

CASA Great Lakes Bay Region

Our mission is to provide highly trained volunteers as a powerful voice that advocates for a safe, permanent and loving environment for children who are in the Bay County or Saginaw County court system because of abuse or neglect. CASA Great Lakes Bay Region, a program of CAN Council Great Lakes Bay Region, was started with support from the Junior League of Saginaw Valley, United Way, the Saginaw Community Foundation, the Harvey Randall Wickes Foundation, the Frank N. Andersen Foundation and generous individuals within the community.

Michigan CASA Association

MICASAA's mission is "to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children who are involved in the family courts by promoting and supporting the development of quality CASA programs in the State of Michigan."

National CASA Association

In addition to providing leadership for CASA programs across the country, the National CASA Association stages an annual conference, publishes a newsletter and promotes CASA through public relations efforts. National CASA offers consultations and resources to help start CASA programs and provides vital assistance to established programs.

OTHER CAN COUNCIL PROGRAMS:

- Children's Advocacy Center (CAC)
- Child Abuse Prevention Education (CAPE)

We speak for a child

Who wears shoes that don't fit
Whose nightmares are real
Who never heard of Mickey Mouse
Whose parents ran away.

We are the voice of a child

Who feels at fault
Who lives in fear of daddy coming home
Who wonders what it's like to have a friend sleep over
Who eats only when food can be found.

We stand for a child

Who has never been to the doctor
Who wonders what the tooth fairy does
Who is unable to stand without help
Who knows too well what an attorney looks like.

We listen to a child

Who doesn't know what the truth is
Who is in constant need of a bear hug
Who finds freedom only on a swing
Who believes they are the parent.

We are the heart of a child

Who wants mommy and daddy to stop fighting or
Who has never had a bandage or a kiss on an "owie"
Who thinks we are the bestest friends they ever had.

We are the people

Who often read these children their very first fairy tale
Who wipe away their tears with our sleeves
Who want them to believe life is worth it.

Together we work to make a difference; we are
CASA ... Help us!



Bay County

715 N. Euclid Avenue
Bay City, MI 48706
(989) 671-1345 • Fax (989) 671-2365

Saginaw County

1311 N. Michigan Avenue
Saginaw, MI 48602
(989) 752-7226 • Fax (989) 752-2777

cancouncil.org



Creative services donated by AGP & Associates, Inc.

REV 09/15



What is CASA?



CASAs are ordinary people making extraordinary contributions to the lives of abused and neglected children.

Every child has the right to a safe, permanent and caring home. Yet, according to the Michigan League for Public Policy, more than 900 children in our region are confirmed victims of abuse or neglect each year. More than 200 of these children live in foster care or with relatives because it is not safe to return home. Most of these children will end up in court. Their only “crime” is that they have been victims.

It is up to a family court judge to decide the child’s future.

- Is it safe to return home?
- Will the child remain in foster care for the rest of his or her childhood?
- Will adoption be the permanent solution?

More and more family court judges in Michigan are turning to CASAs for consistent and thorough information about a child’s circumstances.

CASAs are citizen volunteers, specially trained and appointed by family court judges to speak up for these most vulnerable children.

CASAs are respected and trusted sources of crucial information. A CASA will research the case, assess the facts, identify key problems and submit court reports.

CASAs attend hearings, provide insight to the judge and recommend actions in the best interest of the child.

Foster care workers often have many children in their caseload and cannot devote all of their time to a single case. A CASA volunteer is appointed to only one child or sibling group at a time. CASAs work in partnership with attorneys and foster care workers as appointed officers of the court. The CASA takes time to find out as much as possible about the child from relatives, neighbors, teachers and friends and provides objective information to the family court judge.

The CASA may be the only consistent adult a child has contact with during his or her case, which can last up to two years.

How Can I Help?

CASA volunteers come from all walks of life, with a variety of professional, educational and ethnic backgrounds. A social work or legal background is not required. CASA volunteers are screened and receive more than 40 hours of training on Michigan law, the child protection system, the dynamics of abuse and neglect, child development, and the juvenile justice system.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a volunteer CASA in your community, please call (989) 752-7226.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CASA VOLUNTEERS

- 21 years of age or older
- High school diploma or GED
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Clear background checks
- Completion of 40 hours of initial training
- 12-20 hours of volunteer work monthly
- Objectivity
- Common sense and persistence
- A commitment to the best interests of children

Is There a CASA Program in My Community?

There are currently CASA programs in 26 counties. While CASA is growing in Michigan, there are still many counties that do not have a CASA program. If your county does not have a program, you can help by calling the Michigan CASA, Inc., office at (616) 915-6864 to learn how to establish a CASA program in your county.