

# Hometown

# CASA Newsletter

December 2024

## CASA of Graham County



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## History

The CASA Program is a National organization founded in 1977 by Judge David Soukup in Seattle, Washington. Judge Soukup was concerned about making significant decisions about children involved in the welfare system without sufficient information about their needs. Therefore, he conceived the idea of citizen volunteers who could grant a voice to abused and neglected children in the courtroom. Thus, the CASA program was born, and in 1985, Maricopa County began the first pilot program in Arizona through funding from the Phoenix Soroptimist and Phoenix Junior League. The CASA program has expanded to over 15 counties, including our own hometown program in Graham County, which began in 1990 and is still expanding.

## Mission

C.A.S.A. stands for a Court Appointed Special Advocate. These individuals are everyday citizens who desire to make a change in the lives of children involved in the foster care system. By being the voice for a child during the most challenging time of their life, children are provided the resources they need to be successful. Simple tasks such as learning more about that child and their family, frequent visitations, and recommending services needed, an individual can make the difference a child needs. It has been shown that children who have a CASA are more likely to find safe and permanent homes, succeed in school, and HALF as likely to re-enter the Foster Care System. Being the stability in a child's life can be the difference in their future.

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Fred Barquin

My name is Fred Barquin, and I am a current court-appointed special advocate for Graham County. I have a deep connection to this area, as my father farmed a small portion of the land where Thatcher now stands. I have lived most of my life here. After briefly moving to Phoenix and then to Morenci, I returned to this area, where I raised two wonderful children with my wife of 50 years. My two children have both found success in their life. My son works as an Executive Vice President of communications for the Cesar Chavez Foundation, and my daughter teaches English as a second language for Ruth Powel Elementary School. My friends and family know me as a protector. It is in my nature to take on the role of protecting them or anyone else who is in need.

### How I Got Started

Although I am now officially retired, I have served in various capacities within the social services and criminal justice systems. I hold a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and have used the knowledge I gained to advocate for and assist people in need. After retiring, I was traveling from Thatcher to Safford when I saw a sign on the highway about the C.A.S.A. program. The information on the sign piqued my interest and sparked my desire to learn more. Given my background and experience working with vulnerable and at-risk populations, I felt that my professional experience could contribute positively to the program and help those in need.

### Experience as an Advocate

Serving as an advocate in this role was unlike anything I had done before. This program is truly special because the individuals assigned to these children focus on and actively listen to their needs during what can be a tumultuous time. One of the biggest challenges I encountered during my time as a C.A.S.A. was the lack of resources available to children in our rural community. While I have observed an increase in services provided to children during my time in the program, there is still much more to be done.

Throughout my experience working with various groups of children, the case that impacted me the most involved an at-risk teen struggling with a diagnosed drug addiction. His addiction stemmed from adverse events in his childhood, which left him with a deep-seated difficulty in trusting others. The hardest part of my work with this teen was earning his trust and demonstrating that I genuinely cared for him rather than being just another person in his life. After building this trust, he eventually received the help he needed and made significant progress for a time. Unfortunately, he did relapse into his addiction, but this experience made me realize how crucial my role can be for individuals like him.

### Would I Recommend

I would definitely recommend this program to anyone who wants to volunteer in this capacity. Although it can be difficult at times, this program really does make an impact on children as we become their voices. Children living as dependents of the court (foster care) are involved with many agencies and both the child and caretaker or parent have many tasks required of them. C.A.S.A. advocates are unique as they are only assigned to be the voice of the child. Through this capacity, they can inform the court in a different manner of the specific needs voiced by the child. Children need more people who can advocate and actively listen to them and what they need. This work is truly important and more people need to know about this program



Happy

*Birthday*



**C.A.S.A Shawna**

# IN THE COMMUNITY

## Meet & Greet Information Session @ Sodalicious in Safford



Come Learn about our C.A.S.A program and let us answer any questions you have about joining our organization

December 5th @ 1:00-3:00 P.M. ● 1904 W Thatcher Blvd

## Volunteer Opportunities Available



Scan the QR code below to learn more

This holiday season consider volunteering for a child in your community



# December 2nd-8th is National Grief Awareness Week

*Raising awareness about grief,  
providing support to those grieving*

*encouraging empathy,  
compassion and support for  
those who are grieving*

## Mission

*foster a better understanding  
of the grieving process*

Your paragraph text

*Grief is a natural process so why stigmatize it?*

*How can we help?*

*Offer a listening ear*

*Support Grief organization*

*Spread awareness*

*Use social media and other platforms to share  
facts about grief and support*



# National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

We have not forgotten, nor will we. We live in a world made more free, more just, and more peaceful by those who will answer roll call no more, those who will report for muster never again. We do remember Pearl Harbor.

● Proclamation 5582 - Ronald Reagan - December 7th 1986



December 7th 2024