

CASA of Arizona timeline

1970s

1974 – Public Law 93-247, the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) was passed. The bill states that in every case where the petition alleges abuse or neglect, a guardian ad litem must be appointed. By 1990 most states thought they were in compliance but in reality, were not. If states did not comply they would lose a significant amount of federal funding.

In 1977, a Seattle juvenile court judge, Judge David Soukup, concerned about making drastic decisions with insufficient information conceived the idea of citizen volunteers speaking up for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom. From that first program has grown a network of nearly 1,000 CASA and guardian ad litem programs that are recruiting, training and supporting volunteers.



1979 – CASA of Pima County, originally called Guardian ad Litem, began. The first CASA for Pima County was appointed on Feb. 16, 1982. National CASA was founded in 1982.

“When I got there, Juvenile Court was loaded with lawyers, but there was no one for the kids,” said Judge Lillian Fisher. “I wanted to know something about how the kid was doing socially, emotionally, scholastically. I thought there had to be some way to find out.”
(source: Bonnie Henry column, Arizona Daily Star)

Pima County’s program began with no funding and no staff. Volunteers were background checked and received training in Fisher’s living room. The program eventually joined the state effort in 1987.

1980s

1985 – CASA of Maricopa began as a pilot program with funding from Phoenix Soroptimists and the Junior League of Phoenix. CASA of Arizona was formed in October of 1985 with a mix of federal, state, county and private monies. Original volunteers were recruited from the Foster Care Review Board, The Junior League of Phoenix and the local chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women. Recruitment of volunteers began in November of 1985. The first CASAs were assigned cases in March, 1986. Over 50 volunteers were recruited and trained in the first year.

A recorded history from Trudy B. Catterfeld of the Junior League of Phoenix: “Pauline King, a sustaining League member, was interested in a program she heard operating in other states called CASA and sometimes addressed as other names. She formed a Junior League task force which studied the issue. Upon much research Pauline and her task force found there was an intense need for a CASA program in Arizona. The Task force became a Junior League project. The Junior League donated volunteers and about \$60,000 over a three year period to help the new CASA Program get off the ground. The Junior League as well as the National Association of Jewish Women and Judge Rose all were responsible for CASA’s initiation in the state.”

1986 – CASA of Coconino began 10/1/1986 with help from a Victim Assistance Grant from the Department of Justice. The proposed budget for the state office in 1986 was \$146,708.



A Nov. 9, 1986 Arizona Republic article quotes Judge C Kimball Rose: “The program is exceeding expectations at this point. It’s a very excellent program, primarily because of... very tough screening.”

1987 – Beth Rosenberg and a committee worked to get a bill passed in Congress to extend CAPTA funding while states met the requirements. Policies and standards governing the CASA Program were adopted by the Supreme Court on March 25, 1987.

1988 – CASA of La Paz County began 2/15/88
CASA of Navajo began 7/25/88
CASA of Gila began 10/1/88



CASA of Navajo County’s first CASA graduates

1989 – CASA of Pinal County began 1/9/89.
 CASA of Yavapai began 1/9/89 with a grant from the Margaret T. Morris Foundation.
 CASA of Cochise County began 9/25/89
 CASA of Mohave began 9/11/89



The Junior League of Phoenix's financial support of the CASA Program ended on April 30, 1989. The Maricopa County Bar Auxiliary agreed to take over the JL's responsibilities supporting CASA with training space and recognition events.



Kappa Alpha Thettas named CASA as their national charity. The relationship continues today.



In December of 1989 the CASA Program was endorsed by the American Bar Association.



"Forty-five states have established CASA programs thus far. Evaluations indicate that CASAs greatly expedite a child's movement through the system and into a permanent home by reducing the amount of time the child spends in a foster care setting and reducing the number of times a child is moved while in placement."
 - 1989 Arizona Supreme Court Report of the Commission on the Courts

1990s

1990 – CASA of Graham County began. Programs have been formed in 11 counties and there were over 300 volunteers statewide. Most counties had to be willing to contribute financially if they wished to start a CASA program. Discussion of CAPTA began again and what Arizona would need to be in true compliance. A CASA Task Force was formed to petition the legislature for funding. Barbara Polk was the chairperson of that committee, formed Oct. 1991.

1991 – Legislation was passed by the fortieth legislature to establish a state CASA program with funding from the Arizona Lottery "unclaimed prize fund." Funding in FY 90/91: \$204,000 from general fund, \$149,000 federal funds, \$22,000 private donations. With HB 2419 CASA would receive \$510,000 appropriated funds and \$124,000 in federal funds. HB 2123 Clarified that a guardian ad litem for a child in juvenile proceedings may be an attorney or a CASA. It also set up duties of a CASA.

1/7/91 Volunteers in the program: 285
 CASA volunteers accepted to date: 488



1992 – CASA of Apache, Greenlee and Yuma began 1/1/92. The Jan Lindsey "I CAN DO IT!" Memorial Award was established by the Arizona Friends of Foster Care Foundation in honor of the first CASA of Arizona Program Manager, Jan Lindsey.

Lindsey was also awarded the United States Attorney Public Service Award for invaluable service and assistance to abused and neglected children. Lindsey passed away Jan. 1, 1992 at the age of 49.



"We would pull in anywhere from 40 to 60 volunteers every two months," said Michael Powell, state trainer in 1992. "I probably trained about 1,700 volunteers over six years... It made a difference for children. Back then Arizona was the only court that had FCRB and CASA administrated through the courts. That was, I thought, innovative. I liked the fact that the volunteers were really dedicated to what they did."

1993 – The Committee on Juvenile Court did a substantial rewrite of the case management policies, which helped solidify the role of a CASA and set more formal standards for their participation in court.

CASA of Santa Cruz began 1/1/93.

Katharine Wiles of Pima County was named Chairperson of the National Public Relations Committee. At the time there were 28,000 volunteers nationally and 485 programs. There were 450 volunteers in Arizona serving 860 children.

Judge Soukup came to Arizona to make a presentation to Arizona Judges during a special luncheon.

1994 – The total number of miles driven by CASA volunteers exceeded 1 million by March 31, 1994

1995 – 433 active volunteers, 1,020 children served.

Phoenix hosted the 14th Annual National CASA Conference with more than 1,000 people attending. Barbara Polk of Yavapai County was named the George F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year.

CASA volunteer honored



Barbara Polk, shown here holding Neil Frielich, chats with CASA coordinator Paula Makowsky as Brandon Lips looks on at a recent CASA picnic.

Barbara Polk named tops in the country

By MARY LIN The Daily Courier year, an award she'll receive at the executive director of Yavapai County Big Brothers/Big Sisters.

"Most things get done where there is a partnership of people. When there is somebody who has an idea and asks for help to get it done." - Barbara Polk



1997 – The model court program was established statewide by Chief Justice Thomas Zlaket in an attempt to shorten the amount of time children spent in care.



VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Includes:
 pg. 2 Insights into the Psychological Evaluation
 pg. 3 CASAs Making a Difference
 pg. 4 CASA News
 pg. 6 Family Courts System
 pg. 7 CASA Studies CPS Financial Needs
 Fall 1997 Issue

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Zlaket Calls for Executive and Legislative Cooperation to Implement Model Court Project for Dependencies Statewide

Arizona Supreme Court Chief Justice Thomas Zlaket announced an initiative that will have a dramatic effect on the lives of Arizona's abused, neglected, and abandoned children. "We want to take the Model Court Project currently operating in Pima County and share the success with all counties statewide," Zlaket said at a news conference held October 22.



Chief Justice Thomas Zlaket

Zlaket told media and members of the judiciary and legislature about changes designed to move children through the foster care and dependency court systems quicker.

The changes include having a mandatory pre-hearing conference and court hearing held within five days of the child's removal. Those attending the hearing include parents and anyone parents invite, attorneys for the parents and the children who were appointed at the time of the child's removal, an attorney from the Attorney General's

"...we must have a cooperative effort between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government to implement the project statewide or it will fail."

Office, and the intake case manager. The conference is used to develop a case plan, including agreed upon services. A hearing is held immediately following the conference so the court may review the dependency petition and the proposed case plan, and to order requested services.

"Early intervention to assist families will require intensive effort on the part of judges, child protective services, and the Attorney General's Office," Zlaket declared.

The pilot project in Pima County has had higher initial expenses for early intervention to ensure resources are provided to make the model work. However, the pilot project demonstrates substantial cost savings from dramatically reduced time in care and outcomes that place children in safe, permanent homes. The result is a better, more effective dependency system.

see Model Court, page 6

Arizona Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program

"...we must have a cooperative effort between the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches of government to implement the project statewide or it will fail."
 - Chief Justice Thomas Zlaket

2000s

2000 – 872 active volunteers, 1,545 children served in that year. A couple from Maricopa County, Shirley and Van Hughes were featured on the Montel Williams Show. The code was updated.

2001 – A study of the CASA Program found judges agree with CASA recommendations in 76% of cases. Children with a CASA were found to spend less time in care, receive more services than children without a CASA and were less likely to return to care.

Actor Martin Sheen came to Arizona and became a spokesman for CASA in several PSAs and promotional materials.



2002 – Arizona Governor Jane Dee Hull declared Oct. 28, 2002, CASA week in Arizona.



2007 – The CASA program was awarded the Janet Napolitano "Courage for Children" Award from the Arizona Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents.

2010 – Judge Robert Brutinel of Yavapai County was selected as the CASA Judge of the Year by National CASA.



**2015 – Total CASA volunteers: 6,204.
 Current active volunteers: 1,009
 Total children served: 20,119**