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CASA for Children at #5 on *Portland Business Journal's* list of Most Admired Companies

Thank you to Portland Business Journal for ranking CASA for Children at #5 for its list of Oregon's Most Admired Nonprofits of 2020! The Journal curated this list by surveying 6,000 CEOs around the state and asking them to select companies that they admire in various industries. CASA for Children is honored to be included with so many wonderful nonprofits for the 2020 list!



CASA for Children ranked on the *Oregon Business'* 2020 list of 100 Best Nonprofits to Work For in Oregon!

We are thrilled to be a part of this group of organizations driving positive outcomes for communities here in Oregon. We would love to extend a special shoutout to our fellow CASA organizations

CASA by the Numbers

FY21 Goals



490

Total CASA Volunteers



\$2.41 million

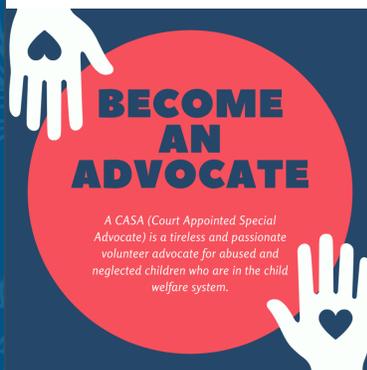
Value of Volunteer Hours



1,058

Total Children Served

Find us on
Facebook



ORIENTATIONS & TRAININGS NOW VIRTUAL

Please register before attending an orientation so we are sure to have space and an information packet ready for you.

who also made the list: CASA of Jackson and Josephine Counties, CASA of Clackamas County, and CASA of Lane County. Congratulations to all community partners who stand with us in service of children.

Check out the whole list



CASA for Children Staff Attend National Conference

National CASA/GAL successfully hosted its first virtual conference in October 2021. Approximately 2,374 CASA/GAL staff, volunteer advocates, and board members across the country joined our learning sessions to better understand what's going on in the lives of the children served by CASA organizations all over the United States.

CASA for Children featured in KATU's Season of Giving

Mamadou Toure, Lead CASA Supervisor in Washington County, and Jenn Klotz, CASA volunteer and Board member, were featured on the AM Northwest morning talk show!

A huge thank you to Fred Meyer Jewelers for sponsoring CASA for Children's participation in KATU's Season of Giving Campaign!

Watch the segment

In an effort to reduce exposure to and the spread of COVID-19, all CASA for Children orientation sessions will be online via Zoom until further notice.

If you have questions, or would like more information, please contact Recruiter, Jake Weiss

[Email Jake](#)

[Orientation Schedule](#)



Congratulations, CASA graduates!

Before getting sworn in on Zoom, these trainees completed 35 hours of extensive online learning to become advocates. New advocates, thank you for your commitment to children in foster care.



Graduate Roster:

Anya Ludwig - Columbia

Rosie Platt - Columbia

Tracy Frazier - Columbia

Ashlee Krump - Multnomah

Bianca Boschmans - Multnomah

Cary Spaeth - Multnomah

Jaidyanne Podsobinski - Multnomah



Court Appointed Special Advocates, do you have questions about serving during the pandemic?

Program staff has resources!

Being a CASA in COVID

*Leslie Rennie-Hill -
Multnomah*

*Sharlena Luyen -
Multnomah*

*Sheri Campbell -
Multnomah*

*Stephanie Berzon -
Multnomah*

*Susan Gonzalez -
Multnomah*

*Dawn McLaughlin -
Washington*

*Eric Zechenelly -
Washington*

*Filma Concepcion
Sahagun -
Washington*

*Katerina
Dimitriadis -
Washington*

*Mel Adams -
Washington*

*Sharene Rekow -
Washington*

*Sharlene DesRochers
- Washington*

*Stephanie Siegel -
Washington*

CASA CONTINUES TO SERVE

CASA for Children's work remains vital for our community's most vulnerable children especially in these uncertain and rapidly changing times.



Kudos for CASAs

Advocates Continue to Thrive Remotely

"**Kathy M.** - Four children and 3,528 days later, your first CASA case has finally closed! We honor your commitment, your longevity, your dedication and your tenacity. We cannot express our appreciation enough. Thank you for being there to the end, Kathy!"



Jeni Bennett, Lead CASA Supervisor - Multnomah County

"I cannot believe your little one can finally proceed to adoption! Thank you, **Katy K.**, for your patience and fortitude during the endless rescheduled trials and hearings over the years. Here's to a new year with new possibilities for your CASA child and family."



"Krysta V., I cried when you sent me the video of your teen being told by their foster parents that the adoption was final. So much joy. Thank you for being with this family for four years and keeping the children's best interests at heart. You represented grace in court and helped others see how traumatizing this was for the youth and what needed to happen to help her build trust. You were so respectful and kind to the foster parents of the siblings, the legal parties and I am thrilled with the outcome. I can't wait to have you on another case."

Debi Sakamoto, Program Manager - Multnomah County

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our CASAs, children in our communities continue to receive support in spite of hard times.



"Karen S., you have been a rock steady presence and advocate for the children and teens in your cases through countless upheavals. Your discerning eye, clear communication, and spot-on advocacy have earned the respect of all on your teams. You have an enormous heart to serve and give generously of your time and skills. Thank you so much for your service and dedication to the CASA program!"

Julie Fong, CASA Supervisor - Washington County

"Kudos and special thanks to you, **Peg E.**, for being such a committed and caring advocate for your teens. Both cases closed just weeks apart: one, a happy send-off for your thriving young adult who spoke at the last hearing with such maturity and gratitude, especially to her CASA! The other, a more somber ending with unknowns that will linger. For both your teens, you offered unconditional presence, kindness, and strong and effective advocacy. I appreciate you very much!"

Julie Fong, CASA Supervisor- Washington County

CASA Joan Spatrisano, 90 years old, retires after 15 years

I would like to send a special congratulations to my CASA, **Joan Spatrisano**, who just closed her last case with CASA for Children. The adoption was finalized last month. Congratulations! Joan has done so much for children and families for the 15.5 years you have served as a CASA at our agency.



Joan's steadfast dedication to our work, includes having served 10 children

without taking a break. Her first case - with seven children - lasted 2,800 days; she then proceeded to support a two child case that lasted 911 days; and Joan's last case with one child lasted 1,968 days. Joan spoke up to all about the best interests of the child, developed collaborative relationships with DHS and made sure the courts and attorneys were reminded often about what was best for the child. Thank you so much!

-- Debi Sakamoto, Program Manager, Multnomah County

Spotlight on Recent Grants



Hillman Family Foundation

\$100,000 over 2 years was awarded to our agency from a combined unrestricted gift from the Juliet Ashby Hillman and Summer Lea Hillman foundations. This new gift from two of the Portland based Hillman Family Foundations has been instrumental in our FY21 foundation funding success.

The Firstenberg Foundation

\$50,000 annual grant for general operating support was awarded to our agency from the Firstenberg Foundation. This was a first time award from this Vancouver, Washington based foundation that supports organizations in both Washington and Oregon. Along with conveying our gratitude for this generous gift, we look forward to cultivating our partnership with the foundation.



City of Hillsboro

The City of Hillsboro granted CASA for Children **\$8,000** to provide 370 children in Washington County with critical advocacy. All new CASAs, regardless of the case they are assigned to, are trained in principles of diversity, equity, and inclusiveness (DEI) as a part of their mandatory 35-hour training program, and on a continuing basis. We deeply appreciate the City of Hillsboro's

Umpqua Bank Foundation

The Umpqua Bank Foundation supported our Educational Advancement Project (EAP) with a grant of **\$3,000**. CASA for Children also presented at Umpqua's *Motivational Moment*, where members of our team, including our CASA recruiter, shared about the opportunity to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate with the Umpqua Bank employee community.



UMPQUA BANK

continued generous support and responsiveness to community needs.

Juan Young TRUST

Juan Young Trust

We humbly thank Juan Young Trust's Eastern Division for fulfilling our **\$10,000** request to support healing and resilience for children in foster care. CASA for Children will use these funds to serve children and their CASAs in Multnomah County; thereby serving an estimated 565 children. In addition, The Juan Young Trust Western Division has provided **\$5,000** to our agency to help recruit, train, and support 50 CASAs in Columbia County; CASAs who will advocate for 100 vulnerable children. The grant will also support efforts to strengthen our services and our organizational stability by advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and trauma-informed care (TIC).

Thank you, Juan Young Trust, both East and West, for your continued and deeply valued partnerships!

AMA PDX - Agency

The Agency program organized by the American Marketing Association of Portland connects volunteer marketing professionals with local nonprofits to carry out marketing projects. CASA for Children applied for the highly competitive opportunity and was successfully chosen for this pro-bono support from January - June 2021 (the second half of FY21). As such, our agency will partner with a team of six volunteers to make our website more efficient and to expand our reach on social media.

"The Portland AMA chapter is the only chapter in the nation that has a program like this...AMA PDX Agency gives volunteers the opportunity to grow their skill set and give back to the community," the organization notes, "In return, Portland's nonprofit community has a chance to leverage local marketing talent, develop richer volunteer and donor bases, and evolve their marketing strategies." More information on the program and other nonprofits participating [here](#).



Upcoming Events

Cooking with CASA



Cooking With CASA

VIRTUAL LIVESTREAM CLASS

February 9th, 2021
6pm-7pm PST

Hosted by Kristin Koziara of Seasoned Portland



February 9th, 6-7pm, Livestream

**Register for Cooking with
CASA**

Treat yourself, family, friends, and partners to a delicious night in cooking with CASA for Children! Kristin Koziara of [Seasoned Portland](#) will teach a virtual class, giving tips in the kitchen and showing you, step by step, how to make “elevated” comfort food.

This event, organized by CASA for Children's [Ambassador Board](#), will raise funds to support volunteer advocates and the children and youth they serve.

We are offering tickets on a sliding scale to make this event affordable for the entire CASA for Children community.

Recording will be made available, if you can't attend.

Thank you to our Kitchen Sponsor, Opal 28!



Community Gathering Series - Second Event

CASA for Children's Community Gatherings are educational, virtual events that update our supporters on



COMMUNITY GATHERING
**TEENAGERS IN FOSTER CARE
AND THE IMPACTS OF THE
PANDEMIC ON FUTURE STABILITY**
FEBRUARY 24, 2021 | 5:30-6:30PM
LIVESTREAM BROADCAST

Featured speakers include:

Kathy Turner - CASA

Victoria Duncan - Former foster youth

Mamadou Toure - Lead CASA
Supervisor - Washington County

Becca Lowry - Teen Supervisor

Kristen Lewis - CASA Program
Attorney

the emerging needs of children and youth in foster care and how our agency responds in order to provide the best advocacy possible.

Our next broadcast will focus on the impact of the pandemic on teens in foster care.

[Register now](#)

Victoria Duncan, a former foster youth from Oregon, was recently featured on TEDx Talks to share her experience in the system and how her CASA, Kathy Turner, helped her achieve stability.

[Victoria's Tedx Talk](#)

Fall/Winter Wrap-up

[Give!Guide](#)



We want to thank the supporters who donated; thereby raising **\$39,146** for CASA for Children in the 2020 Give!Guide, as well as anyone who liked, shared, and talked about CASA for Children. Willamette's Give!Guide was one of the biggest campaigns in history, raising a total of \$6.4 million for "x" local organizations in greater metro Portland!

A big thank you to [Boly:Welch](#) for again sponsoring our participation in the 2020 Give!Guide!

[First Community Gathering Livestream](#)



Our first gathering focused on: “*Resiliency and Resourcefulness during the time of COVID.*” Four CASAs shared their experiences and challenges while working during the pandemic and how the child welfare system has been impacted. In addition, Board President, Tom Savinar, and Executive Director, Betsy Stark Miller, shared insights and thoughts from a leadership perspective regarding the organization’s operations during an unprecedented year.

[Event Recording](#)

Board of Directors Spotlight: Betsy Granger

Betsy Granger, Program & Government Relations Committee Chair

Betsy grew up in a small town in Pennsylvania and graduated from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA with a Bachelors’ Degree and a double major in political science and secondary education. After college, she worked as a legislative assistant to Congressman Fortney H. (Pete) Stark, Jr. on Capitol Hill for three years. Betsy next moved to the San Francisco Bay Area where she was assistant to Nancy Pelosi at the California Democratic Party, just as Speaker Pelosi was beginning her career in politics. She then joined the staff of Congressman Tom Lantos in San Mateo, California. While working for Congressman Lantos, Betsy attended law school at Hasting College of the Law, University of California in San Francisco. After graduation, she joined the legal department of Pacific Bell. As a result of a series of mergers she retired from AT&T after 27 years as in-house counsel. During her time in the telecommunications industry, she represented the company at the Federal Communications Commission, various state regulatory commissions, state legislatures and tribal entities. Betsy also provided advice and counsel on sales, marketing, employee relations, advertising, corporate communications, lobbying, consumer relations, privacy, and legislative policy regarding telecommunications.



Betsy and her husband, George, and moved to Portland, Oregon in 2013 as a result of his promotion to President, AT&T Oregon. Upon retiring at the beginning of 2014, she began considering volunteer opportunities. Having always been interested in education and child welfare, CASA was one of the non-profits that was on Betsy’s list of possibilities because her good friend had shared her experience as a CASA in Pennsylvania. As soon as Betsy read about the program in detail, she knew that it would be a good fit for her interest and experience. Betsy became a CASA in 2015, and in 2016, a member of the CASA for Children Board of Directors.

In Betsy's own words, *"I have completed two CASA cases. They were very different cases but in each one, I could clearly see how I made a difference. The DHS caseworkers and the child's attorney are managing so many cases that there are missed opportunities to help the child during this traumatic time. Also, in the one case, after eight foster homes, two caseworkers, and various therapists, I was one of the few constant sources of stability and support for the child. Fortunately, in both cases, there was a happy ending with family reunification."*

It is very interesting to see a completely different part of the legal system and to be part of it, without being in the role of an attorney. Oregon law is unusual in that a CASA is a party to the case. This puts the CASA on equal footing with the District Attorney, the DHS representative, and the attorneys for the parents and children, giving the CASA access to all confidential records regarding the child and providing the CASA with the basis for a very strong advocacy role. I have been impressed by how much respect the judges afford the CASA during court hearings. I feel very fortunate to have found such a meaningful volunteer experience."

CASA for Children Team Updates



Jim Perillo Retires!

After a 30-year career working in the child welfare system in Washington County, our dear Jim Perillo has retired from CASA for Children in mid-January. Jim was recruited to work for CASA in 2014 on the basis of his reputation for being a collaborative, caring caseworker at DHS who wasn't afraid to think "outside of the box" or "speak truth to power." During his time at DHS, he was the recipient of the Tom Moan Award for Excellence in Child Welfare Casework.

Jim's specialty at CASA for Children was his culturally responsive skill set and experience in working in international adoptions. He forged integral relationships with various consulates that have assisted many children in cutting through the international red tape that was a barrier to permanency. Jim's multilingual skills were invaluable in assisting our Spanish speaking cases and outreach into the Latino community. Jim was also known at the Washington County office for making sure his colleagues were well fed with his mother's homemade Italian dishes, and thus, there was always ample supply of good coffee and treats in that office! We

"It's been wonderful to work with Jim over the past years. Jim has always been such a supportive and caring supervisor. He has incredible insight into the DHS and Court system and he is always available with advice and just to listen. He will be missed!"

- **CASA Sally Wolcott**

"Jim was exactly the kind of supervisor every CASA needs. He was always available with his guidance, support and knowledge to help me move my case in the direction I felt it needed to go. He was not afraid to speak his mind, or afraid to let me speak on behalf of the children we served. I am a better CASA because of Jim!"

- **CASA Cindy Plummer**

"Jim Perillo was my supervisor for many years. Jim is fabulous. He is so very knowledgeable of the laws, and how DHS works; and was always so helpful with questions that I had on my cases. Jim is a good listener, and always had a positive spin to my concerns. Jim was ALWAYS available, too, even listening to my concerns on nights and week-ends; and helping me find solutions to problems that I might have encountered on my CASA cases!"

Jim is a caring, kind man, and clearly was in this work for the kids! I have loved working with Jim over the years, and wish him well in the future. Thank you Jim for being a wonderful, caring supervisor and friend. You will be greatly missed!"

- **CASA Maryanne Andrews**

wish Jim the very best in this next chapter.

**Words by: Georgia McGinnis Roberts,
Program Manager, Washington County**



Mihaela Burlaku - Intern

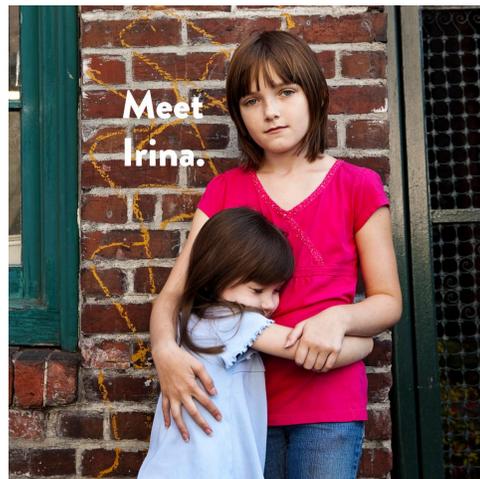
CASA for Children is excited to welcome Mihaela Burlaku, also known as Mila, to the team as an Intern. Mila comes from Ukraine, and was born in Moldova. Having experienced mental and domestic violence, she seeks to bring awareness to the world about the cause of CASA. With the help of her experience in the Air Force, she is professional, timely, capable and kind. Her past has made her open minded and understanding to not judge others based on their circumstances, which will lead her to a career in social work in the future.

“My interest in volunteering with CASA is to help others,” Mila says. “I want to make a difference in my life. I want to be able to support, encourage and strengthen a child, a family and many more. I want others to see the benefits of making a difference and working to change negative mindsets. I hope to benefit from the volunteer experience by understanding the process of the courts and the work that goes into changing a child’s life.”

Ways to Support Foster Youth Now

Learn about the impacts of a CASA

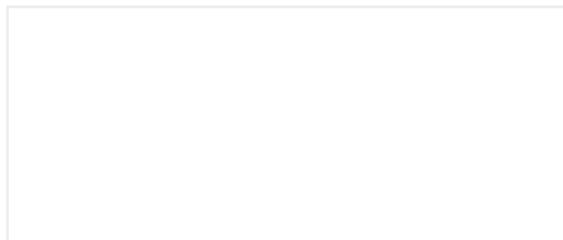
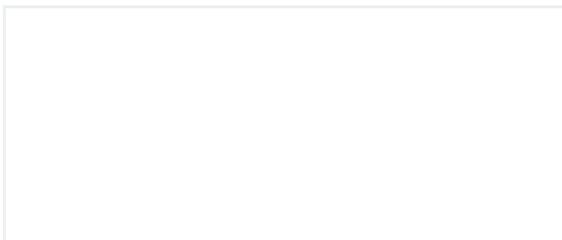
The *Fostering Futures: Supporting Northwest Oregon's children and youth in foster care* campaign aims to raise awareness of the realities children and youth in foster care face, including emphasizing the essential role of CASAs who champion better outcomes for our community's most vulnerable.

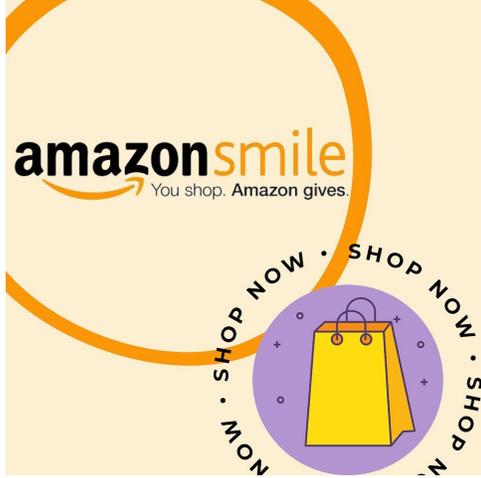


Take Action

Benefit CASA for Children while you shop

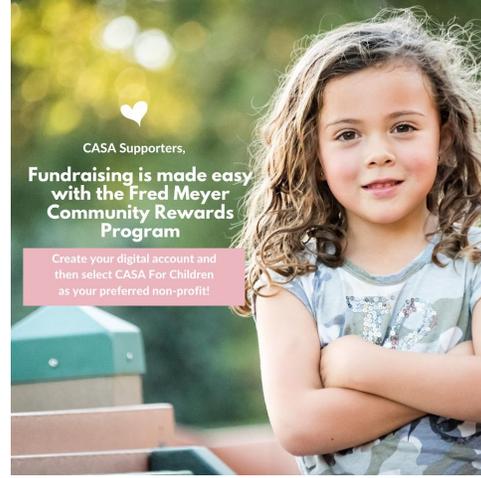
Using *AmazonSmile* and the *Fred Meyer Community Rewards* program are easy ways to contribute to CASA for Children at **no additional cost to you!**





Doing some online shopping?
Before you browse:

1. [Go to our website](#)
2. Click AmazonSmile
3. Submit your order
4. Amazon donates 1.5% of your purchase to us!



The Fred Meyer Community Rewards program makes fundraising easy! **[Link your shopper's card](#)** to CASA For Children and just swipe.

Name: CASA for Children, Inc.
Number: SL433

