Support from National CASA Association brings life to new program

The National CASA Association has awarded CASA for Children of Multnomah, Washington, and Columbia Counties a grant in the amount of $50,000 to support our Teen Program.

Teens entering foster care are one of the most vulnerable populations in our country. They face a much higher risk than their peers of incarceration, financial and food insecurity, homelessness, dropping out of school, teen parenthood, and poor physical and mental health. At CASA for Children, these teens have faces, names, and real issues to be overcome in order to successfully transition through the teenage years and into adulthood.

This grant will fund a portion of the first year of CASA for Children’s new Teen Program to address this gap between need and resources. A trained CASA can be transformative in improving the lives of youth in foster care, so we are using this proven approach and expanding our services to focus on the additional risks facing teens (ages 12-18) and any younger siblings on the same case. Over the next three years, we will hire three new teen-specific supervisors. We are also developing in-depth training for CASAs serving teen cases. These newly trained CASAs, with extra skills and knowledge to combat risk factors, will be better equipped to help their teens transition to adulthood successfully.

AT&T makes significant contribution to CASA’s Educational Advancement Project
AT&T has awarded a grant in the amount of $20,000 to support our Educational Advancement Project.

The Educational Advancement Project is the agency’s effort to improve a child’s chances for academic success and thus, long term stability, by training CASAs in educational advocacy on behalf of their foster children. CASAs help remove barriers and improve the circumstances for academic progress.

Supporting education has been a major focus for AT&T for more than a century and is a key philanthropic focus. Like CASAs, they are driven to help students succeed - in school, in the workforce, and in life.

“At AT&T we believe that it’s important to give every child the opportunity for academic success and stability,” said George Granger, President, AT&T Oregon. “We’re proud to support the Educational Advancement Project and thankful that CASAs are in place to offer guidance toward a bright future.”

CASA is proud to announce a grant award of $36,540 from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund.

This project will address the needs of the children we serve by shaping and improving all aspects of CASA for Children’s programs and policies as they relate to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

We seek to better understand the systemic inequities that impact children in foster care and how our organization can remove the barriers to build an organization that has equity and inclusion interwoven into every inch of its organizational fabric.

This grant will specifically focus on two areas that will most directly impact the needs of the children we serve - DEI training for CASA volunteers/staff and diverse volunteer recruitment.
Kudos for CASAs' Service

"I can't believe it! Thanks to you Bethany Bounds, a forever family may now just be that- forever. You went the extra (and extra) mile in your advocacy for this family. Finally, a home of his own with a family so committed. You did it!"

-Jeni Bennett, Lead CASA Supervisor - Multnomah County

"Big shout out to Lisa Shields for always going above and beyond to ensure your youth feels supported, loved, and empowered in her placement, at school, at work, in her relationships, and in her health and well-being! Through adversity you have remained a steadfast force and your energy, passion, and selflessness are truly unmatched!"

-Carrie Sargavakian, CASA Supervisor- Multnomah County

"Karla Arria-Devoe, I tip the hat to you! With the ups and downs of your case, I am so happy a successful reunification was finally achieved. I appreciate your tenacity, courage and kindness"

-Jeni Bennett, Lead CASA Supervisor - Multnomah County

"Kudos to Adrienne Fischl for successfully closing your first case AND already taking your second case!! You have provided patience, persistence, and gentle guidance to your youth for over two and a half
years and have been a consistent and deeply caring support-person when others have come and gone.
Thank you for your tenacity! I am so fortunate to have you on my team!"

-Carrie Sargavakian, CASA Supervisor - Multnomah County

"Much appreciation for Dave Baca who has now seen through the successful reunification of his kiddos on two cases! You are adept at navigating the bumps and twists and turns with calm and focused patience and your ability to develop rapport with the entire family network is truly remarkable. Excited to work with you in the new year on case #3!"

-Carrie Sargavakian, CASA Supervisor - Multnomah County

"Melissa Anderson, your tireless, spot-on advocacy has been a driving force in your case, paving the way for Mom’s return to Oregon with housing in place, thanks to your resourcefulness, and a long- awaited reunion with her teenage son. Through all the ups, downs, and uncertainties, your sharp advocacy and excellent communication skills have held the case together and kept it on track. You have been a stellar advocate for your youth! I am so thankful to have you on my team!"

-Julie Fong, CASA Supervisor - Washington County

"Heidi Izunagbara, your voice as CASA has been clear, compassionate, and independent. You have never shied away from advocating for what you believe is in the best interests of your girls, whether it be more relative searches by DHS or promoting the girls’ sibling relationship, cultural heritage, and placement together, despite being on different tracks. Your input in your case has been invaluable. Thank you for being such a caring, dedicated, and unwavering advocate for your young girls!"

-Julie Fong, CASA supervisor - Washington County

New Child Welfare Director Named to Oregon DHS

Rebecca Jones Gaston has replaced former director of Children Welfare, Marilyn Jones. Gaston comes to Oregon from Maryland’s Department of Human Services. She has been in the human services field for more than 22 years, with experience as a social worker, advocate, therapist, consultant, and administrator.

"Rebecca has extensive experience in child welfare systems across the country and, as part of that work, she has encountered many of the same challenges we face in Oregon. I am so pleased she is coming on board, and I am confident she is the right person to continue to transform our Child Welfare system into one focused on prevention, safety and improving outcomes for children and families. “
Upcoming Events

29TH ANNUAL AUCTION: Hearts of Gold

We hope that you can join us for this elegant evening of philanthropy and celebration of CASA’s work in the Portland community. Join over 500 local philanthropists, business people, and community leaders for a fun night supporting the work of our organization!

Click here to register/purchase tickets!

For questions or more information, contact Director of Development and Communications Anne Marie Johnson at 503-988-4170 or ajohnson@casahelpskids.org.
Thanks to your incredible dedication and generosity, we nearly reached our goal!

**Total Raised: $36,960**

Because of this, we will be able to recruit and train 17 more CASAs to advocate for children in our community. We cannot do this important work without you, and we are deeply grateful for your support.

We also want to send a HUGE thank you to Willamette Week for organizing this campaign, as well as to all the other wonderful organizations that participated. Together, we continue to make real, positive change in our city.

**Tailgate for CASA - November 2019**

Thank you so much to everyone who joined us on November 8th, 2019, for the 2nd Annual Tailgate for CASA!

The event was a huge success, raising over $11,500 in valuable revenue for CASA's mission. We had a ton of fun celebrating, talking about CASA's work, and meeting so many new people. We hope to see you next year!
On January 24th, CASA volunteers and staff gathered at NW Natural to recognize and celebrate milestones in CASA service.

- 24 CASAs celebrated their 5-year service mark
- 6 CASAs were recognized for 10 years of service
- 4 CASAs were honored for 15 years of advocacy
- 1 CASA, Kate Moody, reached her 20-year mark, and was recognized for advocating for 21 children
- 26 CASAs celebrated retirement and reflected on their accomplishment in serving 172 children

Thank you to NW Natural for co-hosting this event with us and thank you to each of our attendees for making this night special! Most importantly, we extend our gratitude to each and every CASA that dedicates time, energy, and resources to this important work. You are valued and you are making a difference for children and families in our community.

Board of Directors Spotlight: Russ Campbell
Welcome to incoming board member, Russ Campbell! Russ was introduced to CASA several years ago by Anna Maria Savinar, one of our CASA volunteers. Through the years, Russ has attended our Auction where he learned about the work Anna Maria and other CASA volunteers do. He knew he wanted to participate more.

Russ has over 32 years of experience in real estate development, finance and accounting in the Portland area, He hopes to bring those past experiences to CASA as a board member to help expand CASA’s outreach and growth. He currently manages a real estate investment and development company with his brother.

Russ has previously served as a board member and treasurer for JOIN, a non-profit serving Portland’s homelessness population. Russ is married to Dawn Campbell and has four adult children and one grandson. When not working Russ enjoys outdoor activities such as skiing, running, golf and is an active biker who has completed four Cycle Oregon events.

Congrats Recent CASA Grads!

September Graduates
First row (from left): Aryan Sharif, Zoe Kay, Monica Galeana, Stacy Hankin, Kira Lauman, Juliana Vasilchuk; Second row (from left): Shannon Baker, Christopher Aedo, Blair Hulett, Tess Symonds, Mary Ruth Hanna, Michael Hanna, Nina Schieb, Jennifer Kregear, Heather Wall, Randall Sewell; Third row (from left): Kat Leon, Andrea Schulman Cox, Claudia Steinberg, The Honorable Judge Morgan Wren Long, Elizabeth Maxon, Madeline Vanden Branden, Lydia Fillingham, Patrick Easley; Back row (from left): Amy Kula, Adam Blechman, Eric Maxen; Not pictured: Pat Storey

October Graduates

First row: The Honorable Judge Callahan; Second row: (from left): Andrea Zallis, Terry Cairns, Synova Reed, Lizzy Haimowitz, Robin Dunitz; Third row (from left): Carol Craig, Kevin Lay, Leah Cave,
Doug Reed, Ric Spady; **Back row (from left):** Janelle Wright, Ron Cairns; **Not pictured:** Gabrielle Widman, Holly Dueck, Jordan Dueck

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