



# CASA HEROES

2021 *impact report*

# from the DIRECTOR

*Dear Friends,*

It is easy to be overwhelmed while reflecting upon the hurdles our communities have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, but we can take pride in how CASA adapted to meet the needs in an ever-evolving landscape. Our organization, our Advocates, and most importantly, the children and youth we serve, have been challenged in ways we never anticipated. These children are the heroes of our story. If 2021 is any indication, CASA will continue to be able to meet the needs of the region's abused and neglected children for years to come.

In 2021, we were able to serve more children than ever before. This was made possible due to careful planning and infrastructure-building that we put into place in 2020. We implemented several steps to identify the needs in our community and expand our programming.

We updated our mission, vision, core values and strategic goals to ensure that we stay on track. We expanded our staff and planned two office moves to better fit our needs. Most importantly, we have the highest number of Advocates volunteering with CASA than at any time in our history.

We analyzed the data from our programs to identify disparities and worked to resolve them. We launched



and co-facilitated the Equity in Child Welfare Task Force to tackle the overwhelming concerns of disproportionality and disparities in our systems. CASA was joined in this effort by Children & Youth Services, Dependency Court Judge Rick Lowe, many attorneys, and community leaders and service providers who we partner with in Delaware County's child welfare system. Together, we researched and identified best practices across our country for addressing racial inequities and we examined data about children's outcomes and experiences during their journeys through foster care.

The children we serve are heroes. We are so grateful that CASA Advocates continue to serve as a caring presence in their lives. With your help, we will continue to grow, providing even greater assistance to ensure that more children have bright futures. We couldn't do this without your steadfast support. Thank you.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leigh Anne McKelvey".

Leigh Anne McKelvey, MSW LSW  
Executive Director

# MISSION

We champion equitable health outcomes, educational opportunities, and stable home environments for abused and neglected children and youth.

# VISION

We envision a bright future in which all children and youth have the resiliency, consistent relationships with caring adults, and access to child welfare, education, health, and human services they need to fully experience the joys of childhood and pursue their dreams.

# CORE VALUES



**Authenticity**  
**Collaboration**  
**Compassion**  
**Consistency**  
**Effectiveness**  
**Equity**  
**Volunteerism**

**“I just listen.** I’m often the first one in their lives who has done that. Kids really react to that.”

Paul Tutton, 2021 Advocate of the year

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# *Transforming Lives.* TRANSFORMING OUR APPROACH

## AUTHENTICITY

We are a justice-oriented trailblazer and lead with grit. We believe that by leading with our true selves and encouraging open and honest communication, we build stronger relationships between our volunteers, staff, donors, and community partners.

**We thought BIG in 2021.** Not only did we serve 264 children – the most we’ve ever served – but we also had 147 Advocates on board to help us along the way – more active CASA volunteers than ever before in a single year. We built a strong contingent of volunteers by focusing on recruitment and training. This enabled us to take on more cases with ease.

And we haven’t stopped there. We’re continuing to examine all aspects of our work, ensuring that we are growing sustainably, making sure we’re collecting the right information to guide our organization and building coalitions in the counties to ensure that we can work together to identify problems bigger than any one organization. We want to better understand the factors and dynamics that are indicators of poor outcomes and difficult journeys through the child welfare system so that we can continue to be proactive and tailor our advocacy to better meet the needs of those children and youth who are most at-risk when they enter the system.

Most importantly, we are ensuring that we have best practices in place so our Advocates are trained to best address the needs of those we serve. Our work with Voices for Children continues to evaluate how our communities’ child and family serving systems are faring and identify data we can share so that we can all improve our services – and make an impact on policy at the county and state levels.

We continue our anti-racism work to ensure that we are engaging in diversity and inclusion as an organization. We took part in the launch of the Equity in Child Welfare Task Force in Delaware County.

Our dedicated volunteers include 2021’s Advocate of the Year Paul Tutton. Five of our advocates were selected for excellence awards – Rich Connolly, Lauren Campbell, Sarah Ellen Lenahan, Chris Kelly, and Joanne Christopher.

“If you have the desire [to be a CASA], don’t hesitate. ... **It will be rewarding for you,** and hopefully for the child and their families.”

Chris Kelly

# IMPACT

100%

OVER  
\$17,200

WE  
ASKED

WE  
ENGAGED

We served more children and have more trained Advocates on board than ever before.

of CASA's high school seniors graduated and CASA Advocates were present at half of the graduation ceremonies. This is an extraordinary accomplishment for these graduates, especially considering how the pandemic disrupted education and the challenges of virtual schooling.

was distributed from the CASA Cares fund in 2021. A total of 107 requests were funded for a variety of needs that included groceries, transportation assistance, furniture, wifi boosters, phone plans, clothing and shoes, health & hygiene products, home repairs, diapers and wipes, rent and utility assistance, and baby gear.

Delaware County residents through public issue polling what concerns they have about the well-being of children in our community and what our elected officials should prioritize as top issues.

with policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels throughout the year to advocate for our important work and shared goals.

# Our VOLUNTEERS



“Don’t be afraid if you don’t have a background in social services or working with kids that you can’t be a CASA. As long as **you want to help kids** and can be solution-oriented about things, you can be a **CASA.**”

Lauren Campbell



“It’s hard work, but it’s what I love, and **I find it rewarding** along the way”

Joanne Christopher

## COLLABORATION

We can’t do it alone. We believe that strong and mutually beneficial collaboration with families, organizations, and systems of care lead to better outcomes for the youth we serve.





“What intrigued me is that we are appointed by a judge and the court system to give us some more teeth when we have to interact with schools, foster system, foster parents – a more **structured approach to volunteering** than I’ve ever seen before.”

Rich Connolly

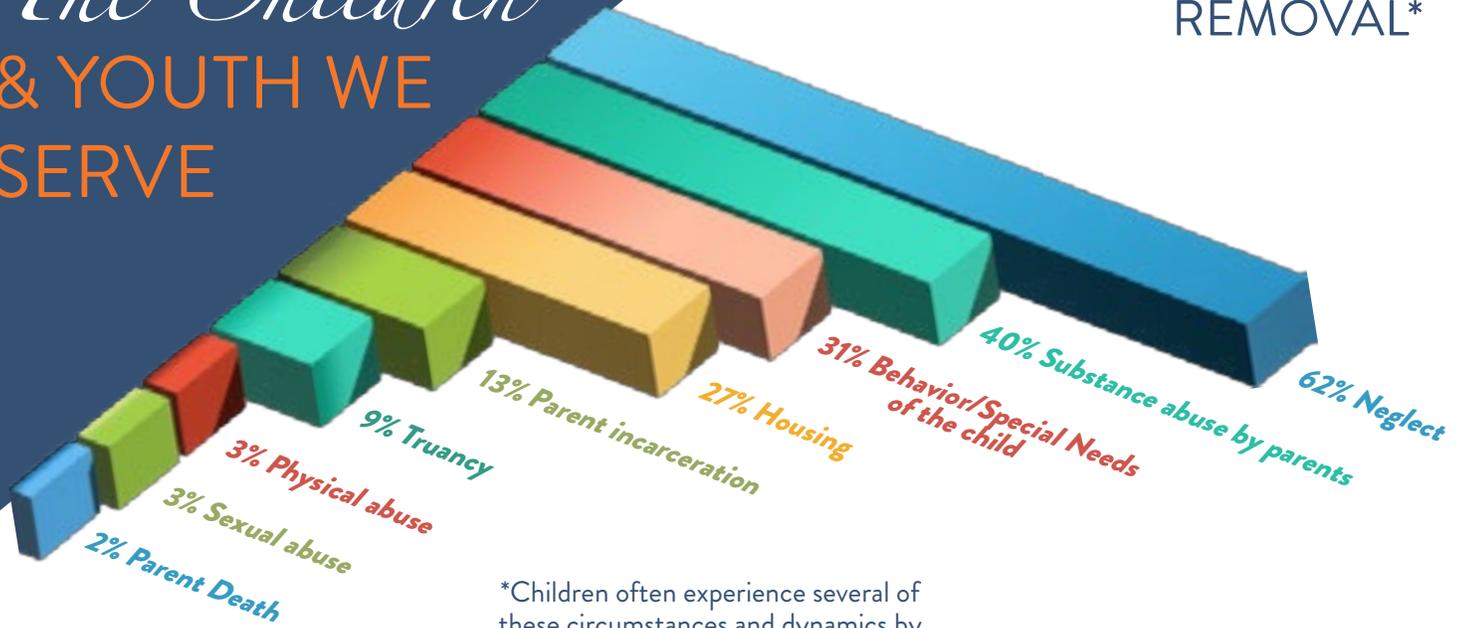
“If you really care about kids, families and foster families, you can be a CASA. It’s important to be flexible and willing to not just learn new things but accept different ideas. So you have to **open your heart and your mind** to a whole new way of thinking.

Sarah Ellen Lenahan



# The Children & YOUTH WE SERVE

## CIRCUMSTANCES FOR REMOVAL\*



\*Children often experience several of these circumstances and dynamics by the time they enter foster care.

**264** CHILDREN SERVED AND **169** CASES



CASA served as Educational Decision Maker for **147 children**. This represents **55%** of the total children served this year.



**44 new volunteer** advocates were sworn in in 2021.

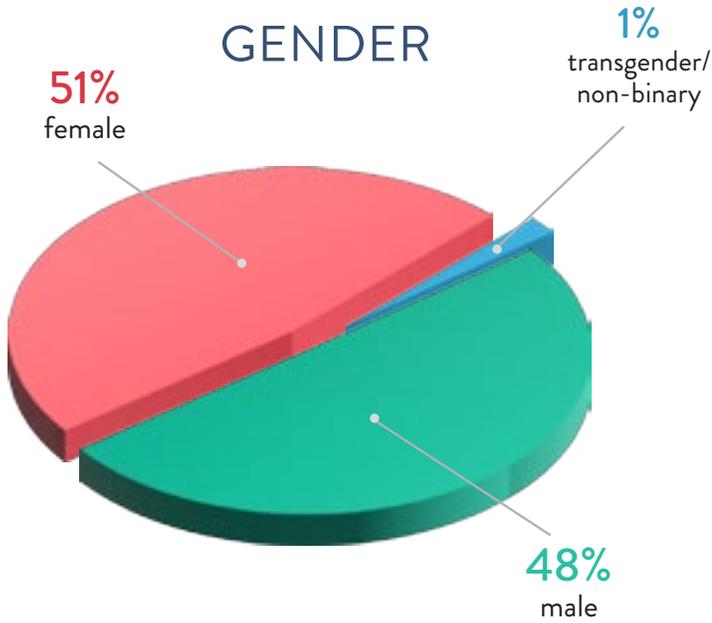


Volunteer advocates completed a combined total of **1,127 hours** of in-service training.

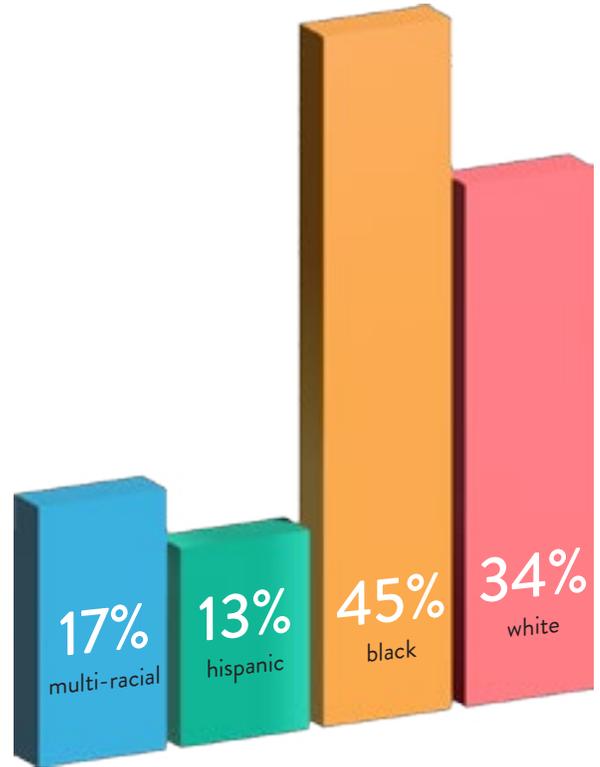
## COMPASSION

We are caring and do not judge others. We believe that empathy and active listening allow us to better understand the perspectives and experiences of the youth we serve.

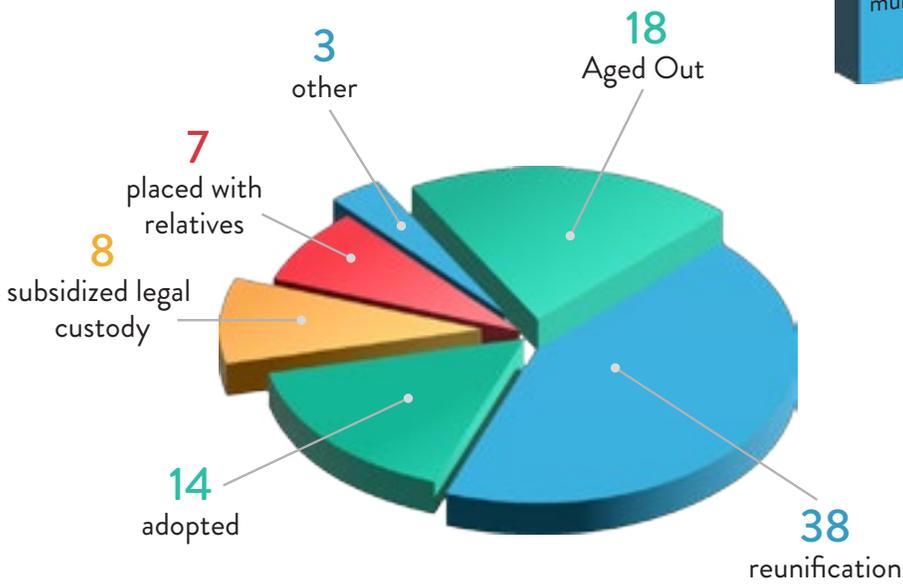
## GENDER



## RACE



## OUTCOMES



CASA completed our work with **88 children** on **53 cases**.

## CONSISTENCY

You can count on us. We believe that our reliability, dependability, and follow-through foster trust and credibility.

**In 2021, Voices for Children's website was launched. Check it out at [VoicesforChildrenDelco.org](https://VoicesforChildrenDelco.org)**

**Our Voices for Children work continues.** This important coalition brings together committed local leaders in human services, government, business, faith, philanthropy, education, and advocacy to ensure that all Delaware County children have opportunities that can lead to hopeful and healthy lives.

Since its launch in 2019, Voices for Children has expanded its impact in the world of advocacy. We conducted a Legislative Education & Advocacy Panel in March 2021, featuring U.S. Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon, PA State Senator Tim Kearney, Vice Chair of Delaware County Council Dr. Monica Taylor, PA State Representative Margo Davidson, and staff from the office of PA State Representative Chris Quinn.



**Dr. Monica Taylor**  
Delaware County  
Vice Chair of  
County Council



**Senator Tim Kearney**  
Pennsylvania  
State Senator,  
26th district



**Congresswoman  
Mary Gay Scanlon**  
U.S. House of  
Representatives,  
Pennsylvania's 5th  
Congressional District



**Chris Quinn**  
Pennsylvania State  
Representative,  
168th district

**We supported the overhaul of Delaware County's juvenile detention system**, and Leigh Anne McKelvey spoke at a press conference in April 2021 on the issue.

Voices for Children conducted its first-ever public opinion poll, finding that nearly half of Delaware County voters believe that the county is on the wrong track when it comes to children's health and well-being. Voters expressed that public education and services for abused and neglected children should be top priorities for local government. We held a press conference in June 2021 at the Delaware County Court House in Media on the findings of the public polling, featuring Leigh Anne McKelvey, Dr. Monica Taylor (now Chair of Delaware County Council), Donna Cooper (Executive Director of Children First), and staff from PA State Senator Tim Kearney's office.

Our collaborations with others in the child advocacy space are ongoing and we are excited to share our voice regarding these important discussions and policymaking decisions. **Please join us for a monthly Action Team meeting on the first Wednesday of every month at 2:00 pm. Contact [voicesforchildren@delcocasa.org](mailto:voicesforchildren@delcocasa.org) for more information.**

## Coalition partners are excited to support...

“community based, data driven projects because they feel relevant to the needs of people who are seeking services.”

-Voices for Children Action Team participant

## Systems of Care in Delaware County



# Diversity & INCLUSION



## Equity in Child Welfare Task Force

The Equity in Child Welfare Task Force of Delaware County was convened in January 2021 to examine and address concerns of disproportionality based on race and cultural background in Delaware County's child welfare system by:

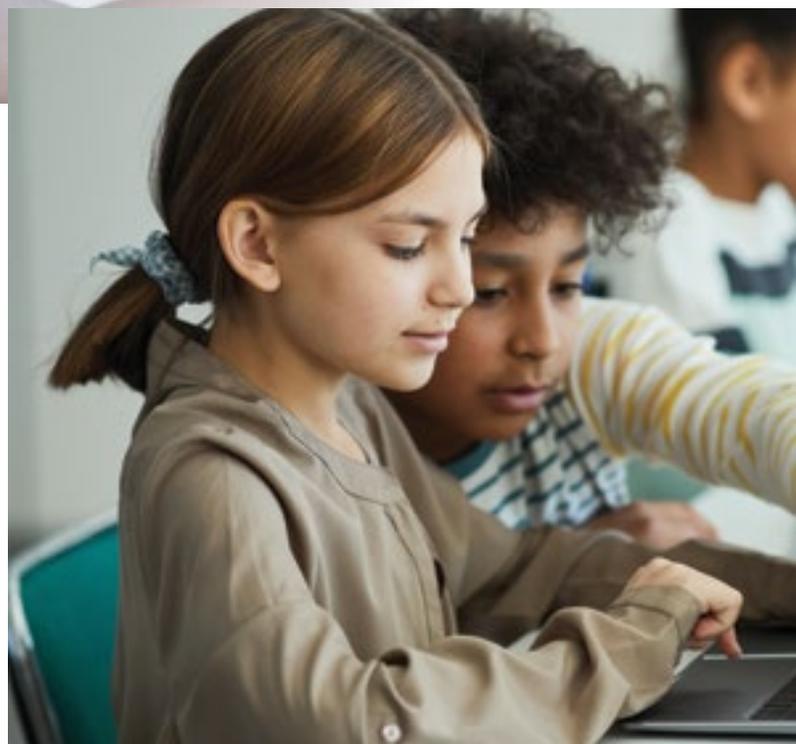
- **Gaining a deeper understanding of racial and cultural inequities in the child welfare system in Delaware County**
- **Identifying concrete recommendations and action steps to make long-term improvements to address disproportionality and disparities**

The task force, which met six times in 2021, consisted of stakeholders in the Dependency Court and child welfare systems, and was co-chaired by Delaware County Judge Richard H. Lowe, Leigh Anne McKelvey, CASA Youth Advocates, and Vanessa Pierre, Delaware County Children & Youth Services (CYS).

Over the course of the year, the task force reviewed data about disparities in Delaware County, provided a cultural humility training facilitated by Tamara Wilson, and reviewed best practices for the County's child welfare system.

CASA formulated several recommendations that emerged out of the group's work including growing visibility and leadership in the area of child welfare; dedicating additional resources to the child welfare system; engaging with the broader community; building capacity in the system to address disparities; and improving the use of data to inform decisions and strategies.

These partnerships are essential to improving the child welfare system in Delaware County and beyond.



## EFFECTIVENESS

We get things done. We believe in being data-driven, outcomes-focused, and innovative.

## Using Data to Boost Our Effectiveness

CASA completed our three-year participation in the RISE Partnership program, which helps nonprofits strengthen their effectiveness. The CASA partnership with RISE focused on improving our capacity to collect, use and apply data to identify areas for improvement and deliver stronger results.

“[RISE] really helped us take a lot of data that was already in some format and look at it in a way that was meaningful,” says Leigh Anne McKelvey.

This new approach to data collection and analysis led CASA to start looking at outcomes by various demographics like age, gender, race, and cultural background. This helps us to tailor advocacy practices and interventions to better support children’s needs. This also will guide us in training our volunteers to become the best advocates possible.

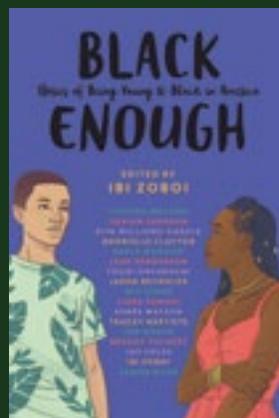
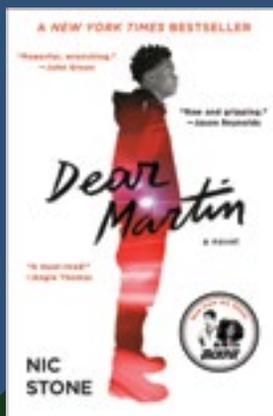
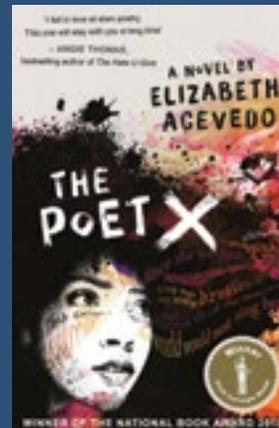
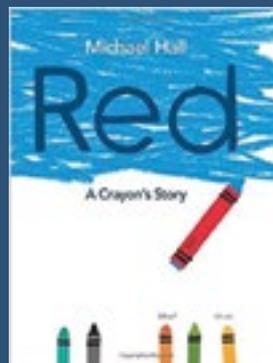
We were able to cast a wider net beyond our organization too, delivering professional development trainings to child welfare stakeholders, including attorneys and caseworkers, to improve the entire countywide child welfare system.



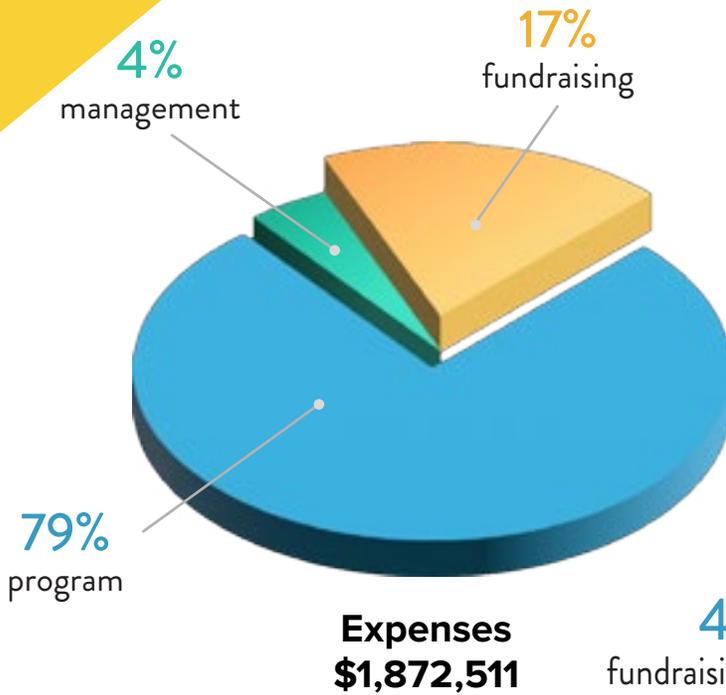
# MLK DAY

## MLK Day Events

CASA devoted significant time in 2021 planning for our Martin Luther King Day of Service event – a diverse book drive for children in our child welfare systems organized by Tamara Wilson and CASA’s Diversity Committee. We believe that all children should be able to see themselves and others reflected in the books that they read. This means various aspects of identity, including family, gender, race, ethnicity, culture (such as traditions, songs, nursery rhymes), language and how language is used, religion, socio-economic status, immigration experience, and other aspects of identity and lived experiences. Ultimately, we were able to provide about 1,600 children and youth with a diverse book.



# Financials

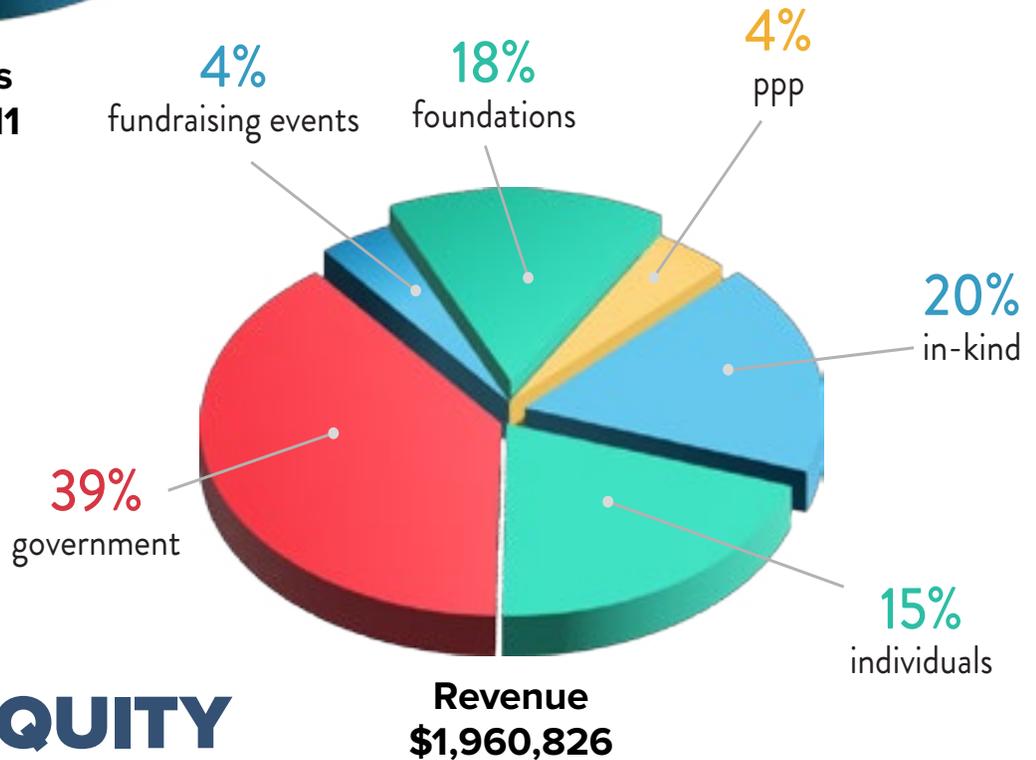


## We are so thankful for our supporters!

Individual giving was up 300% over what was projected. We not only increased our one-time giving, but most importantly, our ongoing giving has grown. These dedicated, regular gifts help us improve our financial forecasting and plan accurately for the future. Sixteen generous new donors committed to CASA's new Community of Champions multi-year giving society, bringing total membership to 39. Members in our Community of Champions made five-year pledges totaling \$395,100. We continue to see new individuals become GEMs – contributors who Give Every Month.

We raised \$15,000 for the CASA Cares Fund, which addresses the concrete needs of the children we serve, and our 2021 Gala, which pivoted to a virtual format, raised \$86,000 in revenue.

CASA Children's Futures Endowment Fund was established with The Foundation for Delaware County. We raised \$36,000 for that fund by the end of 2021. Donations to the Endowment fund are met for a limited time with a 1:5 match from The Foundation for Delaware County.



## EQUITY

We acknowledge that racism and systemic discrimination are barriers to equal access and opportunity. We believe that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are the drivers of a just and equal society.

\*At time of publication, financials represent unaudited year-end totals.

# Our Staff AND BOARD

## CASA Staff

**Jacquona Blackwell, MSW, MBA**  
*Development Director*

**Elisha Coffey, MSW**  
*Advocacy Director/Voices for  
Children Coalition*

**Suzanne Coladonato, MSW**  
*Manager of Advocate  
Engagement*

**Shabria Davis, BA**  
*Development and  
Communications Manager*

**Bronwen DiSalvia, BA**  
*Case Supervisor*

**Hawa Gray-Smith, BS**  
*Office Manager*

**Shakira Hansley, JD**  
*Senior Case Supervisor*

**Mary Kate Howard, MSS, MLSP,  
LSW**  
*Associate Director*

**Shari Jones, BA**  
*Case Supervisor*

**Ashleigh McCarron, BSW**  
*Case Supervisor*

**Leigh Anne McKelvey, MSW, LSW**  
*Executive Director*

**Gregory Rice, MSW, LSW**  
*Case Supervisor*

**Anne Shenberger, MSS, LSW**  
*Strategic Director*

**Yasemin Simsek, BA**  
*Information Management  
Coordinator*

**Susanne Whiting, MSW**  
*Delaware County Program  
Manager*

**Tamara L. Wilson, JD**  
*Chester County Program  
Manager/ Director of Diversity,  
Equity, and Inclusion*

**Diana Zahner**  
*Bookkeeper*

## Board of Directors

**David Cramer**  
*Chair*

**Bernard M. Skeete, CPA, CGMA,**  
*Vice Chair*

**Ian Kauffman, CPA,**  
*Treasurer*

**Joanne Curley**  
*Secretary*

**Loretta Brehony**

**Anthony Cavaliere**

**Kate Fox**

**David Hurst**

**William H. Pillsbury, Esq.**

**Sarah Relich**

**Jennifer Sandner**

**Michelle Tilley, Esq.**

**Katie Topolewski**



# Donors

## 2021

### Corporations

AmeriHealth Caritas Services LLC  
AmerisourceBergen Services Corporation  
Bottomline Technologies  
Brinker Simpson & Co. LLP  
Cangemi Plumbing & Heating LLC  
Covenant United Methodist Church  
A Pickup Project  
Daniel A. White & Associates  
Dementia Companionship Care  
Emerald Advisers  
Ernst & Young  
Estrella Tacos Y Mas  
F5 Networks  
Garnet Ford  
The Higgins Group Incorporated  
Idle Hour Tennis Club  
JPMorgan Chase  
Juliet Koczak Architect  
Keller, Lisgar & Williams, LLP  
Law Offices of William H. Pillsbury PLLC  
Marchese Opticians  
Magraffix  
Matlack Florist  
Microsoft  
Monroe Energy  
Pinocchio's Restaurant  
Republic Bank  
Trinseo  
Vanguard  
WSFS Bank

### Foundations

Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund  
The Boggs Family Fund  
The Community's Foundation  
Compass Cares Philadelphia, Delaware, and South Jersey Community Fund  
Robert & Joan Dircks Foundation, Inc.  
Fidelity Charitable  
Finance of America Cares  
The Foundation for Delaware County  
The Fox Chase Bank Charitable Fund  
The Genuardi Family Foundation  
George McManus Jr. Foundation Fund  
Give T/E  
Greater Milwaukee Foundation Inc.  
David Kelleher and Marlo Pagano Kelleher Foundation  
The Bill and Janet Lasko Foundation  
Liebowitz Family Charitable Fund  
M & T Charitable Foundation  
MKM Foundation  
McKesson Foundation  
The McMurray Donor Fund  
The Nelson Foundation  
The Philadelphia Foundation  
Phoenixville Community Health Foundation  
The Schiel Family Foundation  
The Richard M Schulze Family Foundation  
The Ethel Sergeant Clark Smith Memorial Fund  
Tapper Family Foundation  
United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey

### Government

Chester County Department of Children, Youth, and Families  
Delaware County Department of Human Services  
National CASA/GAL Association for Children  
Pennsylvania Commission on Crime & Delinquency

### Community of Champions

Jenn & Kurt Asplundh  
Terri & Michael Banas  
Carmen & Elke Belefonte  
Karlie & John Bisordi  
Loretta & Ted Brehony  
Barb & Don Cadge  
Quincy & Shane Campbell  
Tony & Michelle Cavaliere  
Carole & Paul Cavanaugh  
David Cramer & Christine Wiita  
Joanne Curley  
Rob & Marcy Fenza  
Greg Garvan & Priscilla Quirk  
Randi & Jay Coen Gilbert  
Barb & Jack Hafner  
Brad Hendrixson, Garnet Ford  
Fran Howell  
David & Pamela Hurst  
Jerome Jaffe  
Frank & Sue Jorfi  
Dot & Laz Krikorian  
Gwen Krilova  
Jacqui & Jim Lake  
Sarah Ellen Lenahan  
Tony & Terri McCarthy  
Leigh Anne & TJ McKelvey  
Ken & Shirley Mertz  
Tayler & John Moots  
Lisa & Tim Moran  
Jeff & Suzanne Mullen  
Olusola Oguntunde  
Will & Laura Pillsbury  
Sarah Relich  
Jenise & Bruce Rhoades  
Jennifer Sandner  
Julie & Jordan Savitch  
Bernard & Maia Skeete  
Dave & Pamela Stitely  
Patty & Bob Szipszky  
Pam Townsend  
Norman Viss  
Tracey & Shaun Walsh  
Kate & Brian Zidek

## Bill and Janet Lasko Foundation

Five years ago, West Chester native Bill Lasko and his wife Janet founded the Bill and Janet Lasko Foundation and began searching for a local nonprofit to help as a way to give back to the community.

“CASA is unique. They know who they are,” he said. “I like that their focus is on vulnerable kids, who are vulnerable through no fault of their own. CASA’s leadership is informed and practical. They have a specific target and have strong relationships with the schools, courts, and other decision makers.”

Bill was also impressed by the commitment of CASA’s volunteer advocates – who often act as mentors to the neglected and abused children they serve.

**“When choosing a cause to support, I base my decision on behavior, instead of mission statements. CASA, and all they do, is inspirational to me,”** he said.

“I became a CASA Advocate to give a voice to children and advocate for their best interests as they navigate through the system. I have found CASA to be a dedicated organization with people passionate about helping improve the lives of children. **Seeing firsthand the positive impact of CASA,** made me want to support them further and become part of the Community of Champions, in order to help more children.

Pam Townsend, Community of Champions

## Norman Viss

As co-owner of **Dementia Companionship Care**, Norman Viss understands the importance of working with marginalized populations and helping others who may not be able to help themselves.

“Our staff provides companionship care to people with dementia. We get to know each client individually. We learn their hobbies and interests, spend time with them daily, help them FaceTime their children and grandchildren,” he explained. We are helping people live in their homes independently longer.”

Since becoming an advocate in 2017, Norman has continued to give back to CASA. In 2020, he became a peer mentor – where he helps other advocates with their cases, and last year he joined our Community of Champions.

**“I wanted to show my support in a way that will help CASA with financial planning and longevity,”** he said. **“Donating for five years gives CASA support for their long term goals.”**



# Spotlight 2021

**639  
PEOPLE**

**have attended Impact Hours** – where we gather to hear stories of our children and our volunteers about CASA’s impact- since originally launched in July 2019.

**MORE  
THAN 50**

**staff, Board, and volunteers** (and many of their family members) participated in MLK Day of Service events

**WE  
EXPANDED**

**our staff to 18 staff members with 15 full-time staff** including a new Case Supervisor for Delaware County.

**OP-ED ON VOICES  
FOR CHILDREN**

**public polling results** published in Delaware County Daily Times on 6/14/21.

**THE DELAWARE COUNTY  
DAILY TIMES**

**published a joint op-ed on 4/20/21** penned by Leigh Anne McKelvey, along with the Directors of the Domestic Abuse Project, Family Support Line, and the Delaware County Victims Assistance Center in support of the VOCA Fix Act.

**WE PROMOTED**

**Mary Kate Howard** to Associate Director  
**Susanne Whiting** to Delaware County Program Manager

**Shakira Hansley** to Senior Case Supervisor

**Yasemin Simsek** to Information Management Coordinator

**VOLUNTEERISM**

We are powered by the commitment and passion of our volunteers. We believe that our trained volunteers serving as CASA volunteer advocates, donors, coalition partners, and Board members are the heart of our mission and positive impact on the lives of youth.



## IN 2022, WE PLAN TO TACKLE A VARIETY OF PROJECTS INCLUDING:

- Implement new three-year strategic plan
- Youth Voices Council launch
- Vicarious and secondary trauma training and support for CASA staff
- PA CASA Health Advocacy project
- MLK Day of Service book drive
- Move to new Delaware County office
- Move to new Chester County office
- Fundraising campaign for new Children's Futures Endowment.
- Technology and cyber security assessment and overhaul
- Voices for Children website and database launch; legislative and campaign materials developed.





CASA Youth Advocates, Inc.  
Delaware & Chester Counties, PA  
PO Box 407, Media, PA 19063  
610.565.2208  
DelcoCASA.org • ChescoCASA.org  
VoicesForChildrenDelco.org

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Advocates on:**



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Delaware County CASA  
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