

UNITED WAY OF THE OHIO VALLEY
OHIO COUNTY
PARTNER AGENCY: CASA OF OHIO VALLEY

A CASA volunteer Advocate in 2015 served an Ohio County family torn apart by substance abuse, mental illness and domestic violence. In this situation, five children were removed from a toxic family environment through no fault of their own. Tragically, these innocent victims were traumatized over and over again by the very system hoping to save them! Social services and the court removed the children to different foster care homes during the year. The siblings were separated as well, and moved to different schools, even two moved out of Ohio County. Imagine being torn from a dysfunctional home setting, from parents and siblings and forced into settings unfamiliar and frightening. Yet, here is where the CASA Volunteer Advocate enters the picture! A CASA Advocate is a community volunteer; screened, trained and supervised by CASA staff. The wonderful Advocate donates their time and their heart to the children in their case. The unique ability of a CASA to serve only one family of children versus the 30 or so monitored by a DCBS worker, allows for building a trusting and consistent relationship. The CASA is often the only stable, consistent adult in an otherwise traumatic and frightening situation. The biologic mother and father of these five children had been abused as children themselves. This series of tragic events in their lives reflected in the cycle of abuse and neglect in their own children. While the father was incarcerated, and the mother institutionalized for psychotic behavior, the children were visited regularly by their CASA Advocate. Seeing their CASA was a lifeline to resources of services and attention for the children they might not otherwise receive. Today, those children are thriving and safe in a loving foster home, planning on adoption of all five siblings! While CASA and the system hope to see a family healed and reunited, it is not always the case or in the best interest of the children involved. This is an area where the CASA observation and reporting to the Court is so very important. CASA is another set of eyes and ears on the child for the judge. CASA lends a voice to the best interest of the child.

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL YOUR INVESTMENT MAKE?

With your investment of \$100 **CASA of Ohio Valley** can:

- Provide brochures and flyers created to include facts on child abuse and neglect specific to Ohio County using the recent data from the Governor's Office and KYA statistics
- Provide funds to create awareness campaigns for various community and corporate events

