

These stories
are real.

An 11-year-old calls
911. She doesn't want
to tell on her parents,
but she's terrified that
they're dying.

"There are four children in all. The oldest was the one who called the police. I'm there to look out for them. I talk with them honestly and get their input. When you gain their trust, children will tell you what's happening and what they need. Caseworkers generally don't have time to build those relationships."

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE (CASA) VOLUNTEER

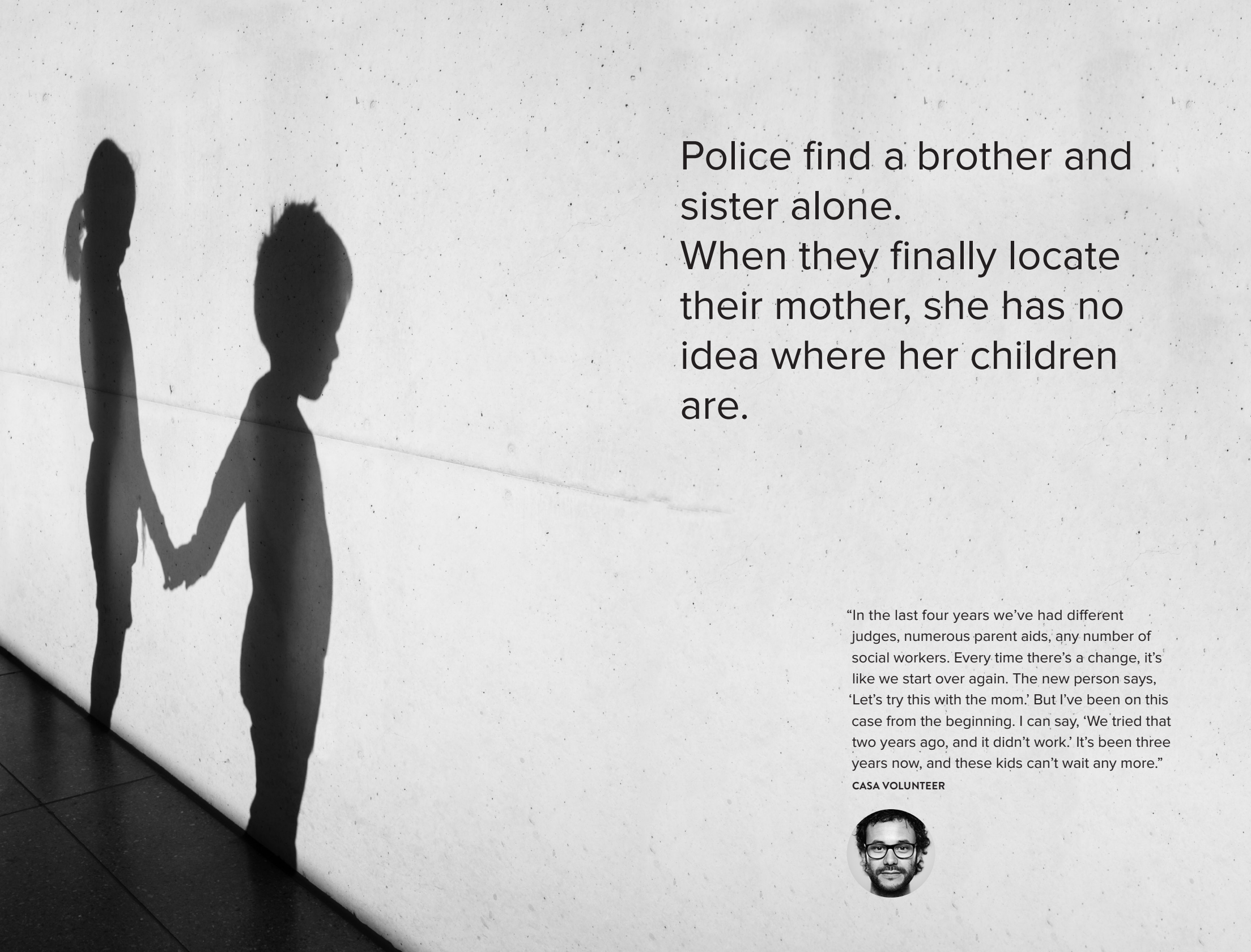


A woman sprawls
unconscious in a parking
lot. In the stroller at
her side are needles,
alcohol, and a baby.

“The state recommended putting my kiddo in a van to visit her father for 30 minutes a week. All the attorneys, everybody agreed. Well, she’s been in foster care since they found her in the stroller. She’s only two years old, and it’s a five-hour drive to the jail. So that’s ten hours, round trip, for a 30-minute visit. I had to say, ‘No, this just doesn’t make sense.’ The court listened to me.”

GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL) VOLUNTEER





Police find a brother and sister alone.

When they finally locate their mother, she has no idea where her children are.

“In the last four years we’ve had different judges, numerous parent aids, any number of social workers. Every time there’s a change, it’s like we start over again. The new person says, ‘Let’s try this with the mom.’ But I’ve been on this case from the beginning. I can say, ‘We tried that two years ago, and it didn’t work.’ It’s been three years now, and these kids can’t wait any more.”

CASA VOLUNTEER



These stories are real.

Child victims of the opioid crisis like them live in small towns and in big cities. They come from every state. Some were born in poverty. Many were not.

All are victims of America's opioid epidemic.

It's a story that's becoming more and more familiar as the rate of children entering foster care because of parental drug abuse has risen for the sixth year in a row.


According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, children of parents struggling with addiction are three times more likely to be abused and four times more likely to be neglected.

One in three children in foster care are there because of a parent's addiction. Courts are struggling to cope with the influx of cases. Child welfare officials are managing record caseloads and budget shortages.

Law enforcement, public health officials, and policy makers are working to stem the tide of overdose deaths and hold accountable those responsible for the epidemic.

Our job is simpler, but equally important.

Our job is to stand for these children.

A young boy with dark hair is shown in profile, looking out of a window. The window frame is visible, and the background outside is blurred, showing greenery and a building. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

It doesn't take much
to throw a lifeline to
a child set adrift by a
parent's addiction.

It takes time.

Last year, 93,300 volunteers spent millions of hours speaking up for the best interests of the 271,800 children they serve. These precious hours spent one-on-one with a familiar face can make all the difference to a child with a profound sense of uncertainty.

Every time a court appointed special advocate (CASA) or guardian ad litem (GAL) volunteer comes back, provides an update, follows up, or remembers a detail from their last visit builds trust and creates a sense of security.

To give every child one caring, constant adult in their lives, we need to recruit more CASA and GAL volunteers, now more than ever.

We know we can do it.

It takes money.

This is a volunteer-led movement, but it's not free. What makes our volunteers so effective is the investment that we make in their ongoing training and supervision.

The issues surrounding opioid addiction are complex. We need to create new trainings and new materials on those issues for all our volunteers. And before we can add new volunteers, we need more supervisors: experienced child welfare professionals who can support those volunteers with advice, expertise, and resources.

Given the return—to the half a million children in foster care and to our society—we're committed to partnering with donors and investors who can help us make that investment.

It takes heart.

It takes heart to see a child in need and stop to help. It takes heart to stay for as long as you are needed—for that child and every child—day after day, year after year, in good times and bad.

Those who do this work, whether they are volunteers, staff members, or donors, have the heart to see, to stop, and to stay.

Perhaps you do, too. And if you do, this is an invitation to join us, in whatever capacity you can.

Not a single one of us has the power to change these children's past—what they have seen, what they have done, what they have suffered.

Every one of us has the power to change a child's story. All it takes is the heart to do so.





Court Appointed Special Advocates
Guardians ad Litem
FOR CHILDREN

NATIONAL CASA/GAL ASSOCIATION

The National CASA/GAL Association for Children, together with its state and local member programs, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child in the United States who has experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive.

CASAforChildren.org