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## Friends of CASA of Franklin County, Ohio January 2023 News Update

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### 2022 RECAP

Friends and CASA of Franklin County, Ohio together offer our deepest appreciation and gratitude to donors and grantors for their support last year – support which subsequently helps CASA volunteers in their service to hundreds of abused and neglected children. In 2022, 252 GALs worked one-on-one with 696 Franklin County children from 351 family units.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Child abuse and neglect often manifests beyond the markings of physical violence in many ways ...

- A number have been sexually exploited and/or trafficked
- They are frequently neglected educationally and socially
- Some are already parents as young as 13 or 14
- They may have been exposed to a culture of adult alcohol or drug use – perhaps even lived in a home with a meth lab
- Infants have been shaken and injured
- There is inadequate clothing or shelter – and sadly, so much more



Numbers of reported cases of child abuse and neglect have increased post-COVID, and financial support in 2022 helped enhance skills and expertise acquired by GALs from new training programs that were created and implemented during the year. These specialized programs focused on specific issues identified as exacerbating emotional turmoil in children already impacted by adverse childhood experiences. With new expertise and skills gained from specialized training programs, CASA volunteers can further help children learn to address and overcome a range of additional physical and emotional traumas.

As we continue into this new year, CASA of Franklin County will update existing programs and complete development of even more specialty training programs which are available to volunteers at no cost, some of which will focus on:

- The impact of alcohol or other drug (AOD) use in the household on abused/neglected children
- How to identify, address and overcome educational setbacks of children in the foster care system
- Adolescent suicide prevention and issues facing children who self-identify as LGBTQ
- Increased complex emotional traumas from the pandemic impacting abused and neglected children

### MORE VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

As stated above, the numbers of children abused and neglected continue to rise – and with that comes an increased need for more [volunteers to help](#) these children. There is a specific need for a more diverse volunteer pool – one that better reflects the diversity of children served by volunteer GALs. This is especially true in terms of needing more people of color and more men to serve as trained CASA volunteers.

Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age and come from all walks of life. CASA volunteers are able to integrate their service to children into daily schedules. Volunteers are retirees, full-time 9-5 professionals, full-time stay-at-home parents, and more. A volunteer application is available [here](#). Upcoming trainings begin March 26, July 9 and September 24. The full training schedule can be found [here](#).