



# the **Advocate Newsletter**

2025 Vol. 3



## Annual Report Fiscal Year 2025

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# A Letter from Executive Director **Drew MacLeod**

Dear Friends of CASA of Yellowstone County,

This past year has brought meaningful progress and important challenges. Volunteer Advocates served more children than the year before, exemplifying their commitment to children and families in our community. We also moved into a new office space—more cohesive for staff, closer to the courthouse, and more accessible for volunteers. Thank you for your patience during this transition.

In November of 2024, we launched the Program Advocate role to support children with especially complex needs or those in large sibling groups. This fall, we welcomed a second Program Advocate to expand that impact. Since the start of these positions, 37 new children have been served.

Our 0.5K Fun Run, despite the rain, was a joyful success, bringing our community together in support of our mission and raising funds to help recruit and train more volunteers. Special thanks to participants and sponsors, we can't "run" without you.

At the same time, we've faced funding cuts at both the federal and state levels. Your support through donations, grants, and volunteer service has been essential in helping us meet these challenges.

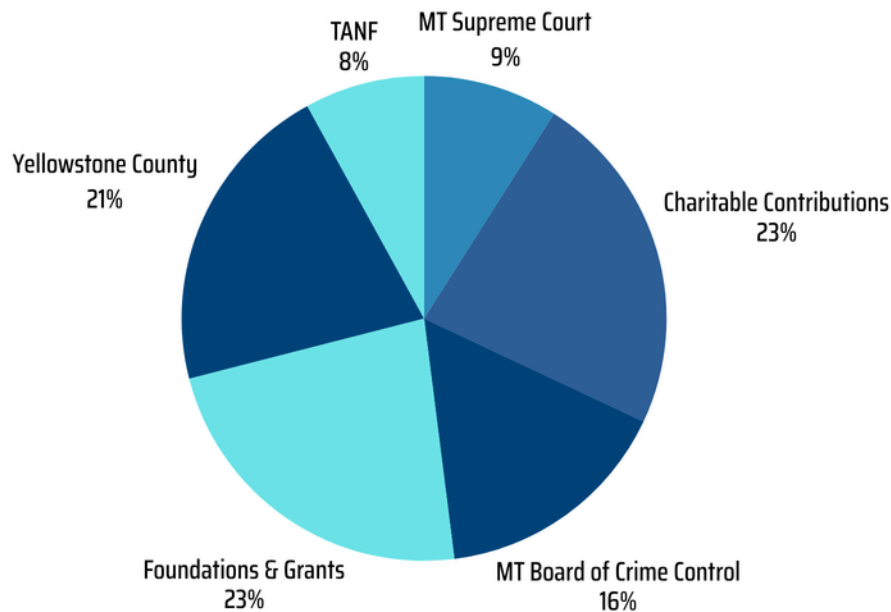
This year's report includes information on tax-advantaged giving, a powerful way to make a lasting difference for children in foster care. The need in Yellowstone County remains high, and we invite you to continue walking alongside us in this vital work.

With gratitude,  
*Drew MacLeod*  
Drew MacLeod  
Executive Director



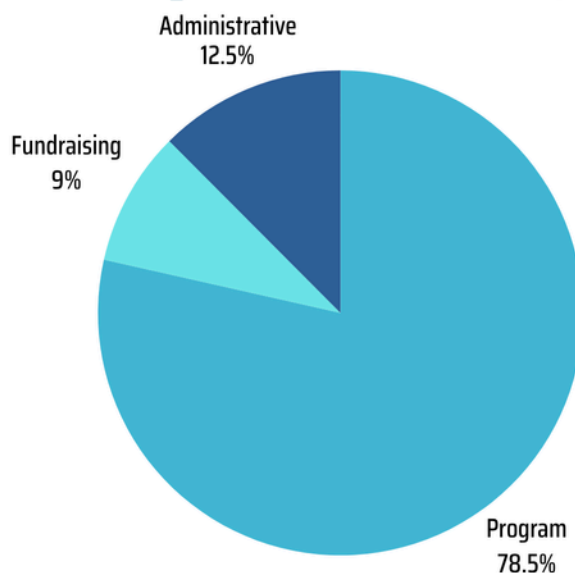
# Fiscal Year 2025 Financial Statement

## Revenue- \$948,000\*



\*\$91,217 was designated for FY 2026 to support the Program Advocate positions.

## Expenses- \$850,000



This financial statement is based on preliminary, pre-audited figures

# Between July 2024 - June 2025, Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates Made a Big Difference

**341** children in foster care had a volunteer CASA voicing their best interests and wishes

**99** children with a volunteer Advocate received permanency

Volunteer Advocates spent **6,714** hours on their cases, donating more than **\$233,580** worth of casework to Yellowstone County

**172** Advocates were assigned to children in foster care. Those volunteers accomplished:

**2,047** child visits

**1,334** reports

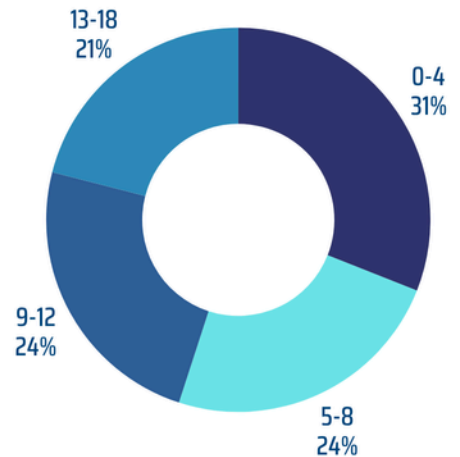
**733** court hearings attended

**35** new Court Appointed Special Advocates were sworn-in by a judge

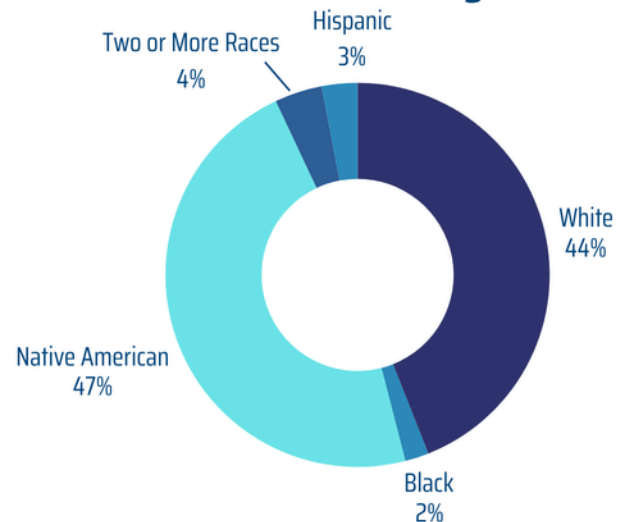


## Year in Review: Children Served

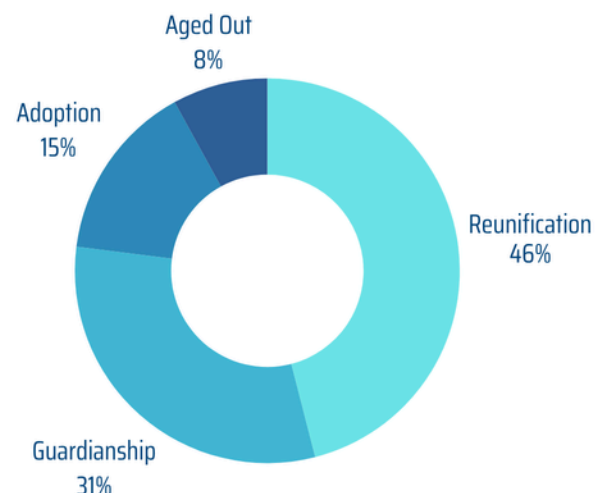
### Age Breakdown



### Race/Ethnicity



## Case Closure of Fiscal Year 2025





# Celebrating a New Home and Stronger Future

CASA of Yellowstone County is thrilled to be settling into our new office space! We recently celebrated with a ribbon cutting alongside the Billings Chamber of Commerce, community partners, and so many friends who have supported our mission over the years. The event was a wonderful reminder of how far we've come and how many people share our passion for advocating for children in foster care.

This new space gives CASA room to grow, connect, and continue training more dedicated volunteers to serve local kids who need a voice. We're deeply grateful to everyone who has believed in and stood beside CASA throughout the years—your support builds brighter futures, one child at a time.



## Welcome to our new training class!



# Shae & Rocco's

## CASA Story




When we think about the impacts of human trafficking, we don't always consider the children who are caught in its reach. That was the reality for Shae and her mother. Shae was just a toddler when she was removed from her mother's care. Her mom, who was young herself, had become entangled in dangerous, violent relationships with people who exploited her substance addiction to continue trafficking her. She'd already lost several children to state custody before Shae was born. Because Shae's mom could not protect Shae from her violent birth father, Child Protective Services (CPS) intervened and removed Shae. CPS also attempted to help Shae's mom connect with safety resources.

Shae was first placed with her grandmother, but the placement had to end after it was discovered that the grandmother had a history of her own children being removed from her care. When Shae entered a new foster home, she was also appointed a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate. Shae's CASA not only made consistent home visits and advocated for Shae's needs in the courtroom, but also supported Shae's young mother, who was struggling with basic needs like housing, stability, and safe relationships. Reflecting on her advocacy, Shae's CASA shared, "One day, I just sat down with Mom and talked through resources she could connect with. I even helped her call her attorney right then, because she had no idea who her attorney was for her child's case."

Soon after Shae moved into her third foster home, her mom gave birth to another baby. Shae's new baby brother, Rocco, was the only sibling Shae had ever known, and fortunately, her new foster home agreed to take Rocco in as well. While the outcome of Shae and Rocco's case is not yet decided, their CASA is determined to make sure they have a childhood and a team of caring adults around them who will support and nurture them. Their CASA stays passionately focused on Shae and Rocco's best interests and hopes their mom will one day get the help and services she needs to be a safe person in their lives.

This is a true story of children living right here in Yellowstone County. By supporting CASA of Yellowstone County, you provide vulnerable children and youth with the consistency and care of a trusted Advocate.





“Before my CASA came into my life, I didn’t really trust adults. He didn’t try to fix everything—he just showed up, listened, and actually cared about what I had to say. Because of him, I now have hope that things can get better.” -Dylan, 16



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

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CASA OF YELLOWSTONE COUNTY

**Make a difference for children like Dylan and become a CASA Volunteer**





## Reduce Your Taxes While Supporting CASA of Yellowstone County

Did you know, your gift to CASA could lower your taxable income? Here are three easy, tax-smart ways to give:

- **IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution:** Direct part of your Required Minimum Distribution to CASA—no income tax owed on the gift.
- **Montana Endowment Tax Credit:** Give to CASA's endowment at the Billings Community Foundation and receive a 40% state tax credit on a qualified planned gift (up to \$15,000 per individual).
- **Appreciated Stock:** Donate stock directly to CASA to potentially avoid capital gains tax and deduct the full market value. CASA works with two financial institutions to facilitate these gifts.

Make your gift today—maximize your impact for the CASA program and youth while minimizing your taxes.

Contact Drew at [drew@yellowstonecasa.org](mailto:drew@yellowstonecasa.org) for details. Gifts made by December 15th will be processed for the 2025 tax year.



# Meet the CASA Board

Our dedicated Board Members make a real difference in our community, helping ensure every child has a voice. If you're passionate about supporting local kids and making a lasting impact, consider joining the CASA Board. **Together, we can create a brighter future for children.**



Brittney Mada  
Board President  
Crowley Fleck PLLC  
Retired Volunteer Advocate



Clayton Gregersen  
Vice President  
Crowley Fleck PLLC



Lynne Roccisano  
Secretary  
Birch Tree Realty  
Retired Volunteer Advocate



Holly Hintz  
Treasurer  
Western Security Bank



Thomas Brewer  
Community Medical Center  
Retired Volunteer Advocate



Laura Forcella  
Intermountain Health



Clayton Barnes  
Edward Jones



Dallas Pender  
Rock Creek Therapy



Allison Scheeler  
Public Health Workforce  
Development  
Retired Volunteer Advocate

**A heartfelt thanks  
to our retiring  
Board Members,  
Charlie & Jenn,  
for their dedicated  
service!**



Charlie Jackson  
Edward Jones  
3 years of service



Jenn Webber  
DPHHS  
6 years of service

# Meet the Staff



Drew MacLeod  
Executive Director  
12 years with CASA



Shayla Fox Brown  
Program Director  
5 years with CASA



Emily Gaudreau  
Development Director  
7 years with CASA



Carrie Porter  
Program Manager  
4 years with CASA



Sherri Carlson  
Training Coordinator  
9 years with CASA



Laura Molodecki  
Marketing & Events Coordinator  
5 years with CASA



Mary Rose Swan  
Program Coordinator  
2 year with CASA



Kourtney Brown  
Program Coordinator  
1 year with CASA



Jennifer Smith  
Program Coordinator  
2 year with CASA



Patty Muir  
Operations Coordinator  
2 years with CASA



Alyssa Nelson  
Program Advocate  
3 years with CASA



**WELCOME!**  
Alyssia Nava  
Our New Program Advocate



# Memorial & Honor Gifts



Your donation in honor or memory of your loved ones has a direct impact in the lives of children in our community. Thank you!

## In Memory of Larry Duane Armer

Karen Herman

Jessie Pekins

Sheryl Hanson

John Freetly

Nathan Malek & family

Rosemary Armer

VMCO

## In Memory of Jim Clark

Steve Fischer & Nikki Nakayama

## In Memory of Kathy Keener

Vera & Bob Ulschak

## In Memory of Linda Schwindt

Vera & Bob Ulschak

## In Honor of Duane Hauge

Vera & Bob Ulschak

## In Memory of Sheryl Kellum

Vera & Bob Ulschak

## In Memory of Peggy Stoltz

Vera & Bob Ulschak

## In Memory of Milt Wester

Vera & Bob Ulschak

## In Honor of Patty Muir's Birthday

Bonnie and John Davidson

## Memorial & Honor Gift Form



Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Given by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory/In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Send Acknowledgement to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: CASA of Yellowstone County | P.O. Box 688 Billings, MT 59103



# THANK YOU, 2025 SPONSORS!



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**TECHNOLOGIES**  
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