

Marathon County: Establishes Court Appointed Special Advocate program

Posted on Wednesday, Sep 6, 2023

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(Marathon County, Wis. / Green Bay, Wis.) The [Wisconsin CASA Association](#) has announced the establishment of a Marathon County CASA program. The Wisconsin Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association champions the needs of abused and neglected children by providing trained volunteers who advocate for a child's best interests in court. CASA of Marathon County will become the 10th CASA program in Wisconsin and 15th county served by a CASA program.

"There is an incredible need throughout the state for CASA programs and Advocates, so we're very excited to expand into Marathon County," said Wisconsin CASA Interim Executive Director Melissa Michel. "In 2022, there were roughly 6,000-7,000 children in Wisconsin who qualified for a CASA, however only 950 children were served. We are working hard to expand our reach into every Wisconsin County so that, someday soon, all children who need an Advocate can be served."

"To get a program up and running, it takes a collaborative effort involving the courts, social workers, the county and Wisconsin CASA," stated Christy Keele, Executive Director of CASA of Marathon County, Inc. "I want to thank everyone who has helped us get this program established including the National CASA Association and Wisconsin CASA." The program is expected to be operational by October.

"It's important for Marathon County residents to understand how this program not only benefits Foster Children, but also provides benefits to everyone living in the county," added Michel. National studies have shown that a child with a CASA volunteer:

- is more likely to do well in school, less likely to be expelled and have

better conduct;

- will spend less time in Foster Care;
- is less likely to re-enter Foster Care;
- and is more likely to find a safe, permanent home.

“Not only can CASA make a positive, lasting impact on a child, but it also offers bottom-line benefits to the entire county. In fact, one year of CASA advocacy costs less than one month of Foster Care,” explained Michel.

Recruitment is now underway for CASA of Marathon County local board members and individuals interested in becoming CASA Advocates. For more information contact Christy Keele, ckeele@casaofmarathoncounty.org.