



WINNEBAGO COUNTY CASA PROGRAM

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Winnebago County CASA
PO Box 4701
Rockford, IL 61110-4701

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

We are in special need of male volunteers
as well as those who speak Spanish.

For information, contact the
Winnebago County CASA office:
815.319.6880
211 S. Court Street
Rockford, IL 61101

*Check out
www.winnebagocountyCASA.org
to sign up for our online newsletter
or to donate online!*

Winnebago County CASA is a nonprofit volunteer organization that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court system.

Taryn Marko
Program Director

Here we are again. It's fall in Winnebago County. There is a crispness to the air and the leaves have begun to fall from the trees. Soon we will be celebrating Thanksgiving with our family and friends. Winnebago County CASA has so many great things to be thankful for this year. We have continued to provide excellent court advocacy to the youth in our community. CASA has served 370 children so far this year. We are thankful that we can count on our 138 advocates to work with these children and ensure that they have a warm place to grow, a safe place to prepare for their days at school, and be given the respect that every child deserves to grow up with.

When I think of fall and all that I am thankful for, the first memory that comes to my mind is spending time with my family at a loud, crowded table, full of laughter and conversation. It's those memories that have stayed with me over the years. Memories of being with people who shared stories and jokes and the lessons that I learned from my elders.

This fall, Winnebago County CASA is challenged to provide advocacy to more and more of our community's children. Winnebago County CASA is working to help families come together so that each of the kids that we serve may look back fondly on their childhood and remember times that they laughed, joked, and learned from each other. We are so thankful for your continued support of our program. By your donation, attendance at one of our events, and advocacy, you have helped our CASA kids' needs be heard. Winnebago County CASA is grateful to you.

As we get ready for the upcoming holiday season, please think about what you can do to help our children. Many of you are doing so much, and again I thank you. I hope you will find your place and make a difference in the life of an abused or neglected child in Winnebago County.

Message from the CASA Office



On May 13, 2014, CASA held our first event at **Abreo** located downtown on State Street. It was a great experience! The night was cool and there was a steady drizzle. If that isn't the perfect ambience for a nightcap, I'm not sure what is. To top it off, Harlan Jefferson, a local jazz musician, and upcoming local artist, Amanee Avery, serenaded the night with their saxophones. Abreo was filled with laughter, soulful music, and our advocates sharing the CASA experience. Abreo was gracious enough to donate a dollar for every item ordered in addition to their bar tips. We could not have imagined a better night. We were able to raise \$295 from the orders placed that evening and over \$100 in bar tips. It was a relaxing evening for all!

Allen's Heroes Assemble Ride was a SUPER fun day! We had a great turnout of motorcycle riders geared up in their superhero costumes to benefit Winnebago County CASA and help provide an advocate for children in Abuse and Neglect Court. Superheroes of all sizes showed up for the 90 mile tour of Winnebago County! Thank you, Kegel Harley Davidson, for the wonderful day!



The **Winnebago County CASA Outreach Team** has been making its way around our local community, sharing our mission and getting the community involved. We have prepared an outreach presentation to not only recruit new advocates, but to also inform our local community about the CASA program. We are working diligently to ensure that our local community has not only heard of our program but has an informed understanding about what CASA advocates do and how we as an organization are bettering the lives of the children in our community. Since April 2014 CASA has shared its mission with over twenty organizations, such as; The NAACP, Rockford Kiwanis, The Harlemites, Loves Park Rotary Club, and countless other organizations. We would love to speak to your club, organization, or business. Please contact Raquel Vera, Outreach Coordinator, to schedule CASA to present to your audience. (rvera@winnebagocountycasa.org) Thank you in advance for supporting CASA and our mission to make sure the children of our community are safe, loved, and respected.



Have you noticed our new Billboards? We are so grateful to Lamar and Super Pantry for donating three billboards to CASA this year! Take a look at the corner of E. Riverside and Forest Hills Road, 11th Street and Harrison, and Alpine Road and Broadway.



Summer Flex Training

We were happy to present two classes with our new Flex Training curriculum this summer. Flex training is comprised of the bulk of the information being presented online in a virtual classroom. The advocates then attend 5 classes in person to discuss new case studies and apply what they learned online. The classes ran July and August and we were happy to swear in 11 new advocates. We were able to work with Boone County CASA and they had three of their advocates join us.

Fall Training 2014

Fall is here and so is our last training for the year! We have 8 potential advocates in this training. Class will run Tuesday and Thursday nights from October 21 to November 20. Once again we also have an advocate joining us from Boone County.

Our Inaugural 5k, Race the Runway, a Success!

October 4th was a cold, rainy, snowy day but we had a great turn out!

We would like to thank all those who came out to make our first year a success. We could not have pulled it off without our amazing volunteers, the Run Committee, and all of our sponsors. A special thanks to the Chicago Rockford International Airport for letting us host our run on the runway and the airport property and also Rock Valley College for letting us use their building out at the airport.

A tremendous thank you goes out to two organization for all of their volunteers: The Rock Valley Ski Association and International Student Exchange. These volunteers worked out in the drizzling rain and snow to ensure our runners kept on course and stayed hydrated. We are hoping to do this again next year, so keep your eyes open for our 2015 date.

We greatly appreciate all of our sponsors:

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We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to each of our generous sponsors for supporting our 2014 events. Every contribution is meaningful and helps us to achieve our mission of advocacy for abused and neglected children in Winnebago County.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

We were blooming with appreciation this year to our wonderful volunteers! The fun filled event was held on August 19th and was attended by not only the advocates but also their families, board members and even some potential advocates! This year's event was held at the beautiful Khlem Arboretum. Our guests had a grilled dinner, enjoyed chair massages, won awards and took home a vase complete with blooms! Thanks so much to the generous donations and provisions from ABC Catering, Goodwill Industries, Bill Doran and Circle of Wellness.



CASA at Casey's Pub was a FUN night out for supporters of the program. We again enjoyed the evening with our friends at Casey's Pub and celebrated with a Chinese Auction with a wide variety of items! One lucky winner, CASA Marie Johnson, went home with an American Girl Doll! Dennis Paul won the Grand Prize of a 50" TV.

Celebrating the 2014

"A Better Life for EVERY CHILD" Dinner Auction



On Friday, April 25th over 200 guests were in attendance at Forest Hills Country Club to support the efforts of Winnebago County CASA in helping children of abuse and neglect in our community. Because of the generous support of Swedish American Health System, our Premier Event Sponsor, Associated Bank, Thayer Lighting and Mc-Gladry, our Gold Level Sponsors, and Alpine Bank, Hosmann & Associates, and Astro-Physics, Silver Level Sponsors as well as the generosity of so many who donated silent and live auction items to the event, we were able to raise over \$40,000! This money goes toward achieving our goal of providing a CASA to every child who needs one by the year 2020. Longtime advocate Burnette Shivers and newly sworn in advocate and former CASA child, Jocelyn Teske silenced the crowd with their heartfelt address. Once Masters of Ceremony Doug Mark and Mike Robinson took command of the room, guests were generously opening their wallets to ensure success of the event. Mark your calendars now for April 17, 2015 so that you can join us to make a difference in a child's life.

The Rockford Pro Am chose Winnebago County CASA as one of the beneficiaries for the 2014 Golf tournament on July 15, 2014. It was a perfect summer day for the tournament. CASA was in charge of the Main Concession tent and supplied Hole #9 Marshalls for the day. Everyone had a wonderful time, working their shifts and meeting professional golfers as well!! Thank you, Rockford Pro Am for your incredible support!!

Upcoming Events

February 6, 2015 – Artale Wine Co. Wine Tasting
April – "Hands Around The Courthouse" at the Justice Center on W. State Street
April 17, 2015--Annual Auction

The holidays are right around the corner! Be sure to add a Cooking with CASA cookbook or a CASA license plate holder to your wishlist. These items and more are available for purchase in the CASA office. Stop by or call for more information. 815-319-6880





I am for the child



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From the Board

This is my favorite time of the year! At Winnebago County CASA, Thanksgiving is a wonderful time to reflect on the tremendous outpouring of support our community has demonstrated over the past year. We are so grateful to all who have given generously of their time and heart by volunteering to advocate for the children, attend and participate in our fundraising events throughout the year, and by donating to our 2014 Annual Appeal which is underway now. Without your support we could not be there when a child has suffered from abuse or neglect, when their lives have been turned upside down in an unfamiliar foster home, or when they feel they have no one they can count on.

As we end this year and think forward to next year we will continue to work to reach our goal at Winnebago County CASA to never say No to a foster child who needs us. With support from you and our community we can recruit new and support existing CASA volunteers who can be the dedicated champions that foster kids in need – kids like Christopher who you can read about in our 2014 Annual Appeal informaton at <http://www.winnebago-countycasa.org/events/annual-appeal/>

I wish you and yours a holiday season full of joy and love and as you gather to give thanks I hope you will consider becoming an advocate this year or choosing another of the many ways you can help children in foster care. Thank you for being a part of Winnebago County CASA.

Sharon Cooper, Chair

Our Board of Director's is GROWING! We have been working hard to serve the children in our community and are excited to welcome five new board members to the CASA Board of Directors! Kimberly Bruce, Michele Corirossi, Michelle Lewis, Julie Snyder, and Matthew Thomann joined Winnebago County CASA this summer to effectively provide voices for the children that CASA represents. Each new director brings a wealth of experience and energy to our Board.

