PIEDMONT CASA HISTORY AND MISSION

“I was consumed by the fact that I didn’t have enough information about each child, and I just didn’t know if I had done the very best job I could.”

The Honorable David Soukup, Founder of CASA

Seattle Superior Court Judge David Soukup was frustrated that parents, governments and agencies were well represented in his courts, but not abused and neglected children. He tapped a social worker to put together a program and sent out a call to volunteers. They expected five and got fifty.

That was 1977. In 1979, the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges recognized the King County system as a national model and coined the phrase: Court Appointed Special Advocates. In 1995, Piedmont CASA was founded in Charlottesville. For the first 16 years, Piedmont CASA served children primarily in Charlottesville and Albemarle County. In FY 2012, we expanded our services into Greene County, and in FY 2013 into Louisa County.

Piedmont CASA recruits, screens, trains, and supervises community volunteers who advocate in court for abused and neglected children. Our mission is to assure that every one of these young victims has a voice in court and the opportunity to thrive in a safe and loving home.

The organization is overseen by a 14-member volunteer Board of Directors. They meet six times a year to develop program policy and procedure, provide fiduciary oversight, develop financial resources, and guide long-term planning for the organization.

The professional staff at Piedmont CASA includes a Program Director and five professional CASA Supervisors who screen, train, and supervise the volunteers. We also employ an Advancement Director, who is responsible for fundraising and outreach, and an Office Administrator.

Our new President Alicia Lenahan arrived May 1, 2013, bringing extensive legal and nonprofit experience, including six years as Executive Director of the CASA Project in Worcester and four years as the Senior VP for the United Way of Central Massachusetts. Ms. Lenahan practiced law for fourteen years and represented children or their parents in child abuse and neglect cases. Her vision and specialized experience in strategic planning provide tremendous opportunities for our agency as we strengthen and increase services for children in our community. Ms. Lenahan has a proven track record of helping entities both large and small establish a long-term vision for the future through consensus-building, engagement of key constituents, and the development of concrete, measurable outcomes.

This Annual Evaluation Report offers an overview of our mission and the service we provide our community; it also addresses trends from Fiscal Year 2012-13 and highlights key successes and community partnerships.

“I started the first CASA program because I got tired of sleepless nights wondering if I had made the right decision for the children. I decided that rather than appoint an attorney, we should appoint a volunteer guardian ad litem who could investigate the facts and make a recommendation from the child’s standpoint ... Thirty-five years later, it is thousands and thousands of volunteers who are waking up at 3 a.m.”

The Honorable David Soukup, Founder of CASA
Piedmont CASA conducted two 32-hour training sessions and inducted 38 new CASA Volunteers.

110 new children were referred to the program, and 68 were assigned CASA Volunteers.

Cases were closed for 111 children, 62 of whom were served by CASA Volunteers. Eleven of the closed cases not served by CASA were inappropriate referrals. Eleven were closed because we did not have a volunteer available to take the case. We also closed seventeen parent-filed protective order cases. These cases were quickly dismissed by the court.

125 independent investigations were conducted.

CASA Volunteers spent approximately 12,231 hours meeting with children, parents, physicians, therapists, social workers, attorneys and others, and an additional 2,840 hours in training.

350 hearings were attended.

32 children remained on Piedmont CASA’s waitlist on June 30, 2013, the end of our fiscal year.

100% of the children served by the program and closed during FY 2013 remained free from new founded incidents of abuse and/or neglect.

Active CASA Volunteers have served with the program an average of 29 months.
**The Need In Our Community**

**Child Abuse and Neglect**

In FY 2012, the most recent year for which statistics are available, 1,753 children were referred to Child Protective Services (CPS) from the four jurisdictions now served by Piedmont CASA. Of those, 858 were accepted by the Departments for investigation or family assessments. The table below shows how our community ranks within the Commonwealth for the number of founded CPS referrals indicating abuse and neglect by family members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>REPORTS PER 1,000 CHILDREN</th>
<th>RANK IN VIRGINIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albemarle</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisa</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlottesville</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Rate of Child Abuse and Neglect, 2011*

Of the 134 Virginia jurisdictions ranked, Louisa County is in the bottom half, and the City of Charlottesville is in the bottom 25%.

When we protect children from family violence, we protect the whole community from the fallout of family dysfunction.

**Foster Care**

The 110 new children entering foster care in FY 2013 reflects a 43% increase over FY 2012, which saw the addition of 63 new foster children. This table shows the increase in the total number of children in care between those years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE</th>
<th>AVERAGE NO. OF MONTHS IN CARE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1, 2012</td>
<td>July 1, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlottesville</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albemarle</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greene</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Virginia Department of Social Services Foster Care Children Demographic Report*

"...about 30% of children in foster care have severe emotional, behavioral, or developmental problems."*

Piedmont CASA advocates for over 200 child victims of abuse and neglect every year. Their ages range from newborn to 18, and their cases come to us through the courts of Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Greene County, and, as of FY 2013, Louisa County.

During FY 2013, the courts referred 264 children to Piedmont CASA. 42.9% identified as white, 34.3% as black or African-American, 10% as multi-racial, 11.4% as Hispanic or Latino, and 1.4% as Asian or Asian-American. Gender was almost evenly split: 52.9% girls, 47.1% boys. Prevalent family risk factors included: economic instability, domestic violence, mental health issues, and substance abuse. (Family Risk Factor reports submitted by CASA Volunteers and compiled in COMET– CASA Outcomes Measurement Evaluation Tool.)

Piedmont CASA Volunteers work with the most serious cases of child abuse and neglect.

These children need Piedmont CASA Volunteers to work through the court and child welfare system on their behalf. They need a dedicated advocate who will address their needs — basic needs that so many of us take for granted like physical health, mental health, education, and protection from abuse.
By the time she was two years old, Sherry had been victimized repeatedly. By the age of ten, she had initiated numerous attempts to harm herself and to injure seriously those around her. By eleven, she had been committed three separate times to psychiatric hospitals, requiring around-the-clock supervision.

These significant traumas, combined with a merry-go-round of placements and social workers, resulted in Sherry developing a deep mistrust of adults. There was, however, one person Sherry trusted and consistently wanted to see: her CASA Volunteer. Lois had been advocating for Sherry since she was two years old, longer than Sherry could even remember.

As Sherry grew from toddler to young child, her behavioral issues became a challenge in school as well as in her foster home. She grappled with Reactive Attachment Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder — but throughout it all, Lois never wavered. Even when Sherry was close to two hours away, Lois would make the drive to visit her and listen. She steadfastly represented Sherry’s interests at school meetings, treatment team planning meetings, emergency team meetings, medication management discussions, group facility planning sessions, and court hearings. Years went by and Lois was often the only person celebrating Sherry’s birthdays with her.

When Sherry’s behavior escalated to the point of being a sustained threat to herself and those around her, she was placed in a secure congregate care facility with psychiatric support. When close to a year went by and Sherry was still there, Lois initiated conversations with DSS about the urgent need to find her a qualified foster home. It would be a risk, but Lois argued that it was a chance — a hope — that Sherry deserved to have.

After months of screening, Sherry was placed with the Smith foster family. The first few months were rocky and Lois was contacted often. In regular visits, she developed an honest, trusting relationship with the Smith family and consistently maintained an open communication about Sherry’s history, needs, and interests.

By the following year, Sherry had been living with the Smiths for nine months, the longest she had ever lived in a single placement. For the first time in her life, she flew on a plane and traveled outside Virginia. To mark the occasion, the family sent Lois scores of happy photos from their adventures at the Grand Canyon.

As they work through the adoption process, Lois continues her advocacy by remaining focused on Sherry’s educational and therapeutic needs. Every time this dedicated CASA Volunteer joins a table of Sherry’s therapists, caseworkers or teachers, she brings more than a decade’s worth of profound commitment to finding a safe and permanent home for this child.

As the Judge noted, “Sometimes it seems like it’s just you and me. This child has gone through an awful lot and after all these years and changes, here we are, and you know this child better than anyone, so I am counting on you to keep the court informed.”

But the happiest moment was when the Smith family announced that they wished to adopt Sherry.

The following case exemplifies the time, energy and service our volunteer advocates provide CASA children.
The strength of the Piedmont CASA program is the commitment of its volunteer advocates. Each volunteer works with one child or sibling group for the duration of a case, making sure that the child’s needs and desires remain at the forefront of case planning and judicial proceedings. Even after the case is closed by the court, the CASA Volunteer may be asked to monitor the situation for an additional three to six months to ensure that the child is safe, court orders are followed, and services continue to be provided.

A 2010 survey by the Center for Nonprofit Excellence found that Piedmont CASA Volunteers donate more than three times as many hours as volunteers in other programs. A natural byproduct of this exceptional volunteer engagement is a better informed community: more people learn about child abuse and neglect in our area, and more people come to understand how our child welfare and court systems work or, in some cases, do not work for child victims.

**RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS**

To recruit CASA Volunteers, we work with broadcast and print media to obtain Public Service Announcements, place ads, and run stories. We submit announcements and articles to club, church, and business newsletters. We distribute posters and flyers, utilize the Web, and seize public speaking opportunities.

CASA Volunteers must be at least 21, complete written applications, participate in personal interviews, undergo extensive background checks, and successfully complete 32-hours of pre-service training. In addition, 12 hours of in-service training each year is required. Over ninety percent of Piedmont CASA Volunteers have college or graduate degrees.

Piedmont CASA’s 32-hour training program uses the National CASA Association curriculum, focusing on cultural and ethnic diversity, the social, psychological and medical components of child abuse and neglect, the juvenile court system, the policies and procedures of child protective services and foster care, and the policies and procedures of the CASA program. Investigation and advocacy techniques, court report writing, and community resources are also part of the curriculum.
RESPONSIBILITIES

CASA Volunteer duties include:

1. Conducting independent investigations
2. Submitting written reports with recommendations to the court
3. Monitoring the case to assure the court’s orders are being implemented and that the child receives needed services
4. Assisting the guardian ad litem
5. Reporting suspected child abuse to child protective services

CASA Volunteers interview parents, caretakers, foster parents, social workers, therapists, educators and other service providers; they attend service planning and Family Partnership Meetings; and they meet with children in their placements at least monthly.

In addition, they provide parents/legal custodians with information about FAMIS (Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan), (a program that provides low-cost health insurance for children in families that earn too much for Medicaid but do not have private health insurance) and Crime Victims Compensation assistance (where appropriate). The local United Way Resource Guide is provided as well.

CASA Volunteers collaborate extensively with the social workers and treatment providers to ensure that all parties stay informed of progress and issues in each case, and that the children receive the services they need. Their investigations culminate with fact-based reports to the judge that include recommendations for how best to meet the needs of each child.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

The 123 volunteers in the program completed 637 units of in-service training (2,840 hours, up 54.7%). Topics included: Foster Care, Trauma Informed Foster Care, Mental Health Issues, Advocacy Skills, Family Dynamics, Substance Abuse, Sexual Abuse, The Court’s Expectations of CASA with the Honorable Edward DeJ. Berry, Open Adoption, Domestic Violence, Maltreatment of Children, Gang Identification and Prevention, Pregnancy and Methadone, Teen Suicide and Death, The Correlation Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse, and Suicide Awareness.
CASA Volunteers in FY 2012-13

In FY 2013, we inducted 38 new CASA Volunteers, which enlarged our pool by 6%. Taking into account the annual loss of volunteers to retirement or sabbatical, we went from 116 to 123 CASA Volunteers. By year’s end, the average length of time a volunteer had served with CASA was 29 months.

Including the 110 new case referrals we got last year, our CASA Volunteers served a total of 210 children in FY 2013. To accomplish that, they attended 350 hearings, conducted 125 independent investigations, and spent a total of 12,231 hours meeting with children, parents, physicians, therapists, social workers, attorneys, and others. That is a 24.9% increase in hours from FY 2012.

Piedmont CASA is proud that 100% of the Volunteer cases we closed during FY 2013 remained free from founded claims of further abuse and neglect.

Because the demand for Volunteers remains far greater than the supply, there is no room for complacency. Thirty-two children were still on our waitlist at the end of FY 2013, a 50% jump in one year. Recruiting additional volunteers will remain a chief priority for some years to come.

Beginning in January 2013, we recruited, screened, and trained five Louisa Volunteers who have served or are serving nine children in that jurisdiction.

Volunteers do not get paid, no fees are charged, and no other program provides this service.

Why Our Community Needs More CASA Volunteers

The courts referred 264 children to Piedmont CASA last year. A large number of these cases were dismissed by the court - closed without assigning a CASA Volunteer. The remaining cases were assigned a volunteer as soon as one became available. But even though we held twice as many training sessions for CASA Volunteers last year, there were still 32 children on our waiting list at year’s end.

According to National CASA Association data, children with CASA Volunteers receive more services than children without an advocate. These services—whether medical, dental, educational, or psychological—often prove to be crucial to the children’s ability to recover from the devastating effects of the neglect or abuse they have suffered. Also, a child with a CASA Volunteer spends less time in foster care than child victims without an advocate. When children move out of foster care and into permanent homes, they benefit from lifelong connections, stable homes, and positive role models.
Measuring Piedmont CASA’s Impact

On Safety and Health for the Children

Of the 61 Piedmont CASA children whose cases were closed:

100% remained free from founded re-abuse while served by Piedmont CASA.

No child reentered the dependency court system within a year of case closure.

32 children (52%) presented with physical health concerns and all 32 (100%) received appropriate treatment and/or showed improved conditions by case closing. Health issues faced by this group of children included, among others, bruising and marks on the body, poor nutrition, a cranial problem, loss of hearing, hyperinsulinism, dental and palate issues, a serious heart condition, exposure to cigarette smoke in the home, testing positive for drugs at birth, digital vaginal penetration, hypertonia, and life-threatening asthma attacks.

37 (61%) of the 61 children whose cases were closed by the program presented with mental health conditions and 37 (100%) of them received appropriate treatment by case closing. Examples of conditions included oppositional-defiant disorder, anxiety disorder, parentification, depression, verbal and physical aggression, attachment issues, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizoaffective disorder, suicidal ideation, self-harm, psychosomatic health issues, abandonment issues, adjustment disorder, anger issues, and ADHD. Services included medication, psychotherapy, individual and family counseling, medication management, and attachment studies.

43 (70%) of the 61 children whose cases were closed by the program were of school-age. Based on teacher reports and report cards, 41 of 43 (95%) were meeting grade level performance and/or receiving remedial services. Services included special education assistance for hearing impairment, individualized and small group instruction, speech therapy, tutoring, English as a second language services, educational assessments, and special education services.

96 children (46%) were in out-of-home placements; the average number of placement changes per child in placement was 2.2 (including initial removals from home).

96 (46%) of the 210 children experienced 128 placement changes during the period. Sixty-three were initial removals from home; 43 of the placements of children already in care were changes to placements of equal or less restriction; 22 placements of children already in care were changes to placements with more restriction due to the child’s need for more services.

At year end, 137 (65%) of children lived in their own home or with a relative and 50 (26%) lived in family-setting foster homes.
On Strengthening the Community

Piedmont CASA maintains ongoing partnerships with many local organizations. All collaborations are formed with a primary goal of ensuring the safety of children, but focus also on strengthening families and community education and outreach.

Formal collaborative partnerships include:

- The Charlottesville and Albemarle Multidisciplinary Teams (MDT) meet monthly to staff cases involving child sexual abuse and/or serious physical injury. This interdisciplinary collaboration with the police department, Child Protective Services (CPS), prosecutors, and mental health professionals helps to improve the investigation and prosecution of child abuse and to ensure the provision of appropriate mental health services to child victims. Each team member brings special expertise and case knowledge, but the CASA Supervisor in particular focuses attention on the safety, stability, and mental health needs of the children. Efforts are underway to develop a Multidisciplinary Team in Greene County.

- The Family Drug Treatment Court Team (FTC)—a collaborative project between the Charlottesville and Albemarle Departments of Social Services, Piedmont CASA, the Region Ten Community Services Board, and the Court—is designed to protect children from abuse and neglect precipitated by the substance abuse of a parent or caregiver. This interdisciplinary team works with participants to develop case plans for the parent’s treatment, family service needs, as well as the child’s safety and health needs, both physical and mental. These efforts are reinforced by intensive judicial monitoring. Piedmont CASA participates in weekly case management team meetings and court hearings to assure the children’s needs are considered in the parent’s treatment plan.

- Piedmont CASA produces the quarterly newsletter of the Pinwheel Collaborative, another initiative that promotes awareness about child abuse and neglect through radio PSAs, print materials, speaking engagements and community training.

- The Charlottesville Best Practices Team and the Louisa County Best Practices Team work to implement the Court Improvement Program in dependency cases and provide regional training to improve practice in the dependency courts. Piedmont CASA is an active, essential member of both groups. The Louisa Interagency Council was formed to develop strategies that will keep citizens informed about the needs of the community, the resources that are available, and how they can become involved or get access. Piedmont CASA consistently takes advantage of community awareness events organized by the IAC.

- Each fall Piedmont CASA partners with the University of Virginia School of Law Pro Bono Program. We accept up to five law students into the CASA program every year, and provide training and supervision to give them hands-on experience working as child advocates in the juvenile court.

- Every August, the GE Volunteers from GE FANUC Automation Americas, Inc. collect and donate school supplies and backpacks. In December, they donate holiday presents for the children served by Piedmont CASA. Last year their generosity provided school supplies/backpacks and holiday gifts for 116 children.
YOU MAKE IT ALL POSSIBLE

Piedmont CASA is incredibly thankful for the support we receive from organizations and volunteer groups like:

- C-Ville Weekly
- Cavalier’s Care from UVA’s Madison House
- The Central Virginian
- Charlottesville Radio Group
- First Presbyterian Church
- Junior League of Charlottesville
- Larry Bouterie, Photographer
- McIntire School of Commerce
- Monticello
- Newsplex
- Tuel Jewelers
- UVA’s Theta Service Fraternity
- UVA’s Project Serve through Madison House
- United Way Day of Caring
- The Village School
- WNRN
- WUVA

We are also deeply grateful for the Friends of CASA Committee members, who work tirelessly every year to help us with mailings and outreach to donors.

Friends of CASA Committee

Tarpley Gillespie, Chair
- Tracy Arbaugh
- Julie Boyer
- Michele Burke
- Stuart Greer Ellis

Becky Gildersleeve
- Sharon Greene
- Lotta Helleberg
- Beth Ann Kallen
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Stephanie Osada
- Sarah Gray Parrish
- Elissa Rieger
- Maria Rolph
- Martha Stockhausen

Mindy Vaughan
- Amy Vigilante
- Jennifer Winslow
- Ames Winter

And to the generosity of the Delta Chi Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, who hold an annual spring pancake breakfast in support of Piedmont CASA.

Delta Chi Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority

Big thanks to GE FANUC Automation Americas, Inc., who sent 116 CASA kids back to school with brand new backpacks and supplies in FY 2013.

Piedmont CASA does not charge fees. We rely on a comprehensive development plan and the generosity of community members and friends like you. We seek funding each year from public and private sources: government grants, foundations, corporations, and individuals. We believe it is important to avoid being too reliant on any one funding source — especially in trying economic times — so that Piedmont CASA is not jeopardized should a particular funding stream dry up; the service we provide is too important.
Child abuse is costly

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, child abuse and neglect cost the United States $124 billion in 2008. This number is based on a single year of confirmed cases of child maltreatment, and it has almost certainly gone up since then. The repercussions for that one year of abuse and neglect are heartbreakingly numerous: improper brain development, impaired learning, blindness, cerebral palsy, head trauma, anxiety, smoking, alcoholism, drug abuse, and higher risks for heart, lung and liver diseases as well as obesity, cancer, and high blood pressure.

The estimated average lifetime cost per child victim is $210,012. This includes $43,178 in healthcare costs and $144,360 in productivity losses. This damage is comparable with other health conditions like stroke, (lifetime cost $159,846) or type 2 diabetes (lifetime cost between $181,000 and $253,000).

Again, this is based on one year of maltreatment in the life of a child. With multiple years of abuse, the risks for these health problems increase in frequency and severity.

CASA is Cost-Effective

• The cost to serve one child in a state juvenile justice facility is $118,418 (2008). With the funds used to incarcerate that one child, CASA Volunteers could serve 105 children. ($1,120 cost per child NCASA.)

• Historically, one CASA Volunteer cuts the amount of time a child languishes in foster care by an average of 7.5 months - that’s an annual savings of $24,375.

Piedmont CASA’s impact, however, is not just measured in dollars. It’s measured in good health, nurturing environments, and safe homes. It’s measured in smiles and hope. It’s measured one child at a time – because the future of our children, is the future of our community.
LOOKING FORWARD

TO INCREASING OUR VOLUNTEER POOL

Early in FY 2014, the number of children on our waiting list shot to 43. Because we do not have a volunteer pool large enough to serve the increasing numbers of child victims, we are constantly trying to recruit new advocates. In FY 2013, we doubled the number of training sessions. In the coming year, we are enhancing our screening process for maximum efficiency, and holding monthly Information Sessions. We will also introduce Flex Learning, a curriculum that alternates 15 hours of online training with 15 hours of classroom sessions. This will enable us to make our training accessible to more people without compromising the depth and intensity.

Another strategy for attracting more CASA Volunteers is to strengthen our visibility, both in the community and on the web. In FY 2014, we are planning multiple events including a Keswick Friendraiser in January and a Bracket Breakfast in March to capitalize on March Madness. On the web, we are planning to expand our social media presence.
We know that a childhood rooted in maltreatment and instability does not prepare these young people to live independently. It does not inspire them with visions of a bright future, nor give them the tools they need to attain it.

Even with optional extended services, turning 18 is not growing up for foster kids; it’s aging out. And aging out of foster care without a permanent home is the highest-risk outcome for a young person.

Aging out means they’re more likely than their peers to end up in jail, homeless, or pregnant. They’re also less likely to have a job or go to college. In fact, by age 24, only six percent have two- or four-year degrees. More than two-thirds of the young women have children. Nearly 60 percent of the males have been convicted of a crime. Almost a quarter were homeless at some point after leaving foster care. For every young person who ages out of foster care, taxpayers and communities pay $300,000 in social costs like public assistance, incarceration, and lost wages over that person’s lifetime. (Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, May 2013 study.)

Virginia ranks second among the states in the percent of youth (32 percent) who age out of foster care.

According to the Casey Family Programs publication *It’s My Life: A Framework for Youth Transitioning from Foster Care to Successful Adulthood*, “Research shows that two critical factors play important roles in helping youth overcome the challenges put before them: a positive, trusting relationship with an adult, and an external support system, such as connections with school, religious organizations or youth groups.”

In FY 2014, Piedmont CASA will begin implementing *Fostering Futures*. In this program, the CASA Volunteer’s role shifts to ensuring that the resources and services foster youth need to make a successful transition to independent living are in place. The vital role of an experienced CASA Volunteer helps ensure that emancipating foster youth can move from the system to independent living.

Because services are so crucial to this vulnerable population, the volunteer’s role in advocating for the youth to obtain those necessary services is critical to the ultimate outcome.

Further, the youth’s plan for permanence should include provisions for a long-term connection to at least one committed and caring adult. This is a youth-driven decision. Foster parents, teachers, community leaders, relatives, neighbors, and service providers are just a few of the adults who might be capable of and willing to take on this role. In short, the CASA Volunteer helps youth create webs of support and interdependency that will increase their success as they transition into adulthood.
2012-13 Board of Directors and Staff

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OUR MISSION

Piedmont CASA trains, screens and supports community volunteers who advocate in court for abused and neglected children. CASA Volunteers conduct independent investigations and make recommendations to the judges regarding the children’s best interests, promoting safe, permanent and nurturing homes.