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IGNITING HOPE
PAST. PRESENT. FUTURE.

2022 IMPACT REPORT
CASA OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS

25
CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF ADVOCACY



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Term July 1, 2021
-June 30, 2022

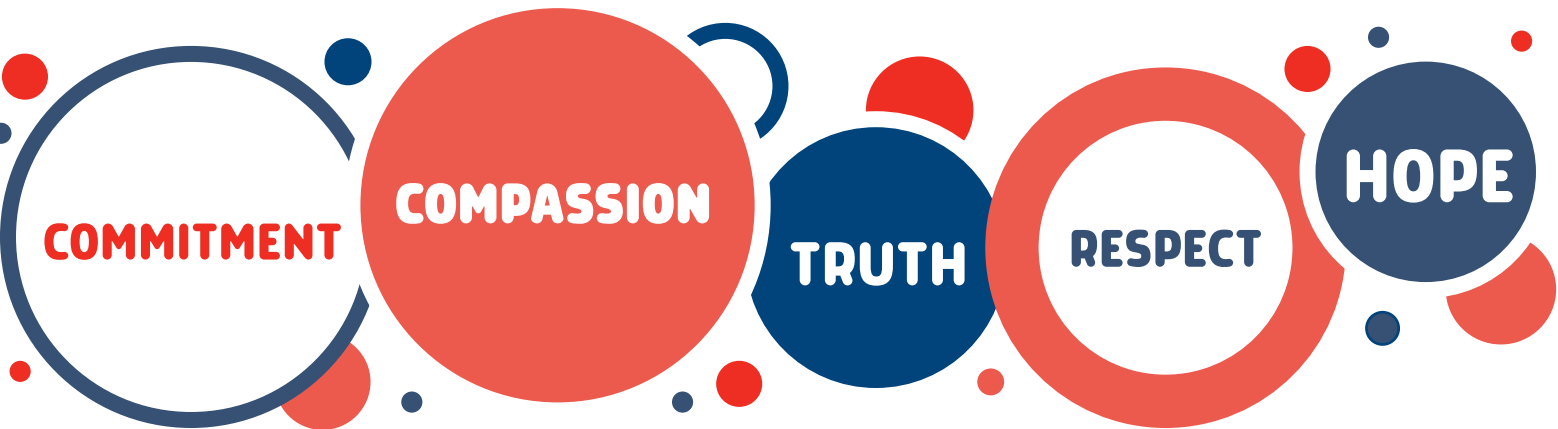


MISSION

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Northwest Arkansas provides compassionate volunteers who advocate for abused and neglected children. We are committed to ensuring a consistent voice, safe home, and promising future for children in foster care.

VALUES

We value children above all else. In order to serve their best interests, we value:



VISION

Every child in foster care will have a fierce and skilled CASA champion by their side.

CASA BY THE NUMBERS

852 Kids served by **383** Volunteers

284 children entered foster care in NWA

96% of children in the last year had two or fewer placements

100% of children in foster care in NWA are served by CASA of NWA

FOUND PERMANENCY

120 Adoptions

63 Guardianship

158 Reunifications

13 Foster teens graduated high school or earned their GED

NOTE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Looking back 19 years ago to when I first started at CASA of Northwest Arkansas, I couldn't have imagined how my part-time job at CASA of NWA would turn into my life's work and how co-workers would become family. As we celebrate 25 years of advocating for children facing abuse and neglect, I find myself reflecting on how far we have come and our hopes for the next 25 years.

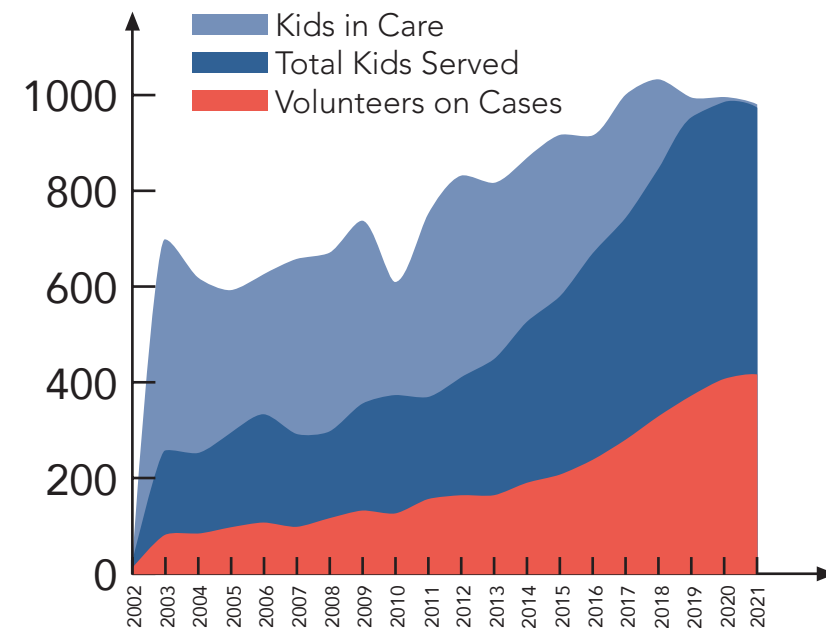
Our successes would not be possible without YOU! The community of Northwest Arkansas makes it possible to change a child's story. Whether you are a current or past CASA volunteer, board member, champion, donor, or all the above; YOU have helped CASA of NWA continue to provide a voice for those who need it most and serve one hundred percent of children in care in our region for the past three years.

My hope is this report inspires you to continue igniting hope in our children through your time, your voice, and your resources.

With gratitude,

Crystal Vickmark
Executive Director

Northwest Arkansas CASA Impact



Over the last 25 years we have seen significant growth. We are pleased to share that we have supported more than **5000** children through the advocacy of more than **1270** volunteers. **Since 2019 we have been able to provide a CASA volunteer to every child in care who needed one.**

NWA CASA Volunteer Margot Martin standing with Executive Director Crystal Vickmark and Program Director Shelley Hart



A GLIMPSE AT THE PAST

Margot Martin spent a career helping children as a teacher.

Margot, 85, has carried that service into retirement for more than 20 years as a CASA volunteer. She is one of over 1,250 volunteers who have served Northwest Arkansas for the last 25 years.

New nonprofits face many challenges in achieving their mission early on, particularly when it comes to volunteers - the key to the success of many organizations. CASA relies heavily on the operation of our volunteers. Our priority has always been to uplift and enable them so they can do everything they can to ensure that the best interest of the child is looked out for.

Our organization began serving two counties, with 12 volunteers serving 14 cases and helping 22 children. It quickly grew to adopt Arkansas' entire Northwest region, consisting of Benton, Washington, Carroll, and Madison counties.

Margot was one of the volunteers who joined CASA in the early days and was sworn in by Judge Zimmerman in the fall of 2001. During her years of dedicated advocacy,

Margot has been appointed by the courts to serve in a resounding 18 cases, where she has been involved in dozens of children's lives. She has been able to provide them with a consistent and compassionate voice.

And consistency does matter.

"I was the only one in that child's life that had the memory and history with this child."

The CASA volunteer assigned to any given case is often the only consistent individual in a child's life as they navigate foster care; they show our kids that there is still hope.

Between all the different caseworkers, instability in the home, and various therapists that these children experience, CASA's goal is to provide one volunteer who stands alongside the child the entire time.

Consistency within an organization matters, as well. Over the years, Margot has witnessed an experienced leadership team grow our staff, volunteer capacity, and operating budget. Initiatives in new volunteer training, continuing education courses, one-on-one interactions with volunteer supervisors, and of course, working with and fighting for children are all why we have maintained a high volunteer retention rate.

"Our organization began serving two counties, with 12 volunteers serving 14 cases and helping 22 children."

Margot was also with us as we reached one of our ultimate goals, to have the capacity to serve every child in need of a voice in Northwest Arkansas. Because of dedicated volunteers like Margot, our long-standing Executive Director Crystal Vickmark, and a leading team of qualified volunteer supervisors, CASA of Northwest Arkansas has become a highly valued organization in our region.

Our volunteers ignite hope in our kids, our judges, and caseworkers, beginning with the efforts of individuals like Margot who simply want to make a difference. They instill a sense of confidence in the courts, remind our staff daily why we do the work we do, and show our kids that their voice is heard. Underneath the pain and trauma, there is always hope.

Sometimes all it takes is one person, one CASA, to reignite it.

ADOPTING HOPE

Allison Judson's first case as a newly appointed CASA was with a child named Crystal. During their time together, Allison learned just how important it is for CASAs to be consistent figures in the lives of the children on their cases.

"I think all kids deserve a chance; the reason I gravitate towards older children is because it's easy for others to give up on them after they've gone through everything," Allison said. "All kids should have the happy ending they deserve."

When she was younger, Crystal's parents faced challenges with drug addiction and struggled to care for her. Ultimately, Crystal went to live with her aunt and uncle.

Crystal had even begun calling them "mom" and "dad" when her uncle was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The strain of managing this new reality took a serious toll on her aunt, and Crystal was placed into foster care. Crystal's hope for the future was fading but was never lost.

Crystal with her adoptive family and Judge Tom Smith of Benton County



After being placed in a foster home, Crystal met Allison for the first time.

“She has a beautiful spirit and a beautiful heart; she had been traumatized but not broken,” Allison said.

When a new home opened in Harrison, Allison knew Crystal did not want to be that far away from her brother in Bentonville. He was the only family she had left in the area, so Allison strongly advocated for her to stay close to her brother and her support systems.

Allison worked closely with Crystal’s foster mom, an important figure in her life. They ensured Crystal was surrounded by supportive people and that she had access to appropriate services, including consistent mental health care. Allison and Crystal went on walks, spoke on the phone often, and Allison made a point to visit with Crystal regularly.

“I just wanted to be the person that she felt safe with,” Allison said. “If she needed to tell me something, she could call me up and talk.”

Crystal was adopted by Christine and Jason, a family she knew through church. They had always wanted to adopt and were waiting for a child who would connect with their youngest daughter. After meeting Crystal, they knew she was the right fit for the family. Her adoption was a special day and “an exciting blur,” Christine said. The courtroom was filled with cousins, aunts and uncles, friends, and other family - all wearing matching T-shirts. They made sure that day was about Crystal as she became a new member of the family.

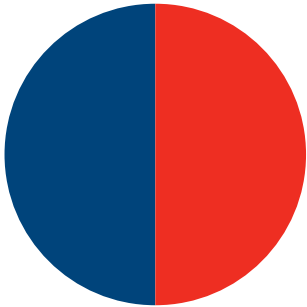
This is how our CASAs provide a sense of hope. Being a volunteer means nothing stands in the way of a genuine relationship. Our CASAs prioritize the needs of the children on their cases; they emphasize that hope can always be reignited, something Allison knew Crystal had never lost.



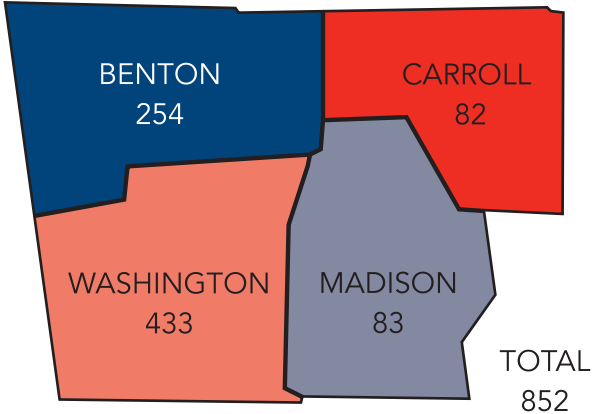
CHILDREN DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender

Male 50%
Female 50%

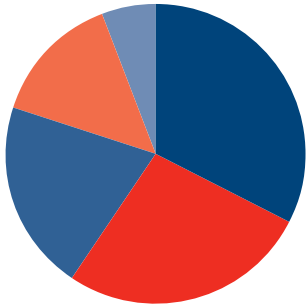


County of Origin



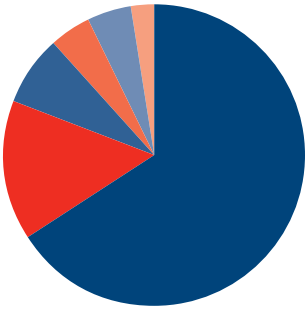
Age

0-4 years 32.75%
5-9 years 27%
10-14 years 20.5%
15-18 years 14%
18-20 years 5.75%



Ethnicity

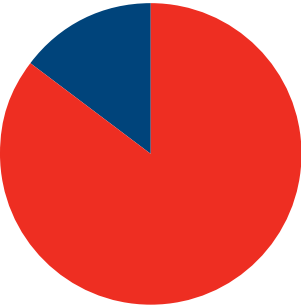
Caucasian 66%
Hispanic/Latino 15%
African American 7.5%
Native American 4.5%
Asian/Pacific Islander 4.5%
Multi-Racial/Other 2.5%



VOLUNTEER DEMOGRAPHICS

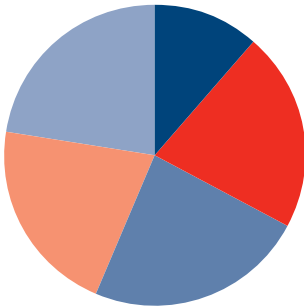
Gender

Female 85.5%
Male 14.5%



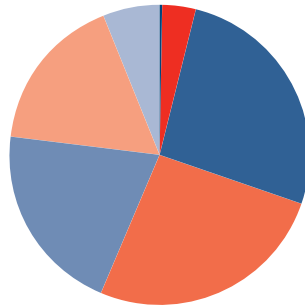
Age

20s 11.5%
30s 21.5%
40s 23.5%
50s 21%
60s+ 22.5%



Years of Service

15+ 0.5%
10+ 3.5%
5+ 26.5%
3+ 26%
2 20.5%
1 17%
Rookie 6%



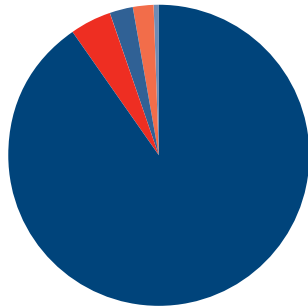
VOLUNTEER RETENTION RATE

77.4%

25 volunteers speak Spanish
1 volunteer speaks Mandarin

Ethnicity

Caucasian 90.5%
Hispanic/Latino 4.5%
African American 2.5%
Unknown 2%
Asian/Pacific Islander 0.5%



WHEN HOPE IS REUNIFIED

Reunification with family is always our first goal unless there are extreme circumstances that make it unattainable. Sometimes it can be seen as unlikely, though, especially in Ann Covington’s first case. Due to the level of drug use, issues of domestic violence, gang affiliation, presence of guns, and an overall unsafe living situation, Ann’s supervisor, Kristen Smith, said this case had “an unlikely chance of reunification.”

Being in the child welfare system for more than 18 years, Kristen knew cases like this rarely resulted in reunification. “When I saw the details, I knew there were many hurdles in the way. I didn’t think they would be able to be reunified,” Kristen said.

When Ann was appointed and started to review the facts of the case, she saw something in the mother that others had overlooked.

Ann knew all the mother needed was intentional support; someone who could guide her through the process of regaining custody of her children. Ann had hope in the mother’s ability to change, and she did not let her give up.

“A big thing that CASAs can do with parents is encourage them,” Ann said. “Having her kids taken away from her was the worst thing that happened to her, and the best thing that happened to her.”

Ann knew all the mother needed was intentional support; someone that could guide her through the process

Ann always reported to the court what was in the best interest of the children. As she saw the mother make changes, Ann knew the children being with their mother was just that – even though DHS would not have been able to recommend reunification because of the severity of the situation.

“That’s why CASA is so important; we don’t have the same policies (as DHS), which means we can make some recommendations that go beyond those policies,” Kristen said.

Over time with Ann’s encouragement, the mother was able to maintain sobriety, get rid of friends who were not supportive of her sobriety, build a positive support system, and maintain stable housing and employment. She also pushed to ensure the kids received the care and support they needed and always remained available as someone they could all trust.

Ann met with the mother and children regularly despite lockdowns and restrictions due to Covid. She connected them with an organization to get them bicycles in the

summer and brought pumpkins to carve with them in the Fall. Ann would often bring board games, and the children loved playing outside with her. She took her time at every home visit to truly connect with the children.

“Ann gave me hope because this was her first case as a CASA,” Kristen said “She is a retired teacher, and she saw past the facts of the case and focused on how she could help reunify the family.”

Eventually, the family was whole again and able to move away from the area with high hopes of a fresh start.

Ann’s dedication in remaining hopeful for this family’s future serves as a reminder to us all. Without Ann being appointed to this case, this family could have been separated forever. The open-minded approach that she maintained is a framework each of our volunteers and supervisors can carry into their work.

Reunification created a new story for this family, one full of hope and opportunity. The work our advocates do is irreplaceable and the hope they instill is forever.

Dellynn holding her degree from the University of Arkansas with her loving adoptive family



A STORY OF THE FUTURE

At our 2017 Light of Hope event we featured a young woman named Dellynn. Seventeen at the time, Dellynn had overcome a variety of issues with her family, dealing with abandonment by her mother, drug use in her family, and watching the effects of it all on her siblings.

We believe at CASA that hope is never completely lost, and sometimes it takes just one person to help revitalize it.

This was the case for Dellynn, who came out of her difficult situation with newfound strength.

Dellynn had numerous caseworkers through her time in foster care, but having a CASA who stuck with her and her siblings, helped Dellynn realize her own potential. Her CASA brought hope and a sense of stability to them.

Dellynn’s adoptive mom, Kacie, recalled how “... the number one most important thing that (her CASA volunteer) Erin was to Dellynn was a rock. She provided the stability that the foster care system didn’t.”

With that stability came an ability to focus more, which allowed Dellynn to take a step back and evaluate who she wanted to be.

“During that time, I had to focus on a lot more than just going to school,” Dellynn said. “... I was focused on surviving. Once I started having consistent support networks and I was in a stable home, able to focus on just being a kid, that’s when it really changed for me.”

Dellynn came out stronger than ever as she took her past trauma and transformed it into motivation. That motivation has helped her earn two undergraduate degrees from the University of Arkansas.

And she is not done yet.

Dellynn is currently finishing her Master’s degree, with Doctoral program applications to follow. Her goal is to become a university professor, but she knows it will probably not end there. She has her sights set even further, hoping to one day end up in Washington D.C., where she wants to be a part of improving the various institutions that she was a part of when she was younger.

“A lot of my experiences with CASA have influenced that, because I know what it’s like to be on the other side,” Dellynn said. Like so many other children in Northwest Arkansas, Dellynn faced instability that could have overshadowed her future. Having a CASA helped her find the stability necessary to take these experiences but to turn them into a reason to not give up and hold on to hope.

As we look toward the future of our organization after 25 years of advocacy, Dellynn’s story provides hope that we truly are making an impact in the lives of children in Northwest Arkansas.

When asked what she would say to kids in foster care now, Dellynn said, “Your identity is not in your struggle, and you can use that struggle to do something great with your life. You have just as much of a chance in the world as they do.”



VOLUNTEERS

This year’s success is due to the love and commitment our advocates bring to the children and families they serve. Thank you to these individuals who gave of themselves to make sure our children’s voices were heard.



- Kimberley Aaron
- Dawn Adams
- Susan Adams
- Edosa Aibangbee
- Michelle Alexander
- Julie Allison ★
- Sarah Allred ★
- Alyssa Antuna
- Diana Antuna
- Melissa Arndt
- Abigail Arnn
- Kim Autry ★★
- Ron Autry ★★
- Laura Avant
- Bryn Bagwell ★
- Theresa Barrera-Shaw
- Amber Barrett
- Joe Bebout ★
- Sharon Becker ★
- Jennifer Becnel
- Robin Beeler
- Tana Beenken ★
- Christine Benson ★
- Kara Biggs ★
- Mary Blankenship
- Jeff Blaschke ★
- Kristi Blaschke ★
- Cari Bogulski ★
- Tracy Bohannan
- Whitney Bohn
- Mary Book
- Megan Boring
- Emily Bost ★★
- Emily Bowman
- Whitney Box
- John Bradley
- Sarah Bradshaw
- Laurie Brady
- Hannah Breckenridge
- Susan Breese
- Rick Brekelbaum
- Mandy Broadstreet ★
- Helen Brown
- Patrick Brutus
- Stephanie Brutus
- Jenny Buchanan
- Haydi Bugarin
- Brennan Bullock
- Brianne Burford
- Happy Burgmeier ★
- Brittany Burks
- Sara Burns

- Shelby Burns
- Hannah Butler
- Maggie Butler
- Valerie Buxton
- Debbie Bzowski
- Nicholas Camper
- Cindy Capobianco
- Candice Carlsen
- Kim Carlson ★
- Carolyn Carney ★
- Lacey Carney ★
- Shannon Carpenter ★★
- Belinda Carpenter ★
- Rick Carpenter ★
- Anne Carroll
- Haley Carson
- Hannah Carter
- Karen Casey
- Kate Chapman ★
- Brittany Chase
- Sylvia Chesser ★
- DeAnne Christoffersen
- Hannah Chudy
- Deanna Cicatiello ★★
- Terance Clark
- Blair Clark-Green
- Brandi Clifford
- Judy Cockrum ★
- Ashley Coffman
- Kim Coker
- Tanae Coleman
- Tina Cone
- Dayna Cook ★
- Teresa Cornett ★
- John Corso
- Debbie Corter
- Francisco Cortez
- Lenore Cottrell ★
- Amanda Cousins
- Ann Covington
- David Covington
- Courtney Cox ★
- Thad Crawford ★
- Craig Crismon
- Ashlee Cross
- Kristin Croswhite
- Jim Crouch

- Kelley Cullen ★
- Shannon Daniel ★
- Kelly Daniels
- Shelby Davis
- Sheri Davis
- Doris Davis
- Linda Davis ★
- Morgan Davis Hill
- Elise de Waal ★★
- Marius de Waal ★★
- Montana Deavila
- Jennifer Deckinger
- Tracy DeLeon
- Heidi Dennis
- Dana Dever
- Susan Dewar
- Matthew Dickson
- Deborah Doerr
- Michelle Doise
- Michelle Doles
- Morgan Dooley
- Priscilla Dorado
- Susan Douglas
- Candis Drechsler
- Britt Dugal
- Kaelan Dula
- Kristen Dunavant
- Jessi Duncan
- Amber Duran
- Tom Dyal
- Blair Dyer
- Caroline Eastep
- Judy Eddington ★
- Asha Edwards ★
- Amy Edwards
- Dianna Eldridge
- Adam Ellzey
- Hannah Favorite
- Amy Ference
- Heather Fite
- Olivia Fletcher

- Jacob Ford ★
- Kristyn Ford ★
- Katisha Fortune ★
- Julie Foster
- Amy Fowler ★
- Steffanie Fowler ★
- Lynne Freeman
- Sabrina Freeman
- Joel Freund
- Nick Fritsche ★
- Randi Fritsche ★
- Robin Fuller
- Jeanie Fuller
- Marcia Gaddy ★
- Shaneace Gard
- Joe Gardner
- Cana Gardner
- Miranda Gauthier ★
- Lacey Gebhart
- Toni Gemper
- Julie Gibbens ★
- James Gibbons
- Kara Gill
- Jason Gill
- Liz Gilmore
- Amber Girdley
- Summer Glass ★
- Erin Goodwin ★
- Megan Gorden
- Tiajuana Gough ★
- Sarah Grace
- Aleza Greene

- Jay Greene
- Jordan Greene
- April Grimes ★
- Christi Guthrie ★
- Megan Hadden
- Elizabeth Hale
- Marie Halvorsen-Ganepola
- Olga Hamilton ★
- Kristie Hamilton
- Sheri Hammond
- Elizabeth Hannum
- Jessica Hansen
- Nicole Hansen
- Sydney Hanshew
- Susan Hantz ★
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- David Hogberg ★
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- Becca Horner
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- Nicole Huddleston
- Lon Hudson ★
- Jennifer Hudspeth
- Summer Hull
- Marla Hunt ★
- June Hutton ★
- Ruby Jackson ★
- Gail Jackson
- Rachel Jardot ★
- Megan Johns
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- Jenna Johnston★
- Teresa Jones ★
- Jessica Jordan
- Emily Jost
- Allison Judson
- Kim Justis
- Cathy Kamer ★
- Stephanie Kear
- Jennifer Keefauver ★★
- James Keenan ★
- Casey Kehoe
- Amy B. Keith ★
- Laura Kellams
- Crystal Kelly ★
- Angel Kendall
- Chelsie Kennedy
- Brandie Kersey ★
- Kenneth Key

- Clayman Kidd
- Cynthia Kimbrough
- Mindi King
- Kilby Kirkconnell ★
- Lindsay Kovach
- Kathy Krantz ★
- Melissa Kronauer
- Lynn Kutter ★
- Laura Ladd Poff
- Leslie Lamb ★
- Karen Lancot
- Chuck Landis ★
- Karen Langston ★
- Holly Lar
- Tim Larsen
- Jeff Larson
- Audrey Laughlin ★
- Lee Lee
- Bethany Lee
- Adam Lentz
- Deborah Lewis
- Debie Liljenberg
- Courtney Lindsay
- Davina Lockhart
- Laura Luchi ★
- Rachel Ludeman
- Tanya Lyon
- Shannon MacNeel ★
- Mallory Magie
- Kay Magness ★
- Krystyl Maienschein
- Logan Maienschein
- Scott Manamon
- Dalia Marples
- Margot Martin ★★
- Leah Martin ★
- Carol Martin
- Alice Martinson
- Julie Matkins ★
- Megan Mattler
- Jennifer May Brust
- Eve McCain
- Kelly McCarty ★
- Lori McCleskey

- Matt McCleskey
- Mary McCord
- Jordan McFarlane
- Kristi McGinnis
- David McMath
- Jessica McNitt ★
- Kasey Meadows ★
- Ashley Mears
- Kristie Meers
- Meredith Menhennett
- Jill Messer-Sams
- Katie Meyer
- Celeste Michaud
- Ana Micula
- Michael Miller
- Priscilla Mondt
- Joshua Moody
- Melody Moore ★
- Krystal Moore ★
- Ainsley Moore
- Rachel Moore
- Gwen Moore
- Brett Morrison
- Heather Morton
- Christin Mujica
- Angie Muldoon ★
- Marla Muller ★★
- Kendra Murphy-Golden
- Rebecca Murray
- Sita Nanthavong
- Linda Neff Colston ★★
- Robyn Nelson ★
- Sally Ann Nesmith
- Greg Nesmith
- Amanda Niccum
- Rachel Nichols
- Prezlie Nichols
- Heather Nielsen ★
- Jessica Nohl
- Carie O'Banion
- Denise Oglesby
- Marissa Orr
- Michelle Palmer
- Daneen Parish ★
- Vennessa Parker
- Kim Parkhurst
- Gary Paryzek
- Erin Patterson
- Glenda Patterson
- Leslie Pearson

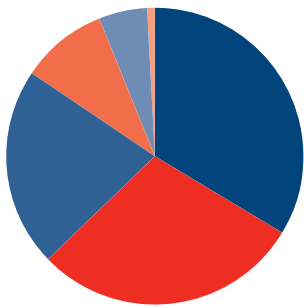
- Allison Pederson
- Tom Perry ★
- Karen Peterson ★
- Jennifer Peterson
- Liz Petray
- Avery Phillips
- Gail Pianalto ★
- Cindy Pickney
- Nancy Plagge
- Kimberly Powers
- Andi Pratt ★
- Rhonda Prenger
- Susan Presley ★
- Meredith Purifoy
- Donna Rackley
- Kerry Rateliff
- Cynthia Rauth
- Jessica Raychek
- Rebecca Renfro
- Shelby Reynolds
- Becky Richards ★
- Scott Richards ★
- Lisa Richards
- Sue Richardson
- Travis Rodman
- Marni Rogers ★★
- Alyssa Rogers
- Briana Ruff
- Savanah Ruff
- Carol Ruff
- Mike Ruff
- Kim Ruggeberg ★
- Mark Ruggeberg ★
- Michelle Rushano ★★
- Erin Rybak
- Morgan Sallie
- Cara Salvatore
- Vanessa Sanchez
- Paul Savas
- Rob Saylor
- Crystal Schmidt
- Carin Schoppmeyer ★
- Stephanie Schriener
- Robin Schumacher
- Sharon Scogin
- Christine Scott ★
- Jeffrey Seidensticker ★
- Becky Seidl
- Denton Seilhan
- Corey Seller
- Stefany Sierra
- Hunter Simmons
- Mike Simmons
- Catherine Slezak
- Myra Small
- Vicki Smith ★

- Christine Smith
- Andrea Smith ★
- Christy Smith
- Nakisha Snell
- Wendy Sooter
- Kesha Soule ★
- Pauli Springer
- Sharon Spurlin ★
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- Neta Sue Stamps ★
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- Sloan Stephens
- Emily Stephenson ★
- Mimi Stewart ★
- Richard Stewart ★
- Lanna Stone
- Misty Sutley ★
- Meghann Swafford
- Pam Sweeney ★
- Barbra Tabor ★
- Loretta Tanner
- Carol Tarvin
- Sabrina Thiede
- Tarah Thomas ★
- Anita Thomas
- Kendra Thompson
- Sharon Thompson
- Langlee Threlkeld
- Debra Torres
- Fernanda Torres
- Jan Townsley
- Kathy Trotter
- Barri Tulgetske
- Brentt Tumey ★
- Elise Tusson
- Jessica Van
- Shelley Vanderbush ★
- Amanda Vestal
- Haley Vincent
- Rebecca Vinzant
- Linda Vytlacil
- Nika Waitsman ★
- Sheroll Walker
- Dillon Walker
- Betty Wang
- Sylvia Warner
- Kimberly Watson
- Brenda Weigel
- Jamia Weir ★
- Carl West ★
- Allie Wilson-Seelig
- Linda Winkle ★
- Camrie Worley ★
- Laura Wright ★
- Ashley Yayock
- Dara Yeager ★★
- Tracy Young ★★
- Kelsey Zenko

FINANCIALS

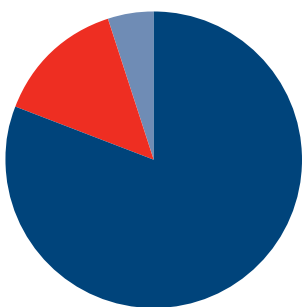
Revenue*

Individuals	33.75%
Government	29.25%
Events	21.5%
Foundations	9.5%
Corporate	5.25%
Other	.75%



Expenses*

Programmatic	81%
Fundraising	14%
Administrative	5%



THE EFFICIENCY OF THE CASA MODEL



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