

VOLUNTEER

SPOTLIGHT

MEET KRISTEN GARTLAND

This month, we're excited to shine the spotlight on Kristen Gartland, who became a CASA volunteer in June 2023. Since joining our program, Kristen has made a meaningful impact by advocating for two children.

In addition to her dedication to the Lucas County CASA Program, Kristen keeps busy as a full-time Marketing Director at RCO Law—and even more so as a new mom! Her daughter turns one this August, and Kristen finds joy in balancing motherhood, her career, and her commitment to child advocacy. When she finds a quiet moment, you'll likely catch her listening to audiobooks across many literary genres.

We're grateful for Kristen's compassion, energy, and advocacy. Thank you for all you do!



Volunteer trip to Volcán de Fuego, Guatemala as a digital marketing developer

Why I Became a CASA Volunteer

Throughout my professional career, I've been fortunate to take part in several meaningful initiatives. The ones I've found most fulfilling are those that support children, particularly those with additional needs and those in the LGBTQ+ community. I realized I wanted this work to be a more consistent part of my life and began exploring how I could make a greater impact by dedicating more of my time and energy to it.

The Impact of CASA on My Life

Being a CASA volunteer has brought me a deep sense of fulfillment. It has helped me balance my external goals and intrinsic values.

Why Children Need CASA Volunteers

The professionals involved with potentially abused or neglected children—like caseworkers from Children Services, staff from the Board of Developmental Disabilities, educators, and others—all play vital roles, but they often manage large caseloads and must focus on the bigger picture or long-term goals. As a CASA, I have the flexibility to take on only as many cases as I can truly commit to. That allows me to give each child the time, attention, and consistency they deserve. These children need someone who can focus solely on their best interests—not just the broader system or outcomes. I'm able to build meaningful relationships, earn their trust, and be a stable presence in their lives. Because other team members often rotate in and out, I'm often the most consistent adult presence.

Essential Traits for CASA Volunteers

Patience, acceptance, and emotional regulation.

Coordinating Investigative Efforts

While investigating a case, each person involved brings a valuable and unique perspective. I've found that starting with active listening is key, taking time to understand the viewpoints of both the professionals on the case and the families of the children. This approach allows me to develop a more complete understanding of the situation and advocate with both confidence and clarity.



Most Impactful Experience

Just recently, I had the opportunity to celebrate one of my CASA children's high school graduation. It was heartwarming to see how happy and proud he was. Despite past challenges and complicated relationships among some of his supporters, everyone set their differences aside and came together to honor his achievement.

The Reward of Being a CASA Volunteer

I work with older youth, and while it can be emotionally challenging at times, there is nothing that brings me more joy than seeing them accomplish something meaningful to them and having the chance to tell them how proud I am.



Meet Kristen's fiancé, Tremayne Hogue, and daughter Nylah Hogue