



I am for the child who's had seven addresses in a single year. Because she's in foster care. Because her father abused her. And because her mother couldn't believe her. That is the child I am for. And because I am, she will be half as likely to languish in foster care, and that much more likely to find a safe, permanent home. I am a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer.

I am you.



### How Can I Help?

To become a valued CASA volunteer or make a donation contact:

CASA of Northeast Tennessee  
P.O. Box 1021, Johnson City, TN 37605  
(423) 461-3500 • www.casatn.org

### MISSION STATEMENT

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Northeast TN's mission is to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the juvenile court. We believe that every child is entitled to a safe and stable home. Trained volunteers are the child's voice to ensure that their needs are identified and addressed.



### A Child's Story

As a boy, my three sisters and I suffered just about every form of abuse you can imagine - emotional and physical attacks by my mother, later sexual abuse by her and her boyfriend. When I was 13 years old, we were all removed from our home. After that, I bounced around, from a children's emergency shelter to an aunt's house, then back to the shelter. There was so much I did not know about the foster care system. Without knowledge or the power to speak up, I felt like a victim. **A year and a half later, I met my CASA volunteer, Robert. And everything changed.** Robert taught me how to communicate, how to represent myself and my needs. He helped me understand what was happening in court and taught me how to stand up for myself. When I had something to say, Robert made sure my voice was heard. When I did not want to or could not speak, he spoke for me. At every school event, Robert was there. From ROTC ceremonies to my high school graduation, he was there. When I took hold of my diploma, I heard his cheers above the rest. About that same time, I was placed into my final foster home, where I learned about service to others. My foster father did so much more than he had to do, for me and for those around him. **From that moment on I decided that there was much that I need to give back. I have basically dedicated my time to helping children whose life circumstances are similar to mine** - from gathering gifts for children of abused women at the holidays to advocating for the rights of foster children on a state level. Today, I am working for a youth-serving organization. As a program manager, I am creating a new mentoring program for

youth who have been raised by their grandparents or in single-family homes. This summer, I had the amazing experience of being an intern in Sen. Harry Reid's office in Washington, DC. I had seen a lot of legislation in the state of Nevada, but the magnitude of change in DC amazed me. This summer I learned that if you have a voice, there is someone who is willing to listen to it and to try to make change. I'll graduate from college in 2014 with a major in psychology and a minor in political science. Right now my plan is to go back to Washington and hopefully get another internship. I've been given a powerful voice. I intend to use it as much as I can, for as long as I can.

In fiscal year 2013/2014, CASA of Northeast TN over 400 children in Greene, Unicoi and Washington Counties with 68 dedicated volunteers. However, there were still hundreds of children who were left without an advocate. You can make a difference in a child's life. Volunteer today!



Lift up a child's voice. A child's life.™

CASA of Northeast Tennessee  
PO Box 1021  
Johnson City, TN 37605

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## Volunteer Your Time to Change a Child's Life

Nobody longs for a safe and loving family more than a child in foster care. As a CASA volunteer, you are empowered by the courts to help make this dream a reality. You will not only bring positive change to the lives of these vulnerable children, but also their children and generations to come. And in doing so, you will enrich your life as well.

### What Do CASA Advocates Do?

#### CASA volunteers listen first. Then they act.

Volunteers get to know the child by talking with everyone in that child's life: parents and relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys, social workers and others. They use the information they gather to inform judges and others of what the child needs and what will be the best permanent home for them.

### Who Can Be a Volunteer?

You do not have to be a lawyer or social worker to be a volunteer. We welcome people from all walks of life. We are simply looking for people who care about children and have common sense. As a volunteer, you will be thoroughly trained and well supported by professional staff to help you through each case.

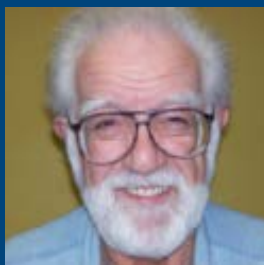
You must be 21 years of age, pass a background check, participate in a 30-hour pre-service training course and agree to stay with a case until it is closed (a year on average). Interested in helping children but not ready to commit to becoming a volunteer advocate? Learn about other volunteer opportunities at [www.casatn.org](http://www.casatn.org).

### Board Member Spotlight



Dan Bragg joined the CASA Board in 2010. He has served as an officer since 2012 in the roles of Treasurer, Vice President, and now President for 2014-15. He is the Practice Administrator for East Tennessee Brain and Spine Center in Johnson City. He has been with the practice for six years. Dan is also a CPA, and he and his wife own an accounting business, Bragg Financial Solutions. Dan has been married to his wonderful wife, Young Shil, for 12 years. They have

been blessed with a 10-year-old son and an 8-year-old daughter. He is passionate about kids as you can see from his role with CASA, coaching youth athletics, and serving in the children's ministry at church.



Jim Makris found his way to CASA when he heard an announcement on the radio looking for volunteers to train as Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for children, particularly those who were abused and neglected. It struck a chord with him; his wife Barbara had been abused by her mother for some years, and he knew how much pain and degradation she suffered, and how that stunted her growth potential. He saw CASA as an opportunity to use his experience to help these children escape from the anguish of abuse and neglect and have an opportunity to live a normal life.

Since October 2009, Jim has been a dedicated and vocal advocate for over 21 abused and neglected children. Jim has said that "Helping others in this way gives me great satisfaction, and enables me to give back to our society for all the blessings I enjoy: my country, friends and a wonderful, supportive, and loving family." Jim was recognized as the Volunteer of Year award at this year's volunteer appreciation night.

**CASA of Northeast Tennessee** has served this community for almost 30 years and this year marks our 10 Year Anniversary as independent nonprofit organization. Starting as an umbrella agency under the Sociology Department, we have grown into an independent non-profit serving over 400 children each year.

### How did we get there?

1985- Washington County Juvenile Court Judge John Keiner recognizes CASA to support abused and neglected children through a partnership with the Sociology Department at ETSU. Starting with one volunteer coordinator and a hand full of volunteers serving the Juvenile Courts of Washington and Unicoi Counties.

1999- Program expands to serve the Juvenile Court of Greene County.

2004- CASA of Northeast TN signs a charter to become an independent 501c3 non-profit organization.

2005- A Board of Directors is put in place. Staff includes an Executive Director and one volunteer coordinator. Expands services to Johnson City Juvenile Court.

2007- A second volunteer coordinator is added and a satellite office is opened in Greene County.

2009- A third volunteer coordinator is added with an expansion grant through the National CASA Association.

2012- Johnson City office moves to the Chamber of Commerce Building for increased office space.

2014- Greene County satellite office moves to a much functional office space. A satellite office is opened in Erwin, TN. Program is serving over 400 children per year by 70 volunteers along with 16 board members. Staff includes an executive director and 3 volunteer coordinators.

## Thank you to our Sponsors



## Save the date!

Golf Tournament- August 18th, 2014  
Red Shoe Masquerade- November 8th, 2014  
American Girl Fashion Show- April 11th, 2015

