



CASA of Middlesex County

FY 2023

Annual Report



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

Our Mission, Vision and Values:

CASA of Middlesex County is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving abused and neglected children who are living in out-of-home placements. CASA recruits and trains volunteers to advise the courts and advocate for the children's best interests.

Our Vision:

All children deserve a safe, permanent home. *To that end, we value:*

- **Commitment** – We are committed to having a positive impact on the children we serve.
- **Quality** – We strive to achieve innovative and tailored advocacy for children and excellence in everything we do.
- **Collaboration** – We communicate and collaborate with advocates, children and families, stakeholders, and our governing board, while protecting and maintaining confidentiality and privacy.
- **Inclusiveness** – We ensure, to the greatest extent possible, an inclusive and equitable environment for the children and families we serve, advocates, staff, and the governing board. We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Who We Are

Board Officers

Sharon Hoffman-Manning,
President

Ellen Clarkson,
Vice President

Dennis Doll,
Treasurer

Amy Jumbelic,
Secretary

Susanne Peticolas,
Member-at-Large

Board Members

William Berlin

Edina Brown

Andrea Conklin Bueschel

John Downs

Alton Kinsey

Board Members Emeritus

Gerald Pomper

Board Liaisons

Betsy Capp

Judith Martin Waterman

Staff Members

Stephanie Brown,
Executive Director

Colette Scozzafava,
Program Director

Lauren Sikora,
**Communications and
Development Director**

Edith Dunn,
Program Coordinator

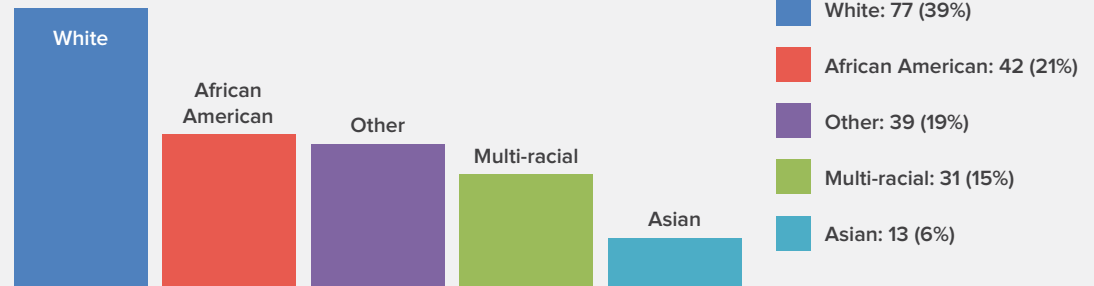
Brian Shoaf,
Program Coordinator

Patricia Gjoni,
Administrative Assistant

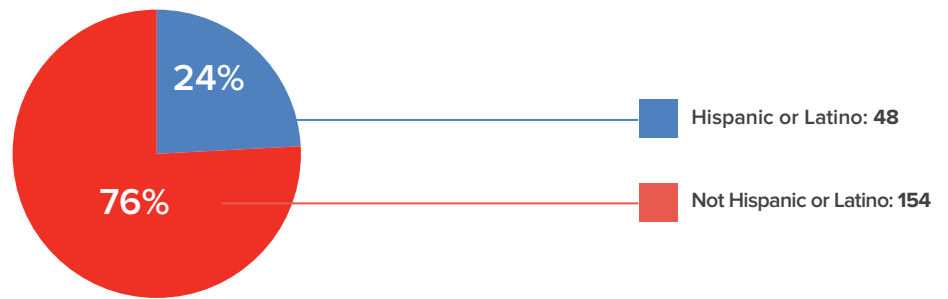
The Children

CASA served 202 children in FY 2023, which equates to 61% of the 333 children from Middlesex County who were in foster care during that time.

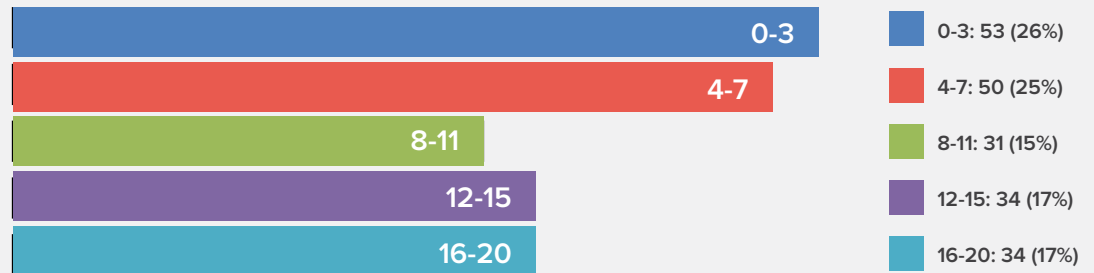
Race of Children



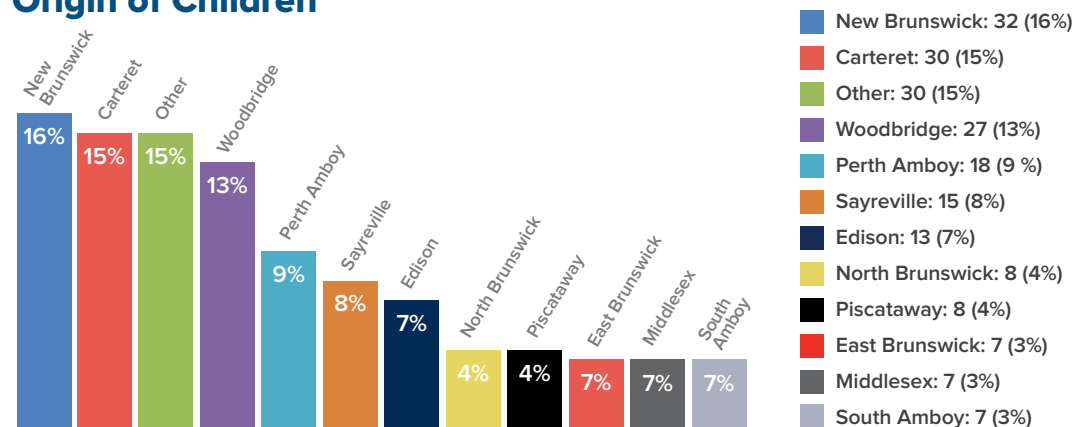
Ethnic Origin of Children



Age of Children



Origin of Children



Major Fundraisers

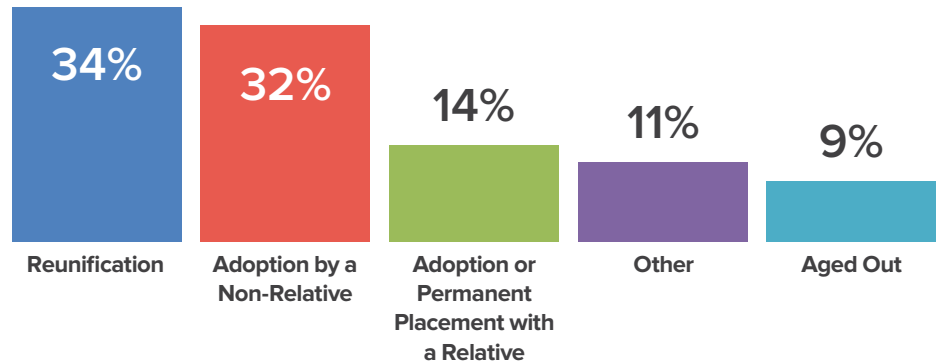
Toast: The Toast, honoring Dr. Francine Conway, raised **\$51,196**.

Holiday Appeal: The Holiday Appeal raised **\$36,756**.

The Volunteers

CASA worked with 104 volunteers appointed to 202 children during the year. Volunteers donated a total of 4,310 case-related hours valued at \$145,764. They also drove 22,178 miles to visit children and gather information about them.

Closed Cases (35 total)



FY2023 Impact Highlights

- CASA represented **202** children in Court
- **98%** of CASA's recommendations were accepted by the Court
- CASA serves all **20+ communities** in Middlesex County, New Jersey
- CASA of Middlesex County is part of a national association of nearly **1,000 CASA programs**
- As of June 30, 2023, CASA reached **61%** of Middlesex County youth in foster care

A few words from our volunteers

“Children in foster care are vulnerable, fragile and sometimes difficult but at the same time they are incredibly resilient, funny, charming, delightful and awe-inspiring!”

— Bernadette Varley, CASA Advocate

“Everyone in the system has their own interest to defend: DCP&P, lawyers, biological parents, resource parents, etc. CASA advocates view and report on the kids, their environment, and their best interest with a unique objectivity.”

— Betsy Capp, CASA Advocate

Jessie's Story



CASA Volunteer Reina Advocates for Child with Special Needs

Jessie, age 5 and autistic, was removed from his home due to neglect. Prior to his removal, there were several reports of authorities finding him alone, without proper clothing, around the neighborhood. His mother suffered from mental health issues and substance abuse problems. Jessie was placed with his maternal grandparents. Despite their best efforts, the extent of Jessie's special needs was overwhelming them. They had,

in the beginning expressed doubts as to whether they would be able to care for him due to his special needs.

CASA advocate Reina was assigned to the case. She visited Jessie both at his placement home and several times at school. In all her reports, she was steadfast in advocating for vital services for Jessie which ultimately helped improved his behavior and assisted with his care in his placement home. Services advocated for included applied behavior analysis therapy, a home health aide, financial assistance for a babysitter and enrollment in summer camp.

While Reina ensured that Jessie was receiving the help he needed to thrive in his new placement, his mother was taking appropriate steps to address her mental health problems and substance abuse issues. Jessie's case was closed when his grandparents were granted guardianship, with the acknowledgment that his mother was to have liberal visitation.

Sources of Income

\$195,288 / Donated services

\$151,050 / Federal grants

\$137,425 / State grants

\$96,849 / Fundraising events

\$49,418 / Individual donations

\$42,294 / County grants