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Illinois CASA Mission Moment



LAKE COUNTY CASA

Vernon Hills, IL

CASA Volunteer Advocate

I'm Mary Ellen Palubicki and I have been a volunteer with CASA Lake County for 13 years. My interest in CASA began when I read the call for volunteers in my local newspaper many years ago. I saw this many times and would always stop and consider volunteering. However, I was fearful that seeing the children's trauma would be too difficult for me. I decided, finally, to give it a try and found that I could handle it and that it was a good fit for me. I wanted to give a voice to children who do not have one. I believe that children are our future, and we must invest in them now or they and society will pay a higher price later. I have found that a CASA needs to be flexible and persistent. Aspects of cases change frequently (case workers, foster homes, child behaviors) and a CASA needs to be able to adjust to these changes and persist in advocating for what is in the best interest of the child. One of the greatest challenges for me is when I perceive that something would benefit a child and, for whatever reason, it is not happening. Sometimes you just have to accept this but other times you can work to make it happen. My greatest success was two sisters who had medical issues that were not being addressed in a timely manner. I was able to connect the team to Shriners' Hospital and the girls received the care they needed. Being an advocate is not always easy and can be frustrating at times but knowing that you are helping to make a child's life and future better makes it all worthwhile.