

How Can My Contributions Help?

Individual contributions are essential for the growth of the Montcalm CASA program. Contributions of money, time and talent enable Montcalm CASA to increase the availability of CASA volunteers to our community's children.

Similar to other CASA programs, Montcalm CASA relies on a mixture of revenue support from local sources including individual and community organization gifts, fund-raising events, United Way and grants.

Yes, I would like to help abused and neglected children reach the safe, permanent homes they deserve.

Please send me more information about the Montcalm CASA Volunteer Program.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

I would like to make a contribution to the Montcalm CASA Volunteer Program.
Enclosed is my contribution of:

\$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other _____

Donations are tax deductible.

Please make check payable to Montcalm CASA

Mail to:
P.O. Box 925
Stanton, MI 48888

To schedule a presentation, please contact the Program Coordinator at 989.831.3561

Montcalm CASA provides trained volunteers to be a voice for abused and neglected children in the juvenile justice system by providing advocacy for their needs and ensuring a permanent home.

What Is CASA's History?

Local

In March 2002, community leaders from Montcalm County Juvenile Court, Montcalm Human Services Coalition and concerned citizens convened for the first time to create a CASA program in Montcalm County. In 2003, the Montcalm CASA Advisory Board was formed and it secured a Program Coordinator and by August 2004, the first volunteer was assigned a case. Today, more than 60 children's voices have been heard through the advocacy of the Montcalm CASA Program.

State

Michigan CASA, Inc. was founded in 1985 to enhance the growth of CASA programs around the State of Michigan. Michigan CASA, Inc. supports growth and professional development of local programs which recruit, train and support CASA volunteers.

National

In 1977, a Seattle Superior Court Judge named David Soukup was concerned about trying to make decisions on behalf of abused and neglected children without enough information. He conceived the idea of appointing community volunteers to speak up for the best interests of these children in court. He made a request for volunteers; 50 citizens responded, and that was the start of the CASA movement. Today, there are more than 59,000 advocates serving in 954 state and local program offices nationwide. Since the inception of CASA advocacy, volunteers have helped more than 2 million children find safe, permanent homes in which they can thrive.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

MONTCALM COUNTY

We speak for a child

*Who wears shoes that don't fit
Whose nightmares are real
Who has never heard of Mickey Mouse
Whose parents ran away.*

We are the voice of a child

*Who feels at fault
Who lives in fear of daddy coming home
Who wonders what it's like to have a friend sleep over
Who eats only when food can be found.*

We stand for a child

*Who has never been to the doctor
Who wonders what the tooth fairy does
Who is unable to stand without help
Who knows so well what an attorney looks like.*

We listen to a child

*Who doesn't know what the truth is
Who is in constant need of a bear hug
Who finds freedom only on a swing
Who believes they are the parent.*

We are the heart of a child

*Who wants mommy and daddy to stop fighting
Who has never had a bandage or a kiss on an "owie"
Who thinks we are the bestest friend they have ever had.*

We are the people

*Who often read these children their very first fairy tale
Who wipe away their tears with our sleeves
Who want them to believe life is worth it.*

We are CASA...

About Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

MONTCALM COUNTY

What Is A CASA Volunteer?

A CASA volunteer is a screened, trained and supervised community member. The CASA volunteer's purpose is to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in child protective proceedings. CASA volunteers are appointed to cases by a judge.

Why Is There A Need?

In Michigan, **more than 21,000 children are confirmed victims** of child abuse or neglect annually, and more than 15,000 of these children live in foster care or with relatives because it is not safe to return home. Montcalm County has an average of 4 to 5 new child abuse and neglect cases started in court each month. For the last five years, **Montcalm County has averaged 49 new cases per year.**

Attorneys and caseworkers often serve caseloads of 30-60 children at once. Such large caseloads leave professionals little time to develop a relationship with a child or an in-depth understanding of their individual needs and wishes.

The information generated by the CASA volunteer and provided to the judge is very important and necessary for the child's welfare to be served.



What Is A CASA Volunteer's Role?

Under the guidance of a trained supervisor, a CASA volunteer carries a small caseload, one or two cases. A CASA volunteer is assigned to a case until it is permanently closed.

From the start, a CASA volunteer works with the child, the attorneys, social workers, school personnel, health providers, parents and others involved in the child's life.

They explain the events to the child and allow the child to express his/her own feelings, hopes and opinions while being objective observers.

From the information gathered, the CASA volunteer will make recommendations to the judge as to what is in the child's best interest. CASA volunteers offer children trust and advocacy during complex legal proceedings.

Is There A Typical CASA Volunteer?

Volunteers come from all walks of life with a variety of professional, educational and ethnic backgrounds. Aside from their CASA volunteer work, 54% are employed with full-time jobs. Nationally, 83% of CASA volunteers are women and 17% are men.



Do CASA Programs Work?

Yes. Research shows that children who have been assigned CASA volunteers tend to spend less time in court and less time within the foster care system than those who do not have CASA representation.

Judges have observed that CASA children also have better chances of finding permanent homes than non-CASA children. All CASA programs are community-based and locally governed to address local needs.

*Every child has a right
to a safe, caring and
permanent home.*



Montcalm CASA Affiliations

Montcalm CASA is a member of the National CASA Association and Michigan CASA, Inc. Montcalm CASA is administered by EightCAP, Inc.

www.eightcap.org