



About Fairfax CASA

Every year, nearly 400 Fairfax children are abused and neglected by 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 the children under the courts protection, advocating for their best interest in the courtroom and 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 on average 150 CASA volunteers each year as they help abused and neglected children find safe and loving homes.



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends –

As another fiscal year closes, we at Fairfax CASA have so much to be thankful for. During FY2016, our CASA Volunteers once again ensured that our most vulnerable children--those with an open Abuse and Neglect case before the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court--**remained the focus** of these complicated and difficult cases, and that their best interests were represented.

Throughout the year, 146 volunteer advocates served 333 children from 198 families. These selfless, dedicated and determined volunteers provided over 220 reports to the Court that included over 1,350 recommendations for services and permanency. 95% of those recommendations were accepted and ordered by the Court. Our volunteers spent over 16,300 hours advocating for the best interests of these children, including 544 hours attending unassigned hearings. Volunteers had 4,465 face-to-face visits with the children on their cases and made over 15,870 contacts with providers or parties to the case, in furtherance of their duties.

Our ongoing goal is to provide exceptional volunteer advocates for Fairfax County's most vulnerable children, while striving to keep our overhead low yet increasing the quality of our services, and **you truly make this possible!** Although the number of cases referred by the Court increased by 32% over last year, we were able to reduce our expenses by 4.2%. Fairfax CASA is stronger than ever due to our continually expanding community who comes together to donate time, resources, and talent in support of our important mission. Fairfax CASA is tasked with a responsibility that we do not take for granted. Through the ongoing recruitment, training and supervision of vetted volunteers, we continue to grow the program and serve our community and will continue to do so because **we firmly believe that our work will ultimately lead to safety, permanency and the opportunity to thrive for every abused and every neglected child.** As you read through this annual report, know that you—our program staff, committed volunteers, stakeholders, generous partners, collaborators and donors—played a critical role in everything that we have been able to accomplish.

Thank you all for making FY2016 another remarkable year here at Fairfax CASA. We look forward to partnering with you in FY2017 as we strive to serve every child and make sure that their voice is heard.

Sincerely,



Darcy Cunningham,
Executive Director

BY THE NUMBERS

Numbers that Count

146

Volunteers Served

333

Children from

198

Families

FAIRFAX CASA VOLUNTEERS
CONTINUE TO FULFILL THEIR
PROMISES TO PROVIDE THE
CHILDREN ON THEIR CASES WITH A
VOICE AND TO STAY ON THOSE CASES
FROM BEGINNING TO END. THEY
CONTINUE TO ACT AS A BEACON OF
HOPE AND A SAFE HARBOR IN WHAT
CAN BE A CONFUSING AND CHAOTIC
SYSTEM.

-Darcy Cunningham
Executive Director

THE DETAILS

 **16,311 HOURS**

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

 **4,465 VISITS**

Made by volunteers to the children
on their cases

 **39 NEW VOLUNTEERS**

Were trained and sworn in during 2016.

 **1,206 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Were included by volunteers in court reports, 94%
of which were adopted and ordered by judges

 **76 PERCENT**

Fairfax CASA's funding was directed to program
services in 2016

 **222 COURT REPORTS**

Submitted by volunteers to the Juvenile and
Domestic Relations District Court

 **65 CASES**

Involving 95 children were closed

 **126,088 MILES**

Volunteers drove in furtherance of their duties
to protect the best interest of their children

FY16

FY16 witnessed a 32% increase in number of cases referred by the
court, as well as 126 new cases opened.

VOLUNTEER SELECTION & TRAINING

Volunteer Screening

It is almost impossible to imagine the sad, traumatic, and disturbing scenarios a CASA Volunteer will be exposed to when they are assigned a case. That is one of the reasons why Fairfax CASA spends so much time and energy recruiting and screening prospective volunteers; to ensure that we are selecting the right candidate for the job. Applicants for pre-service training are carefully vetted to ensure that they have the skills and dedication to serve the children on their cases for the lifetime of the case --an average of two years or longer.

In FY16, the program received 77 applications. Due to highly selective screening practices, less than 50% of all applicants were sworn into service as Court Appointed Special Advocates.

Applications vs. Volunteers Sworn Into Service



During FY16:
77 applied,
**39 were sworn
into service.**



Due to rapid and unexpected increase in the number of referrals received from the Court at the end of FY15, Fairfax CASA started FY16 with children on a waitlist for an Advocate. In response, we added a training class for new volunteers and were able to move all children off the waitlist within 60 days of the closing of FY15.

Volunteer Training

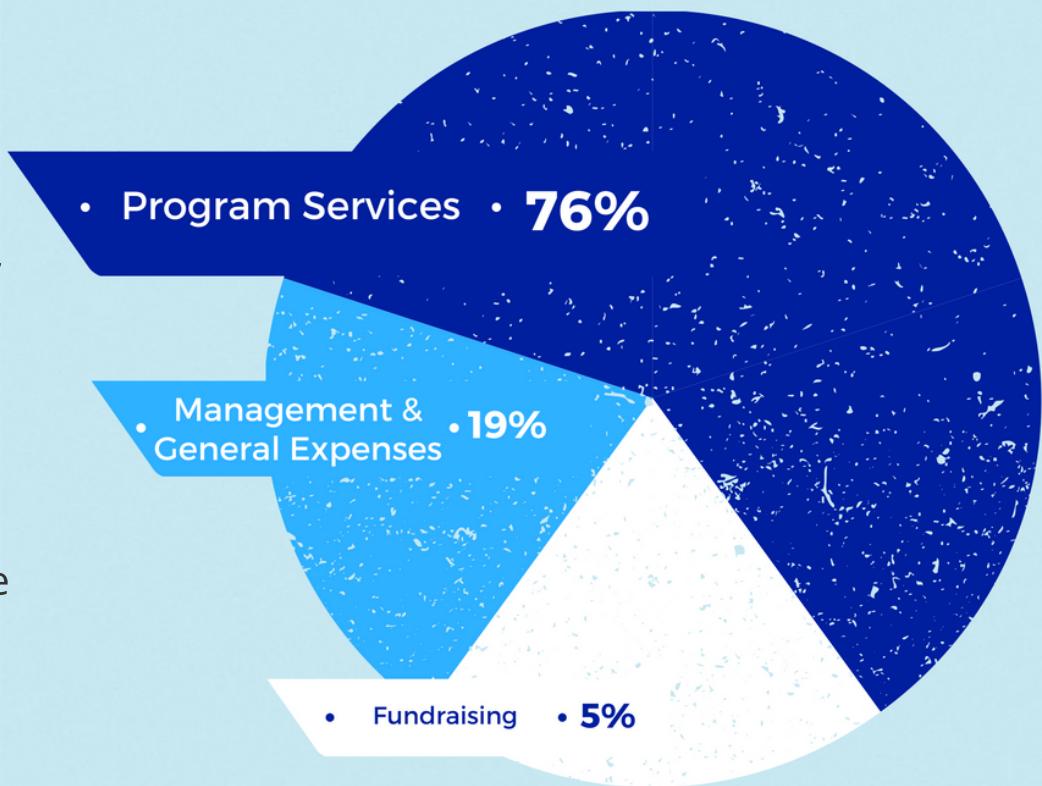
On top of the rigorous 35 hours of pre-service training completed by Fairfax CASA volunteers, all volunteers must complete 12 hours of continuing education yearly to recertify as active volunteers.

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.

FINANCIALS

FY16 Financials: Functional Expenses - \$705,630

Fairfax CASA is funded through public, private, and foundation support. In 2016, 76% of funding received by Fairfax CASA was directed to program services. Fairfax CASA reduced expenses by 4% over FY15 without program costs, or a decrease in the quality of service delivery.



DONORS

Lifetime Major Donors

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

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Debra & Timothy Howard

Riea & Steven Lainoff

Elaine & Alan Montgomery

Vicki & John Nelson

Patsy & Randy Norton

Ingrid & Scott Plein

Barbara Kinosky & Kevin Riley

The Schlussel Family

Robert "Bob" Stewart

Nancy & Robert Torray

Beatriz & John Williams

Christine & Monte Zaben

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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

The Schlussel Family

Craig Staresinich

Robert "Bob" Stewart

Christine & Monte Zaben

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FY 16 (July 1, 2015- June 30, 2016)

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Virginia Senate (D- 37th District)

Matt Raymond

Masters of Social Work Candidate

Jennifer Topscher

Vice President, Top Sure Investments, Inc.



Board President Alan Schuman and Executive Director Darcy Cunningham celebrate his Lifetime Achievement Award presented at the Fairfax County Volunteer Service Awards ceremony.

Lisa Walsh

Mathematics Teacher, Cooper Middle School

Heather Williams

Senior Management, Marketing & Communications, CSC

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Making an Impact

During the course of FY16, Fairfax CASA volunteers monitored court orders, investigated their cases and reported back to the Court, making over 1,200 recommendations provided in over 220 formal court reports. 95.3% of those recommendations were adopted and ordered by the Court.

Improving the lives of Youth 18-21

Sadly, Virginia has consistently had one of the highest rate of foster youth who "age out" at 18 before being connected with a permanent family, either through reunifying with their parents, connecting with a relative who can take custody, or adoption. These youth are at a much higher risk of devastating outcomes: homelessness, unemployment, (twice as likely as the general population), school dropout (over 3x's more likely than the general population), court involvement, poor health, and teen pregnancy. Because of these sobering statistics, Fairfax CASA has been a part of the collaborative effort to see the "Fostering Futures" legislation passed in Virginia for several years. ***After multiple failed attempts, we are thrilled to report that this important and life changing legislation was included by the General Assembly in the final budget package sent to Gov. McAuliffe and signed, effective July 1, 2016.*** This legislation allows for extension of Foster Care services to age 21 and the extension of Adoption Assistance until the age of 21 if the youth is adopted after age 16. ***So long as a youth remains on a vocational or educational path, he/she can now receive formal supports, services and financial assistance, and may also formally maintain his/her relationship with the CASA volunteer.***

Response to Increased Demands

Referrals from the Court and new cases opened increased in FY16, however Fairfax CASA not only continued to serve the children in need through the provision of exceptional advocacy, but did so while reducing expenses:

Fiscal Year	# of Referrals from Court	# of Cases	Expenses
FY15	72	60	\$730,516
FY16	95 (32% increase)	81 (35% increase)	\$705,630

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

CASA collaborates

Collaboration with other service providers and organizations that are part of the safety net for abused and neglected children in Fairfax County is crucial to our success. Fairfax CASA continues to build and nurture the relationships it has fostered with the Fairfax County Department of Family Services; the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court; the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services; other CASA programs across the Commonwealth of Virginia and country; a multitude of non-profit agencies in Fairfax County; various County agencies and local businesses. Members of Fairfax CASA's staff serve on various committees, boards and task forces throughout the County and State, representing not only the CASA program but also the needs of the children we serve.

CASA 's Fairfax Run for the Children

On Saturday, April 30, Fairfax Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) held its sixth annual Fairfax Run for the Children at the Fairfax County Courthouse. The race had over 700 participants and 150 volunteers to support Fairfax CASA's mission of advocating for abused and neglected children. In total the race raised over \$50,000.



This year's race coincided with National Child Abuse Prevention Month and many children picked up the blue pinwheels placed along the race grounds, a symbol of Child Abuse Prevention.

