**CASA of Portage County Volunteer Job Description**

**Title:**

Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad litem (CASA/GAL) volunteer.

**Position Expectation:**

To serve as a trained and approved Court Appointed Special Advocate/Guardian ad litem (CASA / GAL) volunteer, working independently from the court to investigate and monitor cases of juvenile abuse, neglect and/or dependence in the Portage County Juvenile Court.

**Manager:**

Volunteers report to the CASA Executive Director.

**Time Commitment:**

30 hours pre-service training; 1 courtroom observation; 12 hours of annual in-service training, 6 of which need to be Rule 48; other flexible hours as necessary for the assigned case (8-10 hours per month/per case). CASA of Portage County desires at least a two (2) year commitment for a CASA volunteer.

**Role and Responsibilities:**

* Attend screening interviews, court observation, pre-service and in-service training sessions.
* Serve on at least one case annually by investigating and monitoring the situation while the child is under court jurisdiction. Conduct an independent investigation to gain a thorough understanding of the assigned case.
* Conduct interviews with the child, Portage County Children Services caseworker, parent/guardians, relatives, friends, attorneys, teachers, neighbors, foster parents and/or any person with relevant information about the child; review files at appropriate agencies relative to the child’s case. Have regular and sufficient contact (as prescribed by the Executive Director) with the child to ensure in-depth knowledge of the case in order to make fact based recommendations to the court.
* The CASA/GAL volunteer shall meet in person with the child once every thirty days at a minimum. An exception may be granted at the discretion of Volunteer staff; however, the justification and reasons for a decision to permit less frequent in-person contact must be documented.
* Conduct a case conference with the CASA staff through monthly supervision as to preliminary findings and to review progress of the case, including permanency plan.
* Maintain and provide to the office, as required, accurate and timely forms and case records, including monthly office updates and court reports.
* Attend all pertinent hearings, reviews and/or meetings to advocate for the child’s best interest and provide testimony when necessary.
* Maintain a mandated standard of confidentiality on information pertaining to each case.
* Reports any incident of child abuse or neglect, or any situation in which the CASA volunteer has reason to believe that a child is in imminent danger to the CASA supervisor and appropriate authorities, following state legal requirements for mandated reporting.
* Determine if a case/permanent plan has been created for the child.
* Make recommendations for appropriate services for the child, including ensuring reasonable efforts, are being provided to the child and the family when appropriate and act as a facilitator among the parties.
* Maintain complete written records about the case, including dates, regarding appointments, interviews, and information gathered about the child, the child’s life circumstances, and significant others.
* Report any incidents of alleged or suspected child abuse or neglect to the CASA Executive Director and to the appropriate authorities.
* Assure that the “***child's best interests***” are being represented at every stage of the case, attend court hearings, and provide a signed written report with findings and recommendations to the Court, based on what placement and services are best for the child.
* Participate in any planning or treatment team meetings involving the child, in order to keep informed of progress in the case and to act as the representative of the child's best interests.
* Monitor the case to determine whether the child's needs are being met and whether appropriate action is being taken to fulfill any court orders in a timely manner and that review hearings are held in accordance with the law.
* Inform the court promptly of important developments in the case through appropriate means as determined by court rules.
* Advocate for the child’s best interests in the community by interfacing with mental health, educational and other community systems to assure that the child’s needs in these areas are met.
* Receive direct supervision and guidance from Program staff by consulting regularly concerning the assigned case, reviewing progress in the case, and reviewing recommendations and court reports with the staff prior to submitting them to Court. Note: CASA supervisors are prohibited from altering reports or recommendations without the knowledge and agreement of the CASA volunteer.
* When a conflict exists between a CASA volunteer and CASA staff, the CASA Executive Director has the final say regarding recommendations to the court.
* Remain actively involved in the case, until formally discharged by the Court and properly transitioned to a new advocate.
* Return the entire case file to the CASA office after the case is closed.