

I AM FOR THE CHILD.

On March 5, 1995, Ryan Luke, a little boy from McAlester, Oklahoma, died from a child abuse-related head injury. Oklahomans were outraged. Many galvanized their outrage into movements to help children.



It was no different in Rogers, Mayes, Craig, Ottawa, and Delaware Counties. In memory of Ryan Luke, a group of concerned citizens wanted to ensure that children had trained citizen advocates who would visit them in person regularly and speak up when a child's best interests were not being honored. They decided to start a court-appointed special advocate program.



The bottom line is that Child Advocates of Northeast Oklahoma (CANO) believes every child deserves to grow up in a safe, permanent, nurturing home. We believe children need walls to put their pictures on, adults who love them, and families who nurture them and make their health, education, and well-being a priority.

WE ARE FOR CHILDREN...

...who are victims of addiction, who slowly watch their parents killing themselves with substances. Children like **Marissa**, born addicted to methamphetamine.

...who live in a war zone, who witness their parents hurting one another in domestic violence situations. Children like **Curtis**, who thinks love is supposed to hurt. That it's okay to exert power and control over a partner. Who has post-traumatic stress disorder, a diagnosis usually reserved for veterans.

...whose parents are caught in the spiral of untreated mental illness. Children like **Evie** who rarely goes to school. Her mother, Vicki, can barely get out of bed to tend to her own needs, let alone that of Evie and her siblings. Evie stays home, forfeiting her education and development to assure that Max and Shanie, her twin baby brothers, get their needs met.

...who live in abject poverty, whose parents live off a system that was never intended to support them. Children like **Frank** who rarely see a doctor or dentist. Who don't get to eat at night. Whose teachers know to bring soap and a clean change of clothes so they don't have to be "the stinky kid."

CANO believes the solution for bewildered and hurting children is a caring adult – a **CASA volunteer**. Our citizen volunteers are specially trained to understand the needs, growth, and development of children. They recognize what is in the best interest of children. They boldly navigate the complex court system, lending their voices to the voiceless to say, **"I am for the child."**

CASA: A SOLUTION THAT WORKS

Better Outcomes for Children

- CASA volunteers handle just one or two cases at a time, so they can give each child's case sustained, personal attention.
- Children with CASA volunteers spend less time in long-term foster care, experience fewer out-of-home placements, and have significantly improved educational performance.
- More than 90% of children with CASA volunteers never reenter the child welfare system, a significant difference compared to 87% of the general foster care population, resulting in significant savings in child welfare expenses.

Cost Effectiveness

- CASA volunteers save tens of millions of dollars in child welfare costs alone. Just 12% of children assigned a CASA volunteer remain in long-term foster care, compared to 16% of the general foster care population.
- The child welfare system could not afford to provide a comparable level of advocacy through non-volunteer approaches. In 2013, CASA volunteers contributed 5.75 million advocacy hours equivalent to almost \$290 million in taxpayer dollars if compensated for their service. At CANO, our volunteers donated 2,430 hours and drove 30,800 miles in 2016.
- Return on investment: 75 to 1. Federal funding for one staff supervisory position within a local CASA program supports up to 30 trained volunteer workers, assigned to as many as 75 children within a year.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

In FY 2017, 60 volunteers advocated for 230 children. Another 270 children are waiting. CANO's goal is that every child who needs a CASA volunteer will have one. ***We need 70 more CASA volunteers to reach our goal.***

You make a difference!

- **Volunteer:** Become an advocate for a child. Tell everyone you know, ***"I am for the child."***
- **Like Us:** Join our Facebook page, "Child Advocates of Northeast Oklahoma", to let us know you're with us.
- **Follow Us:** Sign up for our email newsletter to stay informed about children's needs and issues.
- **Help Us Share Our Story:** Invite us to speak to your club, church, or group of friends.
- **Donate to Our Cause:** Your donation makes a difference. It costs \$1,700 per year to provide a CASA volunteer to a child and it costs \$500 to train a new volunteer, so every donation helps.

CANO accepts gifts of as little as a dollar to more than \$200,000 in grant funds. We also accept in-kind, planned, and multi-year gifts. Please donate online at www.cano-casa.com/ways-to-give or by contacting Angela Henderson at (918) 923-4570 or at angela@cano-casa.com.

HISTORY OF CASA IN NORTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA



CHILD ADVOCATES OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA

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