

Community Member Takes on Larger Role

Get to know CASA's new director

Tammy Settergren grew up in Chalmers, Indiana (White County) on a large farm where she lived with her parents and an older brother. After graduating from Purdue University with a BS in Business Management and Marketing, Tammy moved to Indianapolis where she met her husband of 24 years, Jay. Jay is a 30-year career firefighter at IFD and a leader of Indiana Task Force One. Tammy and Jay together had two sons, Riley and Chase, both who attended Eastern Hancock High School and a son JJ (Jay) who is a Fishers Police officer

and resides in Hamilton county with his wife and children.

After college, Tammy spent 15 years working in corporate America as a program supervisor, traveling across country and managing all aspects of multi-million dollar contracts. Since leaving corporate America, Tammy opened her own apparel printing business called Just Good Tee's & More. Tammy created The Riley Charles Settergren Foundation in honor of her son, where she holds a board position. She also serves on the Eastern Hancock School Corporation

board. Tammy served as a volunteer CASA in Hancock County and grew into becoming the Executive Director from the Child Case Specialist position. Tammy has a loving and giving heart and knows that she can help so many children in this role. When Tammy isn't busy with her business, helping the community through her sons' foundation or working with CASA, she enjoys cooking, riding her horses, camping and spending valuable time making memories with her friends and family.



SETTERGREN

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES



teers undertake a thorough investigation to understand all aspects of their charges' lives in order to make a recommendation to the court that will best serve a child in need.

The organization always attempt to reunify families if possible, but when that can't be accomplished, the best interest of the child takes precedence.

Volunteers, who must be 21 years-old or older, have a minimum of a high school diploma or GED equivalent, pass criminal and child welfare background checks and provide professional and personal references. Prospective case workers must then complete a CASA interview and 30 hours of training followed by pre-service courtroom observation. Currently, there is an immediate need to increase the volunteer base and they could use several male volunteers.

"They truly are volunteers, and they're true heroes," Sirk said. "One of the greatest resources of Hancock County is our citizens, and our citizens have come forward without pay for the benefit of our children."

The work is thorough and demanding. With clients ranging from infants to 18 years of age, most cases take about a year to complete, but some continue for much longer.

"I can't tell you how much they help," Sirk said. "They just do an excellent job. They are the eyes and ears of the court, and we greatly rely on them."

In addition to government funding, Hancock County CASA also relies on the community at large for support. Hancock County Friends of CASA, Inc., is the organization's independent 501(c)(3) fundraising non-profit arm that accepts donations from the public.

From local donations and volunteers to judicial oversight, Hancock County CASA is truly a community effort that works to protect its most vulnerable with all levels of civic and government leaders on board.

"The county council and commissioners have just been tremendous," Sirk said. "I cannot tell you how wonderful they are to our program. They're constantly looking for ways to support us."

For more information about CASA in Hancock County, to volunteer or donate, visit www.casahancockcountyin.org, or call (317) 477-1304.

CALL TO SERVE

CASA supports Hancock County children in need

Since stepping away in January 2020 from its umbrella partnership with Madison County, the Hancock County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program continues its upward arc in serving local children who are victims of abuse and neglect.

Last year, the organization grew its roster of active volunteers to 56, a 60 percent increase from its initial year as an independent service. The group also served 65 more county children in 2021, and - more importantly - saw a 72 percent decrease in its waiting list.

Overall, more volunteers evaluated the situations of more children in need with significantly less delay, which is something to which Hancock County CASA has been aspiring.

"We've been working on our wait list, which is our biggest goal: to have no child waiting on a CASA," said Marciann McClarnon Miller, Hancock County CASA former director.

But what exactly is CASA?

It is not, as Hancock County Circuit Court Judge Scott Sirk notes, affiliated with a popular local restaurant bearing a similar name.

"It is a court-appointed special advocate here in Hancock County, appointed by the judge to represent and act on behalf of the interests of children who've been removed from their homes," said Sirk, who oversees the Hancock County CASA court program.

"They're (CASA advocates) an independent voice, and they work in the best interests of the children," he said.

Once appointed by the court, CASA volun-



Tammy Settergren, Hancock County Director of CASA, and outgoing director Marciann McClarnon Miller, work to give a voice to county children in need. For more information about CASA in Hancock County, to volunteer or donate, visit www.casahancockcountyin.org, or call (317) 477-1304.

DREAM BIG! FUND

For when county children need 'more than a voice'

last for years and a CASA Volunteer always speaks up for children they represent. Sometimes they need goods or services they can't get anywhere else. They may need something to spark their educational or psychological growth and development. They may need special help to build the self-esteem and confidence so often lacking in children of these circumstances. The CASA is there to help provide hope.

The Dream Big! Fund was created to meet these needs.

Many children don't get 'stuff' of their own, or a day at the zoo. This

is where their CASA comes in. If a CASA sees a special need for a child they represent, they will have the opportunity to apply to Hancock County Friends of CASA, Inc. for support of this child. A CASA would be able to request up to \$200 per child per year. This would be such an amazing way to make dreams come true for Hancock County children who have been removed from their home because of abuse or neglect.

Recently the FOC board approved 6 DREAM BIG! wishes for children, one volunteer stated, "When I told

my child his wish was granted, I saw a smile I hadn't seen on his face in two years of working with him. This was priceless to me and him." His wish was a years family membership to the Indianapolis Zoo!

This Fall, Hancock County Friends of CASA (FOC) will hold a DREAM BIG! fundraiser at Daniel's Winery on Sept. 28 to help support the CASA's and children obtain their DREAM BIG! Wishes. Stay tuned for details.

(317) 477-1304

www.casahancockcountyin.org



The Hancock County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program provides an invaluable service speaking up for children who have been removed from their homes because of abuse or neglect. But sometimes these kids need more than a voice. Many of these cases