

WINTER 2024



From the Desk of Executive Director

Jackie Horton

January is National Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Despite increased awareness in recent years, there remains widespread confusion. The U.S. Department of State defines "human trafficking" and "trafficking in persons" as umbrella terms used to refer to both sex trafficking and compelled labor. In this heinous crime, traffickers exploit adults and children, compelling them into labor or commercial sex for profit.

Within the United States, the predominant forms of human trafficking are forced labor and sex trafficking. Shockingly, research from The Human Trafficking Hotlines indicates that **40% of the victims in South Dakota have been minors.**

Youth within the child welfare system, particularly those in out-of-home placements, are frequent targets of sex traffickers. Those experiencing homelessness, poverty, substance abuse, neglect, physical violence, sexual abuse, or involvement in the juvenile justice system are also at elevated risk. The National Foster Youth Institute estimates that up to 60% of child sex trafficking victims have been in foster care, highlighting the urgent need to address this public health and social justice crisis.

Moving beyond the adage "see something, say something," and ACT is crucial. To deepen my understanding and contribute to prevention, I have joined the South Dakota East River Human Trafficking Task Force. In collaboration with Call to Freedom, CASA is actively delivering Human Trafficking prevention training at local Child Protection Meetings and supporting schools in our service area. Together, we aim to combat trafficking, providing essential support and healing to victims.

CASA staff stood against human trafficking on January 11, #EndTraffickingDay. We are committed to raising awareness and fighting this global issue.

Join us in the fight for freedom,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jackie Horton".

Executive Director Change a Child's Story™



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CASA Helps 85 abused or neglected children in 2023

Every child deserves a sense of safety, connection, stability, and the promise of a permanent home. The trauma these children often confront has a lasting impact on their health and well-being. Studies show children with a CASA volunteer have families that receive significantly more services than those without a CASA. 46 Volunteers, staff, and the Board of Directors remain deeply committed to children in need and, with your continued support, will expand our efforts.

2023 Program Highlights



First Outing

Grant funding allowed us to hold our first CASA & CASA Child outing. This pool party was an opportunity for FUN and support.



Trained & Empowered

To ensure volunteers were prepared for casework we held monthly continuing education training for volunteers and community members. 50 volunteers attended 514 hours of training. Four pre-service trainings were held, and **12 New volunteers said YES** to Helping Children!



Strengthened CASA

Our National CASA self-assessment Confirmed that we are a high-performing program meeting the rigorous nationwide standards assessment.

WELCOME TO THE TEAM

We are thrilled to welcome new volunteers from left to right – Erica Scherrer, Janie Rook, Darci Daley, Danica Miller, Melissa Krogman, Marty DeBoer, and Ranae Duncan.



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The issues facing children affected by abuse & neglect are tough and complex. We ensure our volunteers have what they need to serve America's most vulnerable children and youth.

Our 2024 priority areas are:

- 1) Helping Children Heal from Child Trafficking
- 2) Supporting Families Facing Substance Abuse Disorders
- 3) Helping Children When Parents Are Incarcerated
- 4) Advocating for and Assisting Youth Aging Out of the Foster Care System



BECOME A CASA VOLUNTEER

Do you have a passion for positively impacting the lives of vulnerable children? Consider joining us as a CASA volunteer! **Our training sessions are scheduled for February 1 and April 1**, each spanning six weeks. Classes will occur every Thursday from 5:30 – 8:30 p.m. via Zoom, with online pre-work required between sessions. No previous experience is necessary, but pre-registration is essential two weeks before the class start date. Seize this opportunity to contribute to your community positively! Register at mitchellcasa.org or call 996-1212 to learn more.

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2024

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JAN

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Panel of Attorneys

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Trauma Informed parenting - Understanding Stealing, Hoarding & Lying

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A View from the Bench

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FIRST CIRCUIT CASA

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Mitchell, SD 57301

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Contact Yaque Delval to volunteer at yaque.delval@mitchellcasa.org

Visit us at: www.mitchellcasa.org

Help CASA Recruit Volunteers

There are **NUMEROUS** ways to support CASA.

Introduce your company, organization, or church to CASA. Invite CASA to talk about volunteering at your next employee lunch & learn, organization membership meeting, or special event. Display a CASA poster in your company break room or local community bulletin board.

Share your love for CASA on social media. Connect with us on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Help us connect with new volunteers and supporters by sharing our posts.



First Circuit CASA's goal is to ensure safety and permanency for children whose lives are in turmoil. Our ultimate goal would be that we are able to advocate on behalf of 100% of the abused and neglected children in our jurisdiction.

CASA, 115 E. 11th Ave., Mitchell, SD 57301

Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

I would like to donate to CASA in the amount of \$ _____

I am enclosing my payment in the form of a check (made payable to CASA)
(Contributions to First Circuit CASA are tax deductible)

___ Contact me; I am interested in volunteering as a CASA advocate.

___ I want information about CASA speaking at my business, service club, or church group.