



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 4, 2017

Contact: Kayla Pacton  
815-936-7372

## **MAKE A LIFELONG DIFFERENCE FOR A CHILD** **Child Network Offering CASA Training**

Every year, more than three million children nationally are reported abused or neglected. Despite the states' attempts to help, many of these kids become trapped in the court and child welfare maze and can spend their childhood moving from one temporary shelter to another.

This is where you can step in by becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer.

CASA of Kankakee County, a program of Child Network, is seeking volunteers for its training class that will be held from October 16 – November 17. No special background or education is required to become a CASA. Volunteers from all cultures and professions and of all ethnic and educational backgrounds are welcome. Volunteers must be at least 21 years of age and willing to submit to background checks.

Once accepted into the program, volunteers will receive all necessary training in courtroom procedures, social services, the juvenile justice system and in servicing the special needs of abused and neglected children. The training course follows the National CASA's *Flex Learning* curriculum. This program allows trainees to complete half of the course material online; meeting together as a group once a week. The training consists of 30 hours of classroom and online coursework utilizing a training manual containing content, objectives, and activities to develop advocacy skills. The curriculum models values of respect and responsibility and focuses on knowledge, skills and attitudes to be a successful advocate.

Following training, volunteers can expect to spend an average of ten hours per month on a case. Cases are considered complete when the child has found a safe and permanent home and the case is closed by the court.

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171 N. West Ave., Suite 1  
Bradley, IL 60915  
(815) 936-7372  
Fax (815) 936-9829  
[child\\_network@sbcglobal.net](mailto:child_network@sbcglobal.net)



The children the CASA program serves have many people involved in their lives and advocates strive to be a stable and constant presence in their lives. The advocates make fact-based recommendations to the juvenile court for the best interest of the children they serve. Advocates are known as the “voice of the child” in the court process and the “eyes and ears” of the juvenile judge.

If you are interested in making a difference in a child’s life by becoming a CASA or would like more information, call Child Network at 815-936-7372 or send an e-mail to [info@childnetwork.org](mailto:info@childnetwork.org).

Child Network is a non-profit agency working in Kankakee County to improve the response to child sexual and physical abuse and to advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the juvenile court system. CASA Kankakee County is a member of the Illinois Association of CASA and the National CASA Association.