

# Welcome to Boston CASA's

## FIRST

### Champions for Children Newsletter!



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"Tis The Season": Supporting Children and Youth in Foster Care During the Holidays

<https://www.fosterfocusmag.com/articles/foster-care-holidays>



#### Meet Our New Executive Director

Boston CASA is thrilled to announce that our new Executive Director is the Honorable First Justice Terry Craven. Terry brings an extensive mix of private nonprofit and public service experience to this role. She will guide the organization's focus on growth, strong community partnerships and measurable outcomes. Terry has been a supporter since our beginning as an independent nonprofit organization and is committed to take Boston CASA and our volunteers to the next level.

Prior to joining Boston CASA, Terry served as First Justice for the Suffolk County Juvenile Court, a Probation Officer, non-profit Program Director and an English Teacher at the Mary E. Curley School. Judge Craven is a 1973 graduate from Westfield State with a bachelor's in psychology and received an honorary Doctor of Laws from the college in 2008 for her service in juvenile justice. Her awards include citations from both the Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate for her work with delinquent children and their families and receiving the 2006 Juvenile Bar Association's Judge Leo Lydon Award. Terry graduated from Westfield State University with a B.A in Psychology and received her Juris Doctor from the New England School of Law.



**There is something new coming to Boston CASA!**

Let us introduce you to Boston CASA University ("BCU")

Boston CASA is launching BCU to support the ongoing training requirements of 12 hours annually for CASA volunteers. Beginning in January 2020, Boston CASA will offer the attached series of training programs especially designed for Boston CASA volunteers. Each course has been developed as ongoing training to help volunteers better understand their role as a CASA and much more!

We now invite you to review the curriculum, including the dates and times each course is being offered and who will serve as instructor for the course.

Please register by clicking on the following link.

<https://bostoncasa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Boston-CASA-University-2020.pdf>

## SPOTLIGHT STORY



In October 2016, CASAs Tish Allen was assigned to a group of 3 children who had been removed from their home about 6 months earlier. The story of the three siblings has been long and winding. For most of the last four years they have lived in numerous and separate foster homes, with the oldest of the 3 moving the most frequently and at the farthest distance. The children had experienced homelessness, neglect and had unmet medical needs while in the care of their parents and grandmother. All were delayed developmentally, with the oldest girl (“S”) exhibiting behaviors associated with PTSD, repetitive loss and grief and academic achievement concerns likely as a result of inconsistent school attendance and the impact of trauma. This little girl experienced successive moves in foster placements and schools which caused her to believe that “people don’t like me so they leave” and increased her reluctance to trust anyone or form long-term relationships. Tragically, in mid-2017, the three little ones experienced the loss of their father when he died by suicide.

Throughout all of this upheaval, CASA Tish remained a fierce advocate for these young children, particularly for the oldest girl who clearly had the highest needs. Tish visited all of the children at their separate placements, tracked all of their school progress and advocated for services to support their educational needs. In many ways, Tish’s greatest role was in creating for the court and all parties in this case a comprehensive picture of what the 6 year-old was experiencing. Tish vividly detailed the successive losses of trusted people in S’s life and the impact that the losses were having on S’s emotional and mental health. Tish recorded in great detail the educational needs for S and advocated strongly for additional testing and supports. On more than one occasion the court commented on the comprehensiveness of the information that Tish provided and how the consistency of her reporting was invaluable to the court.

Over the course of Tish’s four-year involvement with this case, the children’s grandmother remained actively involved, but was unable to secure housing sufficient for the little ones, nor was she able to offer the stability which these young kids needed. Their mother visited with the children inconsistently, and was able to recognize that, despite loving her children, she was not able to care for them. DCF moved the children to a plan of permanency through adoption, even though it would be very difficult to find a home for all three children together. Fortunately, the godmother for the children’s dad came forward following his death and petitioned to take in all 3 children. As can sometimes be the case, the godmother’s application stalled with DCF. Tish was able to clearly demonstrate the bond shared by the siblings and advocate, along with the children’s lawyer, for proceeding with the godmother’s application. Over time, the force of the combined advocacy was able to move the application forward, and after a year of pushing DCF, the youngest of the 3 children was moved to the godmother’s home in Brockton, followed in short order by the middle child of the siblings. DCF appeared to drag their feet on placing S with her siblings seemingly without good reason so Tish jumped back in to advocacy mode: she researched appropriate schools in the area that could support S’s educational needs and demonstrated to the court that the delay in moving S. was triggering a return of the feelings that she was not lovable because she was the only one of her siblings who could not go “home.” Finally, S was moved to the godmother’s home nearly a year after her first sibling was placed! S is doing very well and is thrilled to be living in a home with her brother and sister!



### Winter Happenings:

#### A Merry Michael Holiday

December 20, 2019 5-7 p.m. at BCYF Marshall 35 Westville Street, Dorchester, MA RSVP [AMERRYMICHAELHOLIDAY@GMAIL.COM](mailto:AMERRYMICHAELHOLIDAY@GMAIL.COM)

#### Kid's Holiday Party

Saturday, December 21, 2019 3-8PM - Kay's Oasis Function Hall, Dorchester, MA Register by 12/15/2019

<https://bit.ly/35w0298>

#### New Year's Eve Ice Sculpture Stroll

December 31, 2019 1-4 P.M. Boston Harbor Walk

STEM Saturdays at the [Mattapan Branch of the Boston Public Library](#) Saturday January 4, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. Explore family-friendly STEAM activities!



This year's Transforming Lives Gala on October 24 was an outstanding success! This year we celebrated the strong partnerships that make the work at Boston CASA possible—a multi-faceted village of volunteers, board members, donors and staff; steadfast attorneys, social workers, parents, foster parents, teachers, mentors and our critical government and nonprofit partners. We had nearly 300 people in attendance and raised roughly \$225,000 that will keep our program growing in 2020.



<https://bostoncasa.org/gala2019>

### Community Partner Spotlight

Boston CASA is fortunate to be connected to numerous community organizations which share our social justice mission. In this section we will highlight one of these amazing organizations so our volunteers will know about the resources they offer.

**More Than Words** is a nonprofit social enterprise that empowers young adults who are in the foster care system, court-involved, homeless, or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business.

#### SERVING MORE YOUTH

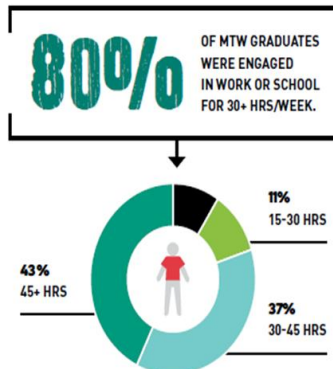
# 361 YOUTH

served by More Than Words in FY19, including 270 in our core social enterprise and 153 graduates in the community.

Our growth in Waltham and Boston means

**MORE YOUTH | MORE JOBS | MORE SUPPORT**

We served 43% more young people this year than before we expanded in FY17!



#### MTW YOUTH LEARN MORE

Our young people are securing the credentials they need to advance in life.

**93% OF MTW GRADUATES WERE ON TRACK WITH HIGH SCHOOL\***

50% of foster youth attain a diploma by age 18\*\*

**49% OF MTW GRADUATES PURSUED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION**

27% of foster youth have completed at least one year of post-secondary education by age 21

#### MTW YOUTH EARN MORE

Our graduates are finding—and keeping—jobs too.

**83% OF MTW GRADUATES WORKED IN 2019**

Only 51% of former foster youth work over the course of a year.\*\*



For more information visit: [www.morethanwords.org](http://www.morethanwords.org)



Interested in becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate? The next info sessions will be held on January 9, 2020, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020 and March 10, 2020.

The next Boston CASA training starts on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Visit [www.bostoncasa.org/volunteer](http://www.bostoncasa.org/volunteer) to register for an info session



*We want to hear from you!*  
*Please [click here](#) for feedback, questions or comments.*



### **Special Thanks to the Village Volvo**

Special thanks to Village Volvo for their generous donation of \$250 to Boston CASA through the Friends and Family Referral Program. For every satisfied customer who makes a referral who purchases a vehicle, the Village will make a \$250 donation to the charity of your choice. Boston CASA would like to extend its appreciation to Village Volvo for this program and to the individual who selected Boston CASA!

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