



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF ST. CROIX COUNTY, INC.

Annual Report 2024

Message from the Executive Director

Growth - Advocates - Sponsorships

Annual Reports are a time when we get to reflect on the year and highlight our accomplishments. 2024 was a good year for CASA that left us with many things to talk about, too many to cover here. However, we decided to focus on three key accomplishments: Growth, our Special Advocates, and our Sponsors & Patrons.

Our goal has been to continue to grow the organization, offering more and diverse services. This year we were successful in securing a grant that would allow us to accomplish this goal. This year we are launching Victim Compensation Fund Assistance. This is a state/ federal program assisting victims of crimes to access compensation.

Like most government programs it requires too much paperwork, but that is what CASA is for. We will help victims complete the application, apply, and track required paperwork. We can help victims for up to four years.

[Read More on page 4.](#)

CASA is always recruiting and training Special Advocates. We would like to highlight a partnership that occurred this year and the success that sprang from it. In spring of this year, CASA presented to the First Lutheran Church in New Richmond. There was an incredible outpouring of support and interest. Twenty-eight people came to learn about being a special advocate. Ten people rolled the dice and immersed themselves in learning about court advocacy. First Lutheran Church hosted the training location, producing some of the most dedicated advocates we have graduated. CASA is looking to replicate the success that this partnership created. If your church/ congregation would like to host an eight week CASA training please reach out to us. We find communities of faith a powerful partner in working with abused and neglected children. [Read about our Advocate Highlights on page 3.](#)

Let me take a moment to thank our Sponsors and Patrons. Without you nothing named above would be possible. We were fortunate to grow our patrons this year. In 2024 we added over 100 new patrons and 8 additional corporate sponsors. Please see page 7 for a list of contributors. We are forever grateful for the support we receive to help children in need. Abuse and neglect are a terrible thing to focus on to raise money and awareness of children within our community. People are always surprised by the numbers, but we do try to focus on the powerful outcomes. Please read page 5 to see our outcomes.

Finally, thank you with the greatest gratitude from the Board of Directors, employees and from myself. You have made this a great year for the children of St. Croix County.

-Sean Kinsella



Message from the Board

Reflecting on 2024: A Busy Year for Our CASA Program

This year has been a remarkable one for our local CASA program. Among our greatest strengths is our exceptional Board of Directors, who continue to provide invaluable leadership. While we were saddened by the retirement of one of our founding Board members, Bridget Connolly, we are profoundly grateful for her years of service. Bridget's contributions were instrumental in shaping our organization and fostering a culture of encouragement and celebration. Her legacy will remain a cornerstone of our mission.

Today, our Board is composed of eight dedicated and skilled members who bring expertise and passion to their roles. They have successfully navigated challenges, updated policies, enhanced marketing, and outreach, and provided steadfast guidance to our Executive Director, Sean Kinsella. Their teamwork ensures that we are always ready to face new challenges while advancing our goals.

Under Sean's leadership, our CASA program continues to thrive. Sean's passion and vision have bolstered everything from volunteer training and management to strengthening critical partnerships with St. Croix County judges, officials, and staff. Thank you, Sean, for your unwavering commitment to our mission and for guiding us on a path of steady growth.

To the members of our community reading this report, we invite you to join us in this important work. Our CASA program serves as the voice for children in need of protection under court supervision. Whether as a volunteer or donor, your support can make a profound difference in the lives of these children. As a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization, we rely on the generosity of people like you. Visit our website to make a meaningful donation today.

We would also like to express our heartfelt gratitude to County Administrator Ken Witt, Judge Michael Waterman, and Vice Chair of the Board Bob Feidler. Their steadfast support and partnership have been pivotal in strengthening the collaboration between St. Croix County and our CASA program. Thank you for being champions of our mission.

Here's to another year of growth, impact, and advocacy for children in need. Together, we can continue to make a lasting difference.



-Marie Gremore



Volunteer Appreciation

CASA of St. Croix is a volunteer-powered organization. We recruit and train adult volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children. Sometimes, the work is hard, balancing risk with rights and outcomes. For our volunteers we hope that they feel challenged, hopeful, and enlightened by the process.

Volunteer Spotlight 2024

We would like to take a moment to focus on two Special Advocates who together have represented two siblings: Joanie Davenport and Teresa O'Rourke.

Joanie Davenport comes from the service side of a large company. While her background is in service, she also has experience in working with youth groups, at-risk kids, and kids who need an adult mentor. She often draws upon experiences with friends who struggled with substance abuse and homelessness. She has been known to open her home to friends who need help getting back on their feet, offering them a safe and stable environment, along with understanding and encouragement. Joanie opened her home to a friend's daughter who experienced turmoil. She needed a place to stay while she established herself, so Joanie welcomed her into her home. Being a foundation to help someone stabilize requires patience, understanding, and empathy.

Teresa O'Rourke has spent many years working for various service-type companies. Serving as a 911 operator, a Special Education Aide and a provider for children with Autism has given her a wide arena with ample opportunities to bless others. Teresa has applied her intuition, compassion, and determination as she works with the young man she was assigned to.

Joanie and Teresa advocated for brothers, separated, who then moved in together. They were high energy and protective of each other. The brothers bonded with their special advocates quickly. Joanie and Teresa understood how important trust was to the boys. The boys needed to know that their advocates would put their needs, wants and wishes first. Their relationship continues and Joanie and Teresa have followed the boys through several moves and changes in school. To this day Joanie and Teresa continue to connect and advocate for the boys and represent their needs in court.

**It only
takes one
caring
adult to
change a
child's life.**



We chose Joanie and Teresa to highlight how differing backgrounds can contribute and add to a child's enrichment.

CASA believes that one caring adult can change a child's life.

**Are you ready to be the
change in a child's life?**



CASA of St. Croix Launches New Service: Victim Compensation Fund Assistance (VOCA)

CASA is excited to tell you about our expanded services.

This year, CASA received a grant to assist victims of crimes to apply for compensation. When CASA began researching for the appropriateness of the grant, the numbers came in to sharp focus. Approximately 22% of the children we support are victims of crime.

CASA will help children apply for victim compensation, by compiling the paperwork, filing and housing documentation. It is a federal and state program, coming with a mountain of documentation. CASA is paid to assist with the application process. The recipient can continue to file for up to 4 years or \$40,000 in assistance. While CASA's focus is on the children we support, abuse is often familial. CASA will also assist parents with their application. 16% of the parents we work with are also victims of a crime.

We are happy to be able to broaden our service offering. We look forward to updating you on this new service.

Advocacy Our Core Program

CASA refers to our core program as ADVOCACY. But our understanding of advocacy is far more broad.

The CASA program provides screened, trained, and qualified community volunteers to advocate for the best interest of the children who are before the court as a result of abuse or neglect. Our Special Advocates gather information, visit the child, collaborate and coordinate with the legal, child welfare, GAL and other partners to ensure service provision meets the child's best interest.

The Special Advocates write a court memorandum with recommendations regarding the needs, wants and wishes of the child.

The advocates monitor the case until released by the court. Best interest advocacy is driven by the guiding principle that children grow and develop best with their family of origin if safety can be achieved.



Stand Up for Kids!

CASA held its second Stand Up for Kids! Gala. It was a night filled with friends and fun, all for a cause focused on children. We brought together people who have a passion for helping children and believe that a child's life is not destined. We heard how advocacy changes a child's life.

This year we added new corporate sponsors while bringing back our old friends. CASA sold out all the seats for the event. And together we raised \$24,000 to support our Court Appointed Special Advocate program. The money goes to support the recruitment and training of advocates who believe that one caring adult can change a child's life.

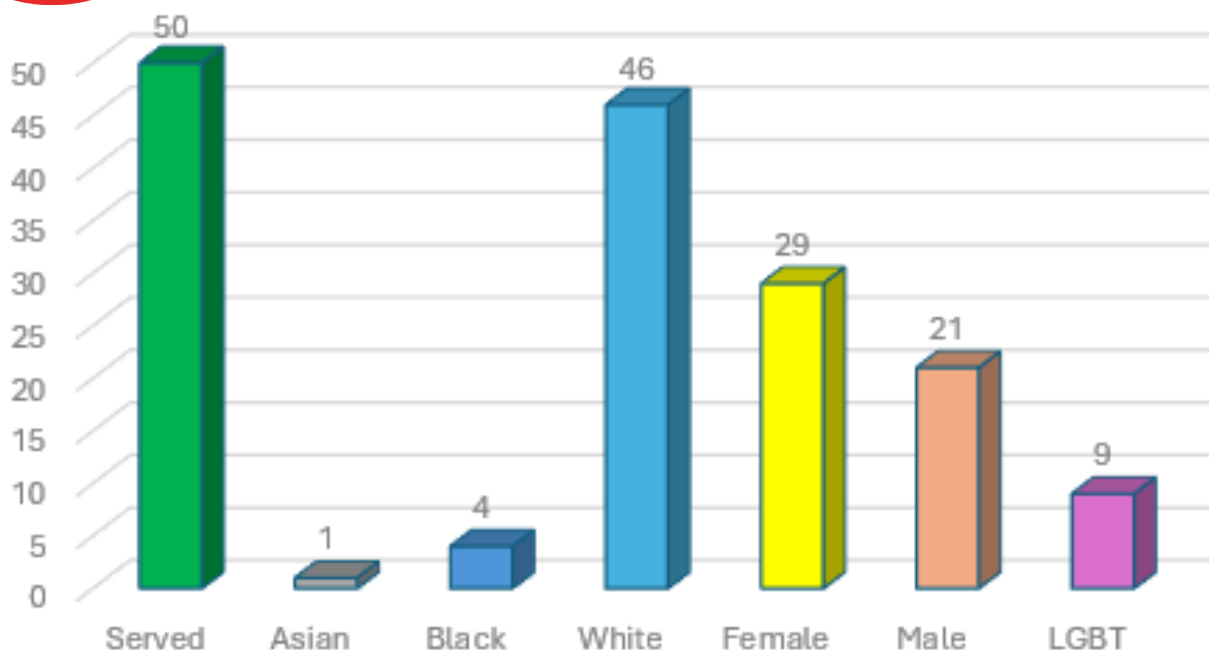
We look forward to seeing you in the Spring of 2025!





Year in Review

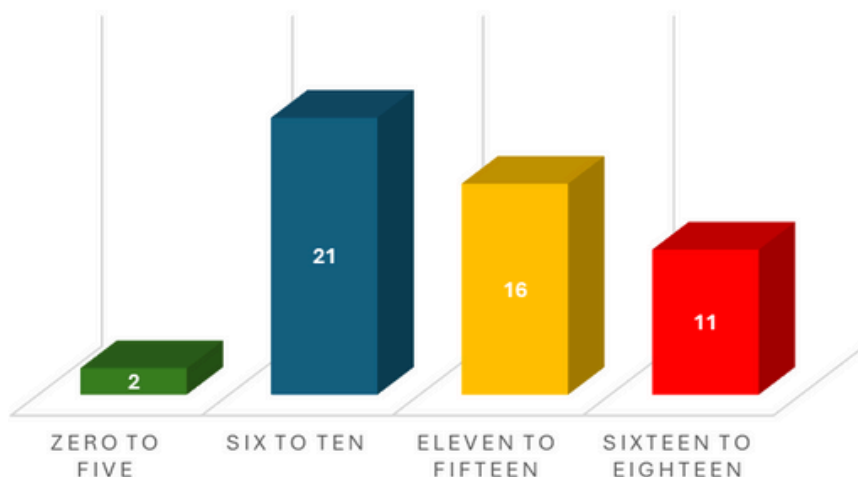
Number Served



Court Appointed Special Advocates supported 50 children this year. The children's ages ranged from 2 to 18.

CASA asks our Special Advocates to donate their time of approximately 2 hours a week for one year. Our advocates donate more than their time, they provide emotional support, attention and advocacy to each child assigned to them. This year our advocates donated over 4000 hours working with children. The Bureau of Labor Statistics call this the Social Value of Volunteerism. Using their calculations our volunteers donated \$84,000 in service to children.

AGES



Financial Summary

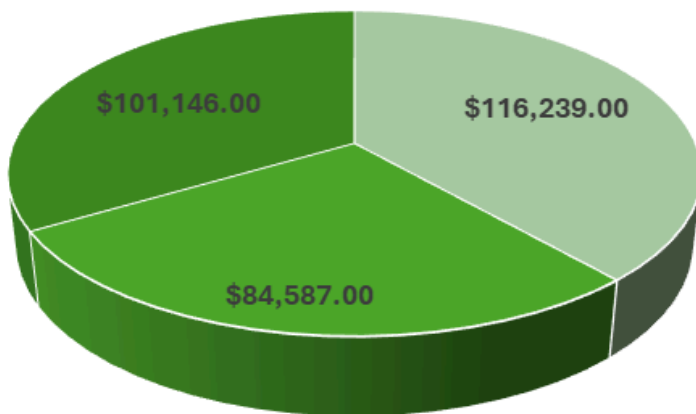
We are pleased to report that CASA maintains strong financial outcomes.

The Executive Director's ability to work with a strong Board of Directors is essential in driving a mission focused nonprofit organization. CASA maintains a six- month Operational Reserve and a 8 month Liquidity. With the addition of our expanded service delivery, we anticipate strong metrics moving into 2025.

Funding Diversification

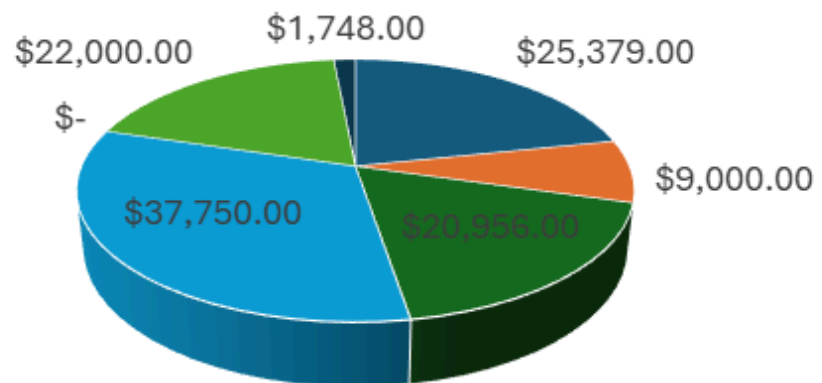
Laura Arrillaga – Anderssen said that “Nonprofits are the intermediaries between generosity and social change”. To be the instrument of change nonprofits must diversify funding generosity, which takes time. CASA continues to network and broaden its donor network base. This year CASA added over 100 new individual donors and 6 new corporate sponsors. Additionally, CASA's new service Victim Compensation Fund Assistance will provide \$38,451 annually for the next three years.

Financial Status



■ Cash ■ Reserve ■ Investments

Funding Distribution



■ Individual Contributions ■ Gifts In-kind
■ Organization/ Sponsorships ■ Grants
■ VOCA Funding ■ Events
■ Misc.



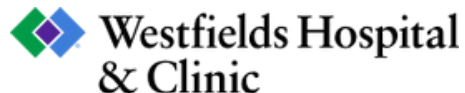
Corporate and Organizational Sponsorships

Gold Patrons



ROYAL
CREDIT
UNION.

Silver Patrons



Hudson Daybreak
Rotary



Bronze Patrons



Foundation Support

Greater Horizons
Grammie Jean Foundation
Hugh J Andersen Foundation
Freddie and Katherine Anderson Foundation
American Online Giving Foundation
Richard M. Schultz Foundation
Hudson Hospital Foundation
United Way St. Croix & Red Cedar Valleys
Otto Bremer Trust





Our Contributors

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