



Montana CASA/GAL Association Making A Difference October 2024

**Montana CASA/GAL Association
empowers advocacy for abused and
neglected children.**

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**The 15 Local Programs in the State of Montana
have helped:**

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*Approximately 1,250 Children with
577 Advocates this past year.*

Letter from the Boardroom - Shannon Parker



Hello, my name is Shannon Parker, and I am one of the board's newest members. I've spent most of my 30-year career in homeless services from Missoula, MT, to Los Angeles, CA, and abused and neglected children were with me every day. Statistics indicate that within 18 mos. of emancipation, 40-50 percent of foster care youth become homeless. Youths who are homeless have a special place in my heart, partly because I've met so many who are now adults facing aging, sickness, poverty, and having no support.

Homelessness and abused and neglected children often go hand in hand. They face many barriers, such as food insecurity, a history of family homelessness, low self-esteem, and the feeling they are different from other kids. That's why I became a CASA volunteer in the early 90s, and today, I am a member of the CASA board and a volunteer once again. CASA offers children whose voices are not as loud as the adults making decisions that affect their lives and advocates for their best interests. I believe that MTCASA and dedicated local programs and volunteers contribute to a future for kids that is safe and nurturing and emphasizes each child's possibility. I feel energized about being a part of these dedicated people and giving my best to make a difference in our communities.

Annual Montana CASA Conference 2024

We just wrapped up our second annual MT CASA Conference in Helena last week, where

almost all Local Programs in the state of MT were able to attend informational sessions! These sessions were jam packed with new resources, methods or other learning tools to utilize to support the children and families we serve!

A big thank you to all that were able to attend, and our MTCASA Board members for helping the conference run smoothly. As well as a huge thank you to our supporters for this conference!

See you again next year for our 2025 Conference!



Judges Panel: From Left-Right: Judge Karen Townsend (Facilitator), Judge Abbott (Helena), Judge Berger (Dillon), Judge Larson (Missoula), and Judge Favre (MI)



Local Program Leaders

Conference Sponsors



CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



The conference is supported by the Children's Justice Act grant from the Children's Bureau. Its contents are solely the responsibility of MTCASA and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Children's Bureau. Children's Justice Act grant administered by the Children's Alliance of Montana.



CASA Day in Helena at the MT Legislature

SAVE THE DATE FOR CASA DAY

February 5th, 2025
10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Rotunda-Capitol Building, Helena



Join MTCASA & other Local
CASA Programs in the Rotunda
of the Capitol Building.

Find out information about Court
Appointed Special Advocates for
children in the Dependency and
Neglect Court System.



Hear from a local judge about the impact of CASA

Grab a bite to eat and meet with your local CASA
representatives

Thank you for all you do for MT children & families

Mark your calendars for CASA Day at the Montana Legislature on February 5th 2025!

Email: elizabeth@montanacasagal.org for more information and to show interest in attending.

Keeping It Local - Local Program Highlight

Program: CASA for Kids - Kalispell
Executive Director: Cindy Basnet
Contact information: cbasnett@flatheadcasa.org, (406)
755-7208
Website: <https://flatheadcasa.org/>



CASA for Kids has successfully implemented a "Flathead Treatment Court Liaison," dedicated to providing crucial support to children during court hearings involving their parents or guardians. This role offers invaluable assistance, allowing children to engage in age-appropriate activities—such as temporary tattoos, friendship bracelets, toys, and coloring books—while they navigate the court system.

One of the primary benefits is that it allows children to retain their sense of childhood in an adult setting. They can choose to listen to the judge, sit beside their parent or guardian,

or enjoy themselves through play. This approach not only fosters a more comfortable environment for the child but also helps mitigate anxiety during potentially stressful proceedings.

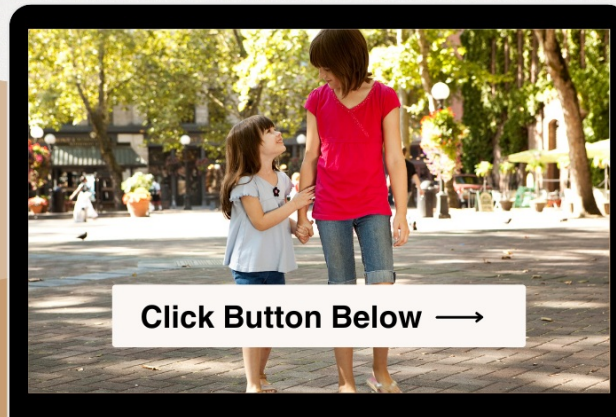
Additionally, the Liaison plays a vital role in maintaining structure within the courtroom. By providing engaging activities for the children, the Liaison helps reduce distractions, allowing the judge to focus on important questions and discussions with parents or guardians. This ultimately streamlines the court process, ensuring that cases can be addressed efficiently and effectively.

This project was funded in part by Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) procured by MTCASA.

Refer Friends to the MTCASA Newsletter

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SIGN UP FOR OUR
NEWSLETTER**

**TELL A FRIEND TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE, OR
FORWARD THIS EMAIL TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS
TO SIGN UP FOR THE MTCASA NEWSLETTER**



Refer your friends, family or people in your life to sign up for the MTCASA newsletter to stay up to date, and learn how to help the CASA community and kids.

Send them the link in the button, or forward this email to them and ask them to reply!

Sign up for the newsletter here

Keep Up To Date with MTCASA

In addition to spreading awareness about CASA

through our upcoming video series, MTCASA is also doing active work to increase our presence on social media and in local newspapers. Keep up to date with MTCASA through our [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#) and keep an eye out in your local newspaper op-ed sections to learn more about our local programs and how you can get involved!



2024 Trainings: A Year in Review

Throughout 2024 MTCASA has provided training and educational opportunities for local staff, volunteers and board members.

Here are some examples:

- Understanding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Training
- Trauma Informed Advocacy: Reframing behaviors and promoting healing for CASA children and families
- ICWA- Introducing CASA to Tribes
- National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training



For a full list of trainings click [here](#)

OUR ORGANIZATION

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Visit montanacasagal.org for more information about our board, staff and mission.

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Montana CASA/GAL Association | 225 West Front Street | Missoula, MT 59802 US

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