

HISTORY OF CASA

CASA was founded by a judge in Seattle, frustrated because he was making life altering decisions for children without having enough information to make the best decisions. National CASA celebrated their 30th Anniversary in 2007. Thirty years ago the idea of bringing unrelated citizen advocates into the courtroom, sharing highly confidential information with them and giving them access to the homes and lives of strangers and power in a court of law was very radical.

Over the past three decades CASA has had 500,000 volunteers advocating for abused and neglected children. Today, there are 900 CASA program offices across the country with more than 57,000 volunteers who are changing the lives of 220,000 children every year.

Over a decade ago Judge Susan Dobrich brought CASA to Cass County to assist her in making the best decisions for the children in the court's care; many of them children removed from their own abusive or neglectful homes.

DESCRIPTION OF CASA

CASA volunteers are trained to advocate for children in court. Through court appearances and written reports to court officers, CASA volunteers speak for their child's best interests. The CASA volunteer visits their child/ren every 10 – 15 days. The volunteer meets with teachers, parents, friends, relatives, neighbors, attorneys, caseworkers; anyone who might have information about their child/ren. This volunteer also makes certain that court ordered services are provided in a timely manner. The CASA volunteer has only one, at the most two, family units at a time. At the close of their court case CASA kids are returned home to an improved family (with the court's assistance), placed in long-term foster care or placed for adoption.