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## Boston CASA Quarterly Newsletter

### Letter from Nicole Stewart

To Our Community,

I once heard a wise woman say, “We are all potted plants, and if we don’t get repotted once in a while, we stop growing and die.” Boston CASA enters the New Year repotted and with growth on our minds.

The Plan for Growth is being implemented thanks to the tremendous support we received from the community that led to a 25% increase in giving in 2024 Fiscal Year over the previous year. While our ultimate goal of doubling our budget over five years, in order to triple the number of CASAs supporting new cases of children and youth, is still three years in the future, we are in a position to increase our staff in order to support more special advocates. Just before Christmas, we moved from 85 Merrimac to 151 Merrimac to a larger office with an extra 500 square feet of space (and lower rent from our previous lease) to accommodate our growing staff. While Suite 200 at 151 Merrimac is being renovated to meet our needs, we are temporarily occupying Suite 300 in the same building.

The first addition to our team is a Transitional Age Youth (TAY) Coordinator, and we are blessed that we had the best candidate in-house. Advocate Supervisor Jaylene Tiscareno has been a driving force behind the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), which is made up of Transitional Age Youth, and has accepted the new position. Along with

continuing to run the YAB program, Jaylene will advance Boston CASA's work to support foster youth nearing the age of independence, assist with expanding our data collection process, and supervise CASAs. Our new emphasis on Transitional Age Youth is in response to the statistically tragic outcomes these adolescents often face as young adults on their own. We are also pleased to announce Haley Bragdon-Clements will be joining us as an Advocate Supervisor to replace Jaylene. Haley's experience as a caseworker at Home Boy Industries Youth Re-entry Center and collaboration with CASAs made her an ideal candidate to join us.

Boston CASA continues to be blessed by the generosity of donors who have embraced our mission and are supporting our Plan for Growth. I am always pleased to get the opportunity to write a little note to our donors in their acknowledgment letter, but in the case of a very generous anonymous donor, I will have to extend a heartfelt thank you for your \$40,000 donation here. While I do not know who this angel is, I want to express how much this gift means to Boston CASA because it is such a strong endorsement of our work and helps feed the Plan for Growth. We also had our first challenge grant for our End of the Year Campaign, which undoubtedly made a difference in exceeding this year's campaign goal by 15%.

We also were blessed to be contacted by TA Realty of Boston. The good and incredibly generous people of TA Realty wanted to brighten the lives of our foster youth, and they asked for the Christmas lists of 25 children and youth. Working with our CASAs, we provided personal lists to TA Realty, and TA Realty delivered so many Christmas smiles. Next year they want to expand the program, and we are happy to help them spread the joy.

April is a big month for Boston CASA. On April 17, we will host our 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Transforming Lives Gala. It is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and a cornerstone to our work. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there. We also are proud to announce we have three marathoners raising \$10,000 each wearing our bibs in the Boston Marathon and they will be running the Monday after the Gala. You can learn more about them and contribute to their runs on our website.

While we were able to make so much progress in 2024, I am looking forward to even more in 2025. Our community is committed to improving the lives of children and youth removed from their homes due to neglect and abuse, and it grows stronger month over month because our mission is so important. From our volunteers who serve as CASAs to my wonderful staff who support the special advocates to our amazing donors, I come to work each day feeling blessed to be the leader of this community and inspired to do even more for the children and youth we serve.

Warm regards,  
Nicole

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## Save the Date for Boston CASA's 13th Annual Gala



**BOSTON  
CASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**  
SERVING SUFFOLK AND MIDDLESEX COUNTIES

BOSTON CASA'S 13TH ANNUAL GALA  
**Transforming  
Lives**



**Save the Date**  
**April 17, 2025**  
Artists For Humanity EpiCenter  
100 W 2nd St., Boston, MA 02127

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**Thank you TA Realty!**

thank you



"I just really appreciate the thoughtfulness that went into selecting great gifts for my youth, and I hope the person or people who shopped for him know they were truly appreciated - my youth is seriously thrilled."



"I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the donor(s) who provided Christmas gifts to my CASA youth! They were extremely generous and amazingly thoughtful."

"I was just so blown away by the generosity, and for the obvious effort they took in running down things I'd requested, and supplementing those with related items he'll also love. Like me, foster mom was just thrilled, and couldn't wait to see his reaction on Christmas Day."



Our amazing partners at TA Realty provided wonderful holiday gifts to 31 CASA youth this year. These gifts helped make the holidays a little more special this year!

We are looking forward to expanding this program in the coming year.

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## Boston CASA's Multicultural Advisory Committee

Boston CASA is committed to both growing the number of youths we serve as well as deepening the impacts we make in their lives. Many of our youths and families come from predominantly Black and Brown communities and as we serve these communities, we know it is important for us to understand their unique needs. In our efforts to do so, we have created the Multicultural Advisory Committee (MAC).

The Multicultural Advisory Committee consists of selected individuals who bring unique knowledge and skills in the areas of culture, diversity, and inclusion to inform and guide Boston CASA in its racial equity plan and in achieving its overall mission. In partnership with MAC, we aim to increase the diversity amongst our volunteer pool, ensure we provide the appropriate resources that address the myriad of challenges facing communities of color, and educate volunteers and staff about the cultural norms within our diverse communities. The goal is to ensure the most effective advocacy for our children and youth. Although MAC members may represent specific cultures and populations, we do not expect them to be the sole voices of that culture or group. As part of our guiding principles, Boston CASA values the expertise and knowledge of community members and hopes to affirm members in positive change to their communities.

If you are interested in being part of MAC, we have an upcoming interest meeting on Thursday, February 6<sup>th</sup> at 6PM via Zoom; register here: [https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/osjc8bU6TeWdDDG-tCd\\_Fg](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/osjc8bU6TeWdDDG-tCd_Fg)

**LOOKING FOR  
WAYS TO  
SUPPORT?**

**WE WANT YOUR HELP:**

- Do you speak another language?
- Are you aware of any culturally specific resources?
- Connected to community events?

If you've always wanted to volunteer or become a CASA, but feel you don't have the time, you can still support!

**JOIN US**  
[MAC@BOSTONCASA.ORG](mailto:MAC@BOSTONCASA.ORG)

**MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

- Build Community Liaisons (CCL)
- Engages in cultural events that enhance cross cultural relations.
- Increase the diversity amongst our volunteer pool

**MORE INFORMATION**  
<https://bostoncasa.org/>

# Meeting our Growth Goals: 50 New Youth Received the Support of a CASA

The Boston CASA Program Team has been hard at work over the last few months to increase the number of youths we serve across Suffolk and Middlesex Counties. Since the beginning our new fiscal year in October, we have gotten referrals for 50 new youths! Our goal this year is to get 120 new referrals from both Suffolk and Middlesex counties and we are on our way to reach that goal. Our five year growth goal is to increase the number of new youth served by 20% each year.

In order to reach that goal, our Referral Team has been hard at work, meeting and communicating with Probation officers, court staff and Judges each week so they know about Boston CASA and the impact our CASA volunteers can have. We are incredibly grateful for their support!

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## 2025 Youth Advisory Board Kick Off

We are excited to officially enter our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of our Youth Advisory Board (YAB). Our YAB Kickoff meeting was held last Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, where our YAB members were able to be introduced to each other as well as YAB mentors. They were supported in the meeting by their attorneys and some of their DCF Team. We officially begin our 10 month program with our first in person meeting on Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our lead staff for YAB have done a lot of work in updating and ensuring the curriculum is meaningful in cultivating leaders and building skillsets for our YAB. This curriculum includes leadership, financial literacy, addressing problems/conflict—communication styles, self care & mental health, perceiving oneself/power of one's story, job readiness, civic engagement, and a resource fair to include some of our community partners (Silver Lining Mentoring, Chica Project, Small House, Youth Villages, Mayor's Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement, Children's Services of Roxbury Young Adult Access Center, SoleTies), all leading up to our Youth Forum in November.

Stay tuned for more information on this and we hope you can join us in supporting our Youth Advisory Board members.

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## Thank You to the Erskine Fund!

Thanks to the partnership of Erskine Fund and Small House, Inc, we were able to successfully support one of our TAY CASA youth in funding a winter college class. The CASA shared that the youth was excited to have the opportunity to complete her goal of completing a 3 credit course over winter break. Completing this course put this youth on track to her graduating on time. This youth has completed this course and received an A-!

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