

# VOLUNTEER

# SPOTLIGHT

## MEET LORI HOOK

Lori is the recipient of the 2024 Lucas County CASA Rising Start Award. She was sworn in as a CASA volunteer in February 2023. Since, she has advocated for four families, serving nine children. Before retiring she worked as a pediatric emergency room nurse and was a paramedic and volunteer firefighter for 12 years in Wood County.

She loves to travel and try new things. Lori hosts dinner parties weekly because she enjoys cooking and baking. She attends concerts and sporting events every chance she gets.

Lucas County CASA is blessed to have Lori on our team. Here is what she told us about her volunteer work.

**How has being a CASA volunteer impacted your life?** Becoming a CASA volunteer has given me a renewed sense of purpose. I have felt more fulfilled being able to help children through the CASA program. I was medically retired and looking for ways to share my passions, and my CASA work has given that back to me.

**Why did you decide to become a CASA volunteer?** After I medically retired, I was searching for something meaningful in my life. I knew that I loved children and wanted to help all children. I used to work as a pediatric emergency room nurse, and I missed dearly the ability to help heal children. The CASA volunteer work was a way for me to use my time to get back to doing what I love. I believe that helping children is my calling and I am so thankful that I found this opportunity.

**In your opinion, why is it essential for children who are child abuse and neglect victims to have a CASA Volunteer?** Children victims of abuse and neglect need someone that they know will support them and be there for them through this process. It is a scary process as there are a lot of unknowns and if they are in a negative situation they won't have anyone to talk to about it. I feel that being able to be their

voice is empowering for them. I hope my presence and advocacy helps them in their journey toward healthy relationships and life.

**In your time as a CASA Volunteer, has there been an experience that impacted you the most?** I believe the first adoption that I was able to help facilitate has impacted me the most. It is so rewarding to know that the child is now safe and in a home with love and happiness. I hope that she will flourish and knowing that I was able to help that happen has meant the world to me. I will forever cherish our relationship and I am happy to say I am an unofficial member of their family.



Lori at her CASA child's adoption ceremony.



Lori graduated with her Bachelor's from Bowling Green State University and her Master's degree from Florida Southern College.

**How did you collaborate and coordinate your investigation efforts with the other professionals on your case?** As a CASA volunteer, I work with a lot of different professionals. This includes Children Services staff, Toledo Police, therapist, school counselors, medical professionals, and anyone else that may have an impact on the child or family. It is important to be calm and professional. There are a lot of situations that are emotionally charged and require a calm and cool head to deescalate a situation to ensure the child is in a safe environment.

**Which three qualities or skills should a prospective CASA volunteer possess?** I feel that is important for the CASA volunteer to have empathy, good communication skills, and an understanding that every child's situation is unique. It is imperative that we as CASA volunteers are able to listen to the children and their families without judgement or bias.

**If you were speaking with people considering becoming a CASA Volunteer, what would you tell them?** I would tell anyone interested in becoming a CASA volunteer that it could be the best decision they ever make. It can be hard at times but it is probably one of the most rewarding jobs you could ever do. CASA volunteers make a positive impact on children of all ages and backgrounds. Your presence and advocacy is life changing for abused children living in foster care. What could be better than that?

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