JUDICIAL DISTRICT VII CASA PROGRAM, INC.

490 MEMORIAL DRIVE SUITE B1 IDAHO FALLS, ID 83402

PHONE (208) 523-6525 FAX (208) 523-5940

info@casa7.org

Thank you for your interest in the CASA Program.

Enclosed is information explaining the program concept and the roles and duties of the CASA Volunteer. If, after reading this material, you believe you would like to be considered for this program, **please complete the attached application form and call the office to set an appointment to bring your application in.**

Prospective applicants must complete the 30-hour CASA training, and pass a personal reference check, fingerprinting, criminal records check, and an interview by the screening committee in order to become a CASA Volunteer. This process is done to ensure that applicants are suited to this particular type of volunteer work, and to ensure the safety of the children we serve. Not all applicants are accepted into the Judicial District VII CASA Program, Inc.

The amount of time required to participate as a CASA volunteer varies from case to case. Generally, a CASA assumes responsibility for only one case at a time. Cases can involve only one child or sibling group. The number of hours required is dependent on the child's/family's situation at the time. Often, much of the work may be done at the convenience of the CASA volunteer, except as it pertains to appearance at court hearings. It is expected that volunteers commit to the program for at least one year.

Mandatory Pre-Service training is provided to prospective volunteers. In-service training on relevant topics is also arranged on an ongoing basis (with 12 hours mandatory per year). In addition, the CASA Supervisor provides continuous assistance, advice, and guidance for volunteers. CASA volunteers are not compensated for their time; however, out-of-pocket expenses such as mileage and long distance telephone calls are reimbursable.

This program is an excellent opportunity for individuals in the community to become meaningfully involved in helping children. If you think you may have the appropriate skills and the time to commit to this program, please submit your application for consideration.

Sincerely,

Stacy McAlevy

Executive Director

# IDAHO'S CHILDREN

Thousands of children in Idaho suffer physical, sexual and emotional abuse or severe neglect because the adults responsible for them don't provide adequate protection or care. These children are often removed from their parents care and place under the protective custody of the State as wards of the Court.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE CHILD?

A CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is a specially trained volunteer from the community who is appointed by the Court to represent the best interests of the child in court. The CASA helps insure that the child's right to a safe, permanent home is acted upon in a sensitive and expedient manner and that progress is being made to achieve permanency for the child.

WHAT DOES A CASA DO?

The CASA acts as the "eyes and the ears of the Court.” Appointed by the judge, the CASA does his/her own independent investigation of the facts of the case and reports the facts, along with his/her recommendations, to the Court. The CASA stands as the representative for the child during all Court proceedings. After the disposition of the case, the CASA monitors the case as long as the child is under the jurisdiction of the Court, always making sure that the child's needs are being met in a reasonable and timely fashion.

 HOW DOES A CASA DIFFER FROM A SOCIAL SERVICE CASEWORKER?

Social workers are employed by the State Government. Their case loads are often so great that it is very difficult for them to always find the time to adequately investigate and follow up each case. The CASA has more time to devote to each case and has a much smaller caseload. The CASA does not replace the Social Worker on the case. S/he is an independent appointee of the Court, there to facilitate and enhance the whole Court procedure.

WHO CAN BE A CASA?

Anyone with a commitment to protecting the interests of children may apply for consideration as a CASA Volunteer. No special educational background is required but a volunteer must have the maturity to deal with complex emotional situations. S/he must possess sound decision making skills, and be able to remain objective and nonjudgmental. S/he must have a good rapport with children, have good communication skills, and have a sincere interest in the welfare of children. Each applicant is screened and fingerprinted for the safety of the children.

CASA JOB DESCRIPTION

A Court Appointed Special Advocate is an advocate appointed by the court to ensure that the needs of a child who may have been neglected or abused are met. In order to do this, the CASA must investigate the facts of the case, recommend a course of action to the Court, explain the Courts finding to the child, facilitate the resolution of the problems, and monitor progress toward established goals.

ANY PERSON, HAVING BEEN CONVICTED OF A SERIOUS CRIME OR FELONY, OR ANY PERSON WITH A KNOWN HISTORY OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO SERVE AS A CASA VOLUNTEER IN JUDICIAL DISTRICT VII.

1. Qualifications of a CASA

1. Be of minimum age (21).

2. Emotional stability and maturity.

3. Interest in children, their, rights, and special needs.

4. Time to devote to training sessions, investigation and follow up of a case, (at least a one year commitment, averaging up to four hours a week).

5. Ability to work with a child, family members, and other professional using tact, concern, and basic human relations skills.

6. Ability to observe, listen, and analyze information clearly and concisely; investigate, interview, negotiate, set goals and make decisions tactfully and objectively.

7. Ability to communicate verbally and in writing, making verbal and written reports to the Court, to the Project Director and to other persons as needed.

8. Present self in a professional manner.

9. Be a credible witness.

11. Requirements of a CASA

1. Attend basic training sessions, approximately 30 hours.

2. Pass intense screening.

3. **Pass Criminal Background Check including finger printing**

 **(Finger print based check will be completed every 2 years)**

1. After training, participate in a one case internship.

5. Maintain strict confidentiality.

6. Attend in-service training sessions on an ongoing basis, twelve per year.

7. Following initial training, serve at least one child until permanency has been implemented, often a period of one year or more.

8. Keep the Project Director informed of all activities and confer with her periodically.

9. Maintain an up-to-date and complete file on each case as assigned and return all case materials to the CASA office at the completion of the case.

10. Be aware of deadlines and timetables involving an assigned case and turn in all reports on time.

11. Complete evaluations, time studies, etc. which may be requested in order to monitor the entire CASA Project.

111. Specific Duties of a CASA

1. Maintain complete written records about each case, including appointments, interview, and the information gathered about each child.

2. Upon assignment to a case, visit with the child, and interview family members, foster family, teachers, social worker, and other interested parties to determine facts. (Many interviews are by phone but by necessity, some must be in person. In addition, any home suggested as a permanent or temporary placement for the child must be visited.)

3. Explore alternatives available to the child: living with relatives, foster placement, etc.

4. Prepare a written report stating findings and a recommendation for permanent disposition of the case and submit the report to the Court no less than five days prior to the Adjudicatory Hearing.

5. Appear in Court at the Adjudication/Disposition/Shelter Care Hearing to make a recommendation to the Court.

6. Assist in the implementation of any plan prescribed by the Court (whether recommended in the CASA report or not).

7. Continue to monitor progress toward goals prescribed by the Court.

8. Bring any significant changes in the family situation to the attention of the Court. Ensure that reviews by the Court are done on schedule.

9. Reappear in Court as needed for review hearings. Continue follow-up contacts, submit supplementary reports, and make new recommendations as needed, until a final disposition is made.

10. Report any incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Program Director and appropriate authorities.

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

Judicial District Seven Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Position Applied for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ How did you hear about us .

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Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Cell #\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ SSN \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DOB \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Other states and cities you have lived in (include dates):

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How long have you lived in Idaho? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you employed? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Name of employer \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Describe personal/employment constraints that may restrict your time.

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In case of emergency call\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please list educational background and/or degrees held.

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Are you bilingual? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Languages spoken \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Please list employers for the last 15 years. Please include:

* Name of Company & Position Held
* Supervisor’s Name & Phone Number
* Employment Start & End Dates
* Reason For Leaving

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Do you have a valid Idaho driver’s license? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have current auto Insurance? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ With whom & limits \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been arrested and/or convicted of a crime? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If yes please explain. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Have you ever been a victim of abuse? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please make a brief statement on what steps you've taken to deal with you abuse issues.

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How did you become aware of this program?

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Write a brief statement on why you have chosen to work in the Child Advocacy Program at this time.

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What strengths do you feel you will bring to this program?

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REFERENCES

Please list five people, not related to you, who have known you for at least two years.(Please provide full name, email, and phone number) Two of these people must be professional references. As part of the Idaho CASA Association Standards, your current employer and these five people will be contacted **via email** and asked to provide a reference. **An unreturned reference is considered a negative reference.**

Name E-Mail Address Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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