

The Need for CASA Volunteers

Every child should have a safe, permanent home, but many do not. In Georgia, approximately 17,147 children at any one time are in the foster care system because they are victims of abuse or neglect. Often these children also become victims of the overburdened child welfare system - a complex legal network of lawyers, social workers, and judges who are too frequently overworked to give thorough, detailed attention to each child. They can get "lost" for months and even years.

In 1976, Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington, observed this problem in the courtroom as well as a lack of sound information upon which to base decisions about a child's future. He raised funding to recruit and train community volunteers to gain first-hand knowledge of the child's situation and speak on behalf of the child in court. In 1977, a CASA pilot program was formed based on Judge Soukup's idea. In 1982, the National CASA Association was established to direct CASA's emerging national presence.

CASA is the only volunteer organization that empowers everyday citizens as officers of the court. We work to ensure that children and youth involved in juvenile court child protection proceedings have courtroom advocacy, access to services and resources, and the individual attention they deserve. CASA volunteers bring urgency to the child's situation, so that children get the intervention services that were necessary for them to recover and break the cycle of abuse.

Appointed by judges, CASA volunteers typically handle just one case at a time—and commit to staying on that case until the child is placed in a safe, permanent and nurturing home. While others may come and go, CASA volunteers provide that one constant that children need in order to thrive.

Today, CASA for Children trains and supports these community volunteers in Cherokee County. It is our goal to provide a voice for every child in our community that is placed in temporary foster care. We believe that every child deserves a safe, permanent home.

The Volunteer Commitment

CASA for Children welcomes volunteers from all cultures, professions, ethnic and educational backgrounds. You don't have to be a lawyer or social worker to be a volunteer. We're simply looking for community members with a desire to help children in Cherokee County!

If this sounds like you and you want to do something to help an abused or neglected child find a safe, permanent home, then you are exactly the person we are looking for!

So what does it take to become a CASA volunteer?

- Submit the *completed* Volunteer Application attached. We require four favorable references, clear criminal history, DFCS history and sex offender registry check.
- Every volunteer participates in a 40-hour training course.
- After successfully completing the training, the volunteer is assigned their first case. A volunteer's average time commitment to a case is approximately 10 hours per month.
- Volunteer advocates are asked to dedicate themselves to a case until it is closed. The average case lasts about 18 months.
- Advocates are supervised and supported every step of the way and always have resources readily available.

The comprehensive training to become a CASA volunteer was professionally developed by the **National CASA Association** in consultation with child abuse and neglect professionals, juvenile court attorneys and judges, CASA staff, and CASA volunteers from all over the country. Using this standard curriculum, our goal during CASA training is to ensure that volunteers receive the tools they need to be the best possible advocate for the children they will serve while providing a positive and stimulating experience.

We realize you are taking time from your regular lives and families and we try our best to ensure that the time you are giving is well spent. CASA training hours are scheduled at times that are convenient for most working people.

Meeting the Need in Cherokee County

CASA for Children has advocated for Cherokee County's abused and neglected children since 1993.

CASA advocates work tirelessly to ensure each child's daily needs are met and that they are moved out of foster care and into a safe home. We hope you will join with us to an effort to achieve safety, recovery and permanency for the youth in Cherokee County who have experienced abuse or neglect.

To Get Started

1. Complete the following Application and Affirmation and Release.
2. Return it to us via email to Mandy@CASACHerokee.org or fax to 770-345-3275 or mail to CASA for Children, Inc., 1083 Marietta Hwy, Canton, GA 30114.
3. You will receive training registration instructions via email prior to each training class offered. Attached is a schedule of information sessions at which you can hear about the CASA program volunteer opportunities in person as well as scheduled training classes.

CASA VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please TYPE or PRINT legibly and complete entire application.

Date: _____

Name: _____
(Last) (First) (MI)

Home address: _____

County: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email address _____

Home #: _____ Work #: _____ Cell #: _____

Sex (circle one) Male OR Female Ethnicity _____

Emergency contact person _____ Relationship _____

Emergency Contact Phone #: _____

How did you hear about the CASA program? _____

Employment

Employment Status: (circle one) Full-time Part-time Retired Full-time Student Not employed

Employer: _____ Position: _____

Length of employment: _____ May we contact you at work? Yes _____ No _____

Work address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Education

Please circle highest level completed:

Some High School / High School / Some College / College Graduate / Post-Graduate

Do you speak a foreign language? Yes _____ No _____ Language(s): _____

Interests & Hobbies

Check other areas you are interested in volunteering with CASA: (NOTE: None is required to be a CASA Volunteer.)

___ Public speaking ___ Web Content Mgm't ___ Events/ Fundraising ___ General Office Duties

List other current community activities, club memberships, church affiliation, or other organizations you are involved with:

Please list other volunteer service and length of service.

More About You

Have you ever worked for the juvenile court? Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever worked for the Dept. of Family & Children Services? Yes _____ No _____

Have you ever been a foster parent? Yes _____ No _____ Currently? Yes _____ No _____

List any charges, arrests, and/or convictions, **other than traffic violations**, and list dates, county/state, and disposition of each. (An applicant having a charge or conviction for a crime involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect or related acts that would pose risks to children or the CASA program's credibility is disqualified as a CASA volunteer. Applicants with other misdemeanor or felony charges or convictions that would not pose a risk to children or negatively affect the credibility of the CASA program will be considered on a case-by-case basis considering the time passed since the incident and the level of rehabilitation.)

Have you ever had a case with, or investigation performed by, the Department of Family and Children Services?

Yes _____ No _____ Please explain: _____

Do you currently take medication or use any drug(s) which might interfere with your ability to drive or otherwise perform the duties of a Court Appointed Special Advocate? Yes _____ No _____

Training Availability

Please check day/ times you would be available for training:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						

If relevant, please list any specific days when you cannot attend: _____

Do you have access to transportation? Yes _____ No _____

Do you have a valid GA Driver's License? Yes _____ No _____

License #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

References

Please list names and contact information of 4 people (2 professional – salaried or volunteer work – and 2 personal – *no family members, please*). If currently employed, please list supervisor first.

1. Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address: _____

Daytime phone _____ Relationship _____

2. Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address: _____

Daytime phone _____ Relationship _____

3. Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address: _____

Daytime phone _____ Relationship _____

4. Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address: _____

Daytime phone _____ Relationship _____

Autobiography

Please attach an autobiographical paragraph and tell us about yourself including why you are interested in becoming a CASA Volunteer.

AFFIRMATION AND RELEASE

Included in application to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate

I, _____, hereby affirm that all of the answers provided on my volunteer application are true. I understand that the information requested will be used only for the purpose of determining my suitability as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. I understand that this application does not ensure certification as a CASA volunteer. I understand that completion of training does not guarantee certification as a CASA Volunteer. Certification is at the discretion of the CASA program staff. After successful completion of my training, I further understand that I will be expected to serve a minimum of one year in the CASA program. If unforeseen circumstances prevent me from fulfilling this obligation, I will submit a written resignation to the program director with as much advance notice as possible.

I am aware that I will be examining sensitive, confidential documents, reports and other material in my capacity as a CASA volunteer. I will discuss these matters only with those persons directly involved in the case at the Court or those who will be consulted for their professional knowledge or expertise. I will not divulge this confidential information to anyone else.

I hereby authorize CASA and any law enforcement agency or other appropriate agency to receive any criminal history record information and state central registry information (from the Department of Family and Children Services) pertaining to me, which may be in files of any federal, state or local criminal justice agency in the United States, and to investigate my background to determine my fitness as a potential volunteer. This information may be requested and be received on a continual basis during the period of time that I am an active volunteer for the CASA program.

I certify that the answers given in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and understand that if accepted into the program as a volunteer, any false or misleading statements on this application shall be grounds for dismissal.

Please complete the following information needed for background checks:

Full Name

Home Address

City State Zip

Date of Birth: month/day/year Race Ethnicity

Hair Color Eye Color Height Weight State in which you were born

Signature

Date