



CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

This year has been full of so many controversial conversations, whether the topic is about voting rights, reproductive rights, or the right to safety, these conversations feel heavy, polarizing and frankly, unhopeful.

For CASA Essex, we choose to focus on making the conversation about our investment in the youth in foster care who have been removed from their homes, some for a few nights others for months and years – all equally traumatic in any person’s life, especially that of a child.

We made a promise over 35 years ago that we would be there to stand with these youth and advocate for everything they need and deserve while they live in foster care. Even during the endemic we have not and will not waiver. Our volunteers remain steadfast to keeping this promise.

In a few short pages to follow, we highlight the work accomplished as a team by the volunteer advocates, the staff, and board of trustees. This is a true demonstration of our efforts to make an impact on the lives of the youth we serve who are living in foster care.

And because of this and your support, I am hopeful,

Marla Higginbotham

Executive Director

How CASA Volunteers Assist and Advocate for their Youth

The impact of a CASA volunteer is invaluable and instrumental in the lives of the foster youth they serve. Being present to assist with daily decisions and tasks, can be life changing for that youth. One of our CASA youth, E.E., told us, "I like that someone speaks up for me."

Here is a list to highlight some of the tasks our volunteers have done to assist and advocate for their youth and their families.

SCHOOL ISSUES

- Chaperone school trips
- Locate summer camp options
- Fill out school enrollment paperwork
- Provide IEP support for youth and bio/resource parents
- Obtain a refurbished laptop for school
- Assist with securing childcare for youth with children during school year
- Tutor speech writing & oration skills
- Support the searching, touring and application process for GED/college/vocational programs

LIFE SKILLS

- Obtain out-of-state birth certificates for youth
- Assist with obtaining Green Cards
- Provide insight on time-management skills
- Schedule state ID appointments
- Support youth while preparing for driving tests
- Aid with opening bank accounts
- Help with financial literacy
- Identify employment opportunities
- Map out transportation options with youth
- Teach youth how to launder at a laundromat

MEDICAL ISSUES

- Accompanied to doctor appointments
- Shared information about preventative device for unknown medical issue at new placement
- Observed that youth exhibited signs of self-harming and made the therapist aware
- Advocated for youth while in crisis at a hospital

HOUSING NEEDS

- Be present during relocation to new foster homes
- Help youth unpack at unfamiliar new home
- Negotiate with shelter for youth to obtain/maintain housing
- Provide reunified family with local food bank options
- Help older youth look for an apartment and furnishings
- Monitor moving process for youth leaving the state

GENERAL ADVOCACY

- Act as sole desired point of contact for youth while AWOL
- Convince hesitant youth to communicate directly with the Division
- Identify a missing piece in an interstate adoption file, preventing a delay in adoption

"I LOVE ADVOCATING FOR MY CHILD! IT HAS BEEN A TRUE JOY WATCHING HIM COME INTO HIS OWN AND LEARN TO ADVOCATE FOR HIMSELF IN THIS PROCESS."

S.Y. CASA VOLUNTEER

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

12,415

VOLUNTEER HOURS SERVED

199

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

29

NEW VOLUNTEERS

93%

RECOMMENDATIONS
SUBMITTED TO JUDGES
ACCEPTED

64

CASA SUPPORTED CHILDREN
REACHED PERMANENCY



Lemonade Social

AUGUST 2021

Summer and lemonade go hand and hand. We invited our volunteer advocates to join us for a Lemonade Social at the Montclair Art Museum as a thank you for all of their hard-work. We mingled outside while sipping on fresh lemonade and snacks from Oink and Moo BBQ food truck. A great time for advocates and staff to come together and converse at the end of the summer.

School Supply Drive

AUGUST 2021

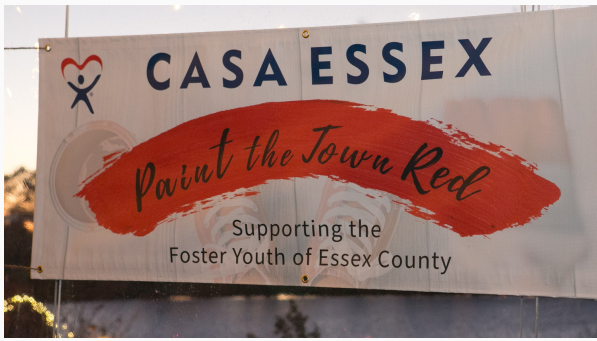
As the children we serve prepared to go back to school, we collected hundreds of essential school supplies. In August, we distributed the school supplies to our volunteer advocates to share with each child. Thanks to the generosity of our community members we were able to provide brand new backpacks, binders, calculators, crayons, notebooks, pencils, and so much more to each school-aged child served by CASA Essex.



Scarecrow

OCTOBER 2021

In October, we were feeling festive, as we got in the fall spirit at the Van Vleck House & Garden's second annual Scarecrow Exhibit in the gardens. The CASA Essex team created a family-friendly scarecrow in the likeness of a CASA Volunteer and two youth, the pair were decked out in CASA apparel and ready to raise awareness.



Paint The Town Red

NOVEMBER 2021

On November 13, we spent the evening celebrating a year of investment in foster youth, our volunteer advocates and community. The event took place at The Rock in West Orange, NJ, where we enjoyed a musical performance from The Abe Burton Trio and DJ Rich Williams had everyone on their feet dancing. We are grateful to our generous sponsors and community members who raised over \$125,000 in critical funds.

Holiday Drive

DECEMBER 2021

The CASA elves were busy at our Holiday Gift Drive. We were fortunate to receive so many generously donated toys, dolls, stuffed animals, games, Legos, electronics, and gift cards from community contributors. Thanks to the generosity of our donors this holiday season, we were pleased to be able to deliver gifts and joy to every child we serve.



Pinwheels for Prevention

APRIL 2022

In April, for Child Abuse Prevention month, we partnered with over twenty-five local businesses in Essex County, to raise awareness by planting blue pinwheel gardens throughout the county, as a reminder that every child deserves a safe and joyful childhood. Visit the Newsroom on our website to view some of our favorite gardens.

27th Annual Golf Outing

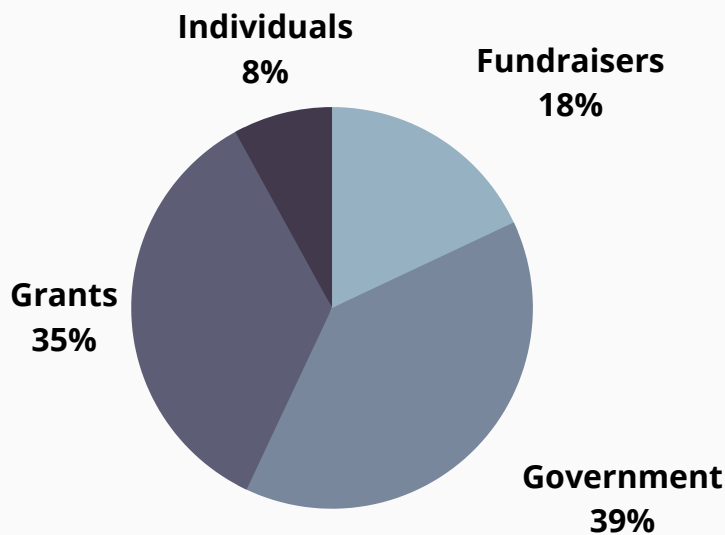
JUNE 2022

It was a beautiful day on the greens, as we celebrated with a full field of golfers at our 27th Annual Golf Outing at the Cedar Hill Country Club in Livingston, NJ. On June 13, we honored longtime supporter Karim Kaspar, Senior Counsel at Lowenstein Sandler, and raised more than \$50,000. Thank you to our sponsors: Lowenstein Sandler, PNC Private Bank, Michael Slater, Debra & Kenneth Caplan, Sybil Eng & Tad Roselund, McCarter English, Fink IR, Jill Rosenthal, PSEG, and Bonnie & Michael Carter.

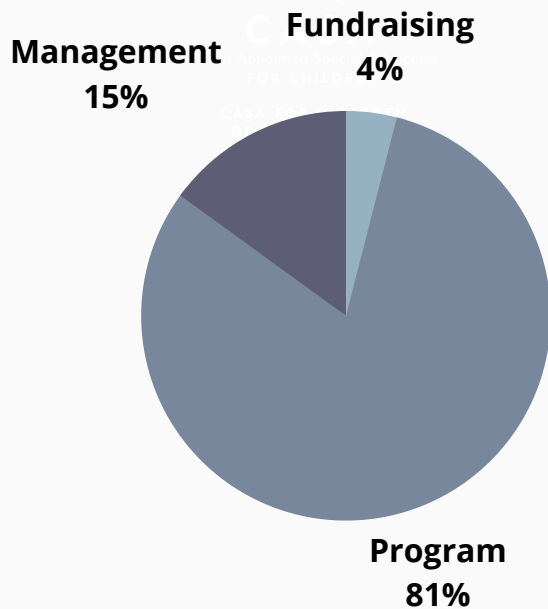


Financials

Revenue- \$1,149,509



Expenses- \$947,057



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 AND WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW A LIST OF OUR FY22 DONORS.](#)

"There is nothing more satisfying to me than being Board President for an organization that does so much to support children in foster care. The board of trustees is committed to assuring we provide all the support needed to grow the CASA for Children of Essex County program." - D.W.

Board of Trustees

- Darren Woolford, President
- Carolyn Gould, Vice President
- Christine Mann, Secretary
- Rachel Simon, Treasurer
- Erica Barrett
- Debra Caplan
- Sybil Eng
- Kristi Nicholes
- Madhu Pai
- Ryan Richman
- Dara Sanderson
- Edward Schwarz
- Suzanne Skipper
- Michael Slater
- Francine Smith

Marla Higginbotham, Executive Director



@EssexAdvocates



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