



**1450 Parkside Avenue, Suite 22, Ewing, NJ 08638 • 609-434-0050**

# Annual Report

**2021**

**GIVE A CHILD HOPE  
CASA FOR CHILDREN  
OF MERCER AND BURLINGTON COUNTIES**





# CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**MERCER**

**BURLINGTON**

2020-21

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# Mission Statement

Our mission is to train and supervise community volunteers, appointed by the Family Court, to advocate for the best interests of children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and/or neglect. Our dedicated volunteers strive to ensure the emotional, physical and educational well-being of these children while they reside in foster homes or residential facilities. The ultimate goal of our volunteers is to help establish a safe, stable and permanent home for each child we serve.

## Staff

Gina Balsamo  
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Laura Wall, Executive Director



**Stronger Together**

#casamercerburlington

Dear Friends of CASA,

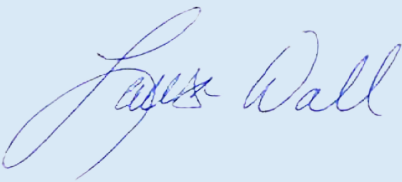
Thanks to the steadfast support of our community, FY 2021 was an impactful time at CASA. It was a year in which we served hundreds of children in foster care through the expert support of two hundred and seventy two highly trained and deeply committed CASA Advocates. And seventy-three of those children were adopted or permanently united with a parent or family member. **That's real success!**

All that CASA has achieved this year, and the life-changing impact we continue to have, is the result of the work of hundreds of people – our volunteer Advocates, our partners in government at both the County and State level, our corporate and foundation supporters, and the many, many individuals whose donations of time, treasure and talent help ensure our mission remains strong.

If you'd like to learn about becoming an Advocate or how to get more involved in CASA's work, *we'd love to talk with you*. Our website has a lot of great information, and is a good place to begin. ***Casamb.org***.

Thank you for being part of this critically important work. We could not do it without you.

Sincerely,



Laura Wall,  
Executive Director



## Interview With Lisa Oros

### Senior Advocate Supervisor

#### How long have you worked with CASA?

I have been with CASA for over 16 years, since the fall of 2005.

#### What is your position with CASA?

Currently I am the Senior Advocate Supervisor in Mercer County. This means that I support peer coaches and advocates, and I also supervise the three other Mercer advocate supervisors, who provide case management and support to our volunteers.



#### What changes have you seen in the Child Welfare System?

I have been working with the Child Welfare System since 2000 and have seen a myriad of changes. When I started there were many, many more children in out-of-home placement. Over the years the system has shifted to trying to help families before it becomes necessary to remove children.

#### What is the most rewarding part of the position?

The most rewarding part of the position is having a part in making life better for kids who have been through a lot. Everyone who does this work looks forward to children being reunified or adopted, and those are great outcomes, but sometimes we also get children glasses, tutoring, or the ability to participate in an extracurricular activity. Those seemingly little things change their lives for the better too. I also enjoy working with the advocates. I have met a diverse, interesting group of people from all kinds of backgrounds. It is encouraging to see people give their time to work within a sometimes frustrating legal system, all because they want to help a child.

#### Why did you decide to become a CASA Advocate?

I had worked for 5 years with an agency that provided support, training and scholarship assistance to resource (foster) families and children in foster care. I was a trainer for most of that time and interacted a lot with resource parents. I had heard of CASA and liked the idea of advocating for children in the system. When a job opened up I applied and am very grateful to have the opportunity to work with CASA.

#### Are there challenges?

There are always challenges when you are working with large governmental systems. At CASA though, we are supplementing that system, working to catch children before they fall through the cracks of large stressed systems.

#### What advice would you offer to someone considering becoming an Advocate?

If you truly want to be a CASA *you can be a CASA*. We have people come in worried because they're not a social worker, or teacher, or nurse, but the desire to be a good CASA, and to give your time and energy to the position, is much more important than your professional or academic background. And we offer a lot of support along the way.





## CASA Story

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### *Meet Andrew*

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Andrew was born prematurely, and with fetal alcohol syndrome. He remained in the hospital for 6 weeks after he was born and then was placed in foster care. That was when CASA stepped in.

Throughout his three years in foster care, Andrew's Advocate worked tirelessly to ensure that he received the interventions needed to overcome his developmental difficulties. By also partnering with his foster parents, the Advocate provided support for the whole family which in turn allowed Andrew to thrive.

In August 2021, Andrew was adopted by his foster family and continues to do well in his loving, permanent home.

CASA is all about the children. Your support of this vital work has had a lasting impact on the lives of local children in our community, like Andrew. Thank you.



# Our Extraordinary Advocates FY 2021

Jeanne Andersen	Jennifer Deming	Shara Hofing	Karol Moss	Denise Shaughnessy
Debra Anderson	Joann DeRosa-Sanderson	Keith Hofmann	Katherine Mullin	Robin Shoblock
Chris Anhut	Lucianna DiMeglio	Nina Hoover	Reem Nasser	Chanta Silver
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Laticia Bailey	Peter Doyle	Linda Jeanes	Kimberly Owens	Colleen Sitzler
Aneesh Bakshi	Debbie Drachman	Antoinette Jones	MaryBeth Parker	Lanie Sjostedt
Christine Barranco	Rebekah Duchette	Shailaja Kasinadhuni	Irene Parriski	Erica Smith
Madeline Bayliss	Kelly Dun	Lauren Kearns	Hollis Pearson	Amber Sosa
Marlyn Bennett	Patricia Dunn-Jones	Debra Keeney	Jane Pedinoff	Kathleen Spivey
Mary Berridge	Amy Dwyer-Tierney	Phyllis Kepner	Ralph Pelleccchia	Wilma W. Stephenson
Janet Betz	David Earling	Donald Kernan	Marlene Penn	Diane Stern
Delores Beverly	Alice Eckel	Tracy King	Sherri Pfeffer	Margaret Sterns
Bindu Bhalla	Joanna Edgar	Courtney Kinloch	Janet Phillips	Crete Still
Marlise Bickel	Joy Elliott	Regina Kneib	Laura Pinto	Eileen Stokley
Erika Boots	Mark Ellis	Elaine Kokotajlo	Rita Polonsky	Jami Szafranski
Debra Bracey	Denise Falnes	Catherine Kolator	Julie Potthoff	Lydia Tattory
Angela Breland-Jackson	Patricia Farrell	Mary Kowlessar	AnnMarie Potts	Kathleen Tiernan
Susan Brennan	Carolyn Featherson	Carole Kraemer	Martha Press	Ernest Turner
Robin Bryant	Lisa Ferguson	Jonathan Krejci	Yasmin Qazilbash	Albert Varga
Kathleen Byers	Brenda Fischer	Susan LaPooh	Jeanne Radimer	Ann Vershbow
Christina Byrne	Kayo Flamini	Cynthia Lee	Ellen Radow Sadat	Barbara Vilkomerson
Alexandria Calabro	Sarah Fletcher	Sarah Legins	Julianna Rankel	Priya Vimalassery
Audrey Camel	Melanie Foster	Erica Lehneis	Neha Rauf	Susan Vogler
Janet Caniglia	Elizabeth Friedman	Lois Levey	Robert Revelle	Dianna Wacławski
Jennifer Capozzola	Martha Friedman	Judy Levy	Daniel Reynolds	Renee Walsh
Susan Carson	Joyce Gallagher	Amanda Lewis	Timory Ridall	Diane Warfel
Lisa Casiano	Stacey Gatlin	Chris Lewis	Kenneth Ritchey	Ah'ree Warren
Heather Casparro	Wendy Girer	Maria Licciardello	Sharon Rittenhouse	Carla Watson
Lisa Cereste	William Goodwin	Barbara Lightfoot	Michelle Robinson	James Webre
Alex Chandler	Sherryl Gordon Hall	Denise Linskey	Melissa Root	Susan Wilczewski
Roxanna Choe	Cheryl Gordon	Eileen Lippman	Ingrid Rosario	Maria Williamson
Kyoko Coco	Miriam Greene-James	Miguel Lopez	Susan Rosenkranz	Margaret Wilson
Sandra Cohen	William Griffith	Regina Lordan	Jeffrey Rozelle	Laura Wojcik
Kari Comly	Yvonne Grinnell	Wendy Lotierzo	Sara Rukenstein	Carol Wolkiewicz
Kathleen Coppins	Michele Groody	John Lutz	Patricia Russell	Suzanne Woodard
Veronica Coyle	Sumit Gupta	Anne Lyon	Ashima Saksena	Theresa Wrobel
Kimberly Currie	Joanne Gusweiler	Sarah Macken	Brooke Samuelian	Joanna Wuehr
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Shanere Deloach	Clifford Harrigan	Kelly Miller	Amy Searles	
	Crystal Harris	Michelle Miller	Janice Sedes	
	Julie Harris	Elaine Monticollo	Lori Seigal	
	Paula Hearle	Carole Moore	Margaret Seitter	
	Sophie Helmers	Denise Moorhouse	Christopher Shafer	
	Victoria Hersh-Bruker	Stephanie Morrison	Alyssa Sharkey	
	Carol Herts	Thomas Morton	Aakash Sharma	
	Mary Hibbs		Rachna Sharma	



## A year of support from existing and new partners



**VIRTUAL  
SWEARING IN!**



#casamercerburlington





# Our Generous Donors FY 2020

## Up to \$249

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Mary Rapoport  
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John & Louise Wellemeyer  
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David Wittenberg  
Arlene Wittenborn  
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Chiemi York

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## **\$5,000 to \$9,999**

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Dow Foundation  
Mathematica Policy Research  
WSFS Community Foundation

## **\$10,000 to \$24,999**

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***CASA of Mercer and Burlington Counties is also deeply grateful for contributions from individuals and organizations (including many longtime supporters of our work) who wish to remain anonymous.***



# Key Figures



**1967**

**HOURS OF TRAINING  
PROVIDED TO  
POTENTIAL  
VOLUNTEERS**



**73**

**CASA CHILDREN  
ADOPTED/REUNIFIED**



**66**

**NEW ADVOCATES  
SWORN IN**



**99%**

**RECOMENDATIONS  
ACCEPTED BY  
COURTS**



**9844**

**HOURS OF  
VOLUNTEER SERVICE  
TO OUR CHILDREN**

## Revenue

Corporate/Foundation: \$135,900

Government: \$806,419

Individuals: \$118,826

Special Events: \$56,850

Contributed Services: \$275,597

## Expenses

Program Services: \$1,000,574

Management: \$126,239

Development: \$43,295



# CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**MERCER**

**BURLINGTON**

**You Can Be a Champion  
for a Child!**

To sign up for an information  
session or learn more about  
volunteering for CASA,  
please visit

**[www.CASAMB.org](http://www.CASAMB.org)**



CASA for Children of Mercer  
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