

2023 Impact Report

BUILDING MOMENTUM



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When you see these square icons, scan them with your phone camera to be directed to a website with more information!

CASA Jeffco/Gilpin Staff

Leah Varnell
Executive Director

Vicki Pyne
Program Director

Christine Evans
Lead Advocate Supervisor

Michele Fisher
Youth Alliance Manager

Debbie Gabriel
Program Manager

Mallory Hastings
Communications Coordinator

Audrey Miklitsch
Community Engagement Coordinator

Diane Nichols
Office Manager

Moriah Nixon
Advocate Supervisor

Laura Powers
Director of Philanthropy

Emily Thomas
Grants Manager

Charles Wentz
Youth Alliance Coach Coordinator

Sarah Whetzle
Volunteer Training, Retention and Data Coordinator

SUSTAINING OUR SUCCESS



Dear Friends and Supporters,

CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties had another incredible year of building momentum as we continued to adapt to the ever-changing child welfare landscape. We put sustainable practices in place, from our diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) efforts (see page 5) to transitioning to a new board chair. After serving on the board for over 20 years, and as board chair for many of those years, Jan Podoll has now moved into the past-chair role and will support Mark Duffy as board chair, allowing for sustainability and leadership growth within the board.

In addition, this past year, we celebrated a new era in the continuum of services provided by CASA Jeffco/Gilpin. Our Youth Alliance program opened AVi in Olde Town in February 2023. Currently, thirty Youth Alliance participants call AVi home. We're now working on additional programming to help participants develop self-sufficiency skills and independence. You can read more about one participant's story on page 11.

Change is inevitable. CASA Jeffco/Gilpin continues to proactively anticipate and adapt to the evolving needs of the children and families we serve. Thank you for an extraordinary year and for supporting CASA Jeffco/Gilpin as we continue to build momentum for a sustainable future for our organization, our children, and our community.

Leah Varnell
Executive Director

Mark Duffy
Chair, Board of Directors

Jan Podoll
Past Chair, Board of Directors

Board of Directors

Mark Duffy, Chair

Senior Vice President, Baird

Greg Dickson, Vice Chair

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Jeffco Public Schools' Principal - Retired

Duncan Griffiths

Shareholder, Griffiths Law P.C.

Karli Huff

Bank Officer, First Bank

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Government Affairs Liaison, Terumo

Jan Podoll, Past Chair

Oil and Gas Land Consultant - Retired

LaDawn Sperling

Realtor, Coldwell Banker

Tim Ziman

Oil & Chemical Industry Leader - Retired

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS (AND HAVING FUN)

Blake Cross is no stranger to CASA Jeffco/Gilpin. The Colorado School of Mines alum volunteered in the office after college while he was deciding on graduate schools. “I had a friend who was involved with CASA through her sorority and I thought it would be a great organization to get involved with in some capacity,” he said.

Blake helped with office tasks and eventually went through training to become a CASA volunteer but then moved to Australia for graduate school. When he returned to Colorado a few years ago, he knew getting back involved with CASA was a must. “With a stable job, I was looking to connect with the community and CASA is the perfect fit,” said Blake, who is a geophysicist.

Blake was appointed his first case two years ago and continues to advocate for the boy, who is now a teenager. The youth has recently been placed in foster care out of the local area, and Blake fills the role of a consistent, trusted adult in the youth’s life.

“Blake has displayed great mentoring skills with this child! He consistently plans different, creative activities of interest to do during his weekly visits with the child to ensure he is having fun and living as normal of a kid life as possible. He also takes the time to listen to the struggles and worries that the child is going through, and offers words of encouragement and advice to help this kiddo be the best that he can be,” said a caseworker involved in the case.



Meet Blake Cross:

- CASA volunteer for 2+ years
- Inspired to be involved in the community by his father, a career military leader
- Enjoys hiking, fishing, rock hounding, and reading
- Born in Germany
- Loves to travel
- Geophysicist for mineral exploration

“For me, it’s the outings with the kid that are the best,” said Blake, who enjoys riding scooters, going to the skatepark, and being with the youth Blake advocates for. “We really have a good time together. There’s been a lot of ugly stuff and some sad days in his life, and I get to help him be a kid and have fun.”

When Blake first started as a CASA volunteer, he didn’t have a lot of confidence in his ability to advocate in court or interact with others on the case. He credits the supportive group involved with the case for helping him grow in his role.

“If anyone is considering being a CASA volunteer, I urge you to do it!” said Blake, who plans to continue as a CASA volunteer beyond his current case. “It’s such a meaningful way to connect with the community, and the time commitment is very manageable. I’ve interacted with all different kinds of people I wouldn’t otherwise connect with, and it’s inspiring seeing the people on the case put their heart and soul into what they do. My visits with the youth I advocate for are usually a highlight of my week.”

COMMITTING TO CHANGE

CASA Jeffco/Gilpin has always been committed to changing and improving. That's why last fall a committee of staff and volunteers and chaired by Audrey Miklitsch, CASA Jeffco/Gilpin Community Engagement Coordinator, was formed to assess CASA Jeffco/Gilpin's commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI).

"It took us a while as an organization to figure out our roadmap for DEAI," said Leah Varnell, CASA Jeffco/Gilpin Executive Director. "We wanted to do it in a thoughtful way and not just check the boxes; we wanted to make sure it was meaningful and sustainable and also very broad and inclusive of all aspects of diversity. Audrey really helped us get into a focus. And now, in the grand scheme, we're exactly where we need to be."

Through research, Audrey found the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's All Children, All Families Program.

"While the program is focused on LGBTQ+ inclusion, it helped us to review things from a broader DEAI perspective so we were able to make changes that affect other marginalized communities as well," Audrey said.

As the first phase of the program, CASA Jeffco/Gilpin's DEAI team reviewed and started revising policies, procedures, and documents to be more inclusive. CASA Jeffco/Gilpin applied for the "Building Foundation for Inclusion" tier certification within the program and are currently waiting to hear back about their results.

There are two additional tiers as part of the All Children, All Families Program. CASA Jeffco/Gilpin hopes to move up in tier levels every year. The All Children, All Families Program was developed in partnership with National CASA.

The DEAI committee is currently composed primarily of CASA Jeffco/Gilpin staff members; volunteers who might be interested in joining should contact Audrey Miklitsch at Audrey@casajeffcogilpin.com.

Advisory Board

Felix Cook, Sr.

Community/CASA Volunteer

Lesley Dahlkemper

Jefferson County Commissioner

Jacqueline Greer

Senior SAP Solutions Manager, Great West Financial

Kellee Hasler

Hospitality Specialist - Retired

Chief Judge Jeffrey Pilkington

1st Judicial District

Ryland Percy

First Bank

Karen Radman

Executive Director, Colorado Music Hall of Fame

Interested in joining CASA Jeffco/Gilpin's Board of Directors? Contact Leah Varnell, leahvarnell@casajeffcogilpin.com.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

256 active volunteers contributed **8,835** hours

- 31 new volunteers were trained
- 56% of our volunteers work full-time
- 13% of our volunteers are male
- CASA Jeffco/Gilpin volunteers stay on a case for an average of 19 months

Scan here for a complete list of our amazing volunteers!



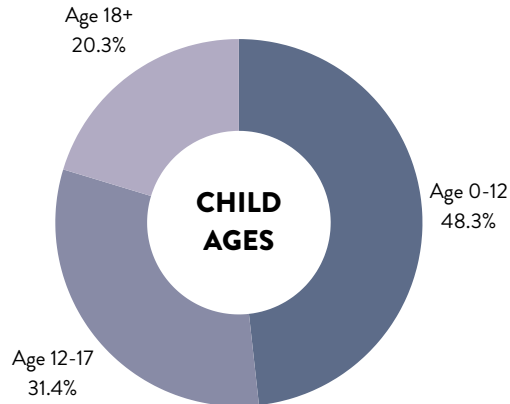
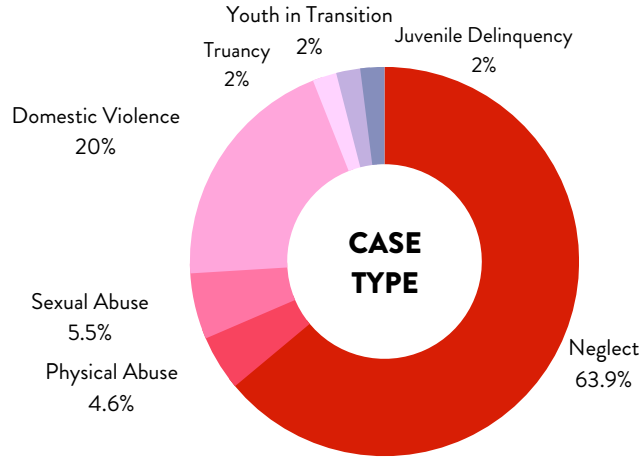
2023 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

311

children
served

237

cases
served



- Jefferson County ranked 7th of 22 districts in the state for number of new filings this past fiscal year.
- 50% of children served remained in their home or were reunified with their parents.
- 40% of cases served were closed this fiscal year.
- 44% of new cases opened in the district had CASA volunteers appointed to the children.
- Of the children served, 49% were male and 51% were female

Statement of Financial Position

Unaudited statement of financial position. If you would like to review CASA Jeffco/ Gilpin's Audit, please contact the office at 303-271-6535.

Assets	'22-'23	'21-'22
Current Assets	\$903,695	\$381,570
Other Assets	\$107,121	\$693,916
	\$1,019,727	\$1,075,486

Liabilities & Net Assets	'22-'23	'21-'22
Liabilities	\$48,537	\$69,527
Net Assets	\$971,190	\$1,005,959
	\$1,019,727	\$1,075,486

2022-2023 INCOME

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we rely on donations from individuals, corporations and foundations. Approximately 50% of our annual budget comes from foundations and grants. Of the remainder, 20% comes from individuals/corporations, 22% comes from fundraisers and 8% from investments and in-kind donations. Cash previously held as long-term reserves was converted into Certificates of Deposit with terms of less than one year in order to take advantage of favorable interest rates.

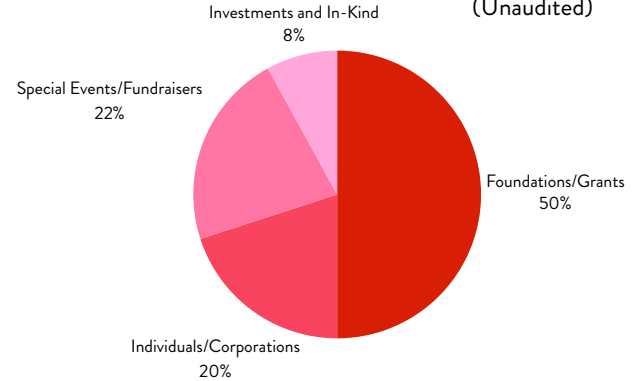
2022-2023 EXPENSES

Four out of every five dollars spent went directly toward programs and services for children. The remaining expenses encompass CASA Jeffco/Gilpin's management and essential fundraising efforts.

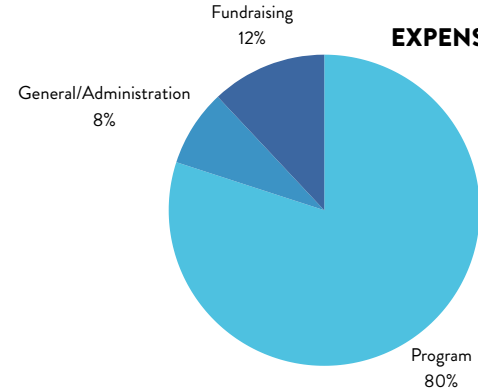
Financial Investments

INCOME - \$993,190

(Unaudited)



EXPENSES - \$1,041,440



ENDOWING LIFE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES

From traditional camp to family camp, Jennifer and Conrad Stoldt and their daughters, now 15 and 13, have treasured their time at Camp Chief Ouray at YMCA Snow Mountain Ranch for nearly a decade. The Stoldts are long-time donors of the camp—and of CASA Jeffco/Gilpin. This past year they were inspired to merge their passions and create an endowed scholarship fund for youth supported by CASA Jeffco/Gilpin.

“It was really a lightbulb moment when I realized that two things that we love—camp and CASA—could be connected,” Jennifer said. “Our hope is that youth supported by CASA can experience Camp Chief Ouray, and it will make a positive difference in their lives like the camp has for our family.”

Jennifer and Conrad established their endowment last fall, with the goal of at least two youth receiving scholarships to attend Camp Chief Ouray annually. This past summer, two siblings, ages 12 and 13, were the first scholarship recipients. Here’s what they had to say:

“Thank you for the awesome camp experience. It was seriously the best time ever! I had so much fun hanging out with my friends, going on cool adventures, and trying new things. The counselors were super nice and made me feel safe and comfortable the whole time. And the food was so good. My favorite part was when I got to go to the pool. It was sooooo much fun.”

“I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity to go to camp. I’m really grateful for that. It was such a new and cool experience. My favorite part was high ropes, it was so fun! Thank you so much. It was such a cool experience. I appreciate this so much.”



The Stoldt’s daughters and nephew enjoying Camp Chief Ouray.

Their CASA volunteer, Laura Markus, shared, “It was fantastic! They both loved it, and they made new friends. We all appreciate the opportunity they got to participate—what an invaluable gift!”

The Stoldt family began donating gifts for the Giving Tree in 2015 and then became consistent major donors of CASA Jeffco/Gilpin in 2017. Jennifer explained, “we believe CASA plays an essential role in the lives of kids and our community. Combining our giving to CASA and our love for Camp Chief Ouray is such a perfect marriage of interests.”

Generous donors continue to make CASA Jeffco/Gilpin's impact possible.

- 115 people donated to CASA Jeffco/Gilpin for the first time this fiscal year.
- CASA Jeffco/Gilpin received \$1407 from the 2022 CO Gives Day Incentive Fund thanks to our generous donors' participation.
- Our 2022 Holiday Giving Tree program assisted more than 300 families.
- CASA Jeffco/Gilpin was supported by 399 individual donors this fiscal year.

**Scan here for a complete list of
our amazing donors!**



LINDA T. PALMIERI AWARD RECIPIENT

In June, our Program Manager Debbie Gabriel received the Linda T. Palmieri Award For Outstanding Service on Behalf of Children from the First Judicial Bar Association. The award is given to someone who has demonstrated a superior degree of professionalism and commitment to children, and who has worked actively to advance the welfare of children.



MEETING YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE

When Meera Rosser was looking for a volunteer role 15 years ago, she wanted something that allowed her to connect with children and was flexible with her work schedule. CASA Jeffco/Gilpin's volunteer advocate role was the perfect fit.

"The training that they gave us and the impact that we can make on the kids' lives really became something I felt strongly about," Meera said.

Meera was appointed to her first case advocating for a 9-year-old girl named Willow. Now, 15 years later, she's still only had one case. Willow is 24 and a Youth Alliance (YA) participant. Meera is her coach. "Before Youth Alliance, there simply wasn't anything for youth like Willow who transitioned out of foster care but didn't have the support to navigate the next steps in life," Meera said.

YA was started in 2019 to support youth successfully transition to self-sufficiency following emancipation from foster care. YA is a partnership between CASA Jeffco/Gilpin and Foothills Regional Housing. Through the collaboration CASA Jeffco/Gilpin manages mentoring and support services and Foothills Regional Housing provides housing. Today YA supports 30 youth, all of whom call AVi at Olde Town home.

"The coaching element is where you are truly a liaison to life," Meera said. "It's about meeting youth where they are and helping them be independent, productive members of society, while recognizing their own limitations."



Willow and Meera during the holidays (left) and at a concert for Willow's birthday (right).

Willow is taking advantage of Colorado education grants that are available for youth who were previously involved in the foster system and YA's partnership with Red Rocks Community College. She's dealing with learning difficulties, navigating post-secondary education, and building self-sufficiency skills.

"Most of the youth have no idea what stability means," Meera said. "They learned what they lived, which means most YA participants are struggling with everything from basic budgeting to putting food in the fridge. Additionally most of the youth struggle with mental health on top of not knowing how to navigate resources and meet their basic needs."

YA aims to continue pairing youth with coaches like Meera who can meet them where they are. The program continues to evolve. "I can't speak highly enough about a program that was put in place where there was nothing for youth like Willow—no services—which meant limited hope," Meera said. "Youth Alliance fills a much-needed gap in ensuring our youth can develop the skills and connections to navigate life on their own."



Children and youth assigned a CASA volunteer reported significantly higher levels of hope, which has been linked to academic success, overall well-being, increases in self-control, positive social relationships, optimism, and more.

Give the gift of hope by supporting CASA this Colorado Gives Day.



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