



# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2018

*July 2017 – June 2018*



Office of the Child Advocate <https://courts.delaware.gov/childadvocate/>

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# Table of Contents

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## Contents

Executive Summary	2
Legal Representation of Children	3
CASA Volunteers and Contract Child Attorneys	3
Volunteer Child Attorneys	3
Child Representation Statistics	3
Child Welfare Policy	4
Training, Conferences, and Professional Development	6
Committees, Task Forces, and Initiatives	7
Child Abuse and Neglect Panel	8
Office of the Investigation Coordinator	9
Court Appointed Special Advocates Program	10
Law Clerks and Interns	12
OCA Partnerships	12
Youth Activities and Donations	13
Volunteer Honor Roll	15
Fiscal Year 2018 Staff and Contractors	20

## Executive Summary

The Office of the Child Advocate (OCA) was created in 1999 in response to numerous child deaths in Delaware resulting from child abuse. These cases pointed to deficiencies in the child protection system that could only be remedied through the collaborative efforts of Delaware's many child welfare agencies. The General Assembly determined that an office to oversee these efforts, staff the Child Protection Accountability Commission (CPAC), and provide legal representation on behalf of Delaware's dependent, neglected, and abused children was necessary. Pursuant to 29 Del. C. § 9005A, OCA is mandated to coordinate a program of legal representation for children which includes the Court Appointed Special Advocate Program (CASA); to periodically review all relevant child welfare policies and procedures with a view toward improving the lives of children; to recommend changes in procedures for investigating and overseeing the welfare of children; to assist the Office of the Investigation Coordinator in accomplishing its goals; to assist CPAC in investigating and reviewing deaths and near deaths of abused and neglected children; to develop and provide training to child welfare system professionals; and to staff CPAC.

OCA accomplishes its charge to represent children through the employment of four Deputy Child Advocates (DCAs), seven Contract Child Attorneys, a substantial and dedicated pool of CASA Volunteers and volunteer Child Attorneys supervised by OCA staff, and strong partnerships with the child-serving agencies in Delaware. During Fiscal Year 2018, 418 new appointments for children were made, and 70 case reviews were completed to ensure the child welfare system was adequately protecting the children involved. OCA provided legal representation through Child Attorneys and CASA Volunteers to a total of 1,210 abused or neglected children throughout the year. On the last day of the fiscal year, 719 children were in the legal custody of Delaware's Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF).

In addition to coordinating the legal representation of children, OCA's staff of social workers, policy advisors, and data analysts participated in many initiatives to improve policies, procedures, practices, and laws on behalf of children. OCA staff worked diligently to deliver training on trauma and mandatory reporting of child abuse to child welfare professionals, as well as to raise awareness within the community, and to make this information widely available online. OCA took substantial steps with its partners to improve outcomes for infants with prenatal substance exposure. OCA continued to support efforts to promote refinement of the multidisciplinary response to child abuse cases, and its staff attended several national trainings and conferences on a variety of child welfare issues.

OCA continued its responsibility, as staff to CPAC, to investigate and coordinate the reviews of all Delaware children who died or nearly died from child abuse or neglect and to oversee the Office of the Investigation Coordinator, which is responsible for monitoring the civil and criminal response systems to child deaths, serious physical injury, and sexual abuse. Finally, OCA continued as the recipient of the Casey Family Programs Education grant charged with improving educational outcomes for children experiencing foster care, and played a vital role in the In-Depth Technical Assistance being provided to Delaware by the National Center for Substance Abuse and Child Welfare.

OCA is extremely grateful to all of the individuals and organizations that support the children served by OCA either through donations, volunteering or partnership. The assistance and partnership of these entities are critical as OCA strives to fulfill its mission to safeguard the welfare of Delaware's children through educational advocacy, system reform, public awareness, training, and legal representation of children.



Tania Culley, Esq., CWLS  
Child Advocate



## Legal Representation of Children

Legal representation of children has been a central focus of Office of the Child Advocate since 2000. The agency is statutorily required to coordinate a program of legal representation on behalf of children. OCA utilizes four full-time Deputy Child Advocates, seven Contract Child Attorneys, 225 CASA Volunteers supervised by 10 CASA Coordinators, and 264 volunteer Child Attorneys who are supervised by a Managing Attorney to represent the best interests of dependent, neglected, and abused children statewide.

## CASA Volunteers and Contract Child Attorneys

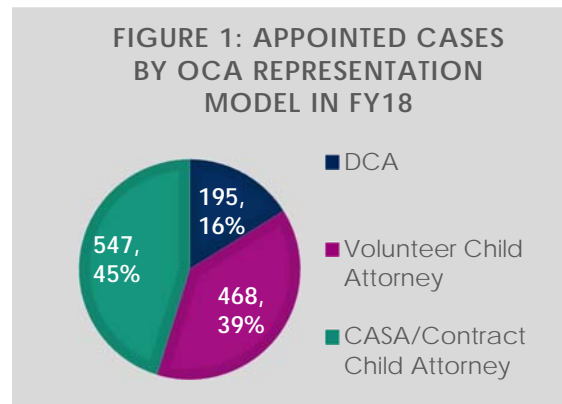
During FY18, 225 CASA Volunteers in partnership with 7 Contract Child Attorneys represented 547 children. The CASA Program trained 58 new CASAs through multiple statewide training sessions. Numerous hours were also spent on in-service trainings of CASAs. Of the dedicated CASA Volunteer pool, 94 had at least five years of experience. Thirty-one of the 94 volunteers had ten years or more experience. One volunteer has 31 years of service. Contract Child Attorneys spent more than 7,000 hours working in tandem with CASA Volunteers and CASA Coordinators. For the second half of the fiscal year, staff spent 8,000 hours supporting volunteers and attorneys in advocating for children, and another 1,000 hours recruiting, training and retaining volunteers.

## Volunteer Child Attorneys

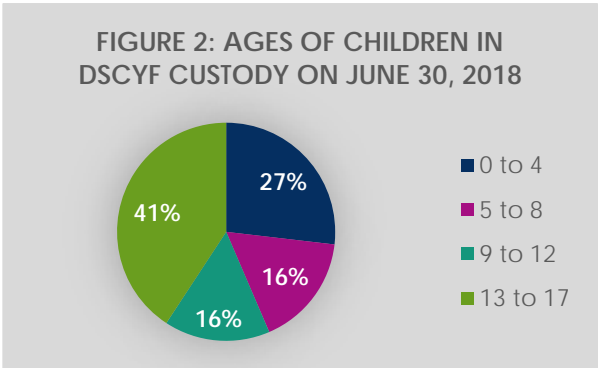
During FY18, 220 volunteer Child Attorneys actively represented 468 children. Of those volunteer Child Attorneys, twenty-two were new volunteers handling their first case. OCA's Managing Attorney trained 24 new attorneys in FY18. By the end of FY18, OCA had a dedicated volunteer pool of 264 attorneys, 186 of which had at least five years of experience. One hundred twenty of those 186 volunteers had ten years of experience or more. OCA now boasts 32 attorneys who have volunteered for at least 15 years. Collectively, nearly 5,600 hours of volunteer attorney time was dedicated to cases that closed in FY18. OCA staff spent just under 1,000 hours training and supporting volunteer Child Attorneys as well as supporting 39 attorneys appointed directly by Family Court under the OCA statute.

## Child Representation Statistics

Throughout FY18, OCA provided legal representation to 1,210 children statewide. Five hundred forty-seven were represented by a Contract Child Attorney and CASA, 468 were represented by a Volunteer Child Attorney and 195 were represented by Deputy Child Advocates (See Figure 1). Broken out by county, 308 children were represented in Kent throughout the fiscal year, 649 in New Castle, and 253 in Sussex. Kent County remained a struggle this fiscal year with the volume nearly eighteen percent greater than Sussex County. CASA Volunteers, partnered with Contract Child Attorneys, handled 57% of the cases in Kent County, with Deputy Child Advocates handling another 21% of the cases. In Sussex County, while the volume is notably lower, only 7% of the children were represented by volunteer Child Attorneys-Statewide DCAs represented 33% of the children and CASAs and Contract Child Attorneys represented 60%.



On the last day of the fiscal year, 719 children were in the legal custody of DSCYF. This was a 7% decrease over FY17, which ended with 776 children in care. On June 30, 2018, 322 of those children benefited from a CASA Volunteer and Child Attorney while the remaining 397 received a volunteer Child Attorney or a Deputy Child Advocate. Of the children in DSCYF Custody on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 193 were 0-4 years of age, 120 were 5-8 years of age, 113 were 9-12 years of age and 293 were 13-17 years of age. One hundred seventy-five (24%) of the children were from Kent County, 142 (20%) were from Sussex and the remaining 402 (56%) were from New Castle. While only 18% of the Delaware population lives in Kent County, the number of children in care is much higher at 24%. The younger children and the teen population continue to represent the largest numbers of children in care. (See Figure 2)



During the fiscal year, OCA filed 418 new attorney appointments. One hundred ninety (45%) of those children were fortunate enough to also have a CASA Volunteer appointed to advocate on their behalf in DSCYF Custody cases. Broken down by case type for new appointments, 381 (91%) were DSCYF custody cases, 27 (6%) were for extended jurisdiction, 7 (2%) were for guardianship cases and 3 (1%) were in custody and visitation disputes. Two hundred (48%) new appointments were made in New Castle County, 113 (27%) in Kent and 105 (25%) in Sussex. One hundred ninety (45%) new cases were assigned to a CASA Volunteer and a contract Child Attorney, 158 (38%) new cases were assigned to volunteer Child Attorneys and 70 (17%) new cases were assigned to DCAs.

DCAs and Family Crisis Therapists spent over 8,100 hours on the direct representation of children in FY18. Contract Child Attorneys spent 7,100 hours on representing children. For six months, CASA Coordinators spent 8,000 hours on the representation of children. Deputy Child Advocates represented 35 children who themselves or their siblings suffered death or near death injuries as a result of child abuse or neglect.

## Child Welfare Policy



Child welfare policy is another area in which OCA acts to strengthen the system that serves children and families. Mandated under 29 Del. C. § 9005A to periodically review child welfare policies and procedures, to recommend changes in procedures for investigating and overseeing the welfare of children, and to develop and provide training to child welfare system professionals, OCA staff spent over 250 hours on efforts involving child protection policy and procedure in FY18, and another 1,400 hours on such efforts while fulfilling their duties as staff to CPAC.

CPAC. In its role as staff to CPAC, OCA supports CPAC and its committees by ensuring compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), preparing minutes and agendas, scheduling meeting times and locations, facilitating communications, conducting research and chairing committees. Each full-time staff member participates substantively on at least one CPAC committee or initiative including CPAC's Caseloads/Workloads, Data Utilization, Education, Legislative, Substance Exposed Infants and Medically Fragile Children, and Training Committees. For more information on the work of CPAC, please see the FY18 CPAC Annual Report.

Legislation. In FY18, the CPAC Legislative Committee met to review Senate Bills 209 and 210 which proposed to restructure and streamline the criminal code, including crimes against children. At the conclusion of FY18, the CPAC Legislative Committee had reviewed the changes to physical child abuse. The Committee was to review the changes to child sexual abuse and make a recommendation for action to the full Commission in August 2018. Lastly, House Bill 140, also known as Aiden's Law, was signed in June 2018. HB140, which was introduced in the prior fiscal year, codifies the State's duty to provide for infants with prenatal substance exposure. OCA staff spent about 100 hours on legislative issues in FY18.



Casey Family Programs Grant. During FY18, OCA remained the recipient of a Casey Family Programs grant, to improve educational outcomes for children experiencing foster care. While the accomplishments under this grant are numerous, in FY18 OCA staff together with its contractors, trained over 3,000 educators and other related agencies on how the Compassionate Schools Model can improve connections between educators and students who have

experienced trauma, foster care, or toxic stress. Through these trainings, educators learn how trauma impacts brain development, the importance of relationships with students, and strategies to foster safe learning environments. The Casey Education Demonstration Project also developed a Compassionate Schools Learning Collaborative, which is comprised of schools all over the state with a focus on improving education outcomes and connections for at-risk students, including students experiencing foster care. The Learning Collaborative has also developed partnerships with the University of Delaware/Department of Education DE-Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Project and Children and Families First to administer trainings and evidence-based strategies to help educators understand how to work with at-risk students.



Helping Delaware schools and districts implement trauma-informed approaches to build resilience in children and families through creative workshops, innovative tools, and hands-on support.

A partnership between the Office of the Child Advocate, Children & Families First, and Casey Family Programs.

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During the fiscal year, the Learning Collaborative met quarterly to share effective trauma-responsive practices to representatives from multiple schools across the state. OCA staff and contractors have also presented at the Delaware State Education Association Annual Conference, the Trauma Informed Schools Conference in St. Louis, MO, the National At Risk Youth Conference, Judicial retreats, the Delaware Superintendents Annual Retreat, Jefferson University Medical School Trafficking Event, the Vision Coalition and the Western Sussex Summit. In addition, staff at the Department of Education (DOE) and students at the University of Delaware Graduate School of Education have received training. As a result of its training on trauma to educators and Delaware

school superintendents, the Project has seen a continual decline in out-of-school suspensions for youth in foster care between 2015 and 2017. This data demonstrates that educators understand the impact of trauma on vulnerable populations, and the devastating impact that out-of-school suspensions can have on students in DSCYF custody and other systems involved youth. OCA spent approximately 800 hours on administration of this grant and participation in strategic planning meetings and trainings.

## Training, Conferences, and Professional Development

OCA staff attended several local and national multidisciplinary conferences, training, and professional development sessions throughout FY18. OCA also conducted numerous training programs focusing on improving skills and knowledge in navigating the many facets of child welfare. OCA spent approximately 2000 hours providing and receiving training in FY18.

OCA held several in-house professional development trainings during FY18. Its full staff retreat focused on educational advocacy, domestic violence and sex offenders, permanency timelines, office procedures and legislation. Spring trainings focused on developing the relationship between the CASA, the CASA Coordinator and the Child Attorney, advocating for permanency and visitation, and professionalism. Kelly Ensslin, Esquire, was recognized as the OCA Employee of the Year and several staff were recognized for their years of service to OCA and CASA.

Various staff attended and trained in national venues including the National At-Risk Youth Conference, the 2017 National Association of Counsel for Children Conference, the National Child Death Review Conference, the Center for Family Representation, the CWLA National Conference, and the 2018 National Citizen Review Panel Conference. Topics included *From Review to Action: How Delaware has improved the State's Child Protection System Through the Review of Individual Cases; Trauma and Becoming an Effective Educational Advocate; Abusive Head Trauma Medico-Legal Perspective; and Using Social Security to Maximize Permanency.*

OCA staff also attended and trained locally on topics such as Stewards of Children, Forensic Interviewing and the Delaware MDT, the Delaware MDT MOU, Trauma, Toxic Stress and the Impact on Learning, Supporting Education Stability for Youth in Foster Care, Family Court appointments, permanency and normalcy for youth in foster care, social security benefits, representing children in Family Court, "Legally Speaking" for foster parents, substance exposed infants and mandatory reporting of child abuse. OCA staff presented at local law firms, in-state conferences, community agencies, Delaware State Bar Association, Western Sussex Summit, schools, and other system partner agencies. Numerous OCA staff regularly present to community partners on the work of OCA.

In FY18, the training requirements for the detection and reporting of child abuse changed as a result of Senate Bill 102, which was passed in August 2017. Under the new requirements, school employees are required to receive 3 hours of child abuse and child safety awareness, prevention, detection, and reporting every 3 years, and new employees must receive 1 hour within 30 days of employment. Numerous meetings occurred throughout the fiscal year to implement the new law. This legislation gives school districts and charter schools flexibility in meeting non-academic training needs such as this one. During the fiscal year, DSCYF and OCA staff provided the onsite school training, *How to Identify and Report Child Abuse and Neglect in Delaware: School Training*, to 431 professionals. Additionally, approximately 7,515 teachers and other school staff completed the online training and survey. Each year, OCA partners with DOE to make the



training available on DOE's Blackboard course management system. Another 294 professionals, mostly from private schools, completed the training on OCA's online training system. In total, 10,100 educators, healthcare providers and members of the public were trained on their mandatory reporting obligations in FY18.

In FY18, another Child Attorney with OCA became a Child Welfare Law Specialist. Deputy Child Advocate Mark Hudson, Esquire, passed all tests and screening requirements and was certified by the National Association of Counsel for Children in August 2017. Mark joins Kelly Ensslin, Eliza Hirst, Jen Donahue and Tania Culley with this distinction.

Finally, staff have taken the initiative to improve their own computer and leadership skills by accessing trainings on software applications, supervisory and management skills, effective presentation skills, DELJIS, internet safety, continuous quality improvement and many other topics.

## Committees, Task Forces, and Initiatives

In addition to providing training, OCA's staff was highly committed to child welfare policy through a number of committees, task forces, and initiatives throughout the state. Many OCA staff participate in multiple committees and workgroups, some of which are referenced in this report.

Staff participated in a number of committees and initiatives with a focus on permanency for children experiencing the foster care system including the Interagency Committee on Adoption (IACO), the CFSR Permanency Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) Workgroup, the CIP Parent Representation and Engagement Workgroup, the Social Services Intervention Project, Quality Hearing Surveys and the CIP Visit Host Guidelines. Staff received training on the state statute ensuring normal childhood experiences for children in foster care and increased their focus on ensuring youth are able to take advantage of these experiences. Staff contributed to policy meetings through the federal Court Improvement Project grant, such as quarterly stakeholder meetings in each county, the CIP Leading Practices and the CIP Steering Committee, and served the Delaware State Bar Association (DSBA) through Mark Hudson's position as President of the Sussex County Bar Association and Vice President, Sussex County of the DSBA. Staff served on a subcommittee of the Access to Justice Commission, and provided training on Family Court Appointments and on pro bono opportunities to new admittees to the Delaware Bar. Staff attended required grantee meetings such as the Children's Justice Act (CJA) Grantee Meeting and the Annual Citizen Review Panel Conference.



Staff participated in committees focused on domestic violence, juvenile trafficking and juvenile justice such as the Juvenile Justice Conference, the Juvenile Justice Collaborative, SMART on Juvenile Justice State Improvement Grant, and the Youth Advisory Council and Conference. Other committees included the Northeast Leadership Collaborative, CPAC De-Escalation of Life Support Workgroup, DFS Advisory and Advocacy Committee, Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (DVCC) Child and Domestic Violence Subcommittee, CFSR Safety PIP Workgroup, Annual Progress and Services Review and Strategic Planning Annual Meeting, CPAC Caseloads/Workloads, Abuse Intervention, Data Utilization and Training with an eye towards improving the overall child welfare system.



In addition to the significant work invested in the Casey Family Programs grant and the Compassionate Schools Initiative, staff supported the CPAC Education Committee and its workgroups, and worked with the DOE to refine and produce quality data on the educational outcomes of children in foster care. Staff have also collaborated with DOE on the First Lady's First Chance Initiative and the Trauma Informed Schools Opportunity Grants. Finally, staff have worked diligently to improve Court Education Reports and develop forms and guides for the appointment of Education Decision Makers.

Staff celebrated their own physical health by participating in the Governor's 5K in October of 2018, and celebrated our children at Child Abuse Prevention Month in April of 2018 which was held this year at Nemours/ Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children. More than 100 child welfare professionals joined hospital staff to renew their commitment to preventing child abuse. OCA was on hand with a table recruiting CASA volunteers.

## Child Abuse and Neglect Panel

OCA, on behalf of CPAC, coordinates the Child Abuse and Neglect Review Panel (CAN Panel), which is charged with investigating and coordinating the review of child deaths and near deaths as a result of child abuse and neglect. Each of these cases must be reviewed within 6 months of the incident, and the cases often involve complicated medical, child welfare and law enforcement histories. OCA staff spent nearly 1,800 hours on the CAN Panel work in FY18. The CAN Panel, with oversight from the CAN Steering Committee, conducted retrospective reviews on 51 death and near death cases of abused and neglected children, which resulted in 161 strengths and 233 findings across six system areas.



In addition to preparing, reviewing, tracking findings and disseminating reports, OCA staff also support the CAN Steering Committee and represent OCA at child death related meetings including the Child Death Review Commission and its Executive Committee, the Delaware Violent Death Reporting System Advisory Board, the Child Abuse Committee at Beebe, and the Child Advocacy Committee at Bayhealth Medical Center. The work of OCA staff, the CAN Panel and the CAN Steering Committee shape the CPAC/CDRC Annual Retreat, the CPAC/CDRC Joint Action Plans, trainings offered to MDT partners, the comprehensive rewrite of Delaware's Memorandum of Understanding for the MDT response to child abuse and neglect, and the Protecting Delaware's Children conference speakers and themes. For more information, see the FY18 CPAC Annual Report.

## Office of the Investigation Coordinator

The Office of the Investigation Coordinator (IC) performs two mission critical functions for at-risk populations of children in Delaware: 1. Monitors each reported case involving the death of, serious physical injury to, or allegations of sexual abuse of a child from inception to final criminal and civil disposition; and 2. Monitors infants with prenatal substance exposure.

To fulfill its charge of monitoring cases of alleged child abuse and neglect, the IC receives weekly and monthly data extracts from the Division of Family Services (DFS), the Delaware Criminal Justice Information Center (DELJIS), and the Children's Advocacy Center of Delaware (CAC). All of the referrals are reviewed and analyzed utilizing the DFS data management system and DELJIS, and then opened if they fit within the purview of the IC. In FY18, the IC received 3,816 referrals from DFS, DELJIS and the CAC, and opened 1,328 cases to monitor. Of the 1,328 cases opened, 94% (1,253) alleged child sexual abuse, 4% (58) involved a serious physical injury to a child, and 1% (17) were child deaths. On June 30, 2018, 774 cases were open in the IC database.



Jennifer Donahue, Esq. and Jennifer Perry on Capitol Hill



Initiating and facilitating communication between the MDT is also a core function of the IC and improves the MDT response in these cases. All open cases are then periodically reviewed and analyzed to ensure the criminal and civil legal response and protection system has followed best practices to achieve punishment for perpetrators and legal protections for child victims. On a quarterly basis, the IC is responsible for analyzing collected data and statistics, identifying child welfare system issues and trends, providing pertinent data to CPAC and members of the MDT and making recommendations for system improvement in accordance with State and Federal law. IC participates in MDT Case Reviews four times per month, and will begin special case reviews in FY19. Increasing expertise

around the MDT and its positive impact on outcomes for victims of crime, in FY18 IC staff participated in the International Symposium on Child Abuse, Crimes Against Children Conference and Cornerstone Basic Interviewing trainings. IC regularly participates in the CPAC Training Committee workgroups, including MDT Case Review and CAN Best Practices, with a focus of further improving the multidisciplinary response to child abuse cases, as well as assists with mandatory reporting training, MDT protocol training and planning the Protecting Delaware's Children conference.

The Office also receives weekly data extracts from DFS for any infant reported to DFS for suspected prenatal substance exposure. These cases are reviewed, analyzed and monitored in the same manner as cases of alleged child abuse and neglect and entered into a separate independent database case tracking system. In FY18, the IC received 632 referrals of infants exposed to substances ranging from opiates to benzodiazepines. In addition to monitoring these cases, the IC is responsible for co-chairing

the CPAC/Child Death Review Commission's Committee on Substance Exposed Infants and Medically Fragile Children, overseeing the state's In-Depth Technical Assistance for Substance Exposed Infants from the National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW), and supporting the federal grant application for a Regional Partnership Grant to fund the development of Plans of Safe Care for infants with prenatal substance exposure and their families. Data and statistical reports are regularly prepared by the IC and submitted to CPAC, the Joint Committee, NCSAW, and other partner agencies. IC and DFS regularly partner to conduct local and national trainings with a recent focus on implementation of Plans of Safe Care statewide and DFS' leadership to develop dedicated staff for these complex cases. IC staff was invited to present on its work on behalf of these infants at SAMHSA's Tri Regional Convening in Kansas City, Missouri in May of 2018. IC was also asked to testify before the US Senate HELP Committee. Ms. Donahue was also recognized in FY18 with the 2017 Muriel E. Gilman Family Advocacy Award and as an Honoree at the Beebe Healthcare's International Women's Day Event. For the core work of this Office, 1,800 OCA staff hours were dedicated in FY18 with another 200 hours devoted to the work of CPAC.

## Court Appointed Special Advocates Program

The CASA Program advocates for children in Family Court proceedings, primarily those children in foster care, through a team approach. The CASA Volunteer partners with the Contract Child Attorney in making sure an independent investigation is conducted, the Child's best interests are represented to the Court, and the statutory duties are fulfilled. The Contract Child Attorney and CASA Volunteer work together as a team, with the Contract Child Attorney primarily in charge of legal duties and the CASA Volunteer in charge of fact gathering and meeting with the child. The CASA Coordinator completes the team by supporting the CASA Volunteer and facilitating communication between the CASA Volunteer and Contract Child Attorney. This creates the "Child Team," a triad of persons who are advocating for and supporting the child.



During FY18, the CASA Program Director and Coordinators provided supervision to 225 CASA Volunteers and coordination with 7 Contract Child Attorneys to ensure the best interests of the 547 children the program served. Staff recruit volunteers, and then supervise the CASA Volunteers by providing training, resources, expertise and regular guidance. Staff also assist with scheduling and conducting client visits; assisting the CASA Volunteer in providing legal testimony for court proceedings as necessary; acquiring, summarizing, and compiling voluminous records from various agencies through the discovery process; scheduling and attending witness interviews; attending and supporting the volunteer at team meetings, IEP meetings, and other multidisciplinary meetings; coordinating with the Contract Child Attorneys; preparing reports for the Court; resolving



conflicts; and generally making sure the CASA Volunteer is complying with all laws and appropriately discharging his or her duties. Strong recruitment, training and recognition of volunteers is what makes this program successful. In FY18 52 new CASAs were trained and assigned to children. Becoming a CASA requires a high level of commitment as each potential CASA spends 30 hours in training before being sworn in by a Family Court Judge. This spring the CASA program rolled out a new training program for volunteers. The program was well received and 23 new CASAs have been trained statewide on the program. In FY19 the CASA program plans to add two new training programs. The first program will be a flexible learning program combining in class instruction with an online interactive classroom. In addition, the CASA program plans to offer a CASA Refresher course for current CASAs. This will be a one-day training for current CASAs to get back to the basics. Current CASA volunteers also participate in monthly in-service trainings on a variety of topics related to the child welfare system.

In FY18 our CASA Volunteers were recognized at a statewide luncheon in Dover, sponsored and hosted by Friends of CASA. Awards were given for years of service with one volunteer, Joan

Heller, receiving an award for 30 years as a CASA Volunteer. Thank you Joan! In addition, a CASA of the Year award was given in each county. Marybeth Celello was the recipient in New Castle County, Bernard Nowell was the recipient in Kent County, and Darlene Dahling was the recipient in Sussex County. This event was well attended by staff and volunteers. The CASA Program also initiated CASA Cafes in FY18 in each county, providing an informal gathering for CASAs each month to develop expertise, gain knowledge and further collaborate as volunteers. Friends of Sussex CASA also hosted an annual training as well as a holiday celebration and supported the needs of youth in care.

Friends of CASA continued to provide monetary support to events that directly support CASA volunteers, including trainings, parking and mileage for lengthy trips to visit child clients. OCA could not achieve its mission without the support of these organizations.



The CASA Volunteer Policy and Procedures was updated in FY18. The policy includes procedures for recruitment, screening and selection, training, general program guidelines, retention, resignation, removal and termination of CASAs. In FY18 the CASA program has focused on recruiting more working professionals, such as paralegals, to join the CASA program. CASA staff and volunteers have recruited volunteers from community and professional events such as the local community events, church groups, vendor events, and professional conferences. CASA was also featured on Comcast Newsmakers in an effort to recruit more volunteers. It is hoped that with a new flexible learning environment, a broader spectrum of CASA volunteers that reflect the population will be recruited. In FY19 the CASA Program will develop a plan to recruit a larger group of volunteers with a focus in Kent and New Castle Counties and launch a CASA Peer Mentor Program. OCA will continue to partner with National CASA for resources and technical support.



In FY18, more than 8,000 hours in six months were devoted to supporting CASA Volunteers, and the Contract Child Attorneys logged approximately 7,000 hours working in tandem with CASA Coordinators and CASA Volunteers to advocate for children. During the fiscal year, trainings of attorneys, coordinators and volunteers continued to occur to implement new guides and procedures as well as elevate legal advocacy in and out of the courtroom. Staff were also afforded the opportunity to attend the National CASA Conference which included mandatory meetings for State Directors and Governing Body Leaders, and held a local Annual CASA Conference for volunteers to gain additional expertise and network with their volunteer colleagues.

The University of Delaware sorority sisters of Kappa Alpha Theta held their annual 5K walk/run to benefit CASA. The KAPPAs hold several fundraisers per year to support the CASA Program. The biggest event is the Rock the CASA 5K which raised over \$2,000.00 in FY18 to support the CASA Program. The proceeds are split between Delaware CASA and Cecil County CASA. The Kappas support the advocacy work of CASA which is their international philanthropy.

## Law Clerks and Interns

OCA benefited from the assistance of one law clerk during the summer of 2017 and two law clerks during the summer of 2018. These law clerks helped the staff with record reviews, memos, and preparation for court hearings. The law clerks also conducted legal research, drafted legislation and observed the legislative process. OCA also benefited from two social work interns. During FY18, law clerks and interns have contributed invaluable assistance to the OCA staff through research, policy work, and record reviews. Law clerks and interns donated about 1,000 volunteer hours to OCA during FY18.

## OCA Partnerships

OCA continued to meet with the Family Court, DSCYF, the Children's Advocacy Center and the Department of Justice to improve policies and procedures in the child welfare system and to develop future policy and legislative agendas. Meetings with DSCYF helped to advance issues such as case management decisions, caseloads, placements, permanency, and system challenges.

OCA also continues to partner with Family Court in a number of areas. OCA and the Court meet on a quarterly basis to review procedures, volunteer recruitment, court appointments and scheduling. Family Court has also continued to delegate a portion of its federal Court Improvement Project (CIP) grant to contract a CPAC Data Manager, who has worked with system partners to review and analyze child welfare data, and staff the CPAC Data Utilization Committee and Education Data Workgroup. The CPAC Data Manager, with support from the Family Court and the CIP grant, identified, secured and began building a cloud based data management system for the Office of the Child Advocate. The CPAC Data Manager and the OCA Office Manager continue to input data, build reports and manage the new system. OCA staff also serve on the CIP Steering Committee, attend national CIP meetings representing the child's voice, participate in county stakeholder meetings and engage in developing CIP trainings and initiatives that meet the goals of Delaware's CIP Strategic Plan.

OCA also met with both the criminal and family divisions of the Department of Justice to review policies and procedures, establish collaboration and tackle system issues. Likewise, OCA has meetings with the Children's Advocacy Center to develop common goals, address system breakdowns and partner for funding opportunities and support.

## Youth Activities and Donations

OCA received many generous donations from individuals and community agencies this past fiscal year. Kind to Kids routinely provides OCA with their signature Blue Duffle Bags to be provided to OCA clients. They have also provided bins of homemade blankets to be distributed to children when they enter foster care. These contributions are always well received by the volunteers, children and social workers.

OCA has also been fortunate for nearly a decade to be the recipient of the *Transform One Unique Child's Heart (TOUCH) Program*, a joint project of the Christiana Rotary Club and Wells Fargo. Staff continued to partner with this program on behalf of OCA, which provided school supplies to nearly 100 children to start school and holiday gifts for more than 300 children during the 2017 season. TOUCH sent out shopping teams weeks prior to the holiday, working very hard to fill wish lists. Even last minute requests from volunteers and advocates, on behalf of their child clients, were able to be filled due to the dedication of OCA staff and its generous community partners. Eastpoint Community Church has also been a veteran supporter of OCA clients during the holiday, purchasing gifts for individual children's wish lists. Thanks to TOUCH and Eastpoint Community Church, children received gifts including toys, games, clothes, shoes, educational items, sports equipment and apparel, electronics, art supplies, jewelry, toiletries and more.



One of our many volunteers, Susan Ament, shared her experience when delivering holiday gifts to her clients:

"In all my visits with S and Q, I rarely saw them smile and laugh. They both have a lot on their plates to deal with. When I gave them those gifts, their faces lit up, they smiled from ear to ear, and they laughed with joy and glee when they opened the gifts. These shoppers definitely made these two young people happy this Christmas. I cannot thank them enough. Seeing their faces is what Christmas is all about. Thank you for your roles in making this happen."

The Delaware Mortgage Bankers Association (DMBA) once again adopted the Office of the Child Advocate as its charitable recipient for its 2017 fundraiser. A special thanks to longtime OCA Child Attorney Volunteer Michael Isaacs for making the work of OCA known to this association, and a special thanks to Daykia, one of OCA's former clients, for her impressive speech. After an evening of silent auctions and speeches, DMBA donated more than \$6,300 to OCA to provide life experiences for children experiencing foster care.



Through the generosity of these organizations and individuals, OCA is able to partner with DSCYF to provide life experiences and normalcy to children who have experienced foster care. During FY18, over \$15,000 was utilized for laptops for high school and college students, trips including school trips to Europe and family trips to Disney, tutoring, school supplies, senior pictures, homecoming and prom attire, summer camps, sports equipment and lessons, and essential items like clothes and baby supplies. OCA was also able to use funds towards a student's dream to accompany her French class to France and Spain. Her CASA Coordinator, Monica Porter, had some kind words to say about her client:

"A is a good student and bright young lady. She received a grade of 94 in French! Addressing and overcoming the many obstacles in her young life that she feels no longer have a place in her present or future plans has been difficult, however, doable for her. It would be a life changing experience for A to go on this trip."

It was a memorable trip that she will never forget, and A shared with her team the many beautiful pictures she took and experiences she had. Thank you to the amazing donors who have made these experiences possible for our children, and thank you for continuing to donate to OCA so that these experiences may continue to be funded.



## Volunteer Honor Roll

### CASA Volunteer Honor Roll

#### 30+ Years of Service

Joan Heller

#### 20+ Years of Service

Matilda Snable  
Gloria Sanders

#### 15+ Years of Service

Shirley Bryan  
Emory Buck  
Beverly Flannigan

Ellen Levin  
Judith Miller  
Leslie Raia

Christina Sailer  
Dorothy Warmack  
Belinda Wilson

Karen Young

#### 10 + Years of Service

Robert Barnes  
Caroline Jones  
Deloris Lockett

Veta McCarther  
Vanessa Minor  
Nancy Misita

Edith Outten  
Jean Simpson  
Karen Skurla

Bette VanKavelaar

#### 5 + Year of Service

Patricia Abernethy  
Tenley Alexander  
Diana Allen  
Jennifer Allen  
Michelle Anderson  
Trudi Kae Anderson  
Susan Arruda  
Patricia Baines  
Richard Gray Banks  
George Berkowitz  
Jennifer Blair  
Lois Clifton  
Henry Coghlan

Selina Coghlan  
Gayle Dillman  
Michael Eisenhauer  
Aimee Elson  
Sue Eriksen  
Suzanne Feaster  
Janet Gordon  
Dennis Hallock Sr.  
Colleen Harbison  
Starr Hargraves  
Lisa Hollandsworth  
Nancy Horne  
Edward Irvin

Michelle Johnson  
Elaine Jones  
Deborah Koppes  
Kathleen Lock  
Constance Luetngen  
Alan Machtinger  
Laura McGowan  
Rebecca Moody  
Sheron Moody  
Geraldine Murray  
Rose Nolen-Watson  
Susan O'Doherty  
Jane Rattenni

Maureen Rayborn  
Karen Reuschlein  
Jeanne Riley  
Amina Saunders  
Geraldine Storan  
Cristian Tijerino  
Gail Truxon  
Daneen Tucker  
Marguerite Veney  
Nichole Welling  
H. Richard White  
Cassandra Wilkerson



## CASA Volunteers

Lauren Allgood	Cory Lyn Foard	Pam Marshack	Carroll Shannon
Marius Ambrose	Brandy Forston	Anne Martelli	Suzanne Shealy
Elizabeth Baker	Erica C. Giles	Malinda Maslo	Robert Sherrell
Bobbi Barends	Maude Glore	Sharon McBride-Howard	Dana Silverman
Patricia Barnes	Margaret Hannan	Brooke McCabe	Michelle Smith
James R. Beirnes	Mark Hare	Margaret McCloskey	Priscilla Sorrell
Barbara Berrick	Thomas Harris	Helene McKinny	Deb Spandikow
Donna Bond	Belinda Harrison	Donald Miller	Pamela Spencer
Thirwall Bonham	Deborah Hartnett	Leann Moore	Lauren Staley
Felicia Bowe	Denise Hoban	Robert George Myers	Regina Starr
Amy Brackin	Kimberly Holm	Marrissa Nardo	Richard Sulkovsky
Mary Ann Brosso	Denise Sylvia Hubbell	Weston Nellius	Yvette Sullivan
Jennifer Brown-Davis	Karen Ingram	Lynne Nickel	Marcie Tauber
Lyn-Diane Budd	Patricia Jackson	Bernard Nowell	Allison Taylor
Linda Busacca	Leah Jaffee	Deborah O'Brien	Eileen Taylor
Peggy Butler	Marsha Jendrewski	Maureen O'Brien	Gary Tennant
Lane Carter	Delia Joseph	Biola Ojedokun	Virginia Terczak
Marybeth Ceello	Evelyn Kauffman	Jackie L. Onwu	Anita Thorpe
Jessica Clampitt	Deanna Killen	Linda Owings	Tonya Thorpe
Kevin Clark	Paul Marti King	Marie Therese Peters	Kathy Tilghman
Kristen Clark	Marjorie Kobin	Lucille Pollard	Gwendolyn Trammell
Eschalla Clarke	Kathleen Koster	Mary Mackenzie Priapi	Martina Travis
Carmel Colica	Jody Kusek	Dell Printz	Rachael VerNooy
Nancy Contel	John Kusek	Elizabeth Raney	Andrea Volpe
Bruce Conway	Tiffany Jean Lacy	Erin Elizabeth Rich	Dorothy Walker
Janet R. Cornwell	Patricia Lanham	Velma Richardson-	Sarah Walsh
Joe Anne H. Corwin	Marietta Laporte	Graziano	Jennifer Whitehead
Carole Cotman	Diane C. Latocha	Beverly Rickards	Annetrea Wilkins
Ann Couzens	Michelle Lauer	Craig Rinschler	Joy Wollen
Lisa Crimm	Laura Lee	Dianne Rogers	Sarah Wooten
Darlene Dahling	Linda Sue Lett	Susan Rohrbacher	Bruce Wyngaard
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Carrie DeV Vaughn	John Loehr	Barbara Roos	Elvida Yoder
Joanne DiBella	Nancy Maldeis	Dennis Edward	Marlene Zeleny
Theresa Doherty	Patricia Mangini	Rozumalski	Cathy Zimmerman
Nancy Dunn	Mary Marchegiano	Nathan Lou Schloss	Allan Zoeller
Diane Fleming	George Marshack	Diane Senerth	

## Volunteer Child Attorney Honor Roll

### 15+ Years of Service

Derek Abbott, Esq.  
Susan D. Ament, Esq.  
John C. Andrade, Esq.  
Shakuntla Bhaya, Esq.  
Curtis Bounds, Esq.  
Megan Cascio, Esq.  
Eileen Caulfield, Esq.  
Edward Curley, Esq.  
Brock E. Czeschin, Esq.

Jill DiSciullo, Esq.  
Shawn Dougherty, Esq.  
Mike Eaton, Esq.  
Glynis Gibson, Esq.  
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Jerome Grossman, Esq.  
Thomas Hanson, Esq.  
Susan Hauske, Esq.

David Hutt, Esq.  
Michael Isaacs, Esq.  
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Kathryn Laffey, Esq.  
Mary Erin Mariani, Esq.  
Carolyn McNeice, Esq.  
Bruce McNew, Esq.  
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Elizabeth Weinig, Esq.  
Natalie S. Wolf, Esq.  
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### 10 + years of Service

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Stephen Milewski, Esq.  
Sharon Morgan, Esq.

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## 5+ Years of Service

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Dana Reynolds, Esq.  
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## OCA Volunteer Attorneys

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Christopher Lee, Esq.  
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Renee Mosley, Esq.  
Lucian Murley, Esq.  
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Raeann Warner, Esq.  
Lawrence Wentz, Esq.  
Andrew Wilson, Esq.  
Elise Wolpert, Esq.

## Fiscal Year 2018 Staff and Contractors

Tania Culley, Esquire, CWLS

Child Advocate

### Legal Services

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Elizabeth Fillingame, Esquire, Managing Attorney  
Erin Fitzgerald, Esquire, Child Attorney  
Melissa Green, Esquire, Child Attorney  
Eliza Hirst, Esquire, CWLS, Deputy Child Advocate  
Mark Hudson, Esquire, CWLS, Deputy Child Advocate  
Jennifer Kline, Esquire, Child Attorney  
Al Lindh, Esquire, Child Attorney  
Mark McNulty, Esquire, Child Attorney  
Tracy Pearson, Esquire, Child Attorney  
Molly Shaw, Esquire, Deputy Child Advocate  
Elizabeth Soucek, Esquire, Child Attorney

### Legal Support

Tahira Ayyaz, CASA Coordinator  
Lauren Brueckner, CASA Coordinator  
Megan Caudell, CASA Coordinator  
Shana Cipparone, Family Crisis Therapist  
Sam Clancy, CASA Coordinator  
Jennifer Falkowski, Family Crisis Therapist  
Nakia Howard, CASA Coordinator  
Emella Kamara, CASA Coordinator  
Jacqueline Kemp, CASA Coordinator  
Camille Keshishian, CASA Coordinator  
Melissa Palokas, CASA Coordinator  
Mary Monica Porter, CASA Coordinator  
Gwen Stubbolo, CASA Program Director

### Policy

Jessica Begley, CPAC Training Coordinator  
Angela Birney, Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Review  
Specialist  
Jennifer Donahue, Esquire, CWLS, Investigation Coordinator  
Rosalie Morales, MS, Chief Policy Advisor  
Jennifer Perry, Investigation Coordinator Case Review  
Specialist

### Administration and Data Management

Janet Jasinski, Administrative Specialist II  
Stephanie Scollo, Office Manager  
Brittany Willard, CPAC Data Manager

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