAILS



20,349 HOURS

Spent by volunteers advocating for the abused and neglected children they serve



76 PERCENT

Fairfax CASA's funding was directed to program services in 2014



4,325 VISITS

Made by volunteers to the children on their cases



207 COURT REPORTS

Submitted by volunteers to the Juvenile & Domestic Relations District Court



26 NEW VOLUNTEERS

Were trained in 2014



96 CASES

Involving 157 children were closed



1,041 RECOMMENDATIONS

Were included by volunteers in court reports submitted to judges



1,881 SUPPORTERS

Connected with Fairfax CASA on Facebook and Twitter

VOLUNTEER SELECTION & TRAINING

On top of the rigorous 35 hours of pre-service training completed by Fairfax CASA volunteers, all volunteers must complete 12 hours of continuing education yearly to recertify as active volunteers.

Fairfax CASA hosts a robust continuing education program with several opportunities every month for volunteers to come together and share their experiences. Gatherings run the gamut from lectures and roundtable discussions, to book clubs and movie nights. Highlights in FY14 included:

- A day-long Fostering Futures training, based on a curriculum from the National CASA Association which addresses advocacy practices for older youth in foster care.
- A interactive diversity training by the Fairfax County Public Schools Improv Troupe, to highlight diversity issues that arise for children in foster care.
- A comprehensive Educational Advocacy training, to enhance the volunteers' skills in advocating for a child's educational needs.

Volunteer Screening

Fairfax CASA maintains an enduring commitment to bringing in only the most qualified volunteers. Applicants for pre-service training are carefully vetted to ensure that they have the skills and the dedication to serve abused and neglected children for the lifetime of a court case: many cases last two years or longer.

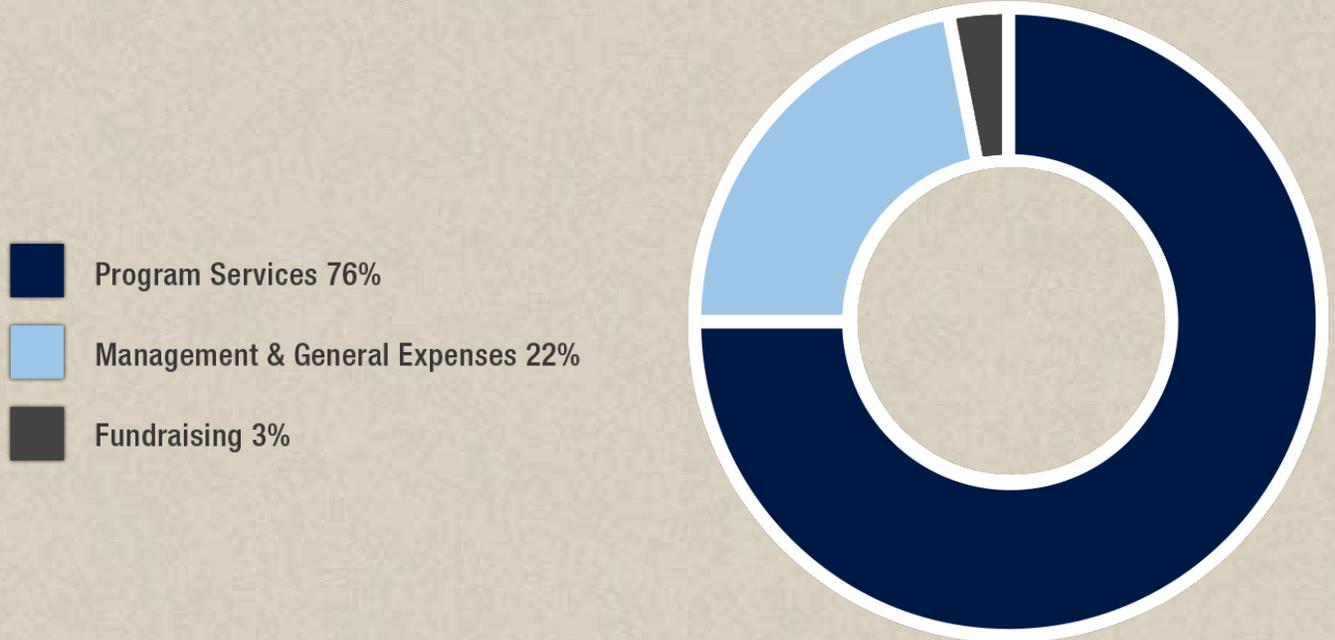
In FY14, the program received 81 applications. Due to highly selective screening practices, less than 32% of all applicants were sworn into service as Court Appointed Special Advocates.

Applications vs. Volunteers Sworn Into Service



FINANCIALS

FY14 Financials: Functional Expenses – \$789,423



Fairfax CASA is funded through public, private, and foundation support. In 2014, 76% of funding received by Fairfax CASA was directed to program services.

DONORS

Lifetime Major Donors

Individuals who have given \$25,000 or more since 2000

Debra & Timothy Howard	Vicki & John Nelson
Barbara & B. Mark Fried	Betty & Bob Gates
Cecilia "Ceal" Hayes	Robert Stewart
James W. Clauson	Riea & Steven Lainoff
Nancy & Robert Torray	Beatriz & Jon Williams
Sheila & Brian Bates	Schluskel Family
Patsy & Howard Norton	Christine & Monte Zaben
Betty & Wayne Angell	W. Brad Clark
Elaine & Alan Montgomery	
Ingrid & Scott Plein	

Investors Circle

Individuals who renew an annual \$5,000 gift

Sheila & Brian Bates
Betty & Robert Gates
Cecilia "Ceal" Hayes
Debra & Timothy Howard
Elaine & Alan Montgomery
Sharon Nelson & John Simek
Vicki & John Nelson
Patsy & Randy Norton
Ingrid & Scott Plein
Schluskel Family
Craig Staesinich
Robert Stewart
Christine & Monte Zaben

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FY14 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014)

Officers

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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

This year, Fairfax CASA repeated FY13's success, by assigning a CASA volunteer to every abused and neglected child referred by the Court. This accomplishment fulfills the court's full service mandate and our board's primary strategic goal. Today, there are no children waiting for a CASA volunteer in Fairfax County. In addition to reaching this major milestone, Fairfax CASA achieved the following:

CASA is recognized by the community

Outgoing Executive Director Lisa Banks received the President's Award from the Fairfax Bar Association in recognition of her work done on legislation that was passed in March clarifying the ability of the Court to retain jurisdiction over foster youth, ages 18-21.

CASA volunteers are satisfied

Fairfax CASA spent FY14 implementing programmatic enhancements based upon feedback from the biennial FY13 Volunteer Satisfaction Survey, such as hosting more evening roundtable events to accommodate working volunteers, and clarifications to the court report writing process. These enhancements built upon the overwhelmingly positive survey results, where ninety-six percent of the respondents reported having a good working relationship with their supervisors, and ninety-six percent reported a very positive/positive impression of Fairfax CASA staff overall.

This survey was released again in January of 2015. Results will be made available in the future.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CASA Collaborates

Fairfax CASA's primary project with its Board of Directors this year was the development of a program to continue CASA volunteer advocacy for youth, ages 18-21, who remain in foster care. Fairfax CASA worked closely with the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), Legislators and The Court to see legislation passed that would clarify that courts have discretion to hold yearly hearings for older foster youth and continue a CASA volunteer's appointment. The new legislation was passed in March and took effect on July 1, and it ensures the best outcomes for those youth who opt to remain in care by providing a vehicle for continued court oversight and CASA involvement.

Throughout the year, our Executive Director served as a member of the Fairfax County Permanency Planning Forum with Fairfax County judges and officials from the Fairfax County Department of Family Services (DFS), legal, educational, and mental health community. The Executive Director also continued to participate with the Commission on Youth Advisory Group, the Kinship Committee of Fairfax County and on the Advisory Board to Great Expectations, a nonprofit dedicated to helping foster youth attain a college education.

CASA's Fairfax Run For The Children

The fourth annual Fairfax CASA Run for the Children took place on May 3, 2014, bringing together more than 800 registrants, 200 volunteers and innumerable spectators. We surpassed our fundraising goal of \$100,000