



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**CASA IN COLORADO**



2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## A Message from the Chairperson of the Board

Our mission at Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) in Colorado is to ensure the success of individual programs of the statewide CASA network through positively effecting state level legislative activities and by supporting the network's efforts to implement effective programs. Nationally, CASA in Colorado is part of a network of nearly 1,000 local community programs supporting volunteers serving children.

CASA in Colorado is a network of 16 programs serving 40 counties. Each program serves a single judicial district. 15 of these programs are separate nonprofit organizations. The remaining program is managed by a CASA program in a neighboring judicial district.

Our 16 programs rely on a mix of government funding, public & private grants, fundraising events, and donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Expenses are primarily direct-service. CASA programs spent over 5 million dollars in 2014-2015 to serve children and families.

These 16 CASA programs in Colorado are responsible for recruiting, training and supervising volunteers, who advocate for sexually, emotionally, and physically abused and neglected children. CASA programs train these volunteers to work collaboratively with human service departments, community service providers, schools, attorneys, GALS, and the courts to help ensure that the individual needs of these children are met.

All potential volunteers engage in an intensive screening and training process, which includes multiple background checks, 35 hours of classroom time and five hours of court observations.

It is this combination of passionate and talented CASA staff working with and supporting dedicated community volunteers that makes CASA in Colorado such a dynamic and impactful organization.

Thank you for your interest and support in helping CASA in Colorado achieve our ultimate aim to end the cycle of abuse and neglect for children in Colorado.

Sincerely,

*Bryan Teets*

Board Chairperson

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## CASA in Colorado Network Programs

### **A Kid's Place**

Gwen Schooley, Executive Director  
County Served: Weld  
[www.akidsplace.org](http://www.akidsplace.org)

### **Advocates for Children**

Peg Rudden, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Arapahoe, Elbert,  
Douglas, Lincoln  
[www.adv4children.org](http://www.adv4children.org)

### **CASA of Adams & Broomfield Counties**

Lindsay Lierman, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Adams, Broomfield  
[www.casa17th.org](http://www.casa17th.org)

### **CASA of Jefferson & Gilpin Counties**

Leah Varnell, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Jefferson, Gilpin  
[www.casajeffcogilpin.org](http://www.casajeffcogilpin.org)

### **CASA of Larimer County**

Lynn Oesterle-Zollner, Executive Director  
County Served: Larimer, Jackson  
[www.casalarimer.com](http://www.casalarimer.com)

### **CASA of Mesa County**

Janet Rowland, Executive Director  
County Served: Mesa  
[www.casamc.org](http://www.casamc.org)

### **CASA of Pueblo**

Zane Grant, Executive Director  
County Served: Pueblo  
[www.casaofpueblo.org](http://www.casaofpueblo.org)

### **CASA of the Continental Divide**

Kathy Reed, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Clear Creek, Eagle, Lake,  
Summit  
[www.mtnccasa.org](http://www.mtnccasa.org)

### **CASA of the 4 Corners**

Barbara Casey, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Dolores, Montezuma  
[www.casa4corners.org](http://www.casa4corners.org)

### **CASA of the Ninth**

Patti Cummings, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Garfield, Pitkin, Rio Blanco  
[www.casaoftheninth.org](http://www.casaoftheninth.org)

### **CASA of the Pikes Peak Region**

Jenny Bender, Executive Director  
Counties Served: El Paso, Teller  
[www.casappr.org](http://www.casappr.org)

### **CASA of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District**

Carlton Mason, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Delta, Gunnison,  
Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel  
[www.casa7jd.org](http://www.casa7jd.org)

### **Child Advocates—Denver CASA**

Nancy Stewart, Executive Director  
County Served: Denver  
[www.denvercasa.org](http://www.denvercasa.org)

### **Northwest Rocky Mountain CASA**

Suzanne Fegelein, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Grand, Moffat, Routt  
[www.nwrmcasa.org](http://www.nwrmcasa.org)

### **Voices for Children CASA**

Nia Wassink, Executive Director  
County Served: Boulder  
[www.vfccasa.org](http://www.vfccasa.org)

### **Heart of Colorado CASA**

Zane Grant, Executive Director  
Counties Served: Chaffee, Custer, Fremont, Park  
[www.hoccasa.org](http://www.hoccasa.org)

### **CASA in Colorado**

Lauren Leeman, State Coordinator  
Serving the State of Colorado  
[www.coloradocasa.org](http://www.coloradocasa.org)

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## CASA Across the Country

CASA in Colorado is part of the National CASA network, made up of **949 state and local programs** which share our essential mission.

In 2014, the most recent year for which data is available...\*

- The average volunteer served on a case for nearly **19 months**
- A typical urban program served **257 children** in a year
- A typical rural program served **85 children** in a year
- CASA volunteers contributed over **6 million hours** in the service of children

**Over 250,000** children were served by a CASA volunteer

**Over 76,000** adults across the country served as CASA volunteers

- **Nearly 40%** of children were returned to their home of origin at the close of their case
- **One-third** of children were adopted or placed with legal guardians at the close of their case

\*National CASA

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## In Colorado, the children CASA programs serve...

- Are the victims of abuse or neglect.
- Are involved with local child welfare agencies and the court.
- Are involved in a *Dependency and Neglect* case.
- Are represented by *Guardians ad Litem* or lawyers, often called GALs. It is their responsibility to facilitate the legal proceedings on behalf of the children or youth. Parents are assigned different legal representation.
- Are assigned to a case worker within a child welfare agency. These child welfare agencies are a part of a county human services department.
- Have a special adult helping them. One who helps advocate for their best interests as they move through the system, changing placements and schools. One who speaks up for them as a Court Appointed Special Advocate.





## The Work of a CASA Volunteer

A Court Appointed Special Advocate or CASA volunteer is appointed by a judge to a Dependency and Neglect (D&N) case. The responsibilities of a CASA volunteer are outlined in the Children's Code of the Colorado Revised Statutes (Title 19-1-103). Children in D&N cases are the victims of abuse and neglect and are often removed from their homes and families during the process. The goal of a D&N case is to ensure safety and stability for the children involved.

By giving their attention to one case at a time, CASA volunteers develop a deep understanding and awareness about the children, ensuring that important details are brought to the attention of the other professionals, such as *Guardians ad Litem* (GALs), case workers, and judges. CASA volunteers meet with the children on a regular basis, gather information, and follow up with everyone involved. Most importantly, *CASA volunteers act as the child's voice throughout the process*, making sure that their needs are met and their perspective is understood.

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## In Colorado, from July 2015 to June 2016, there were ...

**3,959** children served  
by CASA volunteers

- **1,255,012** children and youth under the age of 18.\*
- **95,889** referrals made to human service departments.\*

- **36,217** children in new assessments.\*
- **10,728** children in out-of-home placements, such as foster & kinship care.\*
- **2,048** new children served by CASA in Colorado.
- **575** new volunteers trained by CASA in Colorado programs.
- **127,851** CASA volunteer hours donated to abused and neglected children.

**1,890** CASA volunteers  
serving children

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## The Average CASA Program...

- ♦ contributes **6,150** volunteer hours
- ♦ has a **\$1,480** cost per child

is **18** years old

serves **238** children

- ♦ serves **108** new children every year
- ♦ serves at least one LGBTQ-identified youth

\*Source: NCASA 2015 Colorado Report

## The Average CASA Child...

- ♦ is placed in out-of-home care
- ♦ has been out of the home for about a year
- ♦ lives in a suburban area

\*Source: NCASA 2015 Colorado Report; since assigned to a CASA volunteer

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





## Outcomes for Foster Children

We want our CASA children to beat the odds.  
The current national outcomes\* for youth who age out of foster care are:

- ◆ **More than 20%** will become homeless after age 18
- ◆ **Only 58%** will graduate high school by age 18
- ◆ **71%** of young women are pregnant by age 21
- ◆ At the age of 24, **only half** are employed
- ◆ **Fewer than 3%** will earn a college degree by age 25
- ◆ **25%** will be involved in the justice system within two years of leaving foster care
- ◆ On average, for every young person who ages out, taxpayers and communities pay **\$300,000 in social costs**

The CASA programs in Colorado, along with CASA programs across the country, have historically collected information (outputs) regarding their interactions with the children they serve. CASA in Colorado is now a national leader in CASA programs, implementing an Outcomes Project designed to not only measure how many times a CASA volunteer sees a child, but the impact on that child's life.

As the project continues, we anticipate data that reflects what we already know: that a child with a CASA volunteer will have fewer placements, better medical and educational outcomes, and achieve permanency sooner.

\*Source: Casey National Alumni Study; Jim Casey Youth Opportunities

2015-2016  
**Annual Report**





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**CASA in Colorado advocates for  
the best interests of abused and  
neglected children and youth.**

**2015-2016**

## **COCASA Board of Directors**

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MarkWest Energy Partners

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CASA of the 7th JD

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CASA of the Continental Divide

**Janet Rowland**  
*Executive Director*  
CASA of Mesa County

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**Linda Weinerman**  
*Executive Director*  
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2015-2016  
**Annual Report**