



the Advocate Newsletter



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2022



A Letter from Executive Director **Drew MacLeod**

Dear Friends,

It's my pleasure to share this annual report with you. Advocacy is difficult work, so it's important to look at the positives that occurred in the past year and highlight accomplishments of volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates, staff, and Board of Directors' over the past year.

- Over 400 children were given a voice by volunteer Advocates in Yellowstone County
- Volunteer Advocates donated 7,989 hours of time advocating for youth
- The program team completed the biennial Program Survey which is used to build a quality improvement plan
- A Strategic Plan was developed from the Board's planning session in January
- Our first in person Advocate Appreciation Event in two year was held at Zoo Montana
- Our first ever CASA Community Night at the Babcock was held in March
- We held a fundraising campaign for the CASA Endowment to provide funding in the future
- A company sponsored IRA plan was implemented for staff with match provided
- We partnered with new granters to diversify our funding sources

Recruiting new Advocates continues to be a challenge. To meet that challenge, we are continuously exploring new ways to reach those who have a passion for children and remove barriers to volunteering. It is our goal to provide the best support we can for our volunteer Advocates. We see an upward trend in the number of people interested in volunteering and are confident the coming year will produce over 60 new Advocates.

We need your support to get closer to CASA's vision of providing an advocate for every child that needs one. You can help by encouraging your friend, who would be an excellent advocate, to visit with our volunteer recruiter. Have us come and speak to your civic group or church. Or make a financial contribution that will support those efforts. Thank you for your support, advocacy, and dedication to the most vulnerable in our community. It really does take a village to raise a child and support families in need.

Sincerely,

Drew MacLeod

CASA of Yellowstone County Executive Director

CASA of Yellowstone County Board Members



Dallas Pender
Board President



Mike Leo
Vice President



Andrea Horrell
Treasurer



Linda Schmaing
Secretary



Jennifer Smith



Nate Nunberg



Ursula Richter



Jenn Weber



Maria Gnecco



Brittney Mada



Clayton Gregersen

Welcome New Board Members!



Clayton Barnes



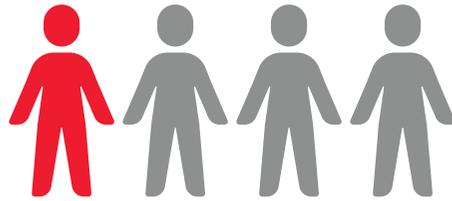
Tara French



Charlie Jackson

DIVING INTO DATA

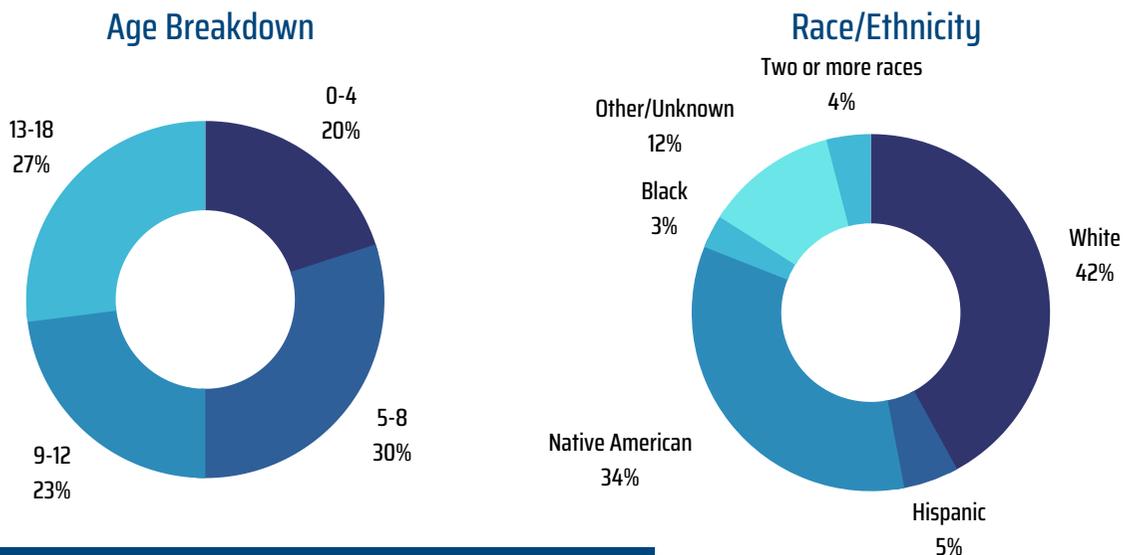
CASA of Yellowstone County's Priority List



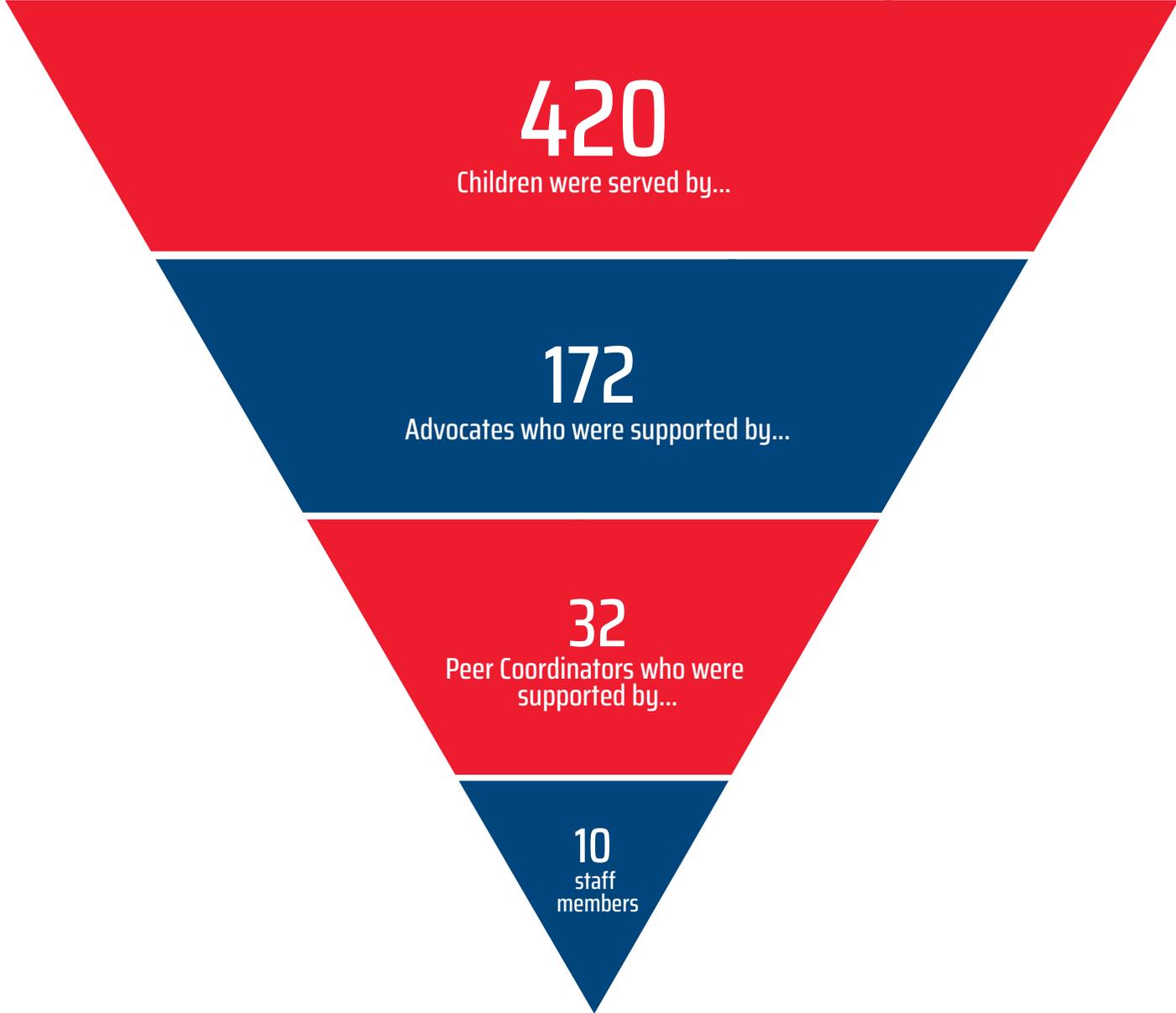
Montana has one of the highest numbers of children in foster care per capita in the nation. Yellowstone County accounts for approximately one-quarter of children in foster care in the entire state of Montana. Due to the high number of children in the local foster care system, CASA of Yellowstone County has the difficult task of going through each case to determine which children are most in need of a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate for their case.

Of the **700 children** currently navigating the foster care system in Yellowstone County, the organization is serving approximately 236 children at this time, with 100 children waiting on the CASA priority list to receive a volunteer Advocate. The impact of just one volunteer Advocate makes a powerful difference for children in foster care in our community. With each class trained and sworn-in, the CASA priority list gets a little smaller, and we take one step closer to reaching our vision of providing a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate for every abused and neglected child in Yellowstone County. If you serve as a CASA, or as a supporter of CASA, thank you! Your generosity has a real impact on children in our community.

Youth Served in Fiscal Year 2022

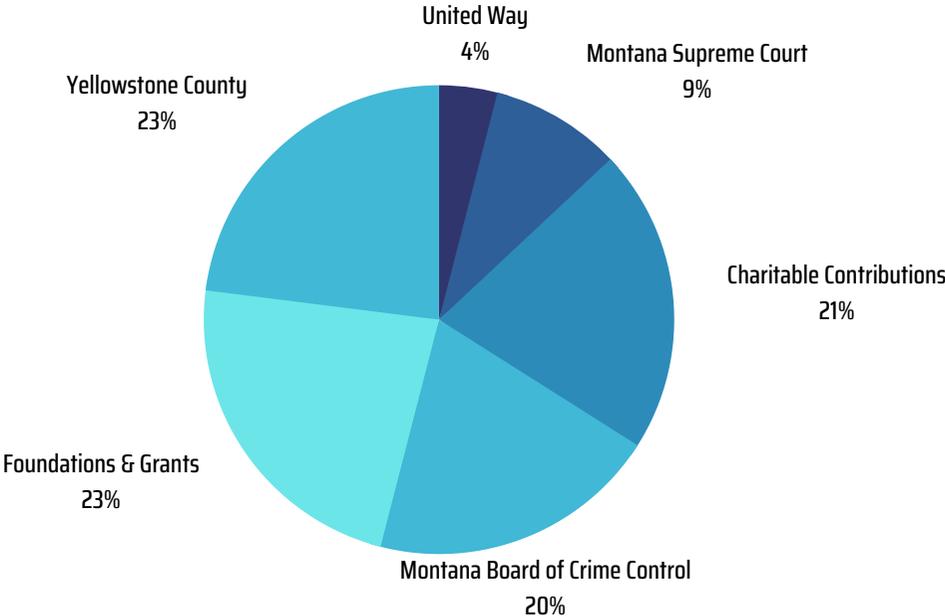


Between July 2021 - June 2022

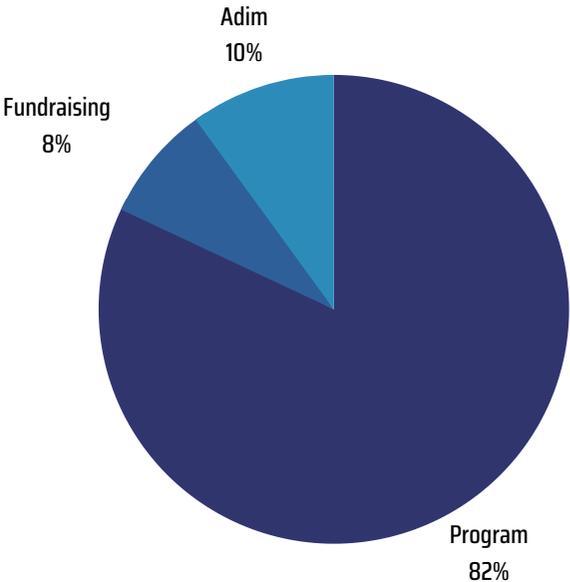


Fiscal Year 2022 Financial Statement

Income- \$735,472



Expenses- \$696,350



This financial statement is based on preliminary, pre-audited figures

Planning for the Future

CASA of Yellowstone County Endowment

In this most recent fiscal year, one of CASA of Yellowstone County's priorities was to build on the Endowment. Thanks to many generous donors, the Endowment has grown to **\$76,963**. While the organization is not utilizing this as a source of income at this time, with continued dedication to growing the Endowment, CASA of Yellowstone County hopes to build it into a funding source for years to come.



Contributions to the Endowment support future generations of volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates and children in foster care in our community. To all who generously donated to the CASA Endowment this past year, please know how grateful we are for your care and support. Donations over \$2,500 may be eligible for the Montana Deferred Annuity Tax Credit.

Advocate Spotlight

Bob Brown



Bob Brown joined CASA of Yellowstone County as a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate in 2017 after learning of the urgent need for more volunteers to advocate on behalf of at-risk children in the foster care system. Thus far, he has limited his CASA advocacy to very young children. Bob currently has two separate cases, one with a three-year-old boy in kinship care (placed with family members), and another case with a newborn infant in foster care.

Bob grew up in Billings and graduated from Billings Central Catholic High School. After serving four years in the U.S. Air Force, he went to college and earned a degree in Business Administration from the University of Montana. Thereafter, Bob spent his career in a number of areas, including public accounting (KPMG), oil and gas exploration, and the Coca-Cola bottling business in both Montana and California. After 16 years as CFO of Sacramento Coca-Cola Bottling Co., Bob retired and returned to Billings in 2014.

In addition to serving as a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate, Bob is involved in a number of other volunteer activities in the Billings community, including serving on the boards of directors of the Billings Catholic Schools Foundation and LaVie. He also sings in his church and cuddles babies in the St. Vincent NICU. Bob has been married to his wife, Mary, for nearly 44 years. Together they have three grown children and one granddaughter.

Bob shared that CASA is one of the most rewarding volunteer activities he has been involved with, knowing that he is making a real difference in the lives of children. With frequent turnover of court and foster care personnel and foster placements, the volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate often is the only “constant” in the child’s life—the one person the child can count on to be there through all the upheaval.

In Bob’s experience, child protective services workers and guardians ad litem carry massive caseloads and often do not have the time or resources to adequately shepherd cases through the system. As a result, sometimes things fall through the cracks. One of the most important roles a CASA can play is to be vigilant as to upcoming hearings and other deadlines and put a bug in the ear of the appropriate parties to remind them of actions that need to be taken. Without that gentle nudging, these cases can end up stretching on for years, which only delays the permanent resolution for each child.

When asked about any advice Bob would have for someone considering becoming a CASA, Bob said, “Just do it! You won’t regret it.”

Congratulations Spring Class Advocates!



In fiscal year 2022 CASA of Yellowstone County swore in 40 new volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates.

During this fiscal year, volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates:

- Spent **7,989** volunteer hours on their cases, donating more than **\$228,006** worth of casework to Yellowstone County
- Conducted **1,620** visits with children in foster care
- Submitted **2,299** official reports on children in foster care to judges, attorneys, and social workers
- Attended **884** hearings to advocate for the best interests of the children on their cases



It's Time to... "Run"?

SEPTEMBER 10th 2022

CASA of Yellowstone County's 0.5k fundraiser "run" is back!

Join us at Thirsty Street Brewing Co. @ The Garage to support children in local foster care.



For more information scan the QR code
or go to www.yellowstonecasa.org



Join us for coffee and learn more about
CASA of Yellowstone County.

We meet semi monthly to give you the
opportunity to ask questions and meet some of
our volunteer Court Appointed Special
Advocates who work with kids in foster care.

Follow us on Facebook to learn about upcoming
Coffee with CASA dates.

Memorial & Honor Gifts



In Memory of Ruth Lechner

Patty Lechner
Howard & Marie Hailstone
Jo Killenbeck

In Memory of Char Pollington

Emily Gaudreau

In Memory of Barb Potzman

Joanne & Bud Leuthold

In Memory of Sandy Mehus

Joanne & Bud Leuthold

In Memory of Joe and Patty Ricci

Janice & John Roberts

In Memory of David Ricci

Janice & John Roberts

In Memory of Bob Western

Lillian & James Hartung

In Memory of James Ulrich

Annette Behm

In Memory of Allan Bergan

Mike & Inger Curtis

In Memory of Rita Feller

Tom Hahn

In Memory of Barb Hogg's mom, Ethel Gerard

Florence Diede

In Honor of Angela Campbell

Drew & Kat MacLeod

In Honor of Gretchen Schumacher

Tyson Schumacher

In Honor of Kaleif and Stephanie Rongstad's Wedding

Kenneth & Marilee Foos

Let's Talk, About CASA

Perhaps you've heard about CASA on the radio or TV, or seen our billboards while driving across town. One of the best ways for us to reach new folks in the community, however, is much simpler – talking to people! Here at CASA of Yellowstone County, we are always seeking out new opportunities to speak to local churches, clubs, schools, and businesses about what we do and the impact our volunteer Advocates have on the lives of children in foster care. We speak to groups large and small, and we're happy to present anything from a short speech to a full PowerPoint presentation.



If you are interested in having someone from our organization come speak to members of your group, please contact Emily (emily@yellowstonecasa.org). We look forward to talking soon!

Become a Monthly Donor!

Court Appointed Special Advocates go through 35 hours of pre-service training and 12 hours of on-going training each year as they walk through the foster care system with their CASA children. As a monthly donor, you can help provide training and support to the volunteer Advocates serving children in the local foster care.

Monthly Giving to CASA of Yellowstone County

- \$10** a month provides training materials for one CASA
- \$20** a month covers half the training cost for one CASA
- \$40** a month provides 6 months of training & support for one CASA
- \$60** a month provides one year of training & support for one CASA
- \$85** a month provides one year of training & support for TWO CASA's
- \$120** a month provides one year of training & support for THREE CASA's

