



MONTANA CASA/GAL ASSOCIATION

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2021



Every child deserves  
*an advocate.*  
Every child deserves  
*a voice.*

[WWW.MONTANACASAGAL.ORG](http://WWW.MONTANACASAGAL.ORG)



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**MONTANA**

# MONTANA CASA/GAL MISSION

The mission of Montana CASA/GAL Association is to support, develop, expand and unite local CASA/GAL programs so they can maximize their effectiveness while advocating for Montana's abused and neglected children.

Our Vision is for 100% of eligible Montana youth to be appointed a CASA advocate.

Our strategic plan outlines strategies and goals to support our mission in 4 core areas.

- Support local CASA/GAL programs through training, organizational development and financial support.
- Support adherence to National CASA standards.
- Advocate for state policy and funding to protect and serve abused and neglected children.
- Promote CASA/GAL through a statewide marketing campaign to raise awareness of our work and cultivate volunteers.

# MONTANA'S LOCAL PROGRAM STATISTICS



**1,783 Montana Children had a CASA in 2021**

**There are over  
1,600 Children waiting for an  
advocate**





# MONTANA CASA/GAL IMPACT

Children who have experienced abuse or neglect fare better with a CASA/GAL.

Studies have shown:

- They are more likely to find a safe, permanent home
- They are more likely to succeed in school
- They are half as likely to re-enter the foster care system
- Volunteers are trained to understand the impact of trauma on children

Having a stable relationship with a supportive adult can help children do well, even when they face significant hardships.

Montana currently has 1600+ children waiting for a CASA.

We are leading the continued growth and development of a network of Local Montana CASA programs.

There are currently 15 local programs across the state of Montana.

Each Local CASA Program recruits, trains and supports their CASA Volunteers.

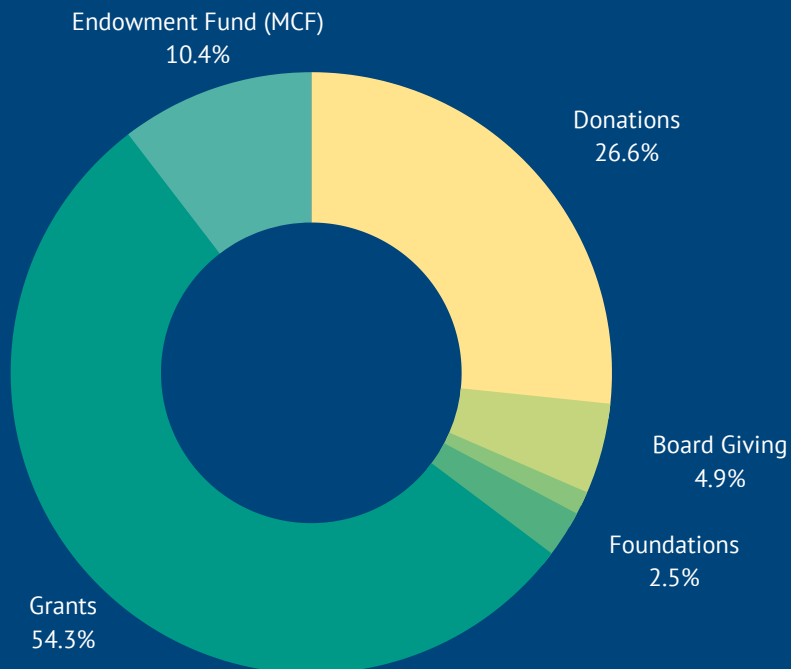
There are areas in Montana that currently do not have a CASA program. We have created an awareness campaign to bring attention to our cause by increasing CASA programs to help serve all Montana foster children.

If you are considering becoming a supporter. Please click the donate button today.

[Donate Here](#)

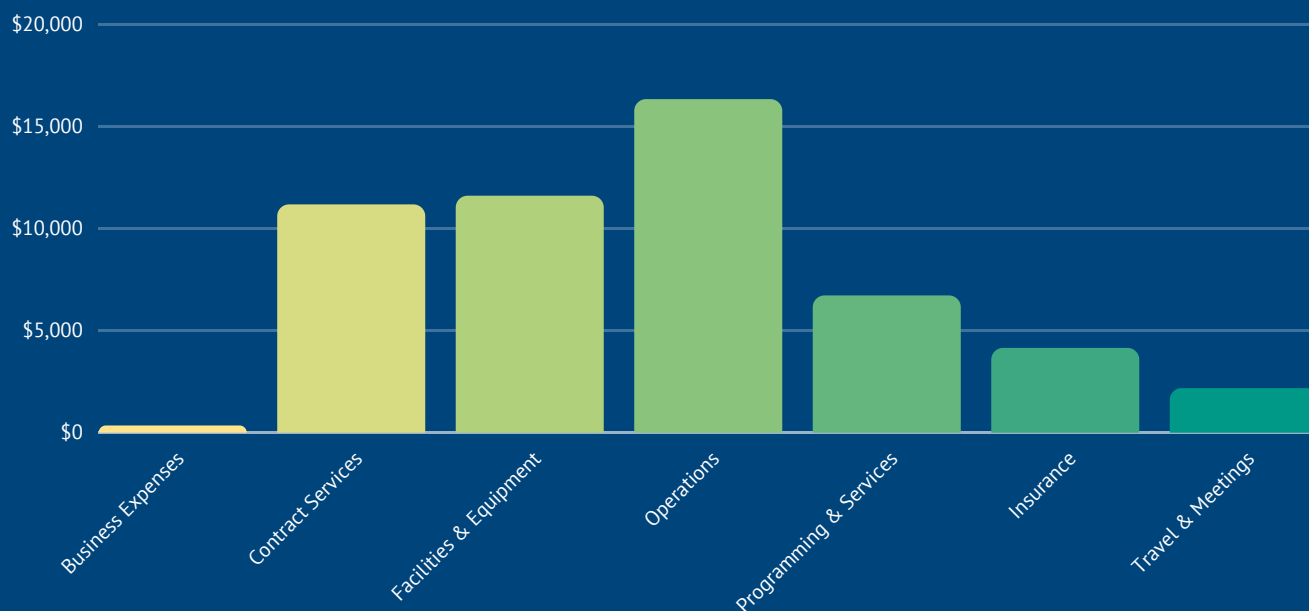
# FISCAL REPORT BY CATEGORY AND PERCENTAGE

TOTAL RAISED \$239,922.81



# EXPENSES BY DOLLAR AMOUNT

TOTAL EXPENSES \$136,133.67



# MONTANA CASA/GAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## **Goal #1: National CASA Alignment**

- Completed the development of MTCASA Infrastructure
- Developed training and support for local programs to meet National CASA/GAL accreditation requirements

## **Goal #2: Resource Development**

- In 2021, procured approximately \$30,000 from individual donors due to MTCASA board engagement
- Establishment of MTCASA Endowment via Montana Community Foundation

## **Goal #3: Business Services & Training**

- Developed and provided trainings to local program staff, advocates and board members via webinar series

## **Goal #4: Legislative**

- Actively participated in Montana Legislative Sessions by providing information to legislators and the governor

## **Goal #5: Promotions, Networking, and Education**

- Established working relationships with state stakeholders such as the Montana Supreme Court Improvement Project, Montana Department of Child and Family Services, Linking Systems of Care, Montana Legislative Interim Committee for Children and Families, and Child Abuse and Neglect Conference

# MONTANA CASA/GAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS CONTINUED

## **Goal #6: Staffing**

- Provided and leased a MTCASA vehicle for director to travel to local programs and meetings

## **Goal #7: Board Development**

- Adopted a policy (created and led by board chair) regarding annual board giving
- Recruited and onboarded three new board members

## **Goal #8: Local Program Growth and Expansion**

- Held discussions with local programs regarding their interest and capacity to expand into areas where CASA does not currently exist
- Supported local programs in volunteer recruitment. By increasing the number of advocates we are able to increase the number of children served.



# CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

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The MTCASA/GAL Board of Directors is made up of twelve diverse members from communities across the state. Throughout 2021, the Board and the Executive Director in collaboration with the fifteen local programs in Montana, worked towards achieving our vision that every child in Montana who is eligible for a CASA will have one.

Serving on this Board has afforded me a deeper understanding of the needs of children in Montana. Children removed from their homes and placed in foster care are among the most vulnerable. This is when a CASA can make a transformative difference in a child's life. When a child is appointed a CASA, they gain a trained, caring volunteer whose only purpose is to advocate for the child's best interests. This can lessen the trauma of being moved from everything that is familiar. The CASA forges a positive and stable relationship with the child and stays with the child until resolution of the case. By being involved in every aspect of the child's life, the CASA can give the court information to aid in judicial decisions.

The MTCASA/GAL Association is helping the existing local CASA programs in the state to develop the capacity to serve 100% of eligible children in their communities. We are also committed to supporting the establishment of CASA programs in communities that do not have one. We are grateful to those who have joined us in this effort. Together we are making a difference in children's lives, one child at a time. We look forward in 2022 to new and continuing partnerships to benefit our most precious resource, our children.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Elaine Meeks'.

**ELAINE MEEKS**

*Montana CASA/GAL,  
Chair of the Board of Directors*





# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS



**Amanda Jones**  
**Ann Marie & Aynslee McNeel**  
**Bayne Foundation**  
**Blue Cross Blue Shield of Montana**  
**Brandn Green**  
**CASA/GAL of Gallatin County Inc.**  
**Christian, Sampson & Baskett, PLLC**  
**Christian Shaeffer, Mission**  
**Accounting**  
**Constance Bull**  
**Danielle Thomsen**  
**Davis Moore**  
**Dennis & Phyllis Washington**  
**Foundation**  
**Eastern Montana CASA**  
**Elaine & John Meeks**  
**Enterprise Holdings Foundation**  
**Eric W. Henson**  
**Fred & Linda Milanovich**  
**Glenda Noyes**  
**Harriet "Suzy" Williams**  
**Hopa Mountain Foundation**  
**In Honor of Kirsten, Steven, &**  
**Anthony Pulito**  
**In Honor of Naomi Hegger**  
**Jan & Pat Munday**  
**Jennifer & Christopher Boyer**  
**Jim Fitzgerald**  
**Joan Brown**  
**John & Jody Menyhart**  
**Joyce Dwyer**  
**Kelly Anne & Matthew Dalton**

**Kiley Goodheart**  
**Larry & Laura Brehm**  
**Lisa Pavlock**  
**Mark Wood**  
**Martin & Marie Mumma**  
**MDU Resource Foundation**  
**Montana Board of Crime Control**  
**Montana Supreme Court: Court**  
**Improvement Program**  
**Mr. & Mrs. John W. Lake**  
**National Christian Foundation**  
**Oro y Plata Foundation**  
**PayneWest Insurance**  
**Police Protective Association**  
**Foundation**  
**Robert Burgi**  
**Roger & Libby Smith**  
**Ryan Phelan**  
**Shane Atwood**  
**Shea for Justice Campaign**  
**Tom & Chris McCall**  
**Tom & Carol McElwain**  
**Town Pump Charitable Foundation**  
**Trihydro Corporation**  
**Val & Cherie LeBlanc-Dyba**  
**Waverly Huston**

\*LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Without support, MTCASA/GAL wouldn't be able to fulfill their mission. Thank you for your generosity in supporting our vision "to give every abused and neglected child in Montana the opportunity to thrive in a safe, loving permanent home".

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

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Thank you for your support of Montana CASA/GAL Association and the programs we support serving children in a time of their greatest need. You make it possible to provide Montana's children a voice in the courtroom and in the halls of the state capitol. It takes Montanans such as you to ensure that children are safe and thriving.

This past year has been awe inspiring as we watched CASA programs fight for children in the courtroom during very trying times. Through dogged determination and the unwillingness to decrease efforts during a time where advocates were at times themselves suffering hardships due to the pandemic, they just kept showing up for the children. And you did too. The outpouring of funds and the "how can I help" attitude provided our programs and our state office the much-needed support to continue this important work. Your continue partnership is vital as our office works to ensure that advocates are provided the skills through trainings, information and statewide partnerships required so they can provide advocacy to their children and in-depth information to judges.

As we continue to increase the capacity of current programs we are taking steps to bring the message of how CASA can make a difference to parts of the state without services. This takes time including education of community stakeholders such as judges and other local leaders. They must recognize how CASAs better the lives of children in care and invite us into their courtrooms and communities. We have made some inroads and we are grateful that your dollars help us to continue to travel to these regions to continue conversations and provide information. Again, our thanks and we value your partnership as a member of the CASA community.



*April Sommers*

**APRIL SOMMERS**

*Montana CASA/GAL,  
Executive Director*



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ROAD

MTCASA's executive director, April Sommers, took advantage in the dip in COVID cases during the spring and summer months and spent over 3 months on the road visiting the 15 Montana CASA/GAL Local Programs.

The purpose of the in-person site visits were to help ensure each local program was receiving the support they need to provide the very best services to every child in their region in need of a CASA. These listening sessions included time spent with program directors and staff, board chairs and judges.

April was also given the opportunity to provide guidance to programs regarding compliance with National CASA/GAL Standards for Local Programs and non profit best practices.

The result of these visits provided vital information to MTCASA to plan and implement individual program and statewide program trainings on a variety of topics in 2022.



Celebrate CASA! The majority of Montana CASA/GAL Local Programs reported providing a voice to 100% of children needing CASA in their court rooms.

The majority of Montana CASA/GAL Programs reported that programs are thriving due to generous gifts from donors and funders.



# 2022 SERVICES TO LOCAL PROGRAMS

## Trainings and Education Resources

- Train the CASA/GAL Trainer
- Nonprofit Board Development and Governance Best Practices
- Roles and Responsibilities of the Nonprofit Executive Director
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Best Interest of the Child
- Implementation of the Youth Rights Policy - The Role of CASA
- Fund Development
- Individual Coaching Sessions with Local Program Leadership

## Networking Opportunities/Montana CASA Cohort Groups

- Bi-Monthly Virtual Meetings of Local Program Directors
- Virtual Meetings of Local Program Board Chairs
- Virtual Meetings of CASA Volunteer Program Staff

## Montana CASA/GAL 2022 Fall Conference



# MTCASA 2021 Board and Staff



ELAINE MEEKS,  
CHAIR



JENNIFER BOYER,  
VICE CHAIR



APRIL SOMMERS,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CHRISTIAN SHAEFFER,  
TREASURER



GLENDA NOYES,  
SECRETARY



TOM McELWAIN



ANN MARIE  
McNEEL



JOHN MENYHART



CHERIE  
LeBLANC-DYBA



JIM FITZGERALD



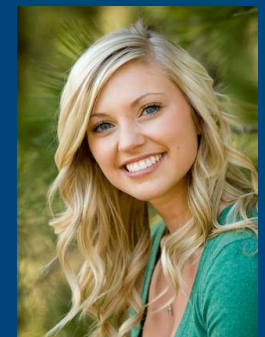
ALEXANDRA PLANT



JAN MUNDAY



RYAN PHELAN



MADISON ALFIERO,  
DEVELOPMENT STAFF



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

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**MONTANA**

**THANK YOU**  
**for your continued support**

**If you have any questions or comments  
you can reach us at:**

**P.O. BOX 2596  
225 West Front Street  
Missoula, MT 59806**

**Phone: 406-461-2111**

**Website: [www.montanacasagal.org](http://www.montanacasagal.org)**

**Email: [office@montanacasagal.org](mailto:office@montanacasagal.org)**