

CASA Outcomes and Annual Report

2012



Strengthening Voices for Abused and Neglected Children



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

OKLAHOMA CASA ASSOCIATION, INC.

A Note from the Director



It was in 1989 that I was trained as a CASA volunteer and assigned to my first case; a 13 year old girl named Sarah who was 8 months pregnant. The allegations in the petition filed with the court were centered on a lack of prenatal care, but through my research, I learned that that the case was investigated as a sexual abuse case and my first charge was getting that information to the judge and making every effort to ensure the child was protected from the alleged abuser. As a CASA volunteer, I learned first-hand the value of having not only a voice representing the child’s best interest, but also an “outside” source of information for the court. And it wasn’t just me; CASA volunteers were making impacts in the lives of children every day. I fell in love with the program, with child advocacy, and the idea that a trained volunteer could make a difference in the life of a child.

At that time, CASA was new to the state of Oklahoma. There were only a few programs, funding was limited and child protection laws had been on the books a scant 20 years. Over the years, we developed a vision of services that could be best provided on a statewide level, thus strengthening and enhancing the quality of services local programs, through the training and supervision of community volunteer advocates, could provide to abused and neglected children who were wards of the court. Hence Oklahoma CASA as it stands today, living that vision through statewide marketing and outreach, a grants program, quality assurance, statewide IT support and website design/maintenance, legislative advocacy, ongoing technical assistance, and statewide training.

We have come a long way, and that vision put in place so many years ago continues to grow as our organization grows. I now sit at different desk than I did in the 1990’s; a desk at which my focus is that of a “macro” nature, as we at Oklahoma CASA strive to provide a statewide voice for abused and neglected children and to enhance the growth and sustainability of CASA programs across the state. But I haven’t forgotten Sarah or any of the other children to whom I was appointed as a CASA. Nor have I forgotten the children on my caseload as a program staff member, or the hundreds of CASA volunteers I personally came to know that so gladly gave their time and energy to speak up for a child.

It is an honor to work with the 26 CASA programs that are tenaciously meeting the challenge at hand. Together, we will continue to strive for quality services, a CASA for every child that needs one, and safe and permanent homes for children.

Thank you for your support.

Sheryl Marseilles, M.S.W.
Executive Director
Oklahoma CASA Association

“CASA found a natural parent from whom the child had been hidden when no one else could, and the child was successfully reunited. CASA was able to discover conduct of a parent that was harmful to the child, when no one else could, so the issue could be addressed.”

From the survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2011

Why CASA Exists?

In the fiscal year of 2011, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services substantiated that 8,110 children were victims of abuse and/or neglect. CASA is an independent entity that is in existence to make sure that these children have a voice in court and find their way to a permanent, safe home.

What is a CASA Program?

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates and is a nonprofit organization tasked with recruiting and training volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children.

What do Court Appointed Special Advocates Do for the Children?

Advocates are community volunteers who represent the best interests of abused and neglected children who are wards of the juvenile court. After being screened and trained, a CASA is appointed to a child or sibling group. Through his or her court order, the CASA researches the case, talks to the child and involved parties and professionals, advocates for needed services and timely decisions, and submits written recommendations to the court. The CASA appears in court and monitors the progress of the court-prescribed plan. A CASA usually handles one case at a time until it is fully concluded.

What are the Outcomes for Children?

The long range outcomes for children with a CASA are that children have a safe and permanent home and that children don't "fall through the cracks" of the system that's in place to protect them.

CASA programs in Oklahoma asked the question: how well do we do this? That question led to the identification of initial and intermediate outcomes that, when measured, demonstrate the real changes we are making in the lives of children.

These outcomes for children include:

- A quality comprehensive history/case statement that is compiled to facilitate the children's move to permanency.
- Social, mental, emotional physical, therapeutic, educational and safety needs of children are identified and addressed.
- Increased stability for children and continuity with an adult involved in the case.
- Faster move toward permanency.
- Children have a voice representing their best interests.

In 2011, **1,154 CASA volunteers** tirelessly spoke up on behalf of **3,447 abused and neglected children** who were wards of the juvenile courts.



“It seems every time I appoint a CASA, results improve.”

From the survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2011



Outcomes for Children

From the period of January 2012 to June 2012, 25 local CASA programs recorded outcomes for the children that were appointed a CASA volunteer. Following are the statewide results that clearly convey the impact CASA volunteers can have on the lives of children.

Outcome: Quality comprehensive history/case statements are compiled to facilitate the children’s move to permanency.

CASA volunteers serve as the “eyes and ears” of the court outside the courtroom. In order to provide judges with the most accurate information in their reports, volunteers must maintain contact with anyone who may have pertinent information to the case.

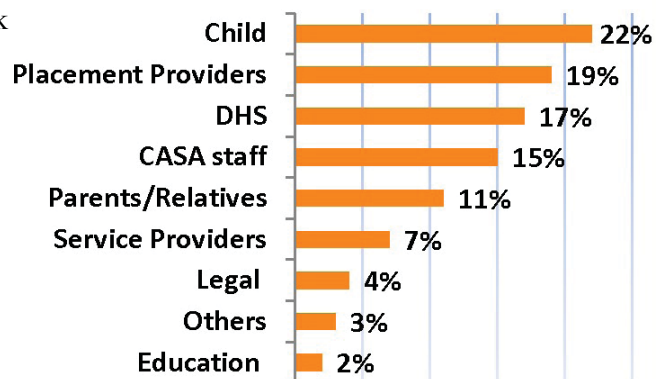
Over this six month period, **35,409 contacts** were made by CASA volunteers on 875 cases. CASA volunteers talk to children, foster parents, service providers, educators, parents and relatives. All of the information gathered through these contacts is compiled into a report that is presented to the judge presiding over the case.

In a survey, judges were asked to rate the quality of reports received based on five indicators on a scale of excellent, good, fair or poor.

- *100% of respondents felt reports received from CASA are clear and concise, containing well-researched recommendations.*

Types of Contacts

N= 35,409



“I can rely on the CASA reports to give me the most current information about the child and their situation. I have found their reports to be most informative in giving up to date information on the children.”

From survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2011

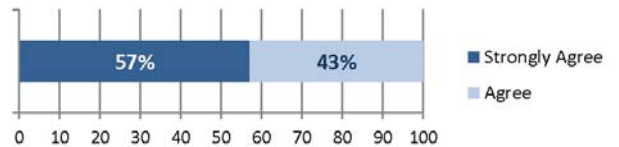
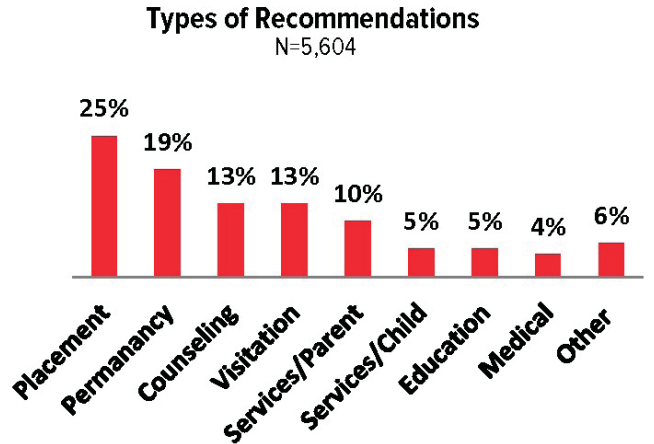
Outcome: Social, mental, emotional, physical, therapeutic, educational and safety needs of children are identified and addressed.

In their reports to the judges, CASA volunteers make recommendations based on their independent, objective opinions as to what is in the best interests of the children. A total of **5,604 independent recommendations** regarding services, visitation, placement, etc. were made to the court by CASA volunteers on 875 cases.

Judges were asked “Compared to cases without a CASA, do you feel children with a CASA receive: fewer services, more services or the same service?” 77% said they felt children received more services and the remaining 23% said that they felt children received the same amount of services.

100% of Judges Surveyed Feel Children’s Needs are Better Met with a CASA

I feel the needs of the children are better met while they are wards of the court when they have a CASA (N=30)



“I particularly appreciate a CASA’s help in looking at whether a child’s ISP [individualized service plan] is being completed and what the child needs for medical care, education and special counseling needs. An active CASA is the best tool to help determine if a child’s medical, educational and behavioral needs are being attended to by DHS.”

From the survey of Oklahoma Judges, 2011

“I was able to do several unannounced visits to the foster home and saw it’s regular state, rather than the cleaned up state DHS saw. There were multiple safety concerns and issues detrimental to the mental welfare of the child. My report helped get her moved into a much better place, with a family member, where she is thriving.”

From the survey of CASA Volunteers, 2011



Outcome: Increased stability for children and continuity with an adult involved in the case.

CASA volunteers are a constant in the life of a child. Often times they are the people who have been on the case the longest and have first hand knowledge of the case’s history.

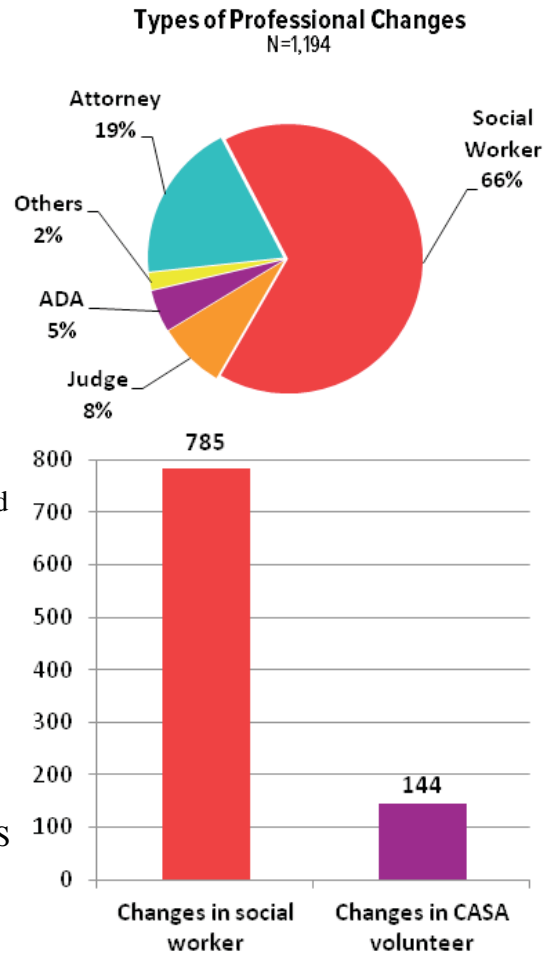
During the January through June 2012 period, **1,194 professional changes** were made to 792 cases. That includes changes in social workers, attorneys, therapists and judges.

Changes in Social Worker Compared to CASA

CASA volunteers research a case by speaking with everyone involved and report back to the judge what they think should be done in the child’s best interests. They perform work most similar to that of a DHS social worker.

During the January through June 2012 period, more than 5 times as many children had a change in social workers assigned to their case than change in CASA volunteer.

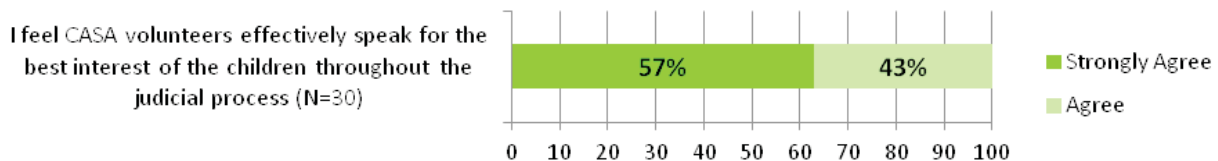
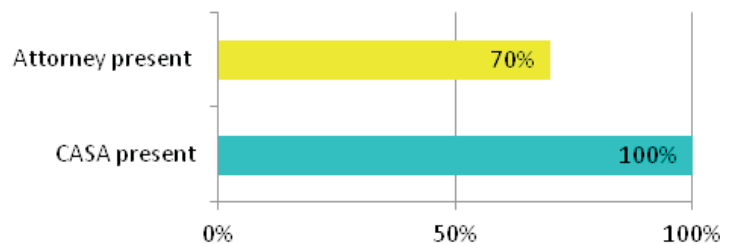
- 49% of respondents to the CASA volunteer survey said they have been assigned to their cases longer than the present DHS workers (10% did not know.)



Outcome: Children have a voice representing their best interests.

Within the six month period, attorneys representing the children were absent for more than 30% of the hearings (2,571 total hearings with attorney present for 1,773). CASA representatives were present for **all** hearings.

100% of Judges Feel CASA Volunteers are Effective Spokespersons for the Best Interests of the Children



“I believe the CASA worker gains more trust because he/she is not ‘from the government.’ Therefore, a relationship can be formed with the children as well as the family. Also, the CASA worker is a ‘constant’...whereas the DHS workers change too frequently.”

“We utilize every facet of our state organization and rely on them heavily for direct support.”

From the survey of Local CASA Programs, 2012

Support for CASA Programs

The mission of the Oklahoma CASA Association is to present a statewide voice for abused and neglected children by enhancing the growth and sustainability of CASA programs throughout Oklahoma.

Program members receive many benefits from the state organization, including:

- Training for staff and volunteers that provides increased knowledge necessary to effectively advocate for abused and neglected children.
- Access to additional financial resources.
- A unified voice at state-level among legislators and policy makers.
- Improved marketing strategies and tools.
- Increased technological capacity.
- Increased knowledge in and assistance with program management.

Calls for Assistance

In the FY 2012, there were **1,101 documented technical assistance contacts** with local CASA program staff. These calls and e-mails ranged from IT assistance to program management and case guidance.

IT Support

The Oklahoma CASA Association leased over \$200,000 worth of equipment to the local programs consisting of computers, LCD monitors, laptops, printers and projectors in FY 2012. Our IT personnel perform service and support for networking, repairing, upgrading, and application support at no charge to the programs and were also on call for assistance. Along with the marketing coordinator, the IT department also offers free website design and maintenance for local CASA programs. So far, thirteen program websites are hosted out of the state CASA office.

When surveyed, 90% of local programs felt the IT services were useful and 74% responded *very* useful. (19 of 26 programs responded)

“The help is appreciated greatly and offsets expenses tremendously!”



Marketing Support

Oklahoma CASA assisted with volunteer recruitment through heightened public awareness and working with individual CASA programs in promoting locally. Over the year, multiple design projects were completed for local programs. These projects included items such as invitations for fund-raisers, website design and direct mail campaigns. New brochure cards were also printed and localized for individual programs for free by the state office.

When surveyed, 95% of local programs felt the marketing services were useful and 70% responded *very* useful. (20 of 26 programs responded)

Marketing Statewide

For statewide marketing, the Oklahoma CASA Association procured 14 new billboards featuring National CASA’s new campaign, “I Am for the Child”. The billboards are placed throughout the state in addition to previous billboards procured through Lamar Outdoor Advertising’s public service program. Billboards Etc. also generously provided space for a billboard.

Oklahoma CASA was able to purchase a localized public service announcement that was produced by Texas CASA. Cox Communications began airing the Laura Bush PSA for volunteer recruitment in late spring.

Training for Volunteers and Staff

Throughout the year, the Oklahoma CASA Association offers multiple trainings to CASA staff and volunteers. In 2012, trainings over topics such as *Board Responsibilities and Internal Controls*, the *Indian Child Welfare Act* and *Creating Sexual Safety in Foster Care* were offered at not cost to staff and volunteers. The 2012 Oklahoma CASA Conference, *Going the Extra Mile*, was very well attended and surpassed previous years in evaluations and generated excitement for future conferences.

All of programs that responded to the survey said that they use training offered by Oklahoma CASA. 90% felt the Training offered was useful and 63% responded *very* useful. (18 of 26 programs responded)



“We need more good people to speak up for children.” Cox Communications began airing a Public Service Announcement featuring former First Lady Laura Bush.

Lift up a child’s voice. A child’s life. Fourteen new billboards were placed in various locations throughout Oklahoma.

“OCASAA does a great job with producing materials that can be utilized on a local level. They are very helpful with customizing marketing tools and campaigns.”

From the survey of
Local CASA Programs, 2012



Oklahoma CASA Association Board of Directors (FY 2012)

Ron Harp, *President*

Tiana Douglas, *Vice President*

Joe Clytus, *Treasurer*

Maria Rosales-Lambert, *Secretary*

Scott Mitchell

Carlos E. Johnson, Ed.D., CPA

Carole Wade

Kathleen Romero

Julie Gordon

Lee Ann Limber

2012 Awards of Excellence Winners

Jalynn Youngberg, Second District CASA - *Child Advocate of the Year*

Nancy Hancock, Okmulgee County / Creek County CASA - *Volunteer Coordinator of the Year*

Mark Livingston, CASA of Oklahoma County - *Board Member of the Year*

Honorable Richard Kirby, CASA of Oklahoma County - *Judge of the Year*

Patti Ahrberg, Payne County CASA - *Lela Roddy Special Recognition Award*



Cherokee Ballard hands Jalynn Youngberg her award for Child Advocate of the Year.

"I found out from the child that he used to wear glasses and it took me putting it into my report for the court to get the action taken. The child is in the 5th grade with a 1st grade reading level."

From survey of
CASA Volunteers, 2011

"I think the children have learned they can trust an adult. I believe they feel like they have a voice and have someone that cares about them. One of my children listed me as his best friend when answering questions from a therapist."

From the survey of
CASA Volunteers, 2011



Statements of Financial Position

For the Year Ended June 30, 2012

Assets

Current Assets

Cash	\$566,897.16
Investments	15,661.72
Accounts Receivable	55,180.80
Court Fees	123,014.73
Prepaid Expenses	<u>5,653.10</u>
Total Current Assets	766,407.51

Fixed Assets

Accumulated Depreciation	-\$213,136.74
Equipment Capitalized	224,918.47
Furniture and Fixtures	<u>16,153.00</u>
Total Fixed Assets	27,934.73

TOTAL ASSETS \$794,342.24

Liabilities and Equity

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$53,959.07
Credit Cards	4,291.35
Accrued Expenses	7,553.43
Accrued Payroll & Payroll Tax	4,994.96
Accrued Vacation	<u>13,334.16</u>
Total Liabilities	84,132.97

Equity

Temporarily Restr. Net Assets	\$0.00
Unrestricted Net Assets	165,867.44
32000 - Retained Earnings	0.00
Net Income	<u>544,341.83</u>
Total Equity	710,209.27

TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY \$794,342.24

Many Thanks to:

State of Oklahoma
 National CASA Association
 Anne & Henry Zarrow Foundation
 Chesapeake Energy
 E.L. & Thelma Gaylord Foundation
 Children's Justice Act
 Oklahoma Bar Foundation

Summary of Revenue and Expense

For the Year Ended June 30, 2012

Support and Revenue

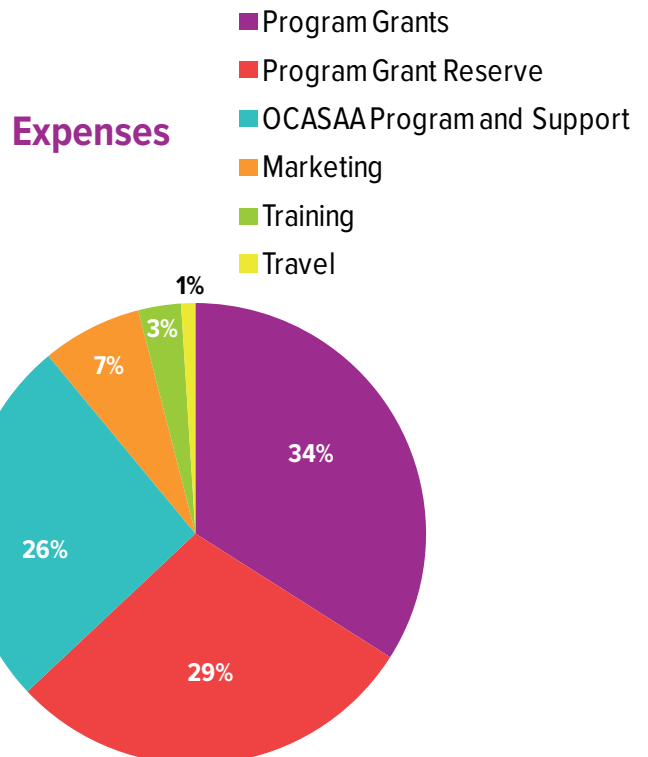
Donations	\$56,225.79
In-Kind Donations	100,800.00
Court Fee Revenue	925,020.14
Federal & State Grants	633,950.62
Dues and Assessment	34,875.36
Conference Fees	12,660.00
Interest	45.86
Misc. Income	1,138.00

TOTAL REVENUE \$1,764,715.77

Expenses

Program Grants	\$585,306.77
Program Grant Reserve	508,451.52
OCASAA Program and Support	450,506.36
Marketing	120,049.71
Training	44,434.64
Travel	20,076.45

TOTAL EXPENSES \$1,728,825.45



CASA Programs

Oklahoma CASA programs serve a total of 56 counties and have a presence in four tribal courts in Oklahoma.

Cleveland County CASA

Serving: Cleveland, Garvin & McClain
Norman, OK
405-360-5295
www.clevelandcountycasa.org

Youth and Family CASA

Serving: Pottawatomie & Lincoln Counties
Shawnee, OK
405-275-3340

Bryan County CASA, Inc.

Serving: Bryan County
Durant, OK
580-924-6164

Okmulgee County/Creek Nation CASA

Serving: Creek Nation, Okmulgee,
Okfuskee & Creek Counties
Okmulgee, OK
918-756-2549

Tulsa CASA, Inc.

Serving: Tulsa County
Tulsa, OK
918-584-2272
www.tulsacasa.org

CASA of Oklahoma County

Serving: Oklahoma County
Oklahoma City, OK
405-713-6456
www.okcountycasa.org

CASA of Southern Oklahoma

Serving: Carter, Johnston, Love,
Marshall & Murray Counties
Ardmore, OK
580-226-0009

Payne County CASA Association, Inc.

Serving: Payne County
Stillwater, OK
405-624-2242
www.casaforkids.com

CASA of Southeast Oklahoma

Serving: McIntosh & Pittsburg Counties
McAlester, OK
918-426-5779
www.casaseok.org

CASA of Cherokee Country

Serving: Cherokee Nation, Adair &
Cherokee Counties
Tahlequah, OK
918-456-8788

Tri-County CASA

Serving: Rogers, Craig &
Mayes Counties
Claremore, OK
918-343-1515
www.tricocasa.org

CASA for Children, Inc.

Serving: Muskogee & Wagoner Counties
Muskogee, OK
918-686-8199
www.casaok.org

Kay & Noble County CASA

Serving: Kay & Noble Counties
Ponca City, OK
580-762-8341
www.kaynoblecasa.org

Second District CASA

Serving: Beckham, Custer & Washita
Clinton, OK
580-323-3322

22nd Judicial District CASA

Serving: Pontotoc County
Ada, OK
580-332-1441

Counseling Inc. CASA

Serving: Atoka & Coal Counties
Tishomingo, OK
580-371-3551

Little Dixie CASA

Serving: McCurtain, Choctaw
& Pushmataha Counties
Antlers OK
580-298-2921
www.littledixiecasa.org

13th Judicial District CASA

Serving: Ottawa & Delaware Counties
Grove, OK
918-787-6481

Fourth Judicial District CASA

Serving: Garfield, Blaine & Major Counties
Enid, OK
580-242-1153
www.garfieldcountycarecampus.org

Canadian County CASA, Inc.

Serving: Canadian County
El Reno, OK
405-264-5520

Third District CASA

Serving: Jackson & Harmon Counties
Altus, OK
580-482-4600
www.3rddistrictcasa.org

CASA Voices For Children, Inc.

Serving: Grady County
Chickasha, OK
405-224-0404
www.casav4c.org

Pawnee/Osage CASA

Serving: Pawnee County/Nation &
Osage County/Nation
Pawnee, OK
918-762-3776
www.pawneecasa.org

San Bois CASA, Inc.

Serving: Latimer, LeFlore & Haskell
Counties
Poteau, OK
918-647-3267

CASA of Southwest Oklahoma

Serving: Comanche & Jefferson Counties
Lawton, OK
580-248-2212

Northwest Oklahoma CASA

Serving: Woodward, Woods, Ellis &
Harper Counties
580-248-2212
www.nwocasa.org

“The court would lose so many important details about the kids [had CASA not been involved]. The other professionals, although caring and compassionate, are not as constant and are very limited to the views allowed them by their position. As a CASA I can look at each child as a person, from every perspective possible and hopefully fill in the important details that the judge needs to know to help these children to get what they need. In one of my cases, I have been the only consistent person this child has known. Even the judge has changed.”

From the survey of
CASA Volunteers, 2011



**Improve Outcomes for Children.
Give an Abused Child a Voice. Yours.**

For more information, contact:

Oklahoma CASA Association
PO Box 54946
Oklahoma City, OK 73154

Phone: 405-524-8999

Fax: 405-524-7222

Toll Free: 1-800-742-2272

or visit

www.oklahomacasa.org



OKLAHOMA CASA ASSOCIATION, INC.