



## News from Montana CASA/GAL

Best Laid Plans, we are all familiar with this statement. There are still so many unknowns facing us in 2021. Having multiple plans: A, B and C has become the new best practice. We here at Montana CASA/GAL have recently updated year three (2021) of our three-year strategic plan. Who would have ever imagined that two years of this plan would be challenged with a pandemic. Tenacity and creativity were required by this organization and the local programs we support to meet the challenges. Children are being seen and heard due to the ability of local programs to pivot and partner to find solutions with courts, social workers, and families. 2,751 children were served by a CASA in dependency and neglect cases in 2020 during the pandemic compared to 2,854 children served in 2019. This year we are hopeful to return to in-person visitations and court hearings by the fall. However, hope is not a strategy. We must continue to create plan A, B and C. Continue to provide personal protective equipment, technical assistance for online meetings and hearings, support CASA staff and advocates as they continue to navigate professional and personal challenges and continue to network with local, state and organization partners to solve problems. Thank you to CASA supporters and donors for providing access to PPE, funds to local programs for virtual platforms, virtual trainings and relief funding. The availability of general operating support will continue to be challenging. We encourage you to continue to support MTCASA and Montana CASA/GAL Local Programs with donations and grants that provide unrestricted operating funds. Thank you for providing a voice to Montana's abused and neglected children.

*April Sommers*