

## **The Need for CASA Volunteers**

Every child should have a safe, permanent home, but many do not. In Georgia, approximately 7,500 children at any one time are in the foster care system because they are victims of abuse or neglect. Often these children also become victims of the overburdened child welfare system - a complex legal network of lawyers, social workers, and judges who are too frequently overworked to give thorough, detailed attention to each child. They can get "lost" for months and even years.

In 1976, Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington, observed this problem in the courtroom as well as a lack of sound information upon which to base decisions about a child's future. He raised funding to recruit and train community volunteers to gain first-hand knowledge of the child's situation and speak on behalf of the child in court. In 1977, a CASA pilot program was formed based on Judge Soukup's idea. In 1982, the National CASA Association was established to direct CASA's emerging national presence.

CASA is the only volunteer organization that empowers everyday citizens as officers of the court. We work to ensure that children and youth involved in juvenile court child protection proceedings have courtroom advocacy, access to services and resources, and the individual attention they deserve. CASA volunteers bring urgency to the child's situation, so that children get the intervention services that were necessary for them to recover and break the cycle of abuse.

Appointed by judges, CASA volunteers typically handle just one case at a time—and commit to staying on that case until the child is placed in a safe, permanent and nurturing home. While others may come and go, CASA volunteers provide that one constant that children need in order to thrive.

Today, Gordon County CASA trains and supports these community volunteers in Gordon County. It is our goal to provide a voice for every child in our community that is placed in temporary foster care. We believe that every child deserves a safe, permanent home.

## **The Volunteer Commitment**

Gordon County CASA welcomes volunteers from all cultures, professions, ethnic and educational backgrounds. You don't have to be a lawyer or social worker to be a volunteer. We're simply looking for community members with a desire to help children in Gordon County!

If this sounds like you and you want to do something to help an abused or neglected child find a safe, permanent home, then you are exactly the person we are looking for!

## **So what does it take to become a CASA volunteer?**

- Submit the *completed* Volunteer Application attached. We require four favorable references, clear criminal history, DFCS history and national sex offender registry check.
- Every volunteer participates in a 40-hour training course.
- After successfully completing the training, the volunteer is assigned his first case. A volunteer's average time commitment to a case is approximately 10 hours per month.
- Volunteer advocates are asked to dedicate themselves to a case until it is closed. The average case lasts about 18 months.
- Advocates are supervised and supported every step of the way and always have resources readily available.

The comprehensive training to become a CASA volunteer was professionally developed by the **National CASA Association** in consultation with child abuse and neglect professionals, juvenile court attorneys and judges, CASA staff, and CASA volunteers from all over the country. Using this standard curriculum, our goal during CASA training is to ensure that volunteers receive the tools they need to be the best possible advocate for the children they will serve while providing a positive and stimulating experience.

We realize you are taking time from your regular lives and families and we try our best to ensure that the time you are giving is well spent. CASA training hours are scheduled at times that are convenient for most working people.

## **To Get Started**

1. Complete the following Application and Affirmation and Release.
  2. Return it to us via email to [amberle.dillard@gordoncounty.org](mailto:amberle.dillard@gordoncounty.org) or fax to 706-602-8187 or mail to Gordon County CASA at PO Box 562, Calhoun, GA 30703
  3. Once we have received your application, you will be contacted to schedule an interview. Attached is a schedule of any scheduled open houses as well as scheduled training classes (if any are currently scheduled).
- Our next training class will be in May 2020

# CASA VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Please TYPE or PRINT legibly and complete entire application.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (MI)

Home address: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Other addresses within the last five (5) years: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Home #: \_\_\_\_\_ Work #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell #: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex (*circle one*) Male OR Female Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact person \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Relation \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about the CASA program? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Employment

Employment Status: (*circle one*) Full-time Part-time Retired Full-time Student Not employed

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of employment: \_\_\_\_\_ May we contact you at work? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Work address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Education

Highest Level Completed: (*circle one*) Some High School / High School / Some College / College Graduate / Post-Graduate

Language(s) other than English: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Interests & Hobbies

Check other areas you are interested in volunteering with CASA: (*NOTE: None is required to be a CASA Volunteer.*)

\_\_\_ Public speaking \_\_\_ Web Content Mgm't \_\_\_ Events/ Fundraising \_\_\_ General Office Duties

Please list previous volunteer experience and length of service. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**More About You**

(Please select one answer per question)

Have you ever worked for the juvenile court? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever worked for the Dept. of Family & Children Services? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been a foster parent? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Currently? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had an injunction for domestic violence entered against you? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you currently take medication or use any drug(s) which might interfere with your ability to drive or otherwise perform the duties of a Court Appointed Special Advocate? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any reason a judge might be reluctant to have you serve as a Guardian ad Litem? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had a case with, or investigation performed by, the Department of Family and Children Services?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List any charges, arrests, and/or convictions, **other than traffic violations**, and list dates, county/state, and disposition of each. (An applicant having a charge or conviction for a crime involving a sex offense, child abuse or neglect or related acts that would pose risks to children or the CASA program's credibility is disqualified as a CASA volunteer. Applicants with other misdemeanor or felony charges or convictions that would not pose a risk to children or negatively affect the credibility of the CASA program will be considered on a case-by-case basis considering the time passed since the incident and the level of rehabilitation.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Training Availability**

Please check day/ times you would be available for training:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning						
Afternoon						
Evening						

If relevant, please list any specific days when you cannot attend: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have access to transportation? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a valid GA Driver's License? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

License #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## References

Please list names and contact information of 4 people (2 professional – salaried or volunteer work – and 2 personal – *no family members, please*). If currently employed, please list supervisor first. Complete information is required. We will not process references without complete Name, Address, Email (if applicable) and Relationship.

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime phone \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

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## Autobiography

Please attach an autobiographical paragraph and tell us about yourself including why you are interested in becoming a CASA Volunteer.

**AFFIRMATION AND RELEASE**

*Included in application to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby affirm that all of the answers provided on my volunteer application are true. I understand that the information requested will be used only for the purpose of determining my suitability as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. I understand that this application does not ensure certification as a CASA volunteer. I understand that completion of training does not guarantee certification as a CASA Volunteer. Certification is at the discretion of CASA for Children, Inc. staff. After successful completion of my training, I further understand that I will be expected to serve a minimum of one year in the CASA program. If unforeseen circumstances prevent me from fulfilling this obligation, I will submit a written resignation to the program director with as much advance notice as possible.

I am aware that I will be examining sensitive, confidential documents, reports and other material in my capacity as a CASA volunteer. I will discuss these matters only with those persons directly involved in the case at the Court or those who will be consulted for their professional knowledge or expertise. I will not divulge this confidential information to anyone else.

I hereby authorize CASA and any law enforcement agency or other appropriate agency to receive any criminal history record information and state central registry information (from the Department of Family and Children Services) pertaining to me, which may be in files of any federal, state or local criminal justice agency in the United States, and to investigate my background to determine my fitness as a potential volunteer. This information may be requested and be received on a continual basis during the period of time that I am an active volunteer for the CASA program.

I understand that a \$25 fee will be collected from me to help defray the costs background screens, training manual and supplies. This fee will be due and payable at the pre- training interview if I am accepted for training.

I certify that the answers given in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and understand that if accepted into the program as a volunteer, any false or misleading statements on this application shall be grounds for dismissal.

Please complete the following information needed for background checks:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth: month/day/year

\_\_\_\_\_  
State in which you were born

\_\_\_\_\_  
Hair color

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eye color

\_\_\_\_\_  
Height

\_\_\_\_\_  
Weight

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date