

IMPACT REPORT - 2021

# CASA OF ESSEX COUNTY

MEETING OUR MISSION IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

## CASA ESSEX IMPACT through COVID

This year was marked by changes and challenges as a result of the pandemic. More than ever, everything in an already unstable world for the foster youth we serve was upside down: remote school - often without reliable WIFI or support at home to navigate the process; food instability was on the rise - including loss of the free breakfast and lunch that so many youth relied on at school were no longer available; and sickness and death were inescapable. Truly, uncertainty reared its ugly head in every aspect of the lives of our foster youth.

For CASA of Essex, like most organizations, our in-person operations immediately shifted to a fully remote operation in every aspect of what we do. Nevertheless, the CASA staff and volunteer advocates never wavered. While the world was on a pause, our advocates kept the beat – showing grit and determination and staying the course by making calls, video chatting, skyping, texting, face-timing and Zooming – deploying every means available to communicate with and advocate for the youth we serve.

Most importantly, our commitment to the foster youth of Essex County remains as strong as ever! In the few short pages to follow, we pack a punch – the work accomplished as a team by the staff, volunteer advocates, and board of trustees during the pandemic is a true demonstration of our efforts to meet our mission in the face of adversity.

I am truly inspired,



**“A world where children who have experienced abuse or neglect are given the opportunity and care to thrive in a safe and permanent home.”**

This is our vision. And we continue to strive to provide a CASA volunteer for every foster youth in Essex County. During the fiscal year of 2021, we served 43% of the foster youth in out-of-home placement.

In four major areas, our programming was supported and enhanced by very generous partners and funders.

I. **General Advocacy.** The Orange Orphan Society, a longtime partner provided support to ensure both our core advocacy operations and response to any emergencies due to COVID for foster youth in the Oranges and Maplewood would continue to be met. In addition, they provided hundreds of mask for us to distribute.

II. **CASA ONE.** The Prudential Foundation supported the development of CASA O.N.E. CASA O.N.E. is a multi-faceted online training and resource portal that will be available to advocates and foster youth, between the ages of 14-21, to connect with a larger community of allies, resources, services, and opportunities.

III. **CASA Resource Consortium (CRC).** The CRC was created with support from the Turrell Fund to provide a major forum for collaboration on addressing specific concerns of young adults exiting foster care. This network hub, has provided a broader array of possibilities which have made a substantial difference in leading Essex County’s aging-out population to make better informed choices, and providing them with invaluable tools to truly succeed.

IV. **Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT).** Led by CASA Passaic, CASA Hudson and Essex joined forces to be the first three sites in NJ to pilot the SBCT program. This program uses the science of early childhood development to improve outcomes for infants, toddlers, and families involved in the child welfare system. SBCT collaborates with child welfare stakeholders and community partners to ensure access to high-quality, trauma-responsive services, as well as promote lasting permanency.

“I am a CASA because foster care is an issue near and dear to my heart, as a past foster child myself, I believe in showing love by serving others.” - GH

[Click here to see the entire list of Essex Volunteer Advocates](#)

201

Total # of Volunteers

91

New Volunteers

11,301

Volunteer Hours Served

92%

Recommendations Submitted to Judges Accepted

57

CASA Supported Children Reached Permanency



## School Supply Drive

In August, we hosted a Back-to-School Supply Drive for the children we serve. We received hundreds of donated materials via our Amazon Wishlist where community members donated new items such as pencils, crayons, binders, notebooks, calculators, backpacks and everything else included on our youth's back-to-school list. As a result, we were able to provide school supplies to all of the school-aged children served by CASA Essex.



## Holiday Toy Drive

December was filled with joy! During our Holiday Gift Drive, we collected toys, stuffed animals, dolls, board games, Legos, and so much more! Thanks to the contributions from our community we were able to provide holiday gifts and bring a bit of cheer to all of the foster children we serve. [View holiday photos here!](#)

## Pedal Away Bike Event with **The Daniel Ives Foundation**

The Daniel Ives Foundation (DIF) was founded after the Maplewood Bike Shed owner's tragic death. To share Danny's passion and joy of cycling and skateboarding with future generations in his community and surrounding communities, an award of \$5,000 to CASA Essex allowed us to provide 27 new bikes accompanied by a helmet and lock to some very excited youth.



# Annual Golf Outing

## Not just one... but two fantastic days out on the greens!

FALL 2020 – We hosted our postponed 25th annual outing on October 15 honoring Mitch Decter.

SPRING 2021 – On June 14, we honored Jill Rosenthal at our 26th annual outing.

The generosity of our sponsors, golfers, dinner guests, and donors helped us raise more than \$130,000. Sponsors included: Lowenstein Sandler · PNC Wealth Management · Mike Slater · Deb Caplan · PSEG · FINK IR · McCarter&English · Jill Rosenthal · JagOne · Eng-Roselund Family · Vanderbilt Insurance Brokerage · Ed Schwarz · Mitch Decter · Bonnie & Michael Carter.



**Mitch Decter**  
2020 Honoree



**Jill Rosenthal**  
2021 Honoree

## Ruby Red Shoe Bash

Our largest fundraiser was reimagined to bring you a virtual event enjoyed from the comfort of your home. The celebration opened with the sounds of the Abe Burton Quartet. We were treated to musical selections from Acute Inflections and Antonique Smith. Jon Fortt was the host and Janice Huff provided a guest appearance. We raised more than \$110,000. [Click here](#) to hear the messages from some of our guests including Senator Cory Booker, Benilde Little, Kesha Knight-Pulliam and more.



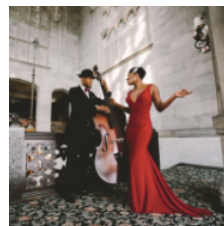
**Jon Fortt - Host**  
CNBC Squawk Alley  
Co- Anchor



**Janice Huff - Special Guest**  
NBC 4 New York  
Chief Meteorologist



**Antonique Smith**



**Acute Inflections**



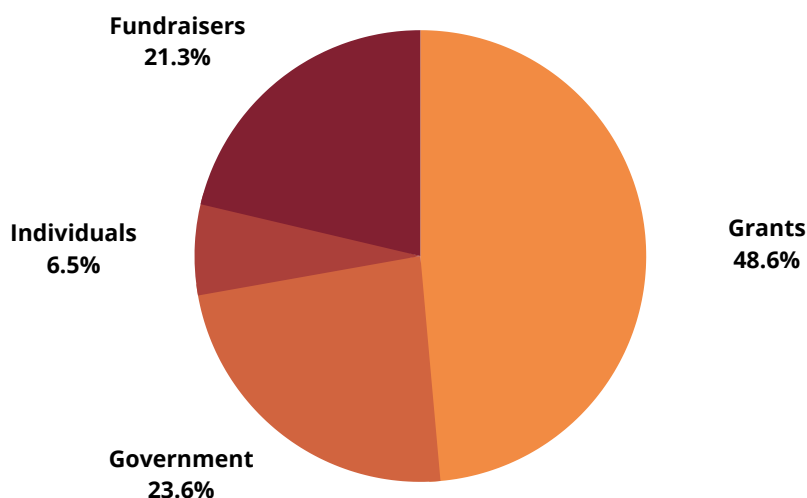
# Financials

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we are able to continue to serve the Essex County children in foster care! Every donation large and small truly makes a difference in the life of the children we serve and we can't thank you enough!

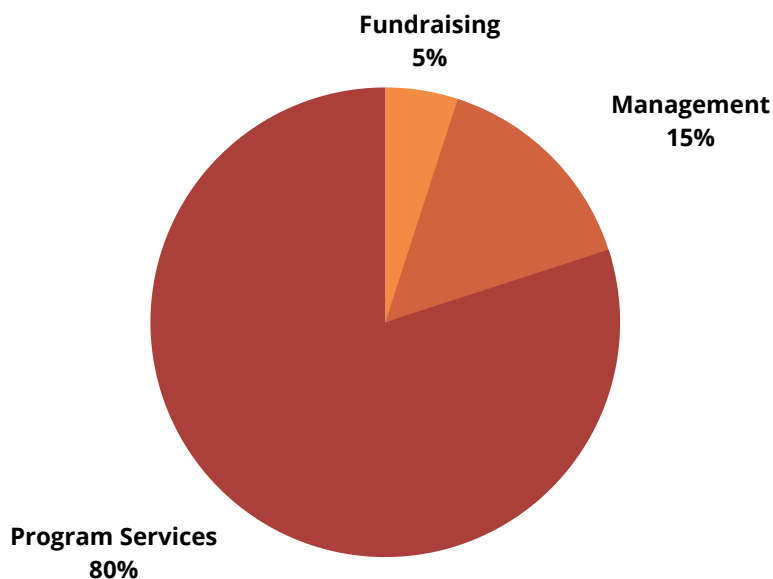
[Click here](#) to view a list of our FY21 donors.



## Revenue \$1,125,998



## Expenses \$925,593



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