

Chesterfield CASA



**FY 2017-2018
Program Evaluation**

Introduction

The mission of Chesterfield CASA is to promote safe, permanent homes for abused and neglected children by providing trained volunteers to advocate for them throughout their involvement in the juvenile court. CASA volunteers are charged with four main duties as specified in the *Code of Virginia*:

- 1) investigate the case to provide factual information to the court,
- 2) submit a written report to the court which includes recommendations as to the child's welfare,
- 3) monitor the case to ensure compliance with the court's orders, and
- 4) assist the *Guardian ad litem* attorney.

As volunteer advocates perform these duties, they are always supported by CASA staff who answer the volunteers' questions and help them navigate the legal and child welfare systems.

Characteristics of the Program

Chesterfield CASA was founded in 1996 as a nonprofit organization. We serve Chesterfield County, as well as the city of Colonial Heights. Both localities share one local Department of Social Services and are encompassed under the 12th Judicial District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. The total overall population of this suburban area exceeds 344,000. Since accepting cases in 1997, our program has provided a powerful voice in court for more than 1,600 children.

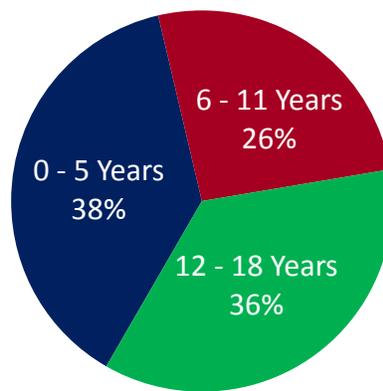
Annual Highlights

- Our robust training program resulted in 20 new volunteers being inducted into the program. Chesterfield CASA's goal is to assign a child to a volunteer advocate as quickly as possible once we receive a case referral from the juvenile court judge. Through careful recruiting and training of advocates, we had only a small number of children still awaiting a volunteer at the end of the fiscal year (all of which were assigned to our program in the last few weeks of June).
- We continue to be proud of our efforts with Henrico CASA to host our Annual Superhero Run, which raised nearly \$66,000 in our 9th year. Using the tagline "Every child needs a hero but abused children need superheroes," we encouraged 540 runners to participate in our event and had more than 100 volunteers from various community groups help with the logistics of the day, including the Family Fun activities held in conjunction with the Kids' Mile Run and 5k Race.
- We are always striving to partner with other community agencies to promote child safety and well-being. Staff actively participated in the Chesterfield Court Improvement Project, Chesterfield Child Abuse Prevention Team, and Chesterfield Partnership for Youth. We also increased public awareness/education of child abuse through various community presentations and fairs.

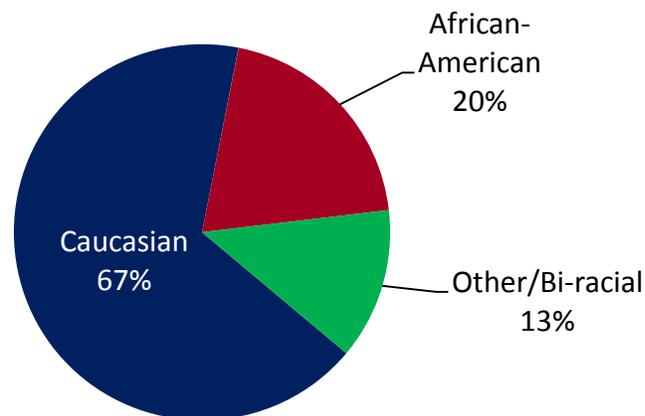
Children Served

Chesterfield CASA was appointed to 189 children in FY17-18, representing 123 cases. Five of these children were closed before we could assign a CASA volunteer. In the past our program has sometimes been forced to operate a waiting list of children who were appointed to the program from the juvenile court, but for whom no volunteer was available. Through targeted recruitment and training efforts, we are typically able to very quickly assign a volunteer to every child appointed to our program. At the end of FY17-18, only four cases had not been assigned a volunteer, most of whom were appointed in the few weeks prior to the end of the reporting period. An analysis of the demographics and characteristics for children served by CASA is detailed below.

Age of Children Served



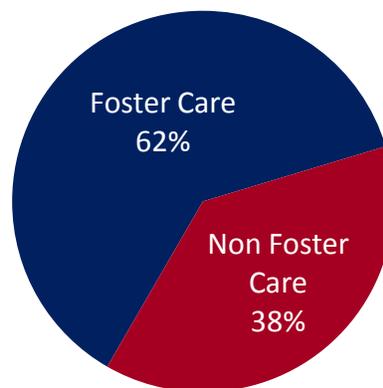
Race of Children Served



Case Type

Type of Abuse	# Children	% Children
Neglect	115	61%
Emotional Abuse	27	14%
Sexual Abuse	26	14%
Physical Abuse	21	11%
TOTAL	189	100%

Status of Children Served



Major Issues Impacting CASA Cases

Issue	# Children	% of Total Served
Criminal involvement by parent/caregiver	136	72%
Domestic violence in home	97	51%
Economic instability	158	84%
Mental health concerns – child or family	166	88%
Single parent/caregiver	118	62%
Substance abuse by parent/caregiver	134	71%
Prior involvement w/ Child Protective Services	126	67%

CASA's work requires that volunteers and staff gather information about each child and submit a written report to the Court at each substantive hearing. Within these reports, volunteers offer recommendations for services that the child and family might need, in addition to what living arrangement/placement is in the child's best interests. During the course of the year, Chesterfield CASA staff and volunteers:

- attended 352 hearings
- submitted 184 reports to the Court
- offered 1,141 recommendations within these reports
- enjoyed strong confidence from the juvenile court judges, who ordered 93% of the recommendations offered.

During the year, 88 children were newly appointed to the program and 86 were closed. Cases were most frequently closed because the child was placed in the custody of parents or other relatives, as shown below.

Reasons for Case Closure

Outcome	# Children Closed	% Children Closed
Runaway	1	1%
Permanent foster care	1	1%
Child aged out	4	4%
Case transferred or never served	5	6%
Adopted	10	12%
Case removed from docket/CASA relieved	17	20%
Reunification or remain with parent	22	26%
Third party/relative custody	26	30%
TOTAL	86	100%

The average length of time in the program prior to case closure was 435 days. The table below details specific length of service for all closed cases during the year.

Length of Service for Closed Cases

Months in Program	# Children Closed	% Children Closed
0 – 3 months	15	17%
4 – 6 months	14	16%
7 – 12 months	13	15%
13 – 18 months	17	20%
19 – 24 months	7	8%
2 or more years	20	24%
TOTAL	86	100%

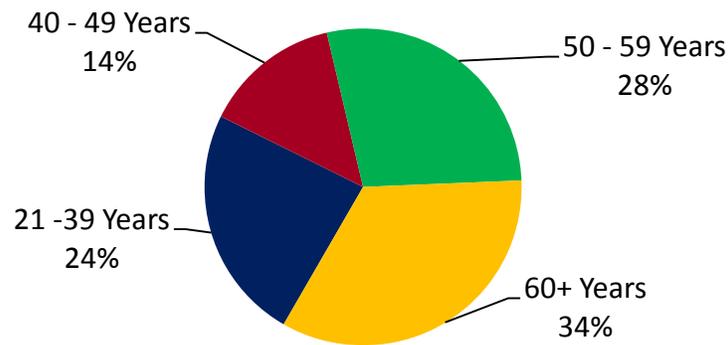
CASA Volunteers

In FY17-18, 79 volunteers provided advocacy service to children at Chesterfield CASA. During the year 20 new volunteers were trained and 18 left the program. The majority of advocates who resigned did so because of health, family, or work commitments outside of their control.

These volunteers contributed over 6,159 hours in FY17-18, valued at \$160,688. They also drove nearly 26,600 miles during the course of their volunteerism. These hours and miles are tracked monthly through timesheets submitted to the Program Director.

Similar to other CASA programs across the country, the majority of Chesterfield CASA volunteers are female (89%) and Caucasian (80%). Of all volunteers, 81% have a college or post-graduate experience/degrees. Many CASA volunteers balance employment with their advocacy responsibilities, as 40% of them hold full-time jobs and 19% work part-time. Another 18% are retired, which is lower than we have experienced in prior years. The chart below shows the age breakdown for our volunteers, which mirrors the decrease in retirees, as it reveals a higher percentage of volunteers under the age of 40 in our program than we have previously experienced.

Age of CASA Volunteers



Program Staff & Governance

For FY17-18, Chesterfield CASA employed five staff: Executive Director, Program Director, and three Advocate Supervisors (one of whom is part-time). The Advocate Supervisors spend the majority of their time supervising our volunteer advocates so they feel supported in their roles. All staff share the responsibility of recruiting, screening, and training new volunteers interested in joining the program. Our staffing structure allows us to meet the needs of our program while also ensuring Chesterfield CASA stays in compliance with the regulatory requirements of a 30:1 volunteer-to-supervisor ratio.

Chesterfield CASA's staff exhibits impressive longevity. One Advocate Supervisor has been employed nearly 11 years (and served as a volunteer for three years prior), the Executive Director has been in place 14 years, and the Program Director has 19 years of service with the program.

Chesterfield CASA is under the direction of a Board of Directors, which is comprised of citizens who have a passion for helping children in need, these individuals provide leadership, financial oversight, and strategic vision for the agency. Members may serve one or two three-year terms and are committed to helping the agency maintain adequate resources, promoting CASA's mission in the community, and providing fiscal and programmatic oversight.

Program Revenue

For the FY ending June 30, 2018, CASA's total revenue was nearly \$333,500 while program expenses were \$317,200. A breakdown of revenues by funding source is shown below.

Revenue Funding Sources

Funding Source	% of total revenues received
Private Foundations	35%
State Government	18%
Victims of Crime Act (federal grant)	15%
Special Events	10%
Individual Contributions	9%
Corporations	4%
Local Government	3%
Churches & Civic Groups	3%
Other/Interest	3%
TOTAL	100%

The table below shows program revenues across the past five years. Revenues have fluctuated over time while program expenses have increased an average of 3% each year during the past decade.

Total Program Revenues by Year

