



CASA of New Hampshire provides a voice for abused and neglected children and youth by empowering a statewide network of trained volunteers to advocate on their behalf so they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.



The Need We Address

One million American children are confirmed victims of abuse and neglect each year and more than half a million of them are in foster care. Each year in New Hampshire, hundreds of children come to the attention of our courts through investigation by the Division of Children, Youth & Families, and law enforcement. These children need someone to be a strong advocate to get to know them and to speak for them in complex, confusing, and often overburdened systems.

The Children CASA Serves

All of the children whom CASA serves are victimized children (from newborns to 18 years old) who have come to the attention of the New Hampshire court system because they suffered abuse or neglect at the hands of their parents or primary caretakers, the very individuals who are supposed to protect and nurture.

They are drug-addicted babies taken into custody directly from the maternity ward. They are toddlers broken or shaken to the point of brain damage by frustrated parents barely more than children themselves. They are the little ones who are used for sexual satisfaction by a selfish step-parent, boyfriend or relative. They are the adolescents who are left to their own devices for survival — who are challenged daily to provide for themselves and, perhaps, younger siblings. They are the teenagers who are verbally battered day in and day out, relentlessly, until they have no shred of self-worth remaining.

The effects of abuse and neglect harm all of the children we serve. There are no socio-economic, cultural, religious, or geographical boundaries. Some come from heavily populated urban and suburban areas, and some from remote corners. They all deserve to know that there are caring adults in the world who value them, and that they are children who deserve a chance to be safe from harm.

Breaking the Cycle

Without someone to focus on the child and ensure that their needs and best interests are being met, the futures of many abused and neglected children would be threatened by a lack of help, stability, and support.

CASA's concentration on the needs of abused and neglected children has a major societal impact. Victimization of children is often the threshold for myriad other problems that will potentially plague their futures — insufficient educational progress,

criminal behavior, mental health issues, and health concerns, to name a few. Ultimately, these problems not only harm the child but also negatively impact the community as a whole. It is estimated that the total annual cost of adult criminality in the United States that is traceable to childhood maltreatment is \$426 billion.

CASA organizations around the United States have been recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice as model juvenile delinquency prevention programs.

CASA Nuts and Bolts

CASA of New Hampshire's volunteer advocates provide dedicated support for children by:

- Gathering information from everyone involved in the child's life — teachers, health care providers, counselors, coaches, parents, and foster parents.
- Visiting with the child at least once per month to check on their wellbeing, form a more complete snapshot of the child, and lend encouragement.
- Preparing and submitting a court report that summarizes all of the gathered information.
- Attending each court hearing to speak for the child, answer questions, and generally advocate for the child's best interests, whatever they may be.
- Becoming an expert on that one child's situation and making sure he is more than just a court docket number.

"When you're a kid, nobody listens to you. They really don't. That's why I'm glad I had a CASA volunteer to speak for me. I don't know what I would have done without him."

Former CASA child

Dedicated Advocacy

CASA volunteers are powerful, effective, caring advocates for abused children. A CASA volunteer advocate is appointed by a judge to speak for the best interests of the child.

At any given time, CASA of NH provides personalized advocacy for more than 1,400 young victims involved in New Hampshire's child protection and juvenile justice systems.

The State of New Hampshire has a statutory obligation to provide guardian ad litem (GAL) services to all children who are involved in the court system because they have been victimized.

CASA of NH currently provides more than 600 carefully-screened, trained, and supervised volunteer advocates who speak up in the courts on behalf of the best interests of abused and neglected children. In fiscal year 2022, these citizens donated more than 89,000 hours of service and more than 468,000 travel miles culminating a significant savings to the state.

Since 1989, CASA of NH has worked to reduce the time a child is involved in the system without a permanent, safe home. It has also advocated for fewer out-of-home placements and remained on each case through appeals, reunification or termination of parental rights and subsequent adoption.



When CASA cannot provide a sufficient number of advocates, the State of NH must supply paid GALs at a rate of \$60/hour, plus mileage reimbursement. Often, paid GALs assume many cases simultaneously. CASA volunteer advocates are only required to take one case, representing one child or sibling group. Their ability to focus time and resources is critical to achieving in effective outcomes.

"CASA volunteers play a critical role in advancing and assuring the interest and welfare of children caught in the net of abuse and neglect. They are invaluable to the judicial system and, most importantly, to the young and fragile lives they so greatly influence."

John T. Broderick
Former Chief Justice
New Hampshire Supreme Court

Our Uniqueness and History

CASA began with the premise that the child protection and juvenile justice systems do not want children further damaged, but lack the resources and singleness of agenda to focus adequate energy on the child alone.

Furthermore, CASA believes there are capable and caring citizens from every walk of life who genuinely want to help children if they have opportunity and a bonafide means to do so. CASA provides just such a vehicle.

Orchestrating a comprehensive, effective, and accountable method of screening, training, and supervision by experienced staff professionals, CASA provides everything needed for a truly unique volunteer opportunity that allows ordinary people to break through the typically closed environment of the courtroom.

As a result of consistently well-managed cases by volunteers and staff who conduct themselves in a professional and constructive manner, it is clear that unpaid, citizen GALs can do a respectable — even admirable — job defending the best interests of vulnerable children, and providing a judge with valuable insight into the child's life. CASA is the only organization in New Hampshire providing volunteer guardians ad litem.

A Solution That Works

The CASA program saves millions of dollars in federal and state government expenses. It is a research-based, effective program of trained, competent, court-appointed community volunteers stepping forward to deliver greater efficiency in government systems, and significantly improving outcomes for the abused and neglected children whom it serves.

- Children with CASA volunteer advocates on average spend fewer months in foster care and experience fewer out-of-home placements than children without a CASA.
- CASA volunteer advocates handle just 1 or 2 cases at a time, so that they can give each child's case the sustained, personal attention it deserves. Low CASA case loads mean the courts can make better decisions for children.
- CASA volunteer advocates work with the intention that the court and child welfare systems remain focused on the specific needs of individual children in an effort to make sure the children's well-being, including their need for safety and permanency, are addressed expeditiously.

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