

**You Can Be a Powerful Voice in a Child's Life!**  
**CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Training Class for Now Being Formed  
for Dorchester and Talbot Counties**

This fall, CASA of Talbot and Dorchester Counties will offer its annual Pre-Service Training to applicants who are interested in becoming volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates.

CASAs are everyday citizens who have the courage to stand up for children thrust into the judicial court system through not fault of their own. Some are victims of violence, sexual or psychological abuse, and others have been neglected or abandoned by their own parents. After completion of training classes, which cover a variety of topics critical to CASA's work, and being sworn in by a judge as court-appointed advocates, CASA volunteers are assigned to work with one child at a time. Each CASA researches a child's background and identifies his or her needs, attends court hearings, and makes recommendations to assist the judge in making decisions that are in the child's best interest. The volunteer closely follows the case to ensure the child receives services and, ultimately, is placed in a safe, permanent home.

People from a variety of backgrounds are encouraged to get involved. No special previous experience is necessary to be a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate; however, volunteers must be 21 years of age and are selected on the basis of their competency, objectivity, and commitment. Nearly half of the children served by CASA are boys who could benefit from having a male CASA volunteer. Additionally, of the children who are under the protection of the courts in any given year, almost a third are African American. With this in mind, CASA encourages men and women from the African American community to apply to become volunteers.

Having a CASA volunteer whom the child can culturally identify with encourages them to freely communicate their needs, ultimately resulting in the successful placement of the child. You can make a difference in the life of a child in need of assistance. At times a friend, at times a role model, at times a familiar face, a CASA volunteer is often the only consistent figure in a child's life.

All prospective CASA volunteers are screened and interviewed before being accepted into the Pre-Service Training program. If you are interested in the fall class, you should apply now to allow time for the screening and interview process. Please contact the CASA office at 410-822-2866 or [casa@goeaston.net](mailto:casa@goeaston.net) for more information and a volunteer application.