



CHILD WELFARE ADVOCACY 2019 CAMPAIGN REPORT

For over 40 years, CASA of Los Angeles has been the only organization in Los Angeles providing court appointed advocates to youth in foster care, helping these children and youth navigate not only the trials of the courtroom, but also the trials of a challenged childhood. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) help transform the lives of children who need them the most—children who lack safe and committed adults in their lives—by helping them to become self-sufficient and responsible young men and women. For many years, CASA/LA served 500-600 children with intensive individual advocacy annually. But with the support of our generous community partners, we have increased the number of children we serve from 570 in FY2011 to 1,239 in FY2019.

Over the last year, CASA of Los Angeles had 1,012 active volunteers, of which 19% were male, 8% were African American, and 9% were Spanish speaking, all populations CASA/LA has attempted to reach over recent years. We also recruited and train 302 new volunteers over the course of FY2019. In addition, we increased our Volunteer Services team by two people in order to better train and support new volunteers, and added a new position, Volunteer Relations Manager, in order to better provide volunteer engagement and increase retention amongst volunteers.

Volunteer Services Program

Throughout the year, the Volunteer Services team provided 15 in-service trainings, which is the continued education program in which CASA volunteers are required to participate. Last year, the team provided the following trainings: Court Report Writing, Family Finding, Special Education, Early Intervention, How to Read IEPs, Fostering Rates, Pregnant and Parenting Teens, Sex and Gender Orientation, Dual Status Youth, and Reproductive and Sexual Health for Youth in Foster Care. In addition, they helped to develop the first modules in the Early Childhood and Transition Age Youth programs for our online learning path, which will offer volunteers a digital learning platform about various topics and issues within child welfare. CASA of Los Angeles is currently out for funding from the Everychild Foundation to support the development of this 30-module training path which would translate all of our continued education into a digital platform, so more volunteers can conveniently access trainings, resources, and support.

In FY2019, CASA of Los Angeles also received a full-scale evaluation from business consultant agency LEK, who provided CASA of Los Angeles with a strategic plan, outlining our goals over the coming years. Through this detailed planning process, CASA/LA has determined that there are **12,000 children** living in foster care in Los Angeles County who have an immediate need for a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) to help them navigate the complex child welfare system, find a permanent home, and ensure that their safety and well-being are cared for.

While we recognize that reaching the goal of 12,000 might be some time off, we have begun to strategize on how we would serve 3,000 children in the next three years. These conversations included the Training Center plan, but it was decided that until we have some other key strategies in place – namely the implementation plan for this three-year strategy, the launch of our upcoming three-year fundraising and marketing campaign and the piloting of our short-term advocacy programs – it was better we waited on securing a new location for our Volunteer Services team. In addition, our previous Director of Recruitment resigned last spring, and with her departure, we were re-organizing



the Volunteers Services and Recruitment teams in order to better structure their work and direction.

Challenges & Opportunities

This year, CASA of Los Angeles is thrilled to be articulating the strategic plan developed by LEK into a results-driven implementation plan which will connect our recruitment, programming and fundraising efforts in new and impactful ways. As part of this plan, our team is developing a capital strategy which will identify our space needs, our online and equipment requirements, staffing goals, marketing strategy, and revenue projections. Through these diagnostics, CASA of Los Angeles will be better able to expand across Los Angeles in ways that are strategically appropriate – through hard office locations, shared collaborative networks and enhanced digital connectivity.

Though we are still seriously considering the need for a Volunteer Services Recruitment and Training Center, we are determining what is the best location, time frame and financial sustainability of a new and rented space. We anticipate finalizing the implementation in the coming month and look forward to sharing it soon.

Evaluation

CASA/LA assesses outcomes measurement through our monitoring database Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) Social Solutions. When a case is assigned, both the Advocate Supervisor and the CASA volunteer examine the case and rate the status and level of risk of the child on a baseline scale along the three core dimensions of safety, permanency and wellbeing. Of those cases which closed last year (369 assessed cases), 68% of youth experienced improved outcomes in safety, 72% experienced improved outcomes toward permanency, and 75% experienced improved outcomes in well-being. Of those cases, over 52% were closed because advocacy goals were met. In addition, over 61% of cases resulted in a permanent placement for the child or youth, and 33% of cases ended in family reunification.

Sustainability

CASA has been fortunate to receive funding from many foundations and continues to develop its relationships and secure renewal and new funding. Of funding received last year, 40% were from private foundations, 21% was from special events, 19% were from individual donors, 12% was from government contracts, 5% were from corporate partners, and 3% were from civic/faith groups.

Next Steps

Currently, CASA of Los Angeles recruits an average of 350 new volunteers per year. However, CASA has identified three strategies by which to significantly increase that number: a major three-year marketing campaign (for which we are in talks with 72andsunny and Deutsch Advertising amongst others), short-term advocacy programs to offer less intensive volunteer opportunities, and our online learning platform. Through this three-year campaign, we will increase the number of new recruits from 302 in FY2019 to 1,000 new volunteers in FY2023. In order to achieve this growth, CASA will be launching a major fundraising campaign in the next six months which will work in coordination with our marketing, recruitment and programs to build a sustainable yet significantly scaled future. As always, CASA of Los Angeles is incredibly grateful to Focusing Philanthropy for your support of and deep belief in our work.