

Local CASA Program Plans Walk-a-Thon to Help Kids in Court System

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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JERSEYVILLE - CASA of Jersey and Greene Counties will host their second annual Walk-A-Thon to raise money for kids going through the court system.

CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates, is a national program that matches a child to an advocate who will speak on their behalf in court. The CASA advocate spends

time with the child and makes recommendations in the child's best interests. The CASA of Jersey and Greene Counties currently has over 90 children in their care. They run solely on donations and grants, said Director Stacy Burney, and the walk-a-thon will help them do more in the community.

"The judge assigns a CASA advocate to the case and we start visiting that child," Burney explained. "We spend a lot of time with them. We play with them, we talk to them, we read to them. We do everything that we can to get to know that child and have a little bit of trust between the two of us. And then we speak for that child in court through a court report... Basically, we tell the court what brought these kids into care and how the kids feel and what their wishes are, and then we make educated recommendations for the best interest of that child."

Burney noted that the court system can "baffle and intimidate" adults, so the CASA program makes it easier for children who are navigating the system. She also said that while kids might see different caseworkers and lose access to their homes and families, their CASA advocate is the same person through the duration of the case. Advocates will also visit with kids after the case is closed.

The CASA Walk-A-Thon is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, 2024, starting at the Jersey County Courthouse in Jerseyville. Participants pay \$25, receive a t-shirt, and walk one, two or three miles. There will also be a short presentation by Judge Eric Pistorious.

Proceeds from the Walk-A-Thon event will go to the CASA program. Burney explained that the money allows them to do more in the community and provide additional resources for the children they work with. She is currently looking to find and train more advocates.

"With those proceeds, we can provide training, we can retain advocates, we can market, we can spend money on the kids," Burney said. "A lot of times we have kids who travel around with nothing. I mean, some of them come with a trash bag."

In these cases, the CASA program will often put a call out to the community for suitcases and supplies. Burney has been pleased to find that many people in Jersey and Greene counties respond to these calls, but she noted that without awareness, the CASA program can't receive the help it needs to be successful. She hopes the Walk-A-Thon will raise money and awareness about what the CASA program does in the community.

"The more people who know, the more people who show," Burney added. "That's what I'm looking for. I'm looking for people just to show up and say, 'Hey, what can we do to help?'"

For details about the CASA Walk-A-Thon, including how to register, click [here](#). You must register by April 17 to receive a t-shirt. You can visit Jersey-GreeneCountyCASA.com for more information about the local CASA program.

If you or someone you know is facing issues related to child abuse, domestic violence, or needs assistance navigating the court system, help is available. The National Child Abuse Hotline can be reached at 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453) for confidential support and resources. Additionally, the National Domestic Violence Hotline provides assistance at 1-800-799-SAFE (1-800-799-7233). Both services offer help 24/7. For more information about resources and support, you can also visit the CASA national website at NationalCASAGAL.org.



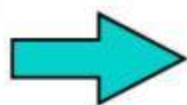
2nd Annual



WALK-A-THON

FUNDRAISER

SATURDAY, APRIL 27TH



10 AM @ the Jersey
County Courthouse



201 W. Pearl St, Jerseyville, IL 62052

For questions email: jerseyvillecasa@jerseycounty-il.gov

\$25 donation includes entry
fee, t-shirt & refreshments

ALL PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT
CASA of JERSEY & GREENE CO'S

There will be a short
presentation by former
Judge, Eric Pistorious.



Register by April 17th
to get a shirt



1, 2 & 3 mile options
ALL ages & abilities