



San Juan CASA Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission Statement:

San Juan County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteer) program's mission is to support effective volunteer advocacy for the best interests of abused and neglected children involved in the court system. The program's vision is to ensure that every child has a safe, supportive and permanent home. A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained, community volunteer, appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of the child in court. Once appointed to a case the CASA volunteer becomes an official part of the judicial proceeding, working alongside attorneys and social workers as an appointed officer of the court.

San Juan County CASA Program History:

In 1996, a group of concerned citizens with the support of the Children's Court District Judge organized a preliminary CASA program in San Juan County. This group which was comprised of a local lawyer, children's court judge, Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), and Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) trained the first four volunteers. Since 1998 the program has been under the umbrella of Childhaven Inc., a private non-profit organization. Childhaven Inc. was suitable to oversee the San Juan CASA program since its mission is to serve abused, neglected, and abandoned children so that they may reach their full potential.

In the fiscal year 2008/2009, 51 active San Juan County CASA volunteers followed 63 cases involving 152 children. CASA volunteers advocated for 45% of the children who went before the Children's Court Judge. San Juan CASA volunteers contributed 3685 volunteer hours and 17,643 volunteer miles serving their children.

Funding Sources:

Childhaven is a United Way Agency and currently receives funding of \$17,000 for the San Juan CASA program for the Fiscal Year (FY) 09/10. The San Juan CASA Program was successful in securing \$11,557 through a grant from VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) for the Fiscal Year July 09/10 and receives \$87,244 from the statewide judiciary budget.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: To serve the best interests of abused, neglected and abandoned children in the court system in San Juan County.

Goal 2: Increase or maintain the number of CASA volunteers serving abused and neglected children in San Juan County while maintaining a high volunteer retention rate.

Goal 3: CASA volunteers expedite the permanency plan of the child while working as a member of the multidisciplinary team.

Objectives

Please describe the objectives to this program (how will you accomplish your goals)

Objectives for Goal 1:

- 1. CASA volunteers provide services to a minimum of 25% of children involved in abuse and neglect cases filed in San Juan County. (Documented by court appointment letter.)**

Objectives for Goal 2:

- 1. Hold a minimum of two CASA Pre-Service training sessions per year. A minimum of three volunteers will attend each training. (Measured by the CASA Pre-Service Training Sign-In Sheets.)**
- 2. Maintain a volunteer retention rate of 80%. CASA volunteer commitment is one year. (Measured through annual statistics.)**

Objectives for Goal 3:

- 1. Recommendations made by the CASA volunteer in his/her report are followed in 80% of the cases. (Measured through reports submitted to the District Court.)**