



2021 KCN Awards of Excellence

CASA Board Member of the Year

Kristin King | CASA of Graves County & Southwest KY

Kristin King joined the CASA of Graves County & Southwest KY Board in December 2018. In just a few short months, her impact on the organization was immeasurable. She was elected treasurer by February 2019 and was an active member in shaping the outcomes of a board retreat meant to “reboot” the organization. Kristin championed the program’s expansion to neighboring counties and her fresh perspectives brought many new ideas to volunteer recruitment and fundraising. She personally serves as an ambassador to the community by keeping recruitment literature well-stocked and through the engagement of prospective volunteers in her personal networks. Her heart for children knows no bounds as she is also the president of Future Hope Africa, a nonprofit that supports development of families in the Democratic Republic of the Congo through improved education and support of entrepreneurship. The Kentucky CASA Network is proud to present this year’s award to Kristin.

CASA Judge of the Year

Judge Lucinda Masterton | Fayette County Family Court

Family Court Judge Lucinda Masterton is a strong proponent of CASA and advocates for the program in her community, throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and throughout the nation. Locally, she has presided over thousands of cases since her election in 2007, relying on the objective, fact-based recommendations from CASA volunteers. Her rulings are ethical, fair, and reunification-focused. Judge Masterton has been known to think outside of the box and made herself aware of community resources to best support the challenges that families and children in the system face. Recognizing communication as a barrier for some families, she worked with CASA to develop a translator position to help with non-English speaking families. She has worked across the commonwealth in support of CASA work by mentoring new juvenile judges and participating in the Judge’s College Youth Panel that provides judges with the youth’s perspective of the system and the positive impact a CASA volunteer has on children. Judge Masterton also continues to exhibit her leadership beyond Kentucky with her recent appointment to the National CASA/GAL Judicial Leadership Council. The Kentucky CASA Network is proud to present this year’s award to Judge Masterton.

CASA Program of the Year

CASA of the Heartland | Hardin County, KY

CASA of the Heartland, with a small staff of champions breaking through the barriers of a global pandemic, made momentous strides in changing children’s stories. The program underwent a key leadership transition following a retirement in late 2019, along with other staff changes. Yet, despite all the transitions in a challenging era, the program achieved great feats. They increased their number of volunteers, reduced their waitlist of children by nearly half, and implemented creative fundraisers and almost doubled their training classes. The program was innovative in engaging the community such as with their pinwheel event where

key stakeholders, including legislators, judges, mayors, law enforcement, and many others, came to represent the total number of children their program has served since its inception. The program creatively expanded their work message as they increased their social media engagement 9-fold with videos such as “The Empty Chair” campaign. Family Court Judge M. Brent Hall supported their efforts by personally appearing in two of the program’s recruitment videos and later provided a letter of support stating the program’s volunteers are always “court ready” with “reports well written, concise, and the CASA Volunteers’ testimony is always well presented.” He further goes on to say that CASA saves lives and he has seen it with his own eyes in his court. The Kentucky CASA Network is proud to present this year’s award to CASA of the Heartland.

CASA Program Director of the Year

Daphyne Maddox | CASA of Midwest Kentucky

According to her board, Daphyne Maddox brings an amazing amount of energy, knowledge, and passion to her work. Daphyne initially expanded a one-county program into two additional neighboring counties. Within the last few years, she also spearheaded the acquisition of another CASA program, as well as an additional expansion, extending their reach to six counties in the area. According to Sheriff Sanderson of Hopkins County, Daphyne approached the expansions with “professionalism, grace, and a huge heart for community.” Family Court Judge Brandi Rogers bolsters the sheriff’s remarks, adding that Daphyne’s collaborative approach to her work and her dedication to the vulnerable children served has proven to be an exemplar model of how a program can build capacity and grow. Daphyne also supports other local programs by offering informal support and was tapped to aid a nearby program’s transition to new leadership. The Kentucky CASA Network is proud to present this year’s award to Daphyne.

Bob Babbage CASA Volunteer of the Year

Eileen Donahue | Boone County CASA

In 2006, Eileen Donahue began her CASA work in Lafayette, Indiana, where she served for five years advocating for 28 kids before coming to Boone County CASA to continue her advocacy for 26 more children for another nine years. Boone County CASA Executive Director Coleen Maier notes, “Eileen is a volunteer who provides support and empowerment to families, by walking alongside and partnering with parents through difficult circumstances, yet still remains a fierce advocate for each child she stands with.” Maier goes on to say Eileen understands her role as a child’s advocate and “models it perfectly through her consideration of each family’s culture, experience, and trauma that otherwise could be seen as a barrier.” The impact of her work has been noted by the bench. In her current long-term case, the judge stopped a hearing until Eileen was able to be present, stating “she is the only one that has all of the information we need to proceed.” Eileen has a heart to serve beyond that of her impeccable advocacy. She aids other volunteers within the program and serves as a mentor to newly sworn advocates. When most were stressed and felt disconnected during the global pandemic, Eileen safely opened her home to staff and volunteers for much-needed informal support and camaraderie. She is an active ambassador for the program helping with community events and fundraising. Eileen has made a lasting, positive impact not only in the lives of 54 children but in CASA programs across two states. The Kentucky CASA Network is proud to present this year’s award to Eileen.