



CASA
CHILD ADVOCATES
SAN ANTONIO

FY 2023

ANNUAL REPORT

DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you so much for your support of Child Advocates San Antonio. We cannot be successful without you. Partners, funders, elected officials and many people in the community are critical in caring for the children we serve. To our Court Appointed Special Advocates – CASA Advocates – we have so much respect for your work with children who need you, words are not enough, you have our deepest gratitude.

CASA's year was busy and energizing as we moved forward with our vision of being a leading, positive and influential force in the child welfare system. Our Strategic Plan is on track, with family collaborations growing, and new family tools implemented together with a business process system. Planning our physical space in the building renovation has been thoughtfully considered to build a comfortable and creative space. We want children to play, to just be a kid, and that makes it easier for them to share thoughts and feelings with their CASA Advocate. Children need a space that allows them to feel psychologically safe, as well as physically safe to heal from trauma they have suffered.

Another goal was accomplished as we earned our National Trauma-Informed Care Agency Certification. We work alongside many children and adults and know that every person and child has experienced past challenges, often including trauma, so this strategic goal was especially important. We have ensured trauma-informed care and DEI&B practices are in every aspect of the agency, from policies and processes to building design.

We were also awarded ARPA funding to support our recruitment goals. Shortly after the Covid-19 pandemic began, we saw a drop in the number of people willing and able to volunteer. Funding awarded through the City of San Antonio, will focus on the recruitment of volunteers to become CASA Advocates and serve more children. Our long-term goal is to have 1,500 Advocates trained and available to serve every child who needs us in the foster care system.

CASA's relationships with the City and County are stronger than ever as we partner to serve children in our community. Our discussions and connection with our State representatives and Senators also flourished. Along with other community stakeholders, we are making a difference to vulnerable children and teenagers. We work closely with everyone connected to the children, and always listen to the child's voice as we strive to support their best interests.

Please reach out if you feel called to be the advocate for children who need you. It is a truly life-changing experience for you and the children. Find your purpose in this opportunity and make a difference in a long-lasting, impactful way. If you have been a CASA Advocate in the past and are interested in returning, or if you are interested in becoming an Advocate in the future, please reach out to our Recruitment team at recruitment@casa-satx.org or 210-225-7070. We will train you and support you every step of the way.

We want everyone, whatever their age, to walk through our door and feel welcome and safe. We are so excited for the renovations to be finished in early 2024 especially as it will be our 40th anniversary year!

Blessings to you and your family,



Angela White
President & CEO



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OUR MISSION

The mission of Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA) is to recruit, develop, and lead highly impactful court appointed volunteer Advocates who provide constancy and support for children and youth who have experienced abuse and neglect.

We achieve our mission through advocacy for services, supportive connections, and permanency, while emphasizing family reunification when possible.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to be a leading positive and influential force in the child welfare community, while serving children who have experienced abuse and neglect in Bexar County.

OUR VALUES

INTEGRITY

We demonstrate commitment to the values, policies, and practices of CASA.

We will not compromise on serving children with excellence.

We are accountable and consistent.

We always tell the truth with kindness.

COMMITMENT

We invest talent, time, and resources to achieve a safe, loving home for the children we serve.

We pursue a shared vision.

We demonstrate a mutual desire to succeed.

We share the CASA mission everywhere to everyone.

EXCELLENCE

We are personally passionate about being our best.

We always strive to do our best in all aspects of our work.

We are innovative and forward thinking.

We learn from mistakes and seek out opportunities for growth and improvement.

COMPASSION

We will maintain a nurturing, caring, and collaborative environment.

We demonstrate caring for others through our words and actions.

We embrace change, challenge, and diversity that promotes personal and organizational growth.

**"She treated me
like I was one of
her own, like I
was family."
Mary Lou**



FY 2023 IMPACT

When Suzanne Martin started her drive to Seguin to meet the child on her newly assigned CASA case, she had no idea her life was about to change. Suzanne knew that Mary Lou had been removed from her home due to abuse and was now living with her aunt Monica, but not much more.

She was anxious when she pulled up to the RV where they lived, but something told her this was going to be a wonderful relationship. She introduced herself and took Mary Lou to dinner. They bonded quickly over one important rule... desserts should be eaten first! After that, their relationship flourished.

Early on, Suzanne not only recognized the bond Mary Lou had with her aunt, but how she was healing from her trauma by being in a loving home. Suzanne advocated for Mary Lou to have a therapist to help with her anxiety. Using her background as a retired educator, Suzanne ensured Mary Lou's educational needs were met by advocating for additional assistance in reading and giving her extra time with tests and assignments. Today, Mary Lou's favorite class is reading, something she didn't like when Suzanne met her.

When Mary Lou moved into a bigger house, Suzanne was right there to provide something Mary Lou had never had before, her first real bed inside her own room. "My room is my safe place. I can do anything in here. I can go in there whenever I want, I can lay on the bed. It's helped me a lot," said Mary Lou. Within those four walls, Mary Lou thrived, not only in school, but in her art. "She's self-taught, her art is just amazing," said Suzanne as she watched Mary Lou paint a faceless angel.

Suzanne stayed by Mary Lou's side throughout her time in care, and they danced together when the judge granted Mary Lou's greatest wish, to call her Aunt Monica her Mom. "Ms. Martin, she's family. She treated me like I was one of her own, like I was family. She's amazing," said Mary Lou.

After the case was closed, Mary Lou had one last question to ask Suzanne, if she would be her Godmother. "She's the example of a Godmother because she's very loving, she's family," she said.



ADVOCATE IMPACT



Be persistent. Be present. Your work is making a difference. It may be years before your kids realize how much of a difference you made in their lives. They may find someone else to be their mentor and you will know you helped connect them with that person. You are helping fill the cracks in their lives and giving them hope.

Joseph Zlotkowski, advocate since 2018



The most rewarding aspect of being an advocate is seeing my kids' eyes light up when they succeed at something or when they see they are seen by others. So often they can feel invisible and they light up when they are noticed. These small moments begin to add up so the kids begin to build greater confidence in themselves.

Nanette Hall, advocate since 2020



Seeing my kid's smiling faces - knowing that by being a part of their journey I can help. Their CPS case worker and attorneys are so busy- just by filling them in on how the kids are doing goes a long way towards finding positive solutions.

Beth Gentry, advocate since 2022



COLLEGE DOCKET PROGRAM: BEXAR COUNTY FOSTERING EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

This fiscal year, Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA) Educational Advocates served college-bound youth by connecting them to their earned high school credits, accompanying the youth on college and university campus tours, and introducing their youth to dedicated staff at Texas Higher Education institutions. CASA Educational Advocates have also assisted their youth in applying to FAFSA, in applying to Texas universities, colleges and trade schools, as well as ensuring their youth is connected to housing and mental health services during their transition into adulthood.

In collaboration with CPS and BCFS PAL, CASA Educational Advocates educated themselves and the youth they serve on permanency options (i.e. extended care, aging out) as well as the benefits the youth will receive upon adulthood based on these permanency goals and outcomes, such as their Tuition and Fee Waiver, Education & Training Voucher, and emergency funding through DFPS PAL and other available funding resources. CASA Educational Advocates have also been instrumental in assisting their youth in obtaining a Texas ID necessary to begin stable employment.

To date, youth experiencing foster care who are matched with a CASA Educational Advocate have received acceptances to a variety of high education institutions including UTSA, TAMU-SA, TAMU-CC, TAMU-PV, Alamo Colleges, UT-Austin, Austin Community Colleges, Texas State University, University of North Texas, and Texas State Technical College.



THE MISSION:

The Bexar County Fostering Educational Success Project will improve college enrollment, retention and graduation rates for students with a history of foster care, will expand students' emotional, social and professional networks, and will increase the number of children in foster care in Bexar County who understand that attending college is achievable and expected and are academically and emotionally prepared to do so.



For many young people in the foster care system, 18 signals the end of the supports and services they so greatly need. Not for KP.

KP experienced placement breakdown right before high school graduation. “My Advocate didn’t give me a choice. They told me I AM going to college”, states KP, aged 17 at the time.

KP opted to enter extended care at age 18 to pursue her dream of attending college. When you meet her, KP’s energy and creativity are evident, along with her curiosity and eagerness to make her mark on the world.

KP was moved from her placement to CWOP a month before high school completion. CWOP stands for Children Without Placement and happens when the state cannot find a suitable and safe placement for that child, requiring the DFPS to provide temporary emergency care until a placement can be secured. To make KP’s dream a reality, her CASA Advocate Dania Sanchez was integral. Dania worked with KP so her transcripts were ready for her to graduate early! In her last weeks of high school, KP made great grades, attended prom, and had fun with her friends – experiences that are normal for many kids, but not always for those in foster care. High school credits were located by CASA and compiled to allow KP to graduate in the Fall of 2022, earlier than her peers.

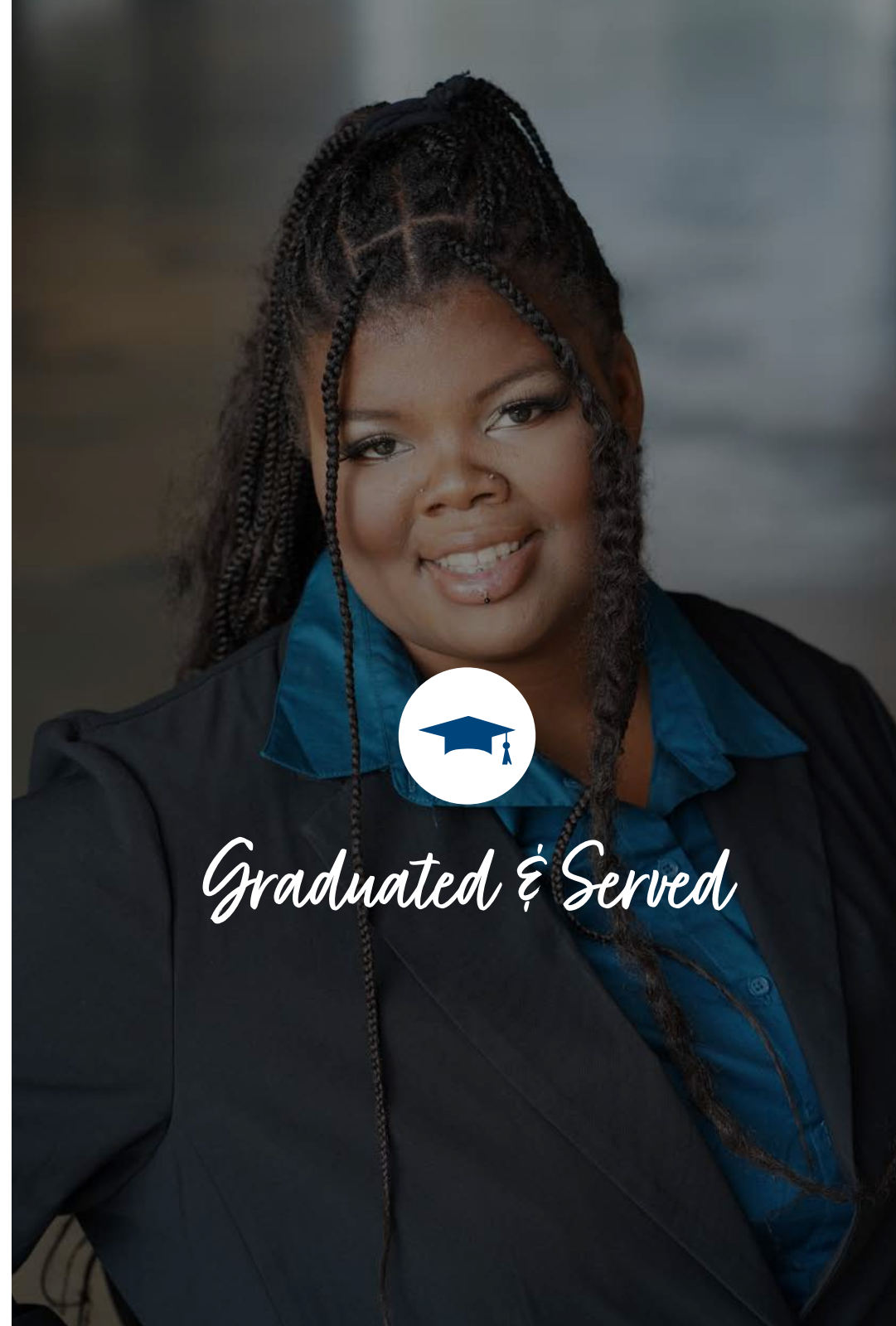
Dania worked with the College Docket program and her CASA Supervisor to make sure KP had all the information she needed to decide on a school, submit her application, and arrange for dorm housing. KP and Dania toured prospective schools, and KP decided to attend TAMUSA where she is in her second semester in fall 2023.

This opportunity for KP to go straight to the TAMUSA Supervised Independent Living dorms and begin her college education earlier than planned, shortened her stay in CWOP by moving to these dorms for housing. Due to KP’s age, her CASA’s advocacy was crucial to ensuring court orders were made to support this housing opportunity despite being limited to youth over the age of 18. Thankfully, collaboration between CASA, Children’s Court, and CPS allowed for this unique opportunity in ensuring KP did not fall through the cracks of an overburdened CPS system.

With housing secured, KP was able to focus on her goals and new college career ahead of her. She is resilient and has overcome many barriers to attaining her goals with the help of her CASA Educational Advocate.

COLLEGE YOUTH SERVED

As of the Summer 2023 semester, our CASA Educational Advocates have worked alongside 46 young adults to graduate high school and attend higher education or trade opportunities. Congratulations again seniors, we wish you the best in your future endeavors!



CHILDREN SERVED

We are so happy to share that we were able to serve 1053 children who had been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect this year.



1053
Children



1
CASA Staff

27
Volunteers

70
Children in
Foster Care

SERVICE MODEL

Founded in 1984, Child Advocates San Antonio (CASA) is the only organization in Bexar County legally recognized by the Texas Family Code and authorized to provide court-appointed advocacy for children who are in the care of Child Protective Services. CASA's highly trained and supported Volunteer Advocates are authorized by a judge to advocate for the child's well-being, including medical and educational services.

ACTIVE ADVOCATES

CASA Volunteer Advocates are special and truly inspiring. They devote an average of 180 hours on each child's case, giving children a highly trained and supported adult to count on. Thank you for helping CASA kids!



2023 ADVOCATE AWARDS



RECRUITER OF THE YEAR AWARD:

BENITO SOTO & JOANN HERRING

Benito & Joann have served as CASA volunteers for 6 years, advocating for 20 children on their cases. They are incredible advocates who recently got siblings together on their case who are in 3 different placements. They are always willing to help promote CASA with their friends & family. They have helped us by sharing at in-person information sessions, community fairs, and men of CASA events.



ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD:

CAROLYN SMITH

Even though this Advocate has been on her case for 6 months, she has been a strong supporter of their CASA teen who has had enough trauma for a lifetime. Carolyn visits the teen multiple times a month and always knows what is going on. She is the first person the teen calls when she has an issue. She has supported the teen, the placement, and the Department to ensure the best interest is met for this teen.



JUDGE SAKAI AWARD

NATALIE MOSLEY-CARTER

This years Judge Sakai award winner has been an advocate for 9 years and during this time has advocated on several different cases. For the past 7 years, Natalie has been instrumental in helping her youth maintain contact with their adopted siblings through over 17 different placements. She has been the constancy in this youth's life and she is a shining example of the compassion and the commitment that our advocates bring to CASA and to the children they serve.



ADVANCING THE MISSION AWARD

NANETTE HALL

Nanette Hall was integral in "Advancing the Mission" of CASA this year. Nan starred in our Santikos video spots, answered a last-minute call to be a part of a video for our IMPACT SA grant application - which we were awarded! - and worked with one of the teens she served to prepare and present at the Breakfast of Champions. Her work beyond her Advocacy was done joyfully and well, and helped CASA both recruit new volunteers and secure funding to continue our mission.



ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD

CHARI COTTRELL

Chari Cottrell's compassion and commitment to the CASA children simply cannot be put into words. Signed on to a case with 4 children, the youngest being months old, Chari really created a connection with these children on a different level. When tragedy struck and ended with the youngest in the hospital on life support, she was there through all the uncertainty and emotions. She truly helped save this baby's life. As of April, all 4 children have been adopted and are thriving in their new homes. They are healing and are able to just be children. Chari's title is CASA Advocate but she has been a witness, protector, guardian, cheerleader, defender and at times a mother to these children.



260+
CHILDREN RECEIVED
SCHOOL SUPPLIES



SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE

This past school season, our community supporters came together to donate school supplies, write notes to students, and stuff backpacks for 269 children with a total of 4,408 items! Thank you so much for your dedication to prepare our kids for school to achieve optimal educational success.



875+

**CHILDREN RECEIVED
CHRISTMAS GIFTS**



HOLIDAY DRIVE

Thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to provide 878 foster youth with toys and gifts during this past holiday season. Approximately 2,567 gifts were distributed during shopping, putting a smile on all of these kids' faces with your donations. Thank you for being a light of hope for children in need!



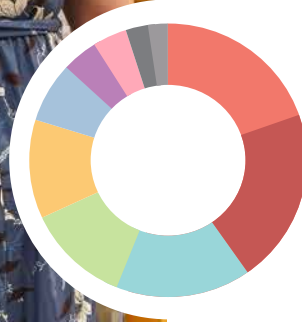
FINANCIAL REPORT

FINANCIAL REPORT NOTES:

- Net assets at end of fiscal year: \$9,687,239.00
- Complete audited financial statements are available on our website: www.casa-satx.org

REVENUE & SUPPORT

Total: \$5,344,986



| | | |
|---|-------------|-------|
| In-Kind Gifts (Volunteer services, donated goods and professional services) | \$1,029,474 | - 19% |
| Federal Awards | \$996,845 | - 19% |
| General Private Contributions | \$906,283 | - 17% |
| Foundations and Grants | \$755,673 | - 14% |
| State Awards | \$716,947 | - 13% |
| Capital Campaign | \$300,000 | - 6% |
| Other Income (Rental, Investment Earning, and Interest) | \$227,064 | - 4% |
| United Way | \$199,905 | - 4% |
| UTSA | \$122,099 | - 2% |
| Local Support | \$90,696 | - 2% |

EXPENSES

Total: \$4,674,299



| | | |
|------------------|-------------|-------|
| Program Services | \$3,858,118 | - 83% |
| Support Services | \$348,588 | - 7% |
| Fundraising | \$467,593 | - 10% |

FY 2023 CHAMPIONS OF HOPE SOCIETY

Hero of Hope

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Frost Bank
H-E-B
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Natalie and Gladys Dalkowitz Charitable Trust
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The RK Group
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Shield-Ayres Foundation
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Mr. Michael Smith
Sysco - Central Texas

Texas Cavaliers Charitable Foundation
Texas Medical Legal Consultants LLC
Tulsa Community Foundation
UBS Financial Services
United Way of Tarrant County
VIA Metropolitan Transit
VIP Mortgage

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Cavender Auto Group
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Crandall & Associates
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Lorien and Marc Whyte

The Champion of Hope Society brings sustainability to our mission all throughout the year. The collective impact of these supporters have come together to ensure more children in foster care continue to have sustained advocacy support.

Thank You

FOR YOUR IMPACT!

*You came together to
provide 1053 children
with a trained and
supported Advocate. You
are truly Champions!*

*If you would like to become a
Champion of Hope to serve more
children in San Antonio, please
contact Blair Ortmann, VP of Mission*

Advancement at:

(210) 225-7070

Bortmann@casa-satx.org

MONTHLY DONOR SUPPORT

Our monthly donors are our GEMS de Esperanza – their Gift Every Month provides hope for children in the foster care system and sustains the life-changing work of trained, dedicated Advocates. Thank you for your ongoing commitment.



“Being a monthly donor allows me to support CASA with a larger financial impact and provides support all year.”

Warren A., CASA Monthly Donor





2022 GALLERY OF HOPE

Last year was one of the largest, most successful Gallery of Hope Galas we have ever seen at CASA. Thank you to all of our sponsors and attendees for helping us raise \$330,000 that night, allowing us to serve over 1050 children in foster care in Bexar County!

2022 SPONSORS:

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 The RK Group
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 Rachelle & David Roth
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 UTSA Student Success

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 Christina & Steve Lecholop
 Mewborne Photography
 Texas Medical Legal Consultants
 Margaret & Ryan Pape
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 Baumholtz Plastic Surgery



GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEER

Become a CASA and be the voice for children in foster care!

Call **210-225-7070** or Visit:
casa-satx.org/become-an-advocate

DONATE

Make a greater impact and give a gift online at:
casa-satx.org/donate

Contact Blair Ortmann, VP of Mission Advancement at 210-225-7070 or bortmann@casa-satx.org to learn about more giving opportunities such as donation drives, corporate matching, or including CASA in your will.

LEAVE A LEGACY COMMITMENT

A legacy commitment is an investment in children who can break the cycle of abuse and neglect when they get the care they need. Leaving a gift in your will or estate is one of the most powerful actions you can take to help children heal from the trauma they have experienced.