

CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.™



CASA OF LANCASTER AND LEBANON COUNTIES

# 2023 Annual Report

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CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF LANCASTER AND LEBANON COUNTIES

CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.™



Resource parents Erica and Nick Helmick and CASA Volunteer Jan Masland at the 2023 Community Awareness Breakfast

"The moment I am most proud of is when I went to watch my child play basketball and I sat with both his resource family and his biological family. At various points throughout the game, my child would check in with his bio mom and ask for water, then check in with his resource dad to talk about a play on the court. It felt like we were a team, supporting my child together."

- Lorien. CASA Volunteer

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Golfers at Fidevia's Voices for Hope Golf Classic in May 2023

### Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

It is always a gift to take the time to reflect back on the previous year. I am sure you can agree that time seems to pass by more quickly each year. 2023 was no exception, it seems we blinked and had a swearing-in ceremony then we blinked again and we were hosting an uplifting breakfast featuring two testimonials to the work of CASA. Then we were welcoming the heat and sunshine of summer, before yet again we were swearing in three more classes of new CASAs and then hosting our most successful Heroes Gala to date.

Throughout 2023, the staff worked to support our CASAs who advocated for 234 children and donated over 6,000 hours of their time. We celebrated two milestone anniversaries of longtime CASA employees; Sophie Wanner, Senior Volunteer Manager, 5 years, and D'Arcy Crocker, Program Director, 10 years. We welcomed two new staff members, Margie Lamberson, Director of Development, and Marguerite Rohrbach, Office Assistant. We continued to find our footing, thoughtfully expanding our work in Lebanon County.

The year was not without struggles. We continue to navigate a post-pandemic world, where it is widely recognized that volunteerism is down across the nation. This current downturn coupled with the incredible and unique ask of our CASAs, made recruitment of new CASA Volunteers even more challenging and increased our admiration of our current CASAs even more. Many of our CASA Volunteers took on additional challenging cases and stepped in to speak up for youth - driving thousands of miles, fielding hundreds of phone calls, lending an empathetic ear for countless hours, and showing up time after time after time. If 2023 reminded me of anything, it is the fact that our CASA Volunteers are truly exceptional people for whom we should all be grateful for.

In addition, your gifts to CASA - financial, time, and expertise allow us to do this work. Every single gift you make is deeply appreciated and we strive to continue to be good stewards of your donations and your trust.

I am excited about our work as we step into 2024 with program staff working on projects focused on older youth, healthcare advocacy, and trauma-informed advocacy. CASA continues to strive to find opportunities of growth for our best-interest advocacy model. As we prepare to celebrate our 15th anniversary in 2025, we know you will be celebrating alongside us.

With gratitude,

Jessica L. Laspino

Jesua La Spirio

#### **Board of Directors**

Ben Stoltzfoos, President
Director of Operations and Marketing, TradeMark Lancaster

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Portfolio Manager and Senior Research Analyst, Emerald Advisors

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Patricia Verdon Chief Financial Officer, VISTA Autism Services

Dave Walker, Esq.
Attorney, Stock and Leader

#### Staff

Jessica Laspino
Executive Director

D'Arcy Crocker Program Director

Margie Lamberson, CFRE Development Director

Laura Wilcox, MSW Operations Director

Sophie Wanner Senior Training Manager

Katelyn Maule Senior Volunteer Manager

> India Folk Volunteer Manager

> Kiran Siddiqui Volunteer Manager

> Kate Welch Volunteer Manager

Marguerite Rohrbach
Office Assistant



CASA Staff 2023 Holiday Card Photo

#### Volunteer Advocates

Juliet Ashton-Luckey Sara Barton Amy Beasley Ruth Beck Danelle Bender Kristen Bishop Catherine Bonser Jackie Brandsema Beth Brandt Donna Bucher Mary Beth Budnyk Christine Bunce Jason Burkholder Ronald Burroughs Greg Carey Shannon Coates Karen Conley Betsy DeLisle Matthew DePietro Ruby Dhillon Cathy Duke Kristine Eves Jessica Finsterbush Paige Fiore Anna Fisher Ann Foley Jacqueline Francis Jill Frey Carol Gallimore Alice Geib Susan George Lorien Gilbert Grace Gill Joanne Glah Philip Golden Jerry Gottlieb Pamela Grosh Amy Grube Jenny Habecker Andrea Hartzler Stacy Hastings Laura Heemer Karyn Heichel Beth Hendrix **Emily Hertzler** Rebecca Hickey Mike Higgs Michelle High Jessie Hoin

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Elise Ranauro

Mary Ellen Reitmeyer Barry Richardson Susan Robertson Adele Ruszak Rebecca Sauder Gail Schilling Rachel Schneider Sarah Scholly Jordan Schonhaut Ann Seprinski Fran Sescilla Michael Sham Patty Shipton Nancy Shirk Theresa Shope Steve Siegrist Erin Small Pam Smith Andrea Smith Heidi Stadel Geoffrey Stankiewicz Mary Stankiewicz Sherri Stauffer Mary Steffy Deborah Tamakloe Sam Thomas Jillian Tice Leigh Trayer Mai Vang Suzanne Vucovich Lani Ward Josh Ward Mary Waskowicz Trisha Waters Jaiya Watson Keri Weaver Heather Weaver Katrina Weaver Margaret Weik Margaret Williams Linda Williard Bridget Willoughby Jenni Woodworth Bonnie Wrisley Jennifer Young

# Mission, Vision, and History



Spring 2023 Lancaster Training Class at their Swearing In Ceremony



To provide a qualified and compassionate court-appointed volunteer advocate to every child who is abused and neglected, to ensure the fundamental human right of having a safe, nurturing, and permanent home is met.



Every child who is abused and neglected will have a safe, permanent home and the support to become a healthy, empowered adult, thereby breaking the cycle of abuse and neglect.



The concept for CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) was developed in 1977 in Seattle, WA by Judge David Soukop. As a Dependency Judge, Judge Soukop felt he did not have enough child focused information to rule in their best interest. His solution was to empower concerned, educated, compassionate community members to advocate for children on his court docket by providing information regarding the child's day to day needs and experience. Their understanding of the children's social supports and relationships with relevant caregivers allowed them to provide otherwise unattainable information.

In 2005 CASA was founded in Lancaster County. President Judge Louis Farina appointed Judge Leslie Gorbey to spearhead a steering committee exploring the need for a CASA program to serve abused and neglected children. With over 700 children in foster care throughout a given year, Judge Gorbey found that vulnerable Lancaster youth needed a voice in court, and needed someone looking out for their best interests. The steering committee founded the first Board of Directors in 2007 and together they secured start-up funding to begin operations as a 501c3. In 2009, Jessica Laspino was hired as the Executive Director and first staff member. In the fall of 2009, CASA of Lancaster County swore in their very first class of volunteers consisting of 11 concerned and committed community members. In January 2010, the Lancaster County Dependency Court appointed CASA its first case.

2020, CASA's leadership team began the process of expanding the current program to serve children in Lebanon County. Leveraging existing relationships with the Lancaster County Judiciary and Children and Youth Agency, CASA began to meet with stakeholders in Lebanon County. In January 2022, CASA was able to begin the formal process with the National CASA/GAL Association to rebrand as "CASA of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties" and officially begin training advocates for children in Lebanon County's foster care system. In August 2022, the Lebanon County Dependency Court appointed CASA its first case.

# **Program**

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate. It is both the name of our program and what we call our volunteers. CASA Volunteers are community members who stand up and speak out to help abused and neglected children.

Our CASA program belongs to a network of nearly 750 community-based programs that recruit, train, and support citizen-volunteers to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in courtrooms and communities.

Our Program Staff, led by our Program Director, supervises and supports our CASA Volunteers. Volunteer Managers work with our CASA Volunteers to provide oversight and guidance as they navigate the child welfare system and the court system. Volunteer Managers assist with reviewing court reports, accompany CASA Volunteers to court, and help CASA Volunteers with case planning.



Speak up for the child's best interests in court. Make recommendations regarding the child's placement and needed services, and monitor the child's situation until the case is released by the court.



CASA Volunteer Bernie Jensen and Alex, her CASA Youth

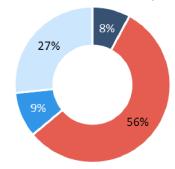
"Throughout the case as a
CASA I was able to get to
know these children well and
advocate for their needs. I
was a constant in their life
as caseworkers, judges, and
attorneys changed."
- Gail, CASA Volunteer



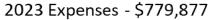
Attendees at our 2023 Heroes Gala and Benefit Auction, "Camp CASA"

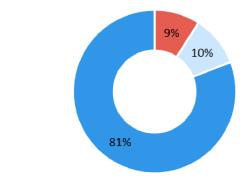
## **Financials**

2023 Income - \$787,178



- Commuity Partnerships and Faith Based Giving
- Grants
- Individual Donations
- Special Events





#### WE THANK YOU!

In 2023 the Lancaster and Lebanon communities of individuals, businesses, family foundations, organizations and grantors graciously came together to uphold children in the child welfare system through their support of CASA of Lancaster and Lebanon Counties.

Because of you we are able to give a voice to children who have been abused and neglected.

- Thank you to all who gave to CASA for the first time in 2023. We welcomed 159 new donors to the CASA family!
  - Thank you to 120 longstanding donors who have given to CASA consecutively since 2020!
- Thank you to 101 volunteer CASAs whose advocacy provided over \$233,000 of community service!

\*Financials represented are from internally prepared statements and have not yet been externally audited.

Donors Page 9

#### \$10,000+

Clark Associates Charitable Foundation
Clark Family Foundation
Fidevia Construction Management &
Consulting
Jerry and Diane Gottlieb
Lucille Meissner

Riverside Camping Association Rick and Jessy Rodgers - Rodgers Charitable Fund/Lancaster County Community Foundation Stadel Motors, Inc.

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## \$2,500-\$9,999

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Attendees at our 2023 Heroes Gala and Benefit Auction, "Camp CASA"

#### \$1,000-\$2,400

**Emily Altimare** Christiane Bercik Lucille Connors Karen M. Crouse Catherine Duke Howard and Evelyn Eckstein Eighth Ward Beneficial Association Steve Farkas and Alicia Moranz Thomas Feely Scott and Laura Fiore First Presbyterian Church (Strasburg) First Presbyterian Church (Lancaster) Ann Foley Fulton Bank, N.A. Juan and Alicia Galarza John Herr and Diane Koken Hershey Palmyra Sertoma Club High Company Historic St. Mary's Church JBT Jonestown Bank & Trust Co. Julius H. Caplan Charity Foundation Drew and Barbara Kavanaugh Kerri Kirchner Kurowski & Wilson LLC Lancaster Lodge 134 Benevolent and Protective Order Elks Lancaster Toyota Matthew 25 Thrift Shop David McIlwaine Karen Nicholson Patient First Penn State Health Vesta Phiel Reidler Foundation S&T Bank (Centerville Road) James and Marsha Schmucker Mark and Stacey Sears George and Mary Jo Soukas Ben and Kate Stoltzfoos Timothy Sullivan and Lavera Leonard Suzanne M. High Family Fund The Ashland Foundation Judith Ann Tubbs

David Walker

#### \$500-\$999

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#### \$100-\$499

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#### **Storytellers**

Special thank you to our
Storytellers! These individuals have
committed to making a monthly
constirubtion to CASA. Monthly
donors are important to our
finanical health as it helps to
ensure steady income for the
organization. If you would like to
become a Storyteller and
participate in our monthly giving
campaign you may sign up on our
website or call (717) 286-1436

Randy Ball Amy Beasley Christiane Bercik Michele Brenneman Elaine Cook-Madric Robert Dills and Nancy Harris Dills David Dodson Brenda Higgins Jessica and Paul Laspino Henry and Carol Mauermeyer Marsha M. Parke Brian and Penny Parker Jeremiah and Laura Rineer Adrienne Squillace Fei Steinbacher William and Debra Stratton Pauline Strausbaugh Patricia Verdon Alex and Laura Wilcox Sara Woodbury

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# Have you considered making a gift in your will?

Collin Zimmerman

It costs you nothing today and will make a huge impact on our organization's future!

Contact our Development Director at

Margie@casalancleb.org or

(717) 286-1436 for more information.



Summer 2023 Lancaster Training Class at their Swearing In Ceremony

Every attempt has been made to accurately reflect the generosity of our donors. If there is an error, we sincerely apologize and encourage you to contact our Development Director at Margie@casalancleb.org or (717) 286-1436.

If you have designated a gift through your Donor Advised Funds (DAF), we thank you and remind you that your name may not be listed above since your gift was originally made to a DAF.

C OURT
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A DVOCATE

To provide a qualified and compassionate court-appointed volunteer advocate to every child who is abused and neglected, to ensure the fundamental human right of having a safe, nurturing, and permanent home



# 2023 BY THE NUMBERS

234
Children served, of those 62 were new to CASA



Children are now in their safe and permanent homes

**7,292**CASA visits to children, family members and providers



85%
Volunteer retention rate

6,242 Advocacy hours provided by 144 CASAs



Volunteer services are valued at \$233,335 ...translating into savings for our community.



Fall 2023 Lebanon Training Class at their Swearing In Ceremony



Fall 2023 Lancaster Training Class at their Swearing In Ceremony

"The family made great strides in therapy, enabling them to be more accepting of the youth's gender identification and working out past issues. The youth reached a point where they were requesting to go home. I feel I was most instrumental in advocating for more therapy, both individual and family to address the numerous issues that this youth faced. I also feel I was instrumental in ensuring the youth's wishes and identity choices were conveyed to the team and respected.