One of the most important things we do as parents is advocate for our children. We make sure they go to the doctor regularly and get good dental care. We are vigilant about ensuring they do well in school. And we are steadfast in working with them to develop the skills they need to live as strong, independent adults.

Even with the best of intentions, institutions cannot do these things as well as parents and trusted friends. That's why CASA Volunteers are so important for kids in care. To be a strong advocate, each Volunteer focuses on just one child or sibling group at a time. The most important goal is to help abused kids find safe, permanent, and nurturing homes. But while youngsters are in the system, CASA Volunteers constantly advocate for their health care and educational support. Interventions of this type are crucial for the long-term success of these boys and girls.

Now Piedmont CASA is taking advocacy one step further by introducing Bridges to Success for Older Youth in Foster Care. Thanks to funding from the Victims of Crime Act, we are adding three new positions to our staff. These CASA Coaches/Mentors will strengthen our ability to help older kids in foster care develop the skills they need to live as strong, independent adults.

When we build strong children, we build a strong community.
advent of an exciting new initiative that will allow us to increase the effectiveness of our advocacy for teenagers.

The brainchild of President Alicia Lenahan and Program Director Randy Nolt, *Bridges to Success for Older Youth in Foster Care* is being developed in partnership with local Departments of Social Services. It will bridge the critical gap between the services our organizations provide, a gap that was putting our kids at risk of aging out of the system without being fully prepared.

Funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA), *Bridges* will enable us to hire three Coach/Mentors for our older youth, beginning at age fourteen. Alongside our Volunteers, they will work with these boys and girls the entire time they are in care, whether it is seven months or seven years.

At the same time, Piedmont CASA is collaborating with ReadyKids to build a Trauma-Informed Community Network (TICN). The Greater Charlottesville TICN will work to engage all service providers – from teachers to doctors to therapists – in implementing trauma-informed care within their respective communities. Our goal is to give our kids and their families the strengthening advantage of continuous trauma-informed care.

Bridges and the TICN are two of the most encouraging developments I have witnessed in the many years since I was first a CASA Volunteer. We can all be proud that Piedmont CASA is leading the way.

But these successes and initiatives are only possible because of our amazing community: dedicated staff, extraordinary Volunteers, an engaged, supportive Board – and you, the friends and donors who are there when our kids need them. You are the foundation upon which all of this is built. Thank you all. Because when we build strong children, we build a strong community.

---

**Strong children ... healthy community**

**Building Bridges for Older Youth (con’t)**

Working closely with CASA Supervisors and Volunteers, CASA Coaches/Mentors will provide one-on-one professional support for our teenagers. This mentoring will begin at age fourteen and continue as long as they are in care. CASA Coaches/Mentors will engage our young people in the development of independent and interdependent living skills. They will participate in case planning, education, and the improvement of soft and hard life management skills. Our teens will be introduced to the Great Expectations program at Piedmont Virginia Community College so they can start exploring available post-secondary opportunities.

CASA Coaches/Mentors can’t replace parents, but they can bridge the service gap between Piedmont CASA and the Departments of Social Services (DSS). That’s why we have been collaborating so closely with both the Charlottesville DSS and the Albemarle County DSS to develop *Bridges*.

The more we can do to build strong children, the more we can enjoy the benefits of living in a strong, healthy community.

---

**Trauma-Informed Community Network**

We all experience trauma in our lives. Under normal circumstances, we can manage the resulting emotions and reactions because we have the support and resilience needed to process them. But when children experience chronic trauma – such as abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction – the impact can be devastating. It includes disrupted neurodevelopment, cognitive impairment, and engaging in health-risk behaviors. The challenging behaviors we see in our CASA kids and their families are often symptoms of their trauma history rather than an organic disorder.

That’s why Piedmont CASA is partnering with ReadyKids to establish the Greater Charlottesville Trauma-Informed Community Network (TICN). We are engaging professionals all across our community, from the child welfare system to public schools to hospitals to nonprofits. Our shared goal is to build awareness so that our children and their families will have the healthy long-term benefits of continuous trauma-informed care.
His mother was in prison and his father was simply not involved. So when six-year-old Lucas was left in the care of his elderly grandmother, he bristled with aggressive and destructive behaviors. She knew the anger and fear came from his former abuse and neglect, but she was suffering from her own health issues. Despite the fact that she loved Lucas and he adored her, taking care of him was overwhelming. Even with additional services and support in place, she was unable to provide the home structure needed for such a troubled boy to recover and thrive.

Lucas was put in foster care and he was assigned a Piedmont CASA Volunteer. Three months later, his grandmother died. The sudden loss amplified Lucas’ emotional problems and he was moved to a therapeutic residential facility.

That was when Lucas’ aunt stepped up and became a strong, consistent part of his life, so much so that she offered to take him into her own family. However, during a trial home placement, there was an incident between Lucas and one of his cousins. This quickly resulted in Lucas being placed in another therapeutic residential facility. Despite this troubling turn of events, his aunt stayed by his side, continued to attend family counseling sessions regularly, and developed a trusting relationship with his CASA Volunteer.

When Lucas was transferred to a third residential facility, the aunt told his CASA Volunteer something she had not told anyone else. She told him that Lucas needed his own bedroom. So if an addition were added to her house, she would take Lucas home again. Thanks to the relationship developed by the CASA Volunteer, a door opened for Lucas that everyone had considered shut. The Volunteer included this information in his court report, and advocated for extra space in the home.

The Department of Social Services approved partial funds for building supplies and searched for other resources in the community. We are pleased to say that construction has begun. When it is completed, Lucas will no longer be a little boy lost. He will return to the home of his beloved extended family.
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We thank our many supporters for their generous gifts to Piedmont CASA. If an error or omission has occurred, we express our sincere regret and ask that it be brought to our attention.

If you would like copies of Piedmont CASA’s financial statements, please call the office at (434) 971-7515.

In-kind Gifts

 Draws are from “Kids 4 Kids”, a gallery of art donated by children in our community to help tell the story of Piedmont CASA children.
By 7:30 am, the Omni Ballroom was buzzing with over 200 people for the third annual “Jimmy ‘Magic Man’ Miller’s Bracket Breakfast”. David Koehn and Rachel Ryan emceed. Ralph Sampson, Barry Parkhill, Antonio Rice, and Jay James were panelists. Rick Carlisle tuned in via Satellite. It was a big success - and a fabulous start for the online tournament. The event raised close to $15,000 for Piedmont CASA. From the hundreds of abused and neglected children our Volunteers advocate for every year - thank you!

**Big Thanks to our Generous Sponsors!**

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Sending CASA kids back to school and bringing them the holiday spirit for fifteen years

In August 2015, the men and women of GE Intelligent Platforms sent almost 100 CASA kids back to school with brand new backpacks and supplies. In December, they bought holiday presents for 126 CASA boys and girls all around our community.

Poverty Simulation
APRIL 23, 2016

More than seventy men and women participated in Piedmont CASA’s Poverty Simulation at Charlottesville High School. Each participant was assigned the role of a low-income family member living on a limited budget. The goal was simple: keep a roof over your head and pay your bills. But there is nothing simple about it if you’re living as one of the working poor. The Poverty Simulation broadens awareness of the challenges faced on a daily basis by many of the families we serve.

Our wonderful community partners and volunteers who made the Poverty Simulation possible

Dianne Brownlee
Betsy Dolliver
Ronald Ignotz
Ann Linden
Susan Quisenberry
Helene Ramos
Sona Sosa
Jean Zearley
17% of our budget was allocated for Administration so that 83% could be invested in our Program Services.

The industry formula for discerning what percentage of the budget is allocated for Administration is to pull the following numbers from the 990: Management plus Fundraising divided by Total Revenue (Income).

14% of our kids are Hispanic.

99% of our children remained free from founded re-abuse while served by CASA Volunteers.

No children re-entered the dependency court system within one year of case closure.

At year end, 140 children still had active cases. Of those youngsters, 51% were living in their own home, an adoptive home, or in a relative placement.

Of the 81 cases closed:
- All children who needed medical treatment received it, and showed improvement.
- All children who needed psychiatric treatment and received it, showed improvement. Two older children declined.
- All school-age children who were not performing at grade level received appropriate remedial services.
Child abuse is costly

Abused and neglected children suffer a lifetime of health problems such as improper brain development, blindness, cerebral palsy, head trauma, anxiety, alcoholism, drug abuse, and higher risks for heart, lung and liver diseases as well as obesity, cancer and high blood pressure.

If you tally the lifetime costs for all the children in the US who have been abused and neglected in a single year - it adds up to $124 billion. With each year adding new victims, that cost is soaring.

Every time a foster youth drops out of high school, it costs the public $209,100 in income support, law enforcement, and medical costs.

CASA is cost effective

Children with CASA Volunteers get better medical and psychological care - which can prevent a lifetime of health costs.

Kids with CASA Volunteers spend an average of 7.5 months less time in foster care - a savings of $24,375 or more in social services per child.

The cost to serve one child in a Virginia residential juvenile justice facility for one year is $260,019. For the same amount, CASA Volunteers could serve over 100 children.

Children with CASA Volunteers do better in school, which means they are more likely to have stable and productive futures.

And the future of our children is the future of our community.
Volunteer Highlights
JULY 1, 2015 - JUNE 30, 2016

THE WORK
- 124 CASA Volunteers advocated for 267 victims of abuse and neglect, ranging in age from newborn to 18
- They conducted independent investigations of 140 family groups
- They attended 487 hearings
- They dedicated 7,953 hours to advocating for children and youth
- They donated another 1,981 hours in ongoing training

THE CHILDREN
- The Courts referred 213 new children and youth to Piedmont CASA in FY 2016
- 128 of these young people were assigned CASA Volunteers
- At the end of the year, no children in foster care were on the waiting list for Piedmont CASA Volunteers

THE VOLUNTEERS
- 26 new Volunteers were trained and inducted in FY 2016
- Currently active Volunteers have served with the program an average of 48 months