

entered protective custody as a Child in Need of Care, their former CASA volunteer was available to be matched with them again.

3. How have you impacted the citizens of Lawrence?

Douglas County CASA volunteers have had a positive impact on our community's most vulnerable children, by advocating for the best interests of child abuse and neglect victims. By advocating for the medical, educational, emotional and permanency needs of these children, our volunteers have helped facilitate better services and outcomes for children ranging from birth to age 18. These efforts have made a positive impact on our community as we protect and nurture children whose parents are unable to provide this support. Facilitating safe, permanent homes for children has a positive impact on our entire community. Our program has also helped increase community awareness regarding the issues of child abuse and neglect via ongoing outreach and special efforts in April (National Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month), including "Pinwheels for Prevention" activities in the community. The latter included the planting and display of 89 pinwheels along the pathway between the Douglas County Courthouse and the Judicial and Law Enforcement Center in April 2012. Our program's efforts to educate Lawrence citizens regarding signs of abuse and neglect and the need and procedure for reporting suspected abuse/neglect has had an important impact on the community.

4. What barriers, if any, have you encountered?

A substantial increase in child abuse and neglect cases in Lawrence and Douglas County during the past 6 months has presented challenges for our agency. Our program served 89 children in 2011 and we have already served more than 81 children in just the first half of 2012. In addition, the number of children waiting for a CASA volunteer has doubled during the past six months, increasing from 25 to more than 50 children. The overall goal of CASA agencies nationwide is to provide a volunteer advocate for every Child in Need of Care, but increased funding is needed to achieve this goal and keep pace with the increase in child abuse/neglect victims in our community. We are also noting delays in the timeline for adoption procedures and these concerns have been shared at case plan meetings and in court reports. An additional barrier is the tremendous need for more foster homes in Lawrence and Douglas County. When children are taken into protective custody in Lawrence and foster homes are not available in our own community, these children are placed in resource homes in other counties. Our volunteers visit their assigned CASA child wherever the child is placed, and increased travel and rising gas prices have been a challenge. We do not have funds to reimburse our volunteers for their gas mileage so finding volunteers who are willing to travel outside of Lawrence at their own expense is a significant challenge. Our community members and officials must work together to recruit and license more foster homes in Lawrence and Douglas County.

5. Review the line-item budget you provided in your application. How much of your allocation has been spent?

Douglas County CASA was allocated \$20,000 in 2012 funding from the City of Lawrence. We have received half of this allocation (\$10,000) so far this year, and half of our allocation (\$10,000) has been spent.