



LANE COUNTY

174 Deadmond Ferry Road
Springfield, OR 97477
(541) 984-3132
www.casa-lane.org

Board of Directors

President

Jesse Howes

Vice President

Lisa Korth

Secretary/Treasurer

Jeff Singer

Kristi Blain

Rhea Cramer

Jenny Freeman

Kathy Gibson

Andrew Greenhalgh-Johnson

Linda Hamilton

Karissa Hibbard

Bonnie Middleton

John Mlynczk

Grace Serbu

Noah Zepeda

Executive Director

Kendra Jones

Dear co-chairs Senator Steiner and Representative Sanchez
as well as the other members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee -

My name is Tami Stebbeds. Myself and my colleagues from CASA of Lane County who have joined me here this evening would like to thank you for this opportunity. I have been a CASA Volunteer for 13 years, have been on staff for 4 years as a CASA Supervisor and have recently taken the position of CASA Lead Supervisor.

CASA's are Court Appointed Special Advocates for children in foster care.
CASA volunteers help to Change a Childs Story.

A child with a CASA volunteer:

- does better in school
- is more likely to receive the services that they need
- more likely to have a plan for permanency
- spends less time in foster care and is less likely to re-enter foster care

CASA Volunteers receive 40 hours of in-depth training through the CASA of Lane County program and are sworn in as a legal party by a Judge before being assigned to a case. The CASA then supports a child or sibling group for an average of two years spending 10 to 15 hours each month investigating, meeting with the child regularly and recommending the best options to the Judge for that child(ren). They pay attention to the child's interests and needs in every aspect of the child(ren)'s life. A CASA serves as a "second set of eyes" on that child(ren) directly for the Judge. The Judges in Lane County request to have a CASA appointed on child dependency cases. We also get requests from caseworkers and in some instances even children themselves.

In Oregon, it is state mandated that every child in the foster care system have a CASA assigned to them; ORS 419B.112 states "(1) In **every case** under ORS chapter 419B, the court shall appoint a court appointed special advocate".

But in Oregon this statute is not fully funded to be able to reach the goal of a CASA for every child. Generally, funds are received through a combination of grants, fundraising and community donations. Every year in Lane County there are nearly 1,000 abused and neglected children in foster care in need of a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Currently CASA of Lane County is serving 430 children. Even with our generous community, fundraising efforts and grants, without state funding, CASA would be serving 25% less children. Funding is needed to continue serving these vulnerable and traumatized children and to reach our goal of a **CASA for EVERY CHILD** in the Lane County Foster Care System.

Kind Regards

Tami Stebbeds

CASA Volunteer / CASA Lead Supervisor

Tamis@casa-lane.org

541-525-6057 cell



Please take 5 minutes to watch Joey and Alana's story – the True Story of a brother and sister who went through the foster care system and had a CASA to be their Voice which changed their story.