

VOLUNTEER

SPOTLIGHT

MEET LANCE BROWN

Our program is proud to shine a light on Attorney Lance R. Brown, a dedicated Guardian ad Litem (GAL) and CASA volunteer who brings both his professional expertise and personal passion to the children we serve. He joined our team in January 2024.

By day, Lance works full-time at Luka Brown, LLP, advocating for clients in the courtroom. Beyond his legal career, he's a self-described sci-fi enthusiast and avid comic book fan, with an impressive collection of novels, comics, and commissioned artwork that reflect his love for the genre.

We are grateful to have attorneys like Lance on our team who not only use their legal skills to advocate for children but also bring creativity, heart, and dedication to everything they do.

Why I Became a CASA Volunteer

I love working with children. I am an attorney, and my typical docket consists primarily of adults. I believe the kiddos need all the representation and advocacy they can get. The adults in most of these cases have attorneys, but the children also need someone to advocate for their best interests.

The Impact of CASA on My Life

Making difficult recommendations is never easy. Even when a strong bond exists between a child and their parent or custodian, I may need to advise that remaining in that placement is not in the child's best interest. My goal is to be firm in my recommendations but deliver them with gentle hands.

Essential Traits for CASA Volunteers

Curiosity, empathy, and being personable, especially with children.

Why Children Need CASA Volunteers

Children who have experienced abuse or neglect may not realize how serious their situation is, or that what happened to them is wrong.

Sometimes they even feel like they need to protect the people who hurt them because they don't know that their treatment isn't normal. On top of that, children often don't have a voice in the process since they aren't automatically given an attorney.

That's why a CASA volunteer plays such an important role. By listening to the child's perspective, their needs and wishes, the volunteer helps ensure their voice is heard. The CASA volunteer must then balance what the child wants with what is truly in the child's best interest.



A Learning Experience

I've grown in patience through this work. Every case is full of moving parts, with many people involved and many voices to consider. To truly advocate for the children, we have to follow every lead, ask hard questions, and sometimes be redirected again and again until we resolve. Gathering pieces from all sides to form a clear report and recommendation can be taxing, but it's worth it because every child deserves someone willing to take that time and care for them.

Coordinating Efforts to Support the Child

Toledo/Lucas County has a very collegial bar and court system. It's easy to discuss cases with colleagues and get helpful guidance. Most organizations and agencies also have clear procedures in place, which makes navigating cases efficient. On top of that, CASA Coaches help streamline the process even further.

If you are considering becoming a CASA Volunteer

Have an open mind, and try to be as much of a blank slate as possible. It is hard for any of us to shed our unconscious biases. However, we should not go into a case and investigation with a mindset of "this is how I would do it," but rather with the thought of what are the resources and means of the parties, what kind of parental history do they have, how has it impacted the children, and what are the best interests of the children, moving forward?