

# Hope needs a helping hand.

BECOME A CASA AMBASSADOR



## GENERAL TALKING POINTS

- Nationwide, one in seven children experience reported abuse or neglect. When these cases of abuse and/or neglect go to court, the judge does not see the child. **CASA bridges this gap to ensure every child's voice is heard in court.**
- CASA supports children and families involved in the child welfare system by promoting safe, healthy homes and advocating for children's best interests.
- CASA increases the overall well-being of children. CASA volunteers are a consistent presence in a child's life. They collaborate with other professionals to find, engage, and strengthen support networks.
- CASA is a vital part of Henrico County, appointed by the local courts to bring valuable information to judges.

## ORGANIZATION DETAILS

- Henrico CASA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established in 1994.
- Henrico CASA is incorporated and governed by a Board of Directors.
- Henrico CASA is one of almost 1,000 CASA programs nationwide and one of 27 programs in Virginia. **Henrico CASA is the largest CASA program in Virginia, serving the most children.**
- Henrico CASA is authorized by the Code of Virginia which ensures that CASA programs provide trained volunteers to advocate on behalf of children who are the subjects of juvenile court proceedings involving allegations of abuse and neglect.

## IMPACT

- Henrico CASA volunteers make deep, long-lasting impacts in the lives of abused and neglected children.
- Studies make clear that child abuse and neglect is the largest health crisis of our time. The effects of childhood trauma are directly linked to mental illness, physical illness, and addiction in adulthood. This has devastating impacts on our health, justice and economic systems. CASA is an important part of the solution.

## ELEVATOR SPEECHES

- **30-seconds - Formal**  
Henrico CASA is a local nonprofit that promotes safe, stable, and loving homes for all children. To achieve this goal the program recruits, screens, trains, and supervises competent volunteers dedicated to representing the best interests and needs of abused and neglected children before the juvenile court. Henrico CASA also seeks to educate the community concerning the needs of these at-risk children to ensure that appropriate services and support are available.
- **30-seconds - Informal**  
CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to advocate for children's best interests in court and in the community. Advocates work with legal and child welfare professionals, educators, and service providers to ensure that judges have the information necessary to make well-informed decisions for each child. Our advocates stay with each case until it is closed to guarantee that the child is in a safe, stable home.

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## VOLUNTEERS

- Henrico CASA volunteers go through vigorous background checks and screenings, submit a written application, and complete an interview before being invited to participate in the training program.
- Henrico CASA's pre-service advocate training requires 40 hours of in-person training sessions that cover topics such as the child welfare and court system; diversity, equity, and inclusion; child development; trauma; mental health and substance abuse; communication; and report writing. On an annual basis, volunteer advocates are also required to obtain an additional twelve hours of continuing education credits.
- Henrico CASA volunteers are appointed by juvenile court judges when there is an allegation that a child has experienced abuse and/or neglect.
- Henrico CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of children and maintain a sense of urgency so that children do not get lost in an overburdened legal system or languish in temporary placements. They observe and report the circumstances of the child through visits and by gathering information from family members, professionals, and others involved in the child's life and case.
- Henrico CASA volunteers and staff members attend all court hearings and submit reports, including recommendations, to the judges. Henrico CASA volunteers stay with each child's case until they have safety and stability.

## BEST INTEREST ADVOCACY

