

CASA of Greater Prince William, Inc.

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CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA's Citizen Volunteers Stand in the Gap helping to rescue Greater Prince William's children from the downward spiraling depths of despair rendered by childhood abuse, neglect and abandonment and to protect our communities and our citizens from future violence by intervening to break the cycle of abuse.

Mission



To see that all children have safe, permanent homes and when in crisis be given every opportunity to be provided all necessary mental, emotional and physical assistance that will enable them to attain self sufficiency and have opportunity for quality of life as adults.

Prince William CASA of Greater Prince William, a non-profit, independent organization was started in 1994 to serve the 31st Judicial District encompassing Prince William, Manassas City and Manassas Park. The organization now maintains a volunteer advocate base of approximately 100 advocates serving nearly 300 child victims each year. The five Juvenile Judges of the 31st Judicial District mandated in 1998 that every abused and neglected child in the 31st Judicial District would be appointed a CASA. GPW CASA is Certified by the National Association of Court Appointed Special Advocates to meet all National Program Standards and is regulated in Virginia by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. CASA is mandated in the Code of Virginia under 9.1-151 thru 9.1-157.

Hurt Children, Hurt Others

Experiencing childhood abuse and neglect increases the likelihood of arrest as a juvenile by 53% and of committing violent crime as an adult by 38%. Child abuse is everyone's problem.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), are a Powerful Force for Child Victims

According to a 2007 audit by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of the Inspector

- Children with a CASA...**
- Receive more services than children without a CASA
 - Are less likely to return to the system reabused
 - Spend less time in foster care
 - Are more likely to be adopted

Just a Little Investment Now...Can Have a Huge Financial Impact

A single criminal career encompassing the juvenile and adult years costs society between \$1.7 million and \$2.3 million according to a study in 1997 dollars. For an average of just \$1,100 per child served annually, a CASA can devote much time to an individual child because they work with no more than 3 at one time. The Advocate helps the child by providing an extra set of eyes and ears to help keep him or her safe. The advocate thoroughly investigates the child's future possibilities and provides the court with a complete report. The volunteer advocates for the child's best interest from a concerned citizen's perspective without the influence of budgetary concerns and local policy and practice that is often disconnected from the actual needs and interests of the child.

CASA History The first volunteer CASA program was organized in 1977 in King County, Seattle, Washington by Judge David Soukop. He felt that the community could help to keep children safe and provide an extra set of eyes and ears to inform the judge concerning the child in order for him to make better decisions about the child's future. There are over 900 CASA programs in every state in the U.S., Virgin Islands and Buenos Aires. In 1986 the CASA program was brought to Virginia. In 1990, the General Assembly enacted legislation providing for the statewide implementations of the CASA program, with responsibility for the oversight of CASA assigned to the Department of Criminal Justice (DCJS). There are 28 CASA programs around the state operating with trained volunteers.

Greater Prince William's Children Are Being Hurt

In fiscal year 2009 CASA worked with 337 children. 98 specially trained advocates spent 12,657 hours visiting with the child, investigating their current situation and future possibilities and advocating for their best interests. In fiscal year 2008, 302 of Greater Prince William's children were legally found to be abused, seriously neglected or abandoned. 2,030 complaints were investigated, 1,658 additional children were determined to be at serious risk and in need of some assistance. There was one child killed.