

CASA volunteer training starts

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Time is running out to sign up for the next CASA Volunteer Training class. CASA is a program of the Fannin County Children's Center. CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. When a judge determines that a child is no longer safe in their own home, CASA is assigned to gather information and make recommendations to the courts about what would be best for the child.

CASA volunteers are a source of hope and support for child victims as they wait for the courts to decide where they may safely live. Advocates help children access the services they need to heal from their abuse, and the information and recommendations CASA volunteers provide help to expedite the court process and provide better outcomes for children under the court's protection. For many abused children, CASA is the only constant during a frightening, uncertain time. A CASA volunteer can make an immediate and critical impact on the life of a child.

CASA volunteers undergo 30 hours of initial training and 12 hours of continuing education each year. Each volunteer advocate works with a CASA staff supervisor who provides guidance throughout the court process. The next initial training class will be held in the evenings, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. beginning on Feb 3.

CASA volunteers come from all walks of life, and most are employed full-time. Volunteers must be 21 or older, undergo a background check and take part in a personal interview. Volunteer advocates are patient, open-minded people with good communication skills, a history of following through on commitments and a willingness to accept guidance. Above all, they care about children.

To learn more about becoming a CASA in Fannin County or to get an application, visit www.fanninccc.org or call (903) 583-4339. To become a CASA outside of Fannin County, visit www.becomeacasa.org.