



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

LAKE COUNTY

2015 Annual Report



A Year of Giving

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A Message from Executive Director, *Terri Greenberg*

Dear Friends of CASA,

During my 20 plus years at CASA Lake County, I continue to be amazed and impressed by the work of our volunteers, staff, and community supporters. This year, 282 dedicated Lake County CASA Volunteers advocated for 527 children in need. These children had been removed from their homes because of horrible abuse or shameful neglect; because their parents would not or could not keep them safe, keep them fed, keep them in school, keep them from harm. We are pleased to say that through our efforts 102 children were either adopted or placed with a permanent guardian, or safely reunified with their biological parents. While still working with all the open cases, we also accepted 142 new cases in FY15.



We will continue to fight to meet their needs. These children need everything. They need protection from being beaten, or raped, or locked in a closet. They need food, clean clothing, and stable housing. They need beds. They need medical and dental care, mental health counseling, and behavioral therapy. They need continuity in their home and schools, and they need to stop being moved from foster home to foster home, so they can finish the school year in the same classroom where they began. But more than anything else they need a caring, consistent adult who will walk this path with them – who will do the hard, grinding work to understand the details of each child’s life and their specific family circumstances, who will make informed recommendations about their needs, and who will advocate tirelessly to see that those needs are met. Our children need CASA.

Every child we serve receives a three-person team:

- (1) A CASA Volunteer who works to understand each child’s specific situation,
- (2) A CASA Case Supervisor who has years of experience in the child welfare system,
- (3) and a CASA Staff Attorney who is an expert in family law.

Together, this team represents each child’s best interests at every meeting, every hearing, and every trial. We have two goals:

- (1) to find each child a safe, permanent home, and
- (2) to ensure their well-being and get the services they need.

Last year our heroic CASA volunteers donated over 35,133 hours to make sure that the Judges who decide where each child will live and what services they will receive heard what they needed to hear. They gave these children a voice. This work is desperately hard. It leaves us dry and parched and barely able to breathe. We could not do it without you, our friends and supporters. We drink from the fountain of your generosity and your encouragement, and we are renewed. Thank you for supporting this vital work. Without you, it would not happen.

Terri Zenner Greenberg
Executive Director

In Fiscal Year 2015

This is what your dollars have helped us achieve:

527

children were served by **282 advocates**.

142

new children received CASA volunteers.

102

children's cases **closed** with the help of a CASA.

Child Race/Ethnicity

African American= 51%
Caucasian= 25%
Latino= 11%
Multi-Racial= 6%
Asian/Native American= <1%
Other= 5%

Child Age

0-5= 42%
6-11= 31%
12-17= 18%
18 & up= 7%
Unknown= 2%

Of the 102 children's cases closed..

47%

were reunified
with their parents

13%

aged out
of the
system

33%

were
permanently
adopted

7%

received permanent
guardianship

Our CASA advocates made sure....

Sibling Visits were implemented for the majority of sibling groups assigned to CASA.

Educational Intervention services (tutoring, evaluations, individualized education plans, college prep) were provided to all CASA children who needed them.

Program Highlights

Trauma Informed Advocacy Training Program

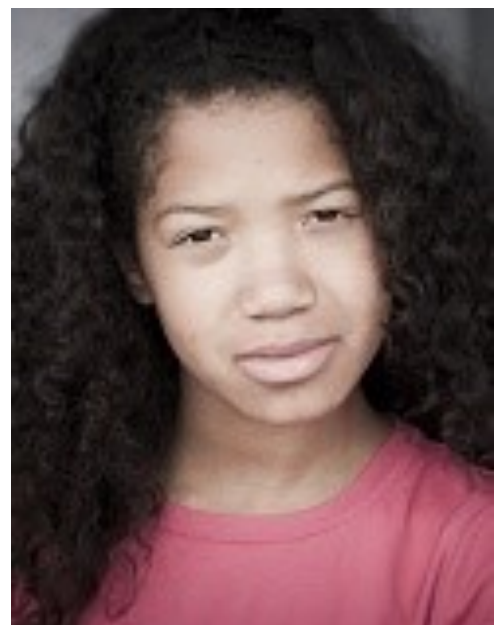
Children in foster care have one thing in common: trauma. When they are removed from the home, they lose their parents, their siblings, their extended families, their schools and friends, even their pets – all the familiar sources of affection and a sense of belonging. But unlike other trauma victims, children in foster care come into the system carrying scars from a lifetime of traumatic events. Domestic violence, sexual abuse, drugs and alcohol, and the cumulative pain of a lifetime of neglect can give rise to complex trauma that can severely impact children’s behavior, relationships, and even their physical health.

Recent research has shown that children who receive trauma-focused therapies have far better outcomes than children who receive more traditional modes of mental health treatment. In the last year, CASA Lake County has partnered with The Children’s Research Triangle to train advocates and staff in trauma informed advocacy. Last spring CASA Lake County sponsored a full day in-service featuring speakers from CRT who addressed the symptoms and effects of complex trauma on children and the various trauma-focused treatment modalities now available for children. CRT has continued its partnership with our program with monthly training sessions for staff



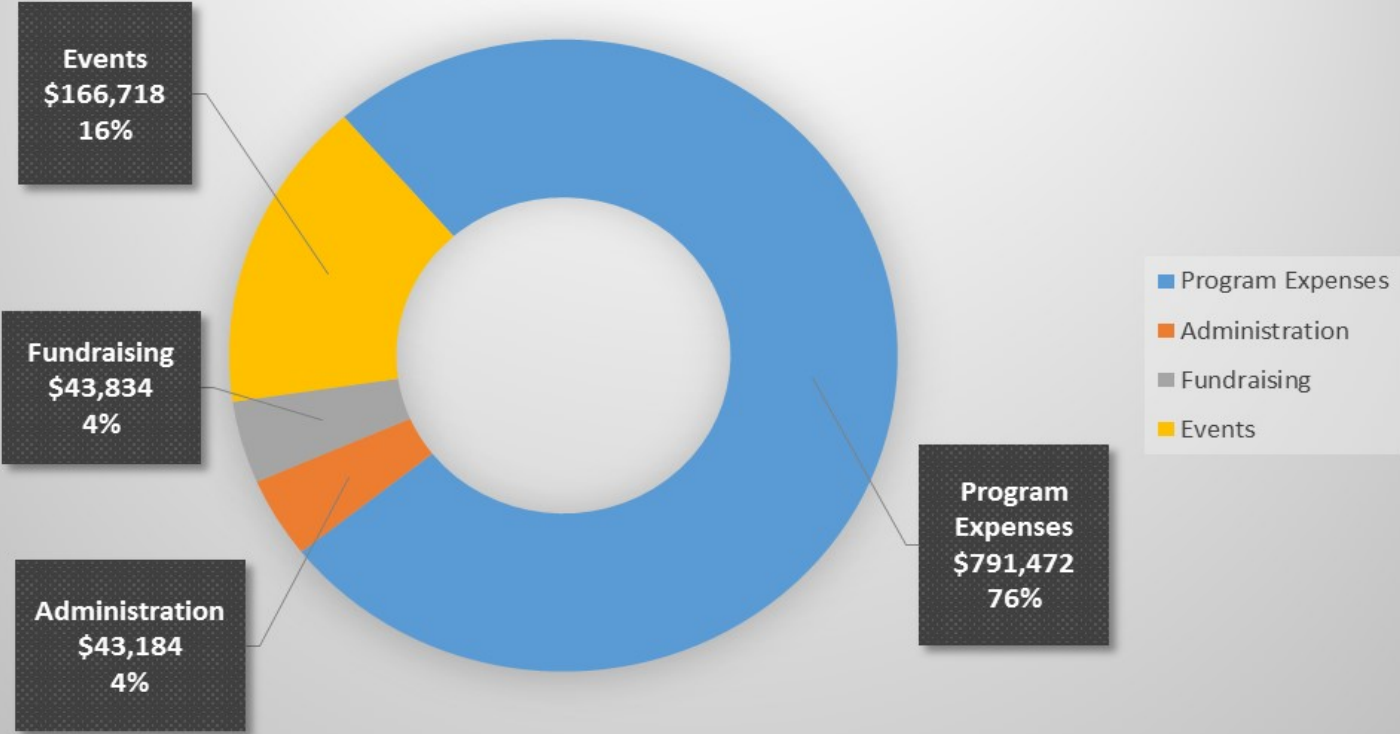
Enhanced and Expanded Training Program

CASA Lake County offers six forty hour training sessions every year. Our program follows the National CASA curriculum, but the presentation of the material has been enhanced and amplified through the use of films and guest speakers. Our trainees witness the effects of the child welfare system through the eyes of parents and children in the system as presented in the documentary “Love and Diane.” They hear about the effects of sexual abuse from a guest speaker who is an adult survivor of childhood abuse. The difficult policy and legal questions addressed in child welfare cases are the subject of the Frontline program showing a role playing exercise by experts in the field. The training program will also be expanded in the coming months to include training in a new web-based program that will enable volunteers to keep case records securely and safely and collaborate on line with the program staff.

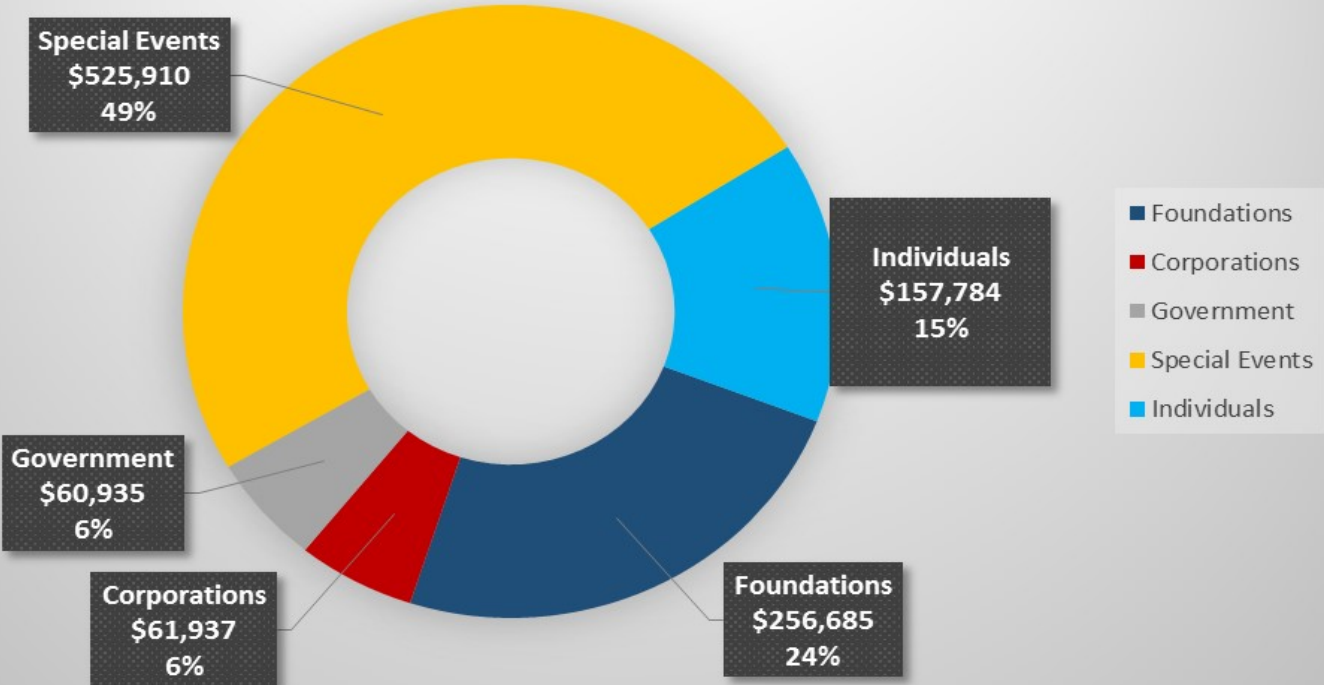


Treasurer's Report Statement

Expenses \$1,045,208



Revenue \$1,063,251



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