

## Learn more about CASANYS

Contact us to see how you can help.



## MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION OF ERIE COUNTY, INC.

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## C.A.S.A.

Court Appointed  
Special Advocates

A program of the Mental  
Health Association of Erie  
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*Waiting ... for someone to hear me.*



[www.casanys.org](http://www.casanys.org)  
[www.eriemha.org](http://www.eriemha.org)

We are also on Facebook!



## What Can I Do

### Become a volunteer

-speak up for children in need

### Spread the word

-tell others about CASA

CASA volunteers can help turn a  
child's life of hurt into one of hope.



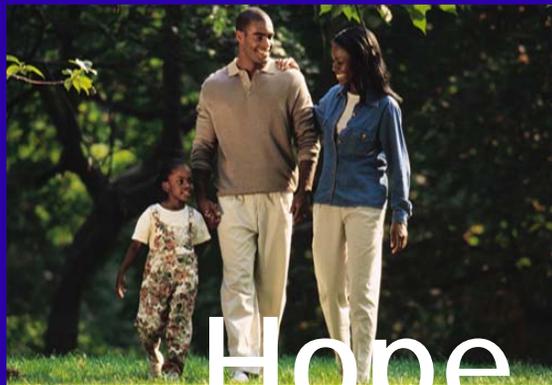
## What is CASANYS?

CASA: Advocates for Children of New York State is dedicated to assisting local CASA programs throughout the state. Through training and technical assistance, information and funding support, CASANYYS helps local programs thrive. CASANYYS staff serves as liaisons to the National CASA organization and participate in advocacy task forces dealing with such critical issues as permanency planning, domestic violence, child sexual abuse, and health care of children in foster care.

## Supporting Safe, Permanent Homes for Children at Risk

Based on 2009 statistics, each year, nearly 24,605 New York State children were in foster care. Furthermore, authorities typically investigate between 40,000 and 50,000 new reports of indicated child abuse or neglect each year. In 2009, CASA volunteers were involved in 3,236 cases.

Every day, these children enter the child welfare system, which works with families, foster parents, and treatment providers to ensure their safety. But these children are often scared and reluctant to trust in the system. How their cases are handled can mean the difference between their growing up as contributing adults or as reminders of how we, as a society, have failed them.



# Hope



# Volunteer



## CASA Volunteers

A child at risk, who finds himself caught up in the foster care system, faces a confusing and often intimidating court system and child welfare bureaucracy.

CASA: Court Appointed Special Advocates, works with family courts to make sure that each child's voice is heard. CASA volunteers come from all walks of life - ordinary citizens with an extraordinary commitment to helping children secure a safe and permanent home.

## What Do CASA Volunteers Do?

After an intensive formal training period, a Family Court Judge swears in CASA volunteers. In addition to meeting with the child on a regular and consistent basis, the CASA volunteer will interview case managers, parents and relatives, treatment providers, school officials, foster parents, and others who know the child's circumstances. The CASA volunteer submits written reports to the Court, providing as complete a picture as possible of the child's needs in order to assist the Judge in making a decision regarding a child's permanency based on the child's best interests.

## Why Does a Child at Risk Need a CASA?

Many things in the life of an at risk child will change. A child's placement, as well as his case worker, may change numerous times before a child gains permanency. But their CASA Volunteer will stay on their case, providing a consistent presence in the life of the child, until the court decides on a safe and permanent home.

The CASA will continue to monitor the progress and needs of the child and to include their findings in regular written reports. A CASA will serve only one or two children at a time. The sole focus of the CASA volunteer is the well being of the child, making sure that the Court has the most accurate information possible to determine a child's best interests.

To learn more about volunteering either view [www.casanyys.org](http://www.casanyys.org) or contact the Mental Health Association.