

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### NEWS

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### **Oklahoma CASA Association receives national grant to raise awareness of Oklahoma's most vulnerable children**

**Oklahoma City – July 18, 2019** – The Oklahoma CASA Association has been awarded a \$60,608 Branding Campaign grant from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad Litem (CASA/GAL) Association for Children. Funds will be used to tailor a national public awareness campaign about child abuse and neglect for local markets, and to distribute the campaign.

There are nearly 950 CASA/GAL programs nationwide, including 48 state offices, that recruit, train and support volunteers who advocate in court for the best interests of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. Their advocacy enables judges to make the most well-informed decisions for each child.

National CASA/GAL has developed a broad-based national campaign, “Change a Child’s Story™.” It is distinguished from other campaigns in that its messaging is told from the point of view of children who have experienced abuse or neglect. The campaign shows the importance to these children of having a volunteer by their side to advocate for their best interests.

In Oklahoma, the campaign will run on radio stations, in movie theaters, on billboards and on social media.

“The needs of Oklahoma’s children coming into care are more complicated than ever before, and life in foster care can be chaotic,” said Sheryl Marseilles, CEO of Oklahoma CASA. “Every child deserves the support of a caring, consistent adult with the training to help her or him heal and thrive.”

The “Change a Child’s Story”™ campaign was developed with R&R Partners, a cause-driven marketing and advocacy agency that has worked on prominent social issues campaigns. R&R Partners conducted focus groups across the country to ensure the campaign would resonate with target audiences while being sensitive to the perceptions of those with experience growing up in foster care.

The federal grant funds distributed through National CASA/GAL are provided by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, US Department of Justice, as authorized under the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990. In 2018, National CASA was awarded nearly \$10 million in federal grants.

There are 22 CASA programs in Oklahoma that recruit, train and support volunteers who help ensure that children who have entered the court and child welfare systems receive appropriate services, have a voice in determining their futures and, ultimately, find a safe, permanent home where they can thrive.

To find a CASA program near you or for more information, visit [www.oklahomacasa.org](http://www.oklahomacasa.org) and change a child's story.

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