

CASA Connections

FALL 2018 EDITION



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA by the Lakes

**IN A WORLD WHERE YOU
CAN BE ANYTHING...**

BE A SUPERHERO!



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Superheroes are everywhere you look these days. Marvel and DC are at war to see which comic book empire will rule the big screen. The secret though, is that they are both winning. Billions of dollars are earned with each new superhero movie they release. Kids and adults alike are flocking to theaters across America to imagine a world where superheroes exist.

Unfortunately, many kids in our own community are longing for a superhero of their very own. They

are lost in a system where they are faced with their own villains and simply need someone to take them by the hand and guide them through a process that oftentimes leaves them confused, broken, and hopeless.

There are more than 500 kids in our own backyard who are victims of abuse and neglect. The foster care system can only do so much on its own. Many times these kids are moved to multiple homes and are left feeling that they don't have a voice in the process. In a system that has so many rules and regulations that most adults don't understand, it's no wonder that children are left feeling helpless.

CASA by the Lakes exists to meet

the needs of those children. We are training up superheroes everyday who are able to advocate for children in the court system and make sure that their voices are heard. CASA superheroes are there to support kids through the court process until they are either reunited with their families or adopted into a new home.

In a world where so many kids feel overwhelmed by villains, it's nice to know that there are superheroes who can be there for them everyday. Maybe the next superhero to walk into a courtroom and "Be for the Child" will be you? Do you have what it takes to be a superhero?

Superhero Spotlight

Angelia Melvin Boyd

We have a special superhero spotlight for this edition in honor of the National Women of Achievement Month in October. Angelia is one of the unsung heroes of Marshall and Calloway counties. She has made a career out of inspiring others to step up and be a voice for children.

Angelia first came to CASA by the lakes in October of 2015. In that time her leadership has brought CASA forward by leaps and bounds. In the last three years we have seen an increase of 50% in the amount of children that are being served, we have acquired a new office in Marshall County, funds raised at the Friends of CASA Banquet have doubled, and we have grown to more than 40 volunteer CASAs!

Angelia's leadership at CASA by the Lakes is invaluable and has already positively impacted lives of children all across our area!



CASA Moment

Abby* and Kaley* haven't had an easy start in life. As two young girls, ages 9 and 2, they lived in an environment that was plagued with the repercussions of their parents' substance abuse issues. Even though someone on the outside looking in could have seen how hard that life was, it was what became normal for these two little girls. Children aren't always looking for better, they are looking for normal.

When both of their parents were arrested on drug charges the girls were removed from parental custody and placed with a family member. Luckily they were able to stay with an aunt who has given them everything they need and more.

However, being abruptly pulled from "normal" isn't easy. That's where the trained CASA volunteer comes in. A CASA took the case and was able to spend time with

the girls and make sure that their life was as close to normal as possible. Often-times she was the sole voice for these girls, representing their interests in court proceedings and helping to explain exactly what was going on.

The story doesn't end there though. Like many superhero CASA volunteers, this CASA's job didn't stop in the courtroom. She knew that the best thing for these little girls was to be reunited with their parents. The CASA spent time with each of the parents and was able to support and encourage them on a road to recovery.

Recovery is not an easy process, but with only a few setbacks along the way, both parents have successfully completed a drug recovery program.

“Children aren't always looking for better, they are looking for normal.”

To this day they both attend regular AA Meetings and have remained clean. The father has been able to hold a steady job and the mom has gone back to school to further her education. The family has been able to work their way up to overnight visits and the girls are happier than ever to be with their parents.

Thanks, in a large part, to the dedicated work of a CASA superhero, this family is well on their way to reunification.

**Names changed for privacy.*



Join the Fight

We get it. Not everyone can volunteer to be a CASA. Maybe you already volunteer, or maybe you already work in the foster care system. Whatever the case may be, there are ways to be a CASA superhero without volunteering as an advocate.

CASA by the Lakes hosts several events throughout the year to raise awareness for abused and neglected children in our community. You can join the fight by volunteering for these one-time events. We are always in need of extra hands to make these events a success.

You can also join the fight by sharing our message. CASA by the Lakes is on most forms of social media and could use your support. Every time you share one of our posts with your friends, you are helping to spread our message. Maybe you aren't able to be a CASA, but one of your friends can.

Finally you can join the fight by giving. It costs around \$1,000 per year to provide a CASA to a family. As a non-profit organization, CASA by the Lakes depends on donations from people and businesses in our community just like you.

To find out more information about ways you can "join the fight," visit us online at www.casabythelakes.org.

Help us welcome our newest CASA Superheroes!

Top Row: Jaleelah Renfroe, Janiene Garcia, Renita Hargis, Lucy Jameson, Adam Williams, James Page

Bottom Row: Leah Lovett, Jessica Lovett

The valuable work done at **CASA by the Lakes** is only possible because of dedicated volunteers like these!

Superhero Training

Superheroes aren't born— they're made.

All of our CASA volunteers go through extensive training so that they are able to serve the children of our community with the highest level of confidence. When someone signs up to be a CASA, they first go through 30 hours of training before being assigned a case (15-20 hours in class + 10 hours of home study). Then they must additionally complete 12 hours of training every year. That's just one small part of what makes our volunteers superheroes!

Upcoming Trainings

CASA Volunteer Training Class

Begins on October 4th | Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:45am—11:15

Kentucky Opioid Epidemic led by Dr. Westbrook

October 27th | 10am—12pm

Session with Dr. Lisa King, Child Therapist

November 29th | 6pm

CASA at a Glance

Check out these numbers for 2018 so far!

Active Volunteers

41

Children Served

144

Children Currently Serving

101

Cases Closed

43

Annual Chili Challenge

November 3rd

FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Join us for our annual Chili Challenge and Cornhole Tournament on November 3rd starting at 4PM! This year's even will be held at the Joe Creason Community Building in H.H. Lovett Park in Benton, KY.

Bring the whole family to enjoy carnival games, a petting zoo, cake walk, and bounce house.

This year's theme is "Around the Worlds with CASA". From Narnia to Westeros, Star Trek to Hogwarts, Canada to Germany, costumes from all realms, both real and fiction, are encouraged and welcomed! Prizes will be awarded for originality. Separate prizes will be awarded for adults and kids. Winners will be announced at 6:00 PM. (Must be present to win.)

If you or your business would like to enter a team in the Chili Challenge or Cornhole tournament just visit casabythelakes.org/chili2018. We have a very brief registration form and entry fees can be paid online. Sign up before October 25th to take advantage of early bird pricing. Only \$35 to enter the Chili Challenge and \$25 to enter the cornhole tournament.



UK FANS CAN'T PASS THIS UP!

At this year's CHILI CHALLENGE we will be giving away a UK Prize Basket. The basket includes 2 tickets to a UK Basketball game and a free night's stay in a hotel.

You can't win if you don't enter. Go to casabythelakes.org/chili2018. Each chance only costs \$5 and you can get 5 chances for \$20!

We will announce the winner at the Chili Challenge. *(Presence is NOT required to win.)*



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CASA by the Lakes
1003 Poplar Street

Murray, KY 42071

www.casabythelakes.org

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