

HISTORY of CASA and CASA for York County

Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington first implemented the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) concept in 1977. As a Judge, he felt a compelling need to have more information available on which he could base his decisions, decisions that had lifelong ramifications for children. In 1982, the National CASA Association was formed to function as a resource to support and increase the capacities of local programs and their efforts on behalf of abused and neglected children.

By the end of 2008, CASA had grown to include over 1,018 member programs, 68,842 volunteers donating over 5.8 million hours, making a lifelong difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. An estimated 240,894 children were served by CASA/GAL volunteers in 2008. CASA volunteers are “Speaking Up” for approximately one million abused and neglected children nationwide.

The Nebraska CASA Association began informally in 1993 to provide assistance to Court Appointed Special Advocate programs throughout Nebraska. In 1998, the Association incorporated as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit and the Nebraska Revised Statute § 43-3701 through § 43-3716 was passed authorizing the establishment of CASA programs designating CASA volunteers as Friends of the Court. This statute empowers CASA’s with the necessary authority to fulfill their duties. There are 19 local CASA programs serving 32 counties in Nebraska (2008 stats), each with its own local director and board.

Locally, the CASA for York County program was founded at the request of community members and Judge Curtis Evans in 2000. During the establishment process, Seward County CASA, a nearby program, offered to expand its services into the York County area. This partnership created the entity known as Seward/York County CASA, which functioned as a non-profit 501(c)(3) agency under the umbrella of Seward County Bridges. During 2001 and 2002, the program was administered out of the Seward office. CASA for York County broke off from Seward County CASA in January of 2003, and continued to function as a non-profit agency under Seward County Bridges until April 2004, when CASA for York became part of the York County Community Health Coalition. By August 2005, CASA for York became a full fledged member of the National CASA Association and continued to be a member of the Nebraska CASA Association. On March 27, 2006, CASA for York County achieved its own non-profit 501C3 status.

CASA for York County operates pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute §43-3701 and adheres to all program guidelines and standards established by the National CASA Association.