

# CASA FOR KIDS

FLATHEAD  
COUNTY

LIFT UP A CHILD'S VOICE. A CHILD'S LIFE.



A **NEWSLETTER** ADVOCATING FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

CASA FOR KIDS FLATHEAD COUNTY

## YOU ARE TRANSFORMING LIVES!

by Julia Sweeney

Judi Hewitt first learned about CASA through a friend who was an advocate in Flathead County. With a background in education, she had firsthand experience working with youth, and knew that there were children and families in the valley who were struggling. She decided that she wanted to become a CASA and help local abused and neglected children in the foster care system.

In October, 2015, Judi was sworn in as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) in the 11th Judicial District. She was assigned her first case in November and worked diligently to advocate for the best interests of the children she was serving. On her third case, Judi was assigned as CASA to Hannah and Anthony due to their mother's inability to parent them.



When CPS arrived to remove Hannah, she asked to be placed with her best friend, Alliyah, and her family. CPS contacted Alliyah's mom, Marcie, who didn't give it a second thought. Hannah and Anthony moved into to their new home.

Although Hannah and Anthony had been involved with CPS years earlier, Marcie and her family had no prior experience. It was an extremely emotional time, and the kids were struggling.

Marcie spent weeks trying to navigate

a system she knew nothing about and then "their superhero, Judi" came to the rescue, "and it was obvious from the beginning that Marcie loved and cared for them. It was so nice to work with this family and I instantly bonded with Hannah and Anthony."

"Judi talked to their teachers, coaches, counselors, and anyone who came in contact with them. She always remained active in her advocacy. She showed up at their sporting and school events to show her support," Marcie

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JULY 2018

# BECAUSE OF YOU!

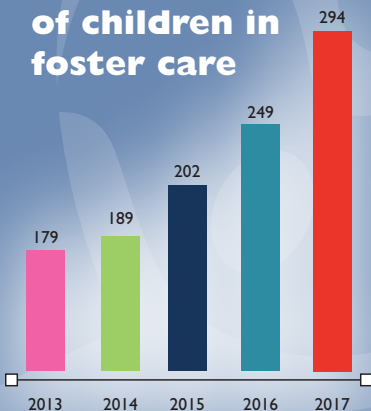
208,705 volunteer hours since 2000



1,116 children served since 2000



We can serve the growing number of children in foster care



reports. “Before Judi, the kids and I were completely lost. I was new to the foster care system and found it difficult to get direct answers or guidance. Once Judi was assigned that changed. Judi was always there to listen to us, our frustrations and to help us find answers or direct us to where we could find answers. She advocated for the kids in all areas.”

Hannah and Anthony know they can count on their CASA. Hannah says about Judi, “She helped me by being there for me when I needed her and always checked up on me. She would always ask me about my sports and school, so it was really nice to not always just talk about the serious things, but about all things I was interested in. Judi is super kind and genuinely cares about Anthony and I. I could tell she did because she would always get things done, she let us know important dates when no one else would, and would contact me at random times just to say hello and ask how things were going.”

Marcie was granted guardianship in May, 2017, and Judi was dismissed as their CASA, however their relationship didn’t end there. Judi remained in their lives as a friend and a strong supporter. She continued to attend their sporting events, and check on the family often. Anthony said of Judi, “She randomly pops up at my sporting events and cheers me on, just as loud as Marcie!”

Judi states that “the children are thriving and it has been such a pleasure to witness how much their personalities have blossomed.”

Judi and the CASA experience made such an impact on Marcie, that she changed her own career and is now a Child Advocacy Specialist with CASA of Flathead County so she can work to better the lives of abused and neglected children.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CASA GRADUATES!

On Friday, May 18, 2018, CASA for Kids had 13 community volunteers complete training and be sworn in as a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate). Each of these amazing volunteers will work as a guardian ad litem for abused and neglected children in the Flathead County foster care system. They have all completed 55 hours of training that covers topics such as the role of a CASA, child development, domestic violence, assessing family strengths, the court process, cultural diversity, and how to write court reports for a judge. **YOUR support made this possible!**

Last year 294 children were served by CASA and given a voice in court. CASA for Kids works to assign an advocate to every abused or neglected child who is removed from their home and entered in the foster care system. As the number of abused and neglected children increases, so does the need for more advocates. We are thankful to the Spring Class of 2018 for joining us to give them a voice and say **“I am for the child”**.





# SUPERHERO FUN DAY

MEET:  
SPIDER-MAN!



SPECIAL SUPERHERO GUESTS:  
FIREFIGHTERS, POLICE, HOSPITAL  
WORKERS, NURSES

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FUN FOR THE WHOLE  
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SUNDAY, JULY 29, 12-4PM  
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# GREAT FISH COMMUNITY CHALLENGE

We are very excited to be a part of the Great Fish Community Challenge again this year! Whitefish Community Foundation hosts this 7 week community fundraiser from July 26th through September 14th. Donations given to CASA for Kids through the community foundation during this time period will come straight to us and be matched! Maximize your gift with the community foundation's matching grant and watch your donation grow!

## MAKE A DONATION JULY 26 - SEPTEMBER 14

### AND MAXIMIZE YOUR DONATION WITH A MATCHING GRANT

WHITEFISH COMMUNITY FOUNDATION WILL PROVIDE A % MATCH UP TO \$20,000

**\$1** YOURS + **%** MATCH = **MAXIMIZES YOUR DONATION**

100% OF YOUR DONATION WILL BENEFIT ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

### IT'S EASY TO DONATE ONLINE:

Go to: [WhitefishCommunityFoundation.org](http://WhitefishCommunityFoundation.org), click on the Great Fish Logo, and find CASA for Kids...OR, scan the QR Code below.

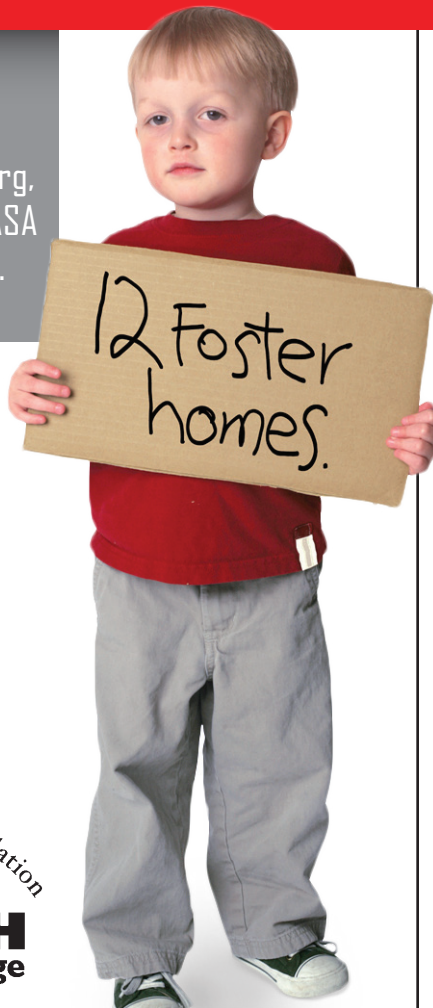
CASA for KIDS recruits, trains and supervises volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children. Year-to-date 90 advocates have served 249 children.

**MAIL-IN DONATIONS** can be made by downloading the official Great Fish Challenge donor form at [www.whitefishcommunityfoundation.org](http://www.whitefishcommunityfoundation.org). Complete the form and designate CASA for Kids for your donation. Checks **MUST BE** made out to Whitefish Community Foundation and mailed to: Whitefish Community Foundation • P.O. Box 1060 • Whitefish, MT 59937.

#### TO DONATE



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