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THE CROSSOVER YOUTH PRACTICE MODEL (CYPM)

*CYPM in Brief: Engaging Court
Appointed Special Advocates to Improve
Outcomes for Crossover Youth*

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Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM)

The Center for Juvenile Justice Reform (CJJR) at the Georgetown University McCourt School of Public Policy developed the Crossover Youth Practice Model (CYPM) to improve outcomes for youth who are involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. The CYPM advances a research-based approach that child welfare, juvenile justice and related agencies and partners can use to better address the needs of these youth and support their transitions to adulthood. The term “crossover youth” refers to youth who have experienced some form of abuse or neglect and who engage in delinquent behaviors regardless of the depth of their involvement in these systems. This brief, which is the fourth in a series of CJJR publications that addresses important issues faced by crossover youth and the systems that serve them, highlights the critical role that Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) play in supporting crossover youth.

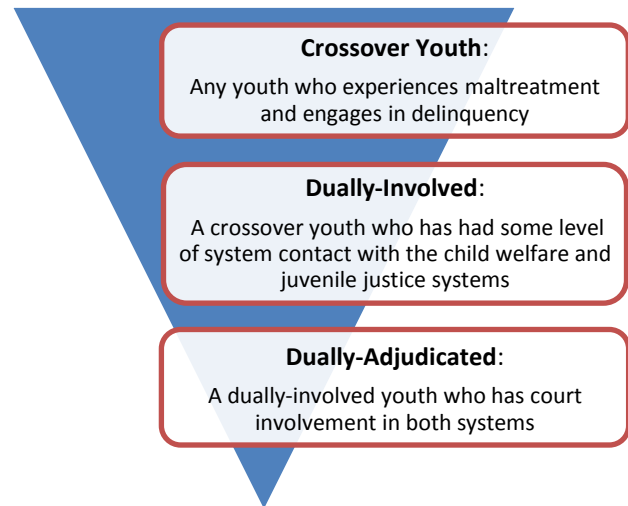


Figure 1: Definitions

A Brief History of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs)

A Court Appointed Special Advocate is a trained individual who is appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of an abused and neglected child in court. These unpaid volunteers are appointed primarily in child maltreatment and dependency matters, but they can be used in delinquency matters as well when the child is also involved in dependency matters. The Honorable David Soukup, a retired King County, Washington Superior Court judge, first introduced the concept of community volunteers serving the child-serving systems in 1976. Frustrated by the incomplete picture of youth’s lives frequently offered by attorneys and child welfare agency staff in his courtroom, he began appointing “Special Advocates,” whose responsibility it was to gather information about the youth outside the courtroom (Justin, 2002). Over time, other courts began to establish similar special advocate programs. They emerged in various formats, but all shared a common goal: the improvement of child welfare via the input of trained community volunteers advocating in court for the best interests of abused, neglected, and dependent children, ultimately assuring that children are safe in a permanent home and have the opportunity to thrive (*Connection Magazine*).

In 1982, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (National CASA) was founded, formalizing this now-national network of programs. National CASA is a membership organization that offers training, local program start-up assistance, information, legislative

advocacy, opportunities, and technical assistance to individual CASA programs at the state and local levels.

Thanks to the support and assistance that National CASA provides to local CASAs nationwide, nearly 1,000 locally situated CASA programs train and support almost 77,000 volunteers to serve abused and neglected youth in dependency courts across the country. These volunteers are appointed to advocate on behalf of children who are before the court as a result of abuse or neglect. However, an increasing number of jurisdictions are also appointing a CASA when a youth becomes dually-involved. These youth have cases in both dependency and delinquency court, which requires a high level of collaboration, coordination, and information sharing between parties.

In order to better understand how CASA volunteers fit in with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems and ultimately act as a positive resource for crossover youth, this issue brief will discuss:

- The role of CASA volunteers in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems;
- Ways in which CASA volunteers can improve outcomes for crossover youth;
- How CASA volunteers fit within the CYPM framework; and
- How CASA volunteers have operated in the field to make a difference for at-risk youth.

CASA's Role in the Child-Serving Systems

In most jurisdictions, a CASA and/or a guardian *ad litem* (GAL) is appointed to act as an independent representative and advocate for a youth's best interests. In over half (55%) of jurisdictions served by CASA programs, the volunteer is appointed to serve as a "friend of the court" (Annual Local Program Survey Report, 2016). Their role includes serving as a fact-finder, facilitator, case monitor, and advocate. In this model, the local jurisdiction usually also appoints an attorney for the child, whether a guardian *ad litem* attorney legally representing the child's best interests or a client-directed/expressed interests' attorney.

Most jurisdictions differentiate the roles of CASA volunteers and guardians *ad litem* (GAL) (Youngclarke, 2004). CASA volunteers are not required to be attorneys, and thus do not represent a child in court in a legal capacity. In 24% of jurisdictions served by CASA programs, however, a CASA volunteer can be appointed as a lay guardian *ad litem* (Program Survey Report, 2016). In these jurisdictions, there is an attorney involved with the case, but they are not necessarily appointed to serve the child; rather, they may be engaged to serve the volunteer or the program. The lay GAL volunteer serves in the same role of the CASA volunteer but may be a party to the case and as such have other responsibilities and status. In 17% of jurisdictions served by CASA programs, there is a CASA volunteer/GAL attorney team, and 4% of jurisdictions use some other variation of the team model (Program Survey Report, 2016).

Federal law requires that all children in child abuse and neglect proceedings are appointed a GAL to represent their best interests, and that GAL may be either an attorney or a lay guardian (Child Abuse, Prevention and Treatment Act of 1974, 2010).

In 1990, National CASA adopted a set of national standards to which a program must adhere in order to be considered a recognized CASA program. Nationally recognized CASA programs require volunteers to undergo a minimum of 30 hours of pre-service training, with an ongoing training commitment of 12 hours annually, in order to ensure that all volunteers have a minimum set of skills and knowledge such that they can provide quality representation. In 2017, National CASA released a revised pre-service curriculum that includes topics on childhood trauma and its long-term effects as well as an increase in case-study engagement of participants in order to increase knowledge transfer during their best-interest advocacy. The revision includes an increase in skill building around the critical area of cultural competency and working with youth that are disproportionately represented in foster care. In addition to an understanding of CASA roles and responsibilities, the curriculum includes:

- An Overview of Juvenile Justice and Child Protection Systems and Processes;
- Cultural Competency;
- Family Dynamics;
- Child Development;
- Communication Skills;
- Trauma-related Advocacy;
- Information Gathering and Sharing; and
- Report Writing (Standards for Local CASA/GAL Programs, 2012)

While CASA volunteers are most commonly involved in the child welfare system, there are circumstances in which they can be involved in delinquency proceedings. Typically, a CASA is first assigned to a child welfare case by a judge to act as a fact-finder, case monitor, and advocate for the child. Once assigned, a CASA will write an initial report on the case. Ideally, if the youth

The Dynamic Role of CASA Volunteers

When first conceptualized over 40 years ago, a CASA volunteer's role was largely considered to be just one of a fact-finder. However, volunteers quickly proved that they were capable of doing much more than just providing a fuller picture of a child's life, and over time, the official capacities of a CASA volunteer changed to reflect that. Under National CASA standards, a CASA also acts as a:

- **Case Monitor:** A CASA ensures that the youth they are working with is progressing toward positive outcomes by monitoring the implementation of service and permanency plans, and assuring that court-ordered services are implemented in a timely and appropriate manner.
- **Courtroom Advocate:** CASA volunteers generate frequent written reports that they present to the court. They attend and testify in court hearings, discussing their findings and recommendations about the case and its progress. They also inform the court of important case developments as appropriate.
- **Positive Adult Influence:** A CASA is required to have regular and sufficient in-person contact with the youth. This frequent contact typically results in the CASA becoming a large source of support and influence for the youth on a personal and professional level.
- **Resource Liaison:** CASA volunteers frequently work with service providers and system contacts to ensure that the youth's educational, mental health, and other community-based needs are being met. They make specific recommendations for services for the child and even the child's family, if appropriate. (Standards, 2012)

is dually involved, the volunteer will be assigned to the youth's delinquency case pre-adjudication, and the report will include recommendations for disposition if necessary. The CASA continues to monitor and report on the youth's circumstances, providing periodic written updates and recommendations to the court until case closure in both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems (Youngclarke, et al., 2004; Standards, 2012). In some cases, CASA volunteers are not appointed initially, but are assigned to a dependency and/or delinquency case post-adjudication/disposition in order to support the youth's best interests as they continue to be involved with both systems. CASA volunteers may even assist youth past case closure, providing assistance and support to ensure a smooth transition for youth away from the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Research on CASA programs suggests that these volunteers have positive results on cases and in life outcomes of system-involved youth. Having a CASA volunteer on a case is correlated with a higher likelihood of having a permanency plan in place and reduced time in foster care compared to youth without an advocate (Calkins & Miller, 1999; Abramson, 1991). Youth with CASA volunteers also tend to have increased access to services while involved in the system and better educational outcomes overall (Youngclarke et al., 2004; Caliber Associates, 2004; Calkin & Miller, 1999). Most importantly, youth who work with a CASA show improvements in various protective factors such as their sense of acceptance, ability to work with others, and other controls against deviant behavior (Waxman et al., 2009). Altogether, these improvements indicate better long-term system outcomes for child-welfare involved youth. A 2006 audit of CASA programs by the U.S. Department of Justice Inspector General's Office found that, for the 75,389 CASA cases that closed between FY 2002-2004, only 1.4 percent of youth reentered the child welfare system during that time (Office of the Inspector General, 2006). Youngclarke et al., (2004) found the long-term rate of reentry to the child welfare system for youth with a CASA appointed to their case to be approximately half that of other foster children.

Advocating for Crossover Youth

The reality of crossover youth's experiences in child-serving systems is starker than their non-maltreated or non-delinquent counterparts; they experience high rates of placement change, high rates of mental health and substance abuse problems, and are more likely to penetrate deeper into the juvenile justice and child welfare systems (Herz, Ryan, & Bilchik, 2010). Crossover cases tend to be resource intensive with high levels of instability and complexity, all while disproportionately affecting youth of color. Given the unique role they play in a youth's life, CASA volunteers have the ability to mitigate some of these challenges, connect the youth to needed services and supports, and ultimately help achieve positive outcomes for youth, families, and communities.

Unfortunately, crossover youth often receive harsher processing outcomes. They are more likely to be detained on first-time charges and less likely to receive probation compared to delinquent

youth who have no connection to the dependency system. (Ryan, Herz, Hernandez, & Marshall, 2007). However, when crossover youth have a dedicated and knowledgeable support system, the chances of that youth achieving positive outcomes increases. Linkages to pro-social, caring, responsible adults is a key tenet of positive youth development, and studies have shown that youth who have positive connections with at least one supportive adult engage in fewer risky behaviors (Butts, Bazemore, & Meroe, 2010). The involvement of a CASA in crossover youth cases can provide stability for what is otherwise a population that experiences a disproportionate amount of turbulence in their life, as they are frequently the only member of a case team that is consistently present throughout the stages of a case and across courts and organizations. A youth's case can linger within systems for years and experience numerous case manager and probation transfers, but CASA transfers are rare (Youngclarke et al., 2004).

Girls and African-American children are disproportionately overrepresented in the crossover youth population when compared to the general population of delinquent or dependent youth (Herz, Ryan & Bilchik 2010). They also often come from families with a history of criminal behavior, mental health, and substance abuse problems. CASA programs are required to train their volunteers in cultural competency, family dynamics, and other special needs that may apply to the children they serve (Standards 2012). As a result, CASA volunteers are well suited to attend to the needs of what is a specialized population within the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Maltreatment, placement type, and disruption of therapeutic services are all factors that can impact the likelihood of youth delinquency (Huang, Ryan, & Herz 2004). The insight that CASA volunteers gain from their investigatory work, as well as the relationship they build with the youth in their case, puts them in a strong position to identify risk factors and advocate for services for youth that otherwise may be overlooked by attorneys or case managers, who may be handling significant caseloads and workloads. The average caseload of a CASA volunteer is less than two (Annual Local Program Survey Report, 2014), meaning they can dedicate resources and time to a case that other system workers are not able to provide. The significant amount of time that CASA volunteers spend with youth also helps in developing a level of trust and rapport that may give a CASA greater awareness of risk factors present in a youth's life, positioning them to more readily identify crossover youth and help to protect them against becoming dually-involved.

CASAs fill a unique role in the juvenile justice system, acting as a resource not only for youth but also for the court. A CASA serves as a conduit for case information between courts, case managers, and service providers—an especially important function in crossover cases where multiple systems are involved. The sheer amount of collaboration between actors and organizations involved in a youth's case can result in potential services being overlooked or less robust representation (Youngclarke et al., 2004), and a CASA can act as a bulwark against these

types of breakdowns. CASAs frequently leverage their extensive knowledge of their assignments when working with system officials and youth to devise case plans that are reasonable, well-tailored to address the youth's needs, and easily understood. When obstacles do arise, CASA volunteers can provide ancillary support to ensure that youth stay on track to achieve their case plan goals. For example, if transportation is a barrier to keeping scheduled appointments, a CASA may provide transportation, or work with system officials and youth to determine an alternative solution. If caregivers are not regularly participating in meetings, the CASA may attend and follow up to engage caregivers, while monitoring the case for timeliness and compliance.

Delinquency, Dependency, and Motherhood: CASA Volunteers in the Field

Teresa* gave birth to her first child, a son, at the age of twelve. Living in a foster home where she was classified as a “minor mom,” her desire to parent her own child frequently clashed with her foster mother’s ideas concerning his care. Teresa was eventually removed from the foster home for unruly behavior due to the constant conflict, but the court ordered her son to remain, granting Teresa only limited supervised visitation. Despite her primary desire to raise her own child, her case was on a path to termination of parental rights. Teresa’s CASA supervisor intervened, suggesting that the needs of both Teresa and her son could be met by placing both of them in a different, more specialized home, where Teresa could receive services that would prepare her to better manage the responsibilities of motherhood alongside her other life goals. It took several years, but with her CASA volunteer’s advocacy and assistance, Teresa was reunified with her son when she was fifteen and given the opportunity to parent under nurturing supervision.

Teresa’s CASA volunteer continued to support Teresa in her journey through the delinquency and dependency systems, pointing out successful milestones in Teresa’s development both as a youth and a mother, giving judges and other stakeholders in Teresa’s case more than the basic facts to take into consideration when creating action and re-entry plans.

Today, Teresa has three children and recently completed a certificate program to become a nurse. Despite the case being closed, her CASA advocate continues to be a positive presence in her life, providing job references and guidance toward resources that Teresa can use to become a more independent individual.

**Names have been changed to protect privacy. Story as told to Helen Jones-Kelley.*

CASA volunteers can also act as resource brokers for the youth with whom they work. A CASA often identifies helpful resources and connects the youth with them, as well as establishes a relationship with caregivers and service providers to encourage follow-through. This responsibility is both formal and informal, the latter typically in education services. In some states like Texas and California, the law permits CASAs to be appointed as an “education advocate” or “educational rights holder” to ensure that youth are receiving educational services that meet their needs (TFC §107.002 (i); CGC § 7579.5(b))¹. These various roles place CASA volunteers in a good position to not only enrich the information that judges and other services system actors receive, but also create new opportunities for the youth they serve.

¹ For more information about CASAs as education liaisons, please see “[CYPM in Brief: Improving Educational Outcomes for Crossover Youth](#)”.

What the CYPM Recommends

Crossover youth's cases are often some of the most complex in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. As CASA volunteers are often assigned to more complicated cases, they likely have contact with the crossover youth population even if they are not formally assigned to the delinquency case. The experience offered by CASA volunteers presents an excellent opportunity for partnership in jurisdictions seeking to transform the way in which they serve crossover youth. Jurisdictions implementing the CYPM should consider employing the following practices in order to engage CASA volunteers and utilize their strengths in crossover cases.

Involve CASA in CYPM Planning and Implementation

CASA volunteers' knowledge and direct experience of both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems make them valuable to a local jurisdiction's CYPM implementation team. Given their understanding of how youth and families experience the systems—including multi-system assessments, case planning meetings, and service delivery approaches—CASAs have important insight that can help inform the development of CYPM protocols, related tools (e.g., resource inventories, system maps), and youth and family engagement strategies. Thus, CYPM implementation teams should invite CASA volunteers to participate in the planning and implementation of the model for their jurisdictions from the beginning of the process. Ideally, at least one CASA volunteer should be part of the governance structure that develops and continues to monitor the CYPM protocols after the initiative is launched.

Involve CASA Volunteers as Early as Possible in a Crossover Case

In most jurisdictions, CASA volunteers maintain small caseloads which enable them to focus on ensuring case plan compliance by all parties and position them to play a critical role in sharing valuable knowledge of a youth's particular circumstances and history. Additionally, CASA volunteers typically have a comprehensive understanding of the resources and services available in the community—an especially critical asset when constructing and executing case plans. Ensuring clear channels of communication between case entities at the point of crossover identification can assist in mitigating the potential communication issues, confusion over locus of responsibility, and misunderstandings that may arise due to the youth's depth of involvement in the system and the breadth of various services involved (Conger and Ross, 2001), and CASA volunteers are in a strong position to act as that conduit. Where resources are available, a CASA volunteer should be assigned at the earliest point in the case considered feasible by the judge. If the judge has not assigned a CASA independently, the youth's case team should ask for the assignment.

Ensure that CASA Volunteers Are Part of the Case Planning Team

The CASA should be included in all multidisciplinary team meetings and meetings with the youth and family. Coordinated case planning and effective inter- and intra-system communication increase the potential for crossover youth to successfully exit the system(s) in

which they are involved (Baglivio et al., 2016) and CASA volunteers can facilitate those interactions. They should work closely with the representatives from the juvenile justice and child welfare agencies and other members of the team to ensure that all parties have the same understanding of case plan goals and requirements, including the role that each partner plays in achieving an effective and smooth case resolution.

Provide CASA Volunteers with Appropriate Youth Information

Case planning teams should also look to utilize the CASA volunteer to assist with successful case planning execution, timely case resolution, and access to resources. CASA volunteers leverage their extensive knowledge of their assignments when working with system officials and youth to devise case plans that are ambitious, but appropriate and feasible with which to comply. Ensuring that CASA volunteers have access to the relevant information on the youth (consistent with the law) in a timely fashion maximizes their utility to the case team and enhances their ability to provide sound representation for the youth.

Perspectives from the Field

System officials and partners in Lancaster County, Nebraska and Mohave County, Arizona have worked with the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform to implement the CYPM in their communities. When implementing the CYPM, jurisdictions are required to develop a governance structure to oversee the planning, launch, and ongoing oversight of the work. These entities, usually referred to as Implementation Teams, are multi-disciplinary bodies that typically include representatives from the courts, child welfare, juvenile justice, behavioral health, schools, and other important community stakeholders. By bringing together a diverse group of participants around a common issue, communities are able to benefit from a wide range of perspectives and resources.

Leadership in both Lancaster and Mohave Counties actively engaged local CASA representatives in the CYPM process. In Lancaster County, this engagement came early on, allowing the team to better plan, and develop their protocols for responding to crossover youth. In Mohave County, engagement with the local CASA Council after the launch of the Model has helped caseworkers identify additional resources and supports for crossover youth.

Lancaster County, Nebraska

In 2014, Lancaster County, Nebraska embarked on the process of implementing the CYPM. From the inception of the effort, local CASAs were active on the Lancaster County Implementation Team alongside representatives from the Court, Probation, Department of Health and Human Services, County Attorney's Office, defense bar, and others. The region's CASA volunteers were interested in the effort as many of their cases involved crossover youth.

Historically, youth in Nebraska with truancy or ungovernable cases were handled by the Department of Health and Human Services, and the process for CASA working with these cases

was similar to traditional abuse and neglect cases. After a legislative change in 2010, authority of truancy and ungovernable cases was transferred to the juvenile probation system. While CASAs still worked with these cases, they became more familiar with the process of working with both agencies when a truancy or ungovernability case required additional family services or formal child welfare involvement. CASAs were often in the position of ensuring that required services were delivered in a timely and coordinated fashion, regardless of whether the case originated in the child welfare or juvenile justice system. By handling cases in both systems, Lancaster’s CASAs were in the important position of seeing the value of collaboration and coordination between the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

A CASA is at the same time a participant and an outsider in both systems. This dual-system perspective was particularly important during the CYPM planning process. The CASA representative on the Implementation Team participated in both Lancaster County’s CYPM Information Sharing² and Protocols³ workgroups. As part of these groups, Dawn Rockey, the Executive Director of CASA for Lancaster County, was able to underscore the importance of in-person teaming meetings and the value of regular and ongoing communication with those involved in a crossover case. Ms. Rockey used her position on the Implementation Team to advocate strongly for joint-teaming meetings and developing information sharing protocols to ensure that every worker and stakeholder had the case reports necessary to make informed decisions.

Since the implementation of the CYPM in Lancaster County, the CASA volunteers have noticed several changes in case practice that have led to better collaboration among the parties involved in a crossover case. The new CYPM protocols for the early identification and notification of a youth’s crossover status have been particularly valuable. Upon notification, CASA volunteers are immediately able to contact the appropriate individuals at the child welfare and juvenile justice agencies. This allows the CASA volunteers to begin collecting the information they need in order to provide the “whole picture” view of the youth that the Lancaster County judges expect. Overall, CASA volunteers have noted that the speed in which services are coordinated and delivered between both agencies has increased after the launch of the CYPM protocols. On occasions where gaps or delays in services may exist, the CASAs have the information and access they need to prompt further collaboration among the partners in the case and strongly advocate for the best interests of youth.

² This workgroup focuses on discussing and understanding what information can legally be shared between child welfare, juvenile justice, education and behavioral health staff and the components of a fully-informed consent process. This workgroup also explores legal implications of information sharing and how it impacts families. The work product includes development of information sharing agreements as necessary and an informed consent process.

³ This workgroup focuses on developing protocols across child welfare and juvenile justice, along with partner systems, to implement the CYPM. The protocols detail the practices and approaches the agencies and partners will implement in order to better serve crossover youth, including but not limited to the process for identifying youth at the point of crossing over, informing the charging decision, developing the pre-adjudication/pre-disposition meeting structure to address immediate case level concerns, and on-going case management if dual-adjudication occurs.

By including CASA representation early in the CYPM planning process, the Lancaster team was able to capitalize on the unique experiences and expertise of the CASA volunteers who interact with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Since launching the CYPM protocols, CASA volunteers also report that they are better able to facilitate the collaboration among the parties involved in a crossover case.

Mohave County, Arizona

Similar to Lancaster County, Nebraska, system officials and partners in Mohave County, Arizona began the CYPM implementation process in 2014. While Mohave County had representation from CASAs throughout the CYPM development effort, it was not until after the formal launch of the CYPM protocols in May 2015 that the county's CYPM team fully realized the potential of collaborating with local CASA volunteers.

One key element of the CYPM approach in Mohave County was the establishment of the Mohave County Crossover Youth Practice Model Governance Board. Created in January 2015 via an administrative order issued by the Mohave County Presiding Juvenile Judge, Honorable Lee Jantzen, the purpose of this board is to “assist in the development, implementation, fidelity and oversight of services and programs for the Crossover Youth of Mohave County.”⁴

The Governance Board's membership consists of key stakeholders and parties involved in crossover cases (e.g., probation, child welfare, behavioral health, the courts, schools, attorneys) that meet four times a year to oversee the implementation of the CYPM in the county. At times, this involves developing specific policy or practice changes, establishing ad hoc committees to review new issues, and employing a continuous quality improvement mechanism for crossover cases.

CASA volunteers had been members of the Governance Board since its founding and had been active in all of the Board's responsibilities. In May 2016, a new CASA volunteer rotated on to the Board and helped the CYPM team recognize the untapped potential of Mohave's CASA community. This new member was closely connected to the Mohave County CASA Council, a local youth-serving entity previously unfamiliar to many on the Board. The Council was formed in 2008 by a group of CASA volunteers to help foster youth in Mohave County get the resources and funding they need to engage in pro-social and educational activities. The CASA Council, an independent 501(c)3, raises money throughout the community to help cover the costs of sports fees, camps, arts and music lessons, tutoring, summer camps, and other programs (CASA Council of Mohave County, n.d.).

Upon learning of the Mohave CASA Council, Governance Board members were able to spread word about the ways in which the CASA Council could support workers responsible for crossover cases. Since that time, probation officers have worked with the CASA Council to

⁴ In re: Membership of the Mohave County Crossover Youth Practice Model Governance Board. No. 2015-10 (Mohave County, Ariz. 2015)

obtain support and resources for their crossover cases, helping youth gain access to pro-social and extra-curricular activities that can serve as a protective influence for these youth.

Mohave County still employs CASAs in their tradition capacity in dependency cases. These CASA volunteers offer stable relationships for these youth, attending family team meetings, Foster Care Review Boards, and hearings with the youth and family. However, in collaborating with the Mohave CASA Council, the Governance Board has expanded the breadth of resources and support available for the crossover population.

Both Lancaster County and Mohave County have benefited greatly by bringing CASA representatives into their CYPM efforts. Lancaster County ensured that a CASA representative was involved in the CYPM planning early on and benefited from her insight into both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems when crafting their CYPM protocols. Mohave, by continuing to look for new opportunities to collaborate with outside partnerships even after the launch of the Model, enhanced their already strong protocols with the resources and support of the CASA Council. Communities looking to tap into the expertise of their CASA volunteers should be sure to incorporate CASA volunteers into any system-change effort from the start. Jurisdictions should also perform occasional reviews of their community to identify potential partners who can inject new support, resources, and ideas into their reforms.

Conclusion

The work that CASA volunteers do to ensure robust representation for the youth they work with is invaluable, especially when paired with the principles set forth in the CYPM. CASA volunteers' impact on crossover youth may be the difference between a child's case getting lost in the system and a successful case closure. The contributions of CASA volunteers in the CYPM work in Lancaster County and Mohave County demonstrates the positive influence these advocates can have in the systems change process and in fostering good outcomes in complex multi-system cases. Leveraging CASA volunteers as stakeholders in the CYPM led to better protocols, enhanced inter-agency communication, and increased support for juvenile justice and child welfare caseworkers and the children they serve. By meaningfully involving CASA representatives in the implementation and management of the CYPM, these jurisdictions put crossover youth in a better position to achieve positive outcomes.

For more information about the Crossover Youth Practice Model, please visit: <http://cjr.georgetown.edu/>.

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