

Meet Trina Clark, new member of Piedmont CASA's Board of Directors

*by Cathy Eberly, retired CASA Supervisor
and current CASA Volunteer*



Take it from new Piedmont CASA board member Trina Clark, a foster parent who's been involved with Juvenile and Domestic Relations court cases for years: Not everyone in the court system makes the children their top priority.

That's why Trina has found her introduction to CASA so exciting. "All parties in these foster care cases are supposed to pursue what is in kids' best interest," she says. "I've found CASA Volunteers to be refreshingly unbiased advocates for children."

Trina and her husband, Michael, have had 16 foster children in their home over the past four years. While they've worked with Guardians ad Litem (GALs), attorneys appointed by the court to represent children, the children they've taken in have been from jurisdictions where Piedmont CASA hasn't yet been introduced.

Their current foster child, a six-year-old boy, is in this situation. "He's been with us seven months and in care for three years," Trina explains. "He's got nobody in his corner but the Department of Social Services and us. I can't help but wonder if his situation would differ if he had a CASA Volunteer." Trina considers her new role with Piedmont CASA part of her family's commitment to serving others.

A native of New Zealand who worked in fashion design, she met her husband in South Korea when he was stationed there as a member of the U.S. military. The couple then moved on, first to England, and later to Romania, where Trina worked in the U.S. Embassy. They relocated with their daughter to Charlottesville area in 2015, where Trina currently works as director of administration for WillowTree. Part of Trina's commitment to service includes taking advantage of any opportunity to talk with others about becoming foster parents. "I want others to see that there's no stereotypical foster parent; I think I bring a global perspective to this work."

It's a perspective Trina hopes to bring to the board of Piedmont CASA. "My reach as a foster parent is limited," she notes, "so I want to effect change on a larger scale by sharing my passion for children in foster care."

"Trina's unique insight as a foster parent brings welcome and necessary lived experience to our board," says Kate Duvall, Piedmont CASA President and CEO. "She knows our CASA children and the challenges they encounter. I am certain she will be an advocate for them on our board and make sure that we always prioritize the children we serve in our work."

Trina applauds Piedmont CASA's plans to expand their services into some of the areas from which her former foster children have hailed. She was surprised — and pleased — to learn that CASA Volunteers serve their children over the life of their court cases, no matter how long the children are in foster care. "It's all about making children's experiences better."

"I have a lot to learn," she admits. "But I believe that though I can't change the world for everyone, I can try to change the world for a child."



Cathy Eberly served as a Piedmont CASA Supervisor for 4 years, retiring in 2021. She is currently a Piedmont CASA Volunteer.

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