

Cumberland County CASA Program
1 Courthouse Square, Suite 301
Carlisle, PA 17013



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: CASA Program Office

717.240.6159

casa@ccpa.net

Be the Voice for an Abused and/or Neglected Child

*CASA Holds Informational Sessions for Volunteers **Wednesday, Dec. 8***

Carlisle, PA – The Cumberland County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program is looking for volunteers to work with abused and/or neglected children whose cases are involved in the child welfare court system.

CASA will host two virtual informational sessions on **Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2021, Noon- 1 p.m. and 6 - 7 p.m.** To attend, sign up at www.pacasa.org/start. CASA volunteer training is scheduled to start in March 2022.

A CASA volunteer is a trained community member appointed by a judge to serve as the “eyes and ears” of the court. CASA volunteers represent the best interest of the child, many of whom are in foster care, by prioritizing their needs so that their “voice” may be heard in court. It is the only program of its kind, built around assigning one caring adult advocate to the case of one abused and/or neglected child or sibling group.

“In 2020, 43 Cumberland County CASA volunteers advocated for 69 dependent children,” said Virginia Koser, Outreach Coordinator at Cumberland County CASA. “We are reaching out into the community to find more residents who want to help make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable children in our area.”

Volunteers must be 21 years of age or older, complete an interview process, pass background clearances, and undergo 40+ hours of training. The in-depth training for new volunteers educates advocates about the CASA volunteer role, the child welfare

system, and effective advocacy techniques. Most volunteers spend 10-20 hours per month in their advocacy role, and most cases last between 18-24 months.

CASA Volunteer roles and responsibilities:

- **Gather Information:** To inform the court of the child's situation, a volunteer must gather in-depth knowledge of the child and his or her family situation.
- **Advocate:** Provide the facts to the court through written reports and speaking on the child's behalf for the child's best interest.
- **Facilitate:** Communicate between the parties for services to support the child's needs.
- **Monitor:** Stay informed of the child's situation until a safe, permanent home has been achieved.

These four key actions help ensure the court has all information needed to make the best-informed decisions regarding the best interest of the child.

To learn more about becoming a CASA volunteer, visit www.ccpa.net/casa, email casa@ccpa.net, or call 717.240.6159.

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