

VOLUNTEER

SPOTLIGHT

MEET ELENA DELUNA

Elena joined the Lucas County CASA team in the summer of 2022, and since then, she has been a dedicated and passionate advocate for three families and five children. Her commitment to CASA is truly inspiring.

By day, Elena works full-time at Trust Company Family Offices in Holland, Ohio, where she will celebrate 10 years of service this year. She expresses deep gratitude for her workplace, which supports her in fulfilling her role as a CASA volunteer—a cause close to her heart.

Outside of work and volunteering, Elena treasures time with her children and her mom. She has a spontaneous spirit and loves the freedom of hopping in the car to explore both new and familiar places.

We are incredibly thankful for Elena—her compassionate heart, unwavering dedication, and the meaningful difference she continues to make in the lives of children and families in Lucas County.

Here's what Elena had to say about her volunteer experience:

Why did you decide to become a CASA volunteer?

Growing up, I watched my mom care for my cousins with such love and generosity, and being raised alongside them shaped me into the person I am today. I've carried that same spirit into my own home, always keeping an open-door policy with my kids. Their friends have always known that our home is a safe space—a place where they can come to talk, cry, share a meal, or simply rest their heads.

Over the years, I've taken custody of my cousin when he was just 14, opened my home to my children's friends, and cared for my niece. Through these experiences, I realized that if I could make a difference in their lives, I could extend that impact to other children who need support, care, and advocacy.

How has being a CASA volunteer impacted your life?

Becoming a CASA volunteer has had a profound impact on my life. Knowing that I can make a difference—not just for one child, but for many—fills me with purpose and hope.

In your time as a CASA volunteer, has there been an experience that impacted you the most?

Every child I meet leaves a lasting impact on my life—their stories, their strength, and the challenges they face and overcome. I remind them that today is just one moment in time, and tomorrow brings new possibilities. The choices we make today can shape a better version of ourselves tomorrow. Each step forward is a chance to grow stronger than we were yesterday.

Which three qualities or skills should a prospective CASA volunteer possess?

A person who wants to become a CASA volunteer should have strong listening skills—every child wants to be heard. Empathy is essential, as it allows you to truly understand and connect with a child's emotions, while also being in tune with your own. Resilience is just as important; you'll need to stay optimistic through challenges and help each child see that they, too, can grow into strong, resilient individuals.



How did you collaborate and coordinate your investigation efforts with the other professionals on your case?

I believe that every case is unique, but the people involved—advocates, professionals, and caregivers—can make all the difference in shaping a better future for a child. Open and consistent communication is essential. By staying informed and working together, we can ensure the child's needs are fully met. It takes a united effort to truly make a lasting impact on both the child and their family.

If you were speaking with people considering becoming a CASA volunteer, what would you tell them?

I am a CASA volunteer, and I want to help a child. I want to make a difference in their life. That's why I believe—if I can do it, you can do it too. Let's make it happen together. No child should ever feel alone. Together, we can make a real impact in a child's life.

In your opinion, why is it essential for children who are child abuse and neglect victims to have a CASA Volunteer?

I believe many children may stay silent about things like abuse because they're afraid or unsure if they'll be believed. That's why I make sure my CASA kids know they can talk to me about anything—without fear or judgment. I remind them that I'm here for them, they're not alone, and together, we can be heard. I am their voice until they find the strength to use their own.