

ProKids



It will take **all of us** to
find the **hope** and **healing**
beyond the **storm**.

2019 Report to the Community

Who We Are

ProKids

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(current as of June 2020)

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Essa Naser

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Justin Tillson

Julie Wilson

Kelly Wittich

Our Vision

A safe, permanent and nurturing home for every child.

Our Mission

What: ProKids mobilizes our community to break the vicious cycle of child abuse and neglect.

How: ProKids helps our community to discover the power of investing in the promise of our children. We recruit, train and support community volunteers to speak up for children who have been abused and neglected and help guide them into safe environments where they can thrive. ProKids creates alliances within the child protection system to maximize outcomes for our children.

Why: To create a new cycle of growing up safe and secure, fundamentally changing the future for our children and our entire community.

Our Volunteers

At ProKids, Court Appointed Special Advocates – known as CASA Volunteers – speak up for children in crisis. With ProKids CASA Managers/Guardian ad Litem (GALs) and ProKids staff attorneys, these CASA Volunteers are powerful, adaptable collaborators who advocate for the best interest of our community's abused and neglected children. Working alongside county case workers, therapists, teachers and other professionals in the child protection system, ProKids CASA Volunteers bring valuable insight to the Hamilton County Juvenile Court and make the outcomes you see on these pages possible.

Bob McMahon | ProKids Board President



As ProKids was tabulating the outstanding 2019 numbers you will see in these pages, the reality of 2020 was dawning – but not too daunting for the ProKids community. **We had served 1,009 children with a record-setting 310 CASA Volunteers, more than we expected, and helped keep 99% of them free from abuse and neglect.**

But a storm was gathering on the horizon. A storm that was casting an even longer shadow of trauma on the lives of the children ProKids serves.

“ProKids
is
uniquely positioned
for this moment...”

Alongside everyone else in our community, abused and neglected children were directly affected by the pandemic and related economic destruction. They became isolated in the places they called home. **Were they all safe?** We had more questions than answers.

As I looked at the outcomes from the preceding year, I knew one thing: **with ProKids, our community’s most vulnerable children would have the advocacy they needed to protect them.** ProKids is uniquely positioned for this moment because ProKids has been doing this work since 1981. There has certainly never been a year quite like 2020. There have been economic downturns. Despair. Upheaval. Through it all, ProKids has been there for abused and neglected children who have no one in their corner, just as it will continue doing for years to come.

In these pages you’ll see the data that proves to me every day, every month, at every board meeting, that ProKids knows what it is doing on every level in the best interest of kids. These children are with their siblings, getting what they need in school, receiving the therapy and medical care they need and, most importantly, a home where they can be safe and thrive.

Even as the challenges we face shift and we expect more children to come into the child protection system, **we can count on ProKids to change the childhood for abused and neglected children in our community, and change the future for all of us.**

At a time when the world seems so uncertain to us adults, and even more so to children, I hope you can join me and ProKids in giving these children a chance at something that makes life so much more secure: a home.

Tracy Cook | ProKids Executive Director



As the pandemic was beginning, five children were removed from their mother and her boyfriend. Their violence had spilled into the street and a neighbor had reported it.

What really had been going on in their home?

Our concerns were confirmed as the ProKids volunteer took the oldest girl, 13, for a socially distanced walk near their relative's home. In her mask, the volunteer learned the young teen had been taking care of her siblings. There'd been ongoing abuse and neglect of her, her brothers and her little sisters, including the one who was just weeks old. After several weeks of isolation and lockdown, this girl finally had someone to trust.

Thanks to the training ProKids provides, the volunteer was able to respond appropriately, take the information back to her Advocacy Team including her CASA Manager and ProKids attorney, and advocate with them in court to help these children remain in a safe place.

This is why a CASA Volunteer is so critical for our community's children in crisis.

In my years at ProKids I've seen how our volunteers and our donors come together to keep our children safe and bring them through their trauma.

And as the reality of the public health crisis hit, our volunteers and staff did not need to be told how vulnerable our children would be. They just got to work.

ProKids volunteers made sure high school students had access to the internet to continue classes, that parents could continue to visit their children safely, that counseling was not interrupted so our children could heal, that court had the information they needed so a child's adoption could proceed.

ProKids kept advocating, no matter what, because of your support. We know there is hard work ahead. We'll need even more compassion, agility and grit.

We must bring these children hope and healing beyond the storm.

And that's where you come in.

Join us.

**"We
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The ProKids Difference

In 2019, ProKids Advocacy Teams, including a **record-breaking 310 trained CASA Volunteers**, with staff **CASA Managers and Attorneys**, advocated for **1,009 Greater Cincinnati children**.



Children who **have been abused** are **more likely** to be abused again.

99% of ProKids children were free from abuse and neglect.



On average, 16-17 year olds in foster care read at a **7th grade** level.

98% of our children received appropriate educational placement or achieved developmental milestones.



The likelihood of **stability decreases** the more a foster child **moves**.

89% of ProKids children experience stability during their case.



Children placed without their siblings are **more likely to be moved** to another foster home.

70% of ProKids children were placed with their brothers and sisters.



80% of foster children have mental health issues; **25%** have 3 or more chronic health conditions.

97% of our children have access to the interventions and services they need.



1/3 of youth who age out of foster care have unstable housing.

100% of ProKids youth aging out of foster care have a place to live.

Learn more at www.prokids.org/outcomes

Why ProKids?

In 2019, ProKids recognized the following community members for their impact. We asked them why you need to be a part of ProKids into the future, particularly after the storm of events which exposed our community's children to even more risk of trauma. Here's what they had to say:

Tom Cuni, ProKids Board Member and volunteer attorney 2019 ProKids Merilee Turner Volunteer of the Year



"Recent events may have made the plight of our children more apparent, but unfortunately there is a long history of disruption in the lives of the children in our community. When this happens, children find themselves in a large and complex system. When they meet a ProKids CASA Volunteer, these children find a caring individual who gets to know and understand them. And because these dedicated volunteers are trained and supported by ProKids, they know how to advocate for these children and make a difference. We will need more of these kinds of volunteers in the months ahead."



Read more at prokids.org/HopeandHealing

Why ProKids?

T.D. Hughes, ProKids Board President Emeritus 2019 ProKids Community Builder of the Year



“Stepping up and supporting ProKids can create a significantly better time and place for our children because it gives our community an opportunity to break the cycle of abuse and neglect for thousands of children so they can have the life they were meant to live. ProKids does this by creating a foundational safety net that protects these children from literally falling into a black hole that no one even knows exists. We know that many children are facing ugly circumstances today and will face ugly circumstances tomorrow. And we know that ProKids can help these children if ProKids has your help.”

Quatez Scott, Ph.D. Student 2019 ProKids Community Builder of the Year



“Speaking from my personal experience of having a CASA Volunteer, it was great to have someone who became a familiar face spend quality time with me. Whether it was getting outside and taking a walk or simply talking about my day, having someone volunteer their time and genuinely express concern for my wellbeing helped me through a lot of difficult times. Sometimes, that can make all the difference in the life of a child and their outlook on life. Right now is a great time for people to get involved in ways that can directly impact the lives of children and families in Cincinnati.”

Read more at prokids.org/HopeandHealing

Why ProKids?

Jill Baker Braun, CASA Volunteer **2019 Darlene Kamine Advocate of the Year**



“When a child is taken into foster care because of abuse and neglect, there is inherent trauma. They need to have someone on their side. The CASA Volunteer has no sides except one: the child’s side. As CASA Volunteers, we learn to support these children in a professional and unconditionally loving way. We help ensure that these children won’t fall through the cracks. As the numbers of children and cases continue to rise, ProKids will need many more people to step up and take a stand for these kids, because they are the most vulnerable in our community.”

Mary Anne Bressler, CASA Volunteer **2019 Darlene Kamine Advocate of the Year**



“Right now, with so much going on in our world, so many people are struggling. We make sure that children who live in crisis are protected, nurtured and cared for. CASA Volunteers are able to work in a complicated system and to help find solutions to complex problems, not because of our professional backgrounds (of which we represent many) but because of our care for the children in our community and our passion for a community in which every child is safe. The training we receive and the support of the ProKids staff enables us to make a difference. As we continue through this most extraordinarily difficult time, CASA Volunteers can help the children of our community weather their own storms in the midst of this time of tumult.”

Read more at prokids.org/HopeandHealing

Why ProKids?

Karen Gerrety, CASA Volunteer 2019 Darlene Kamine Advocate of the Year



"A child in trauma may be moved from one school to another and one foster family to another, but the CASA Volunteer is a constant in the child's life, focused on the needs of the child. Because our caseload is small, often just one child or a group of siblings, we are better able to get to know the child and their caregivers, we are better able to learn about problems the child is facing and advocate for interventions.

It's important for members of the community to step forward and be the bridge between trauma and a loving, nurturing home."



Read more at prokids.org/HopeandHealing

Why ProKids?

Amy Gilles, CASA Volunteer

2019 Darlene Kamine Advocate of the Year



"CASA Volunteers are like quarterbacks, who are able to see all the players involved, identify the best play to work toward and have the goal of a safe, permanent, nurturing home for each child they work with. As volunteers, we advocate for education services, for the physical and mental health care needs of the child and collaborate with others in the child protection system to identify what is in the best interest of the child. This is why we need more volunteers to speak up for children who will need us now and in the future."

Mike Hardy, CASA Volunteer

2019 Darlene Kamine Advocate of the Year

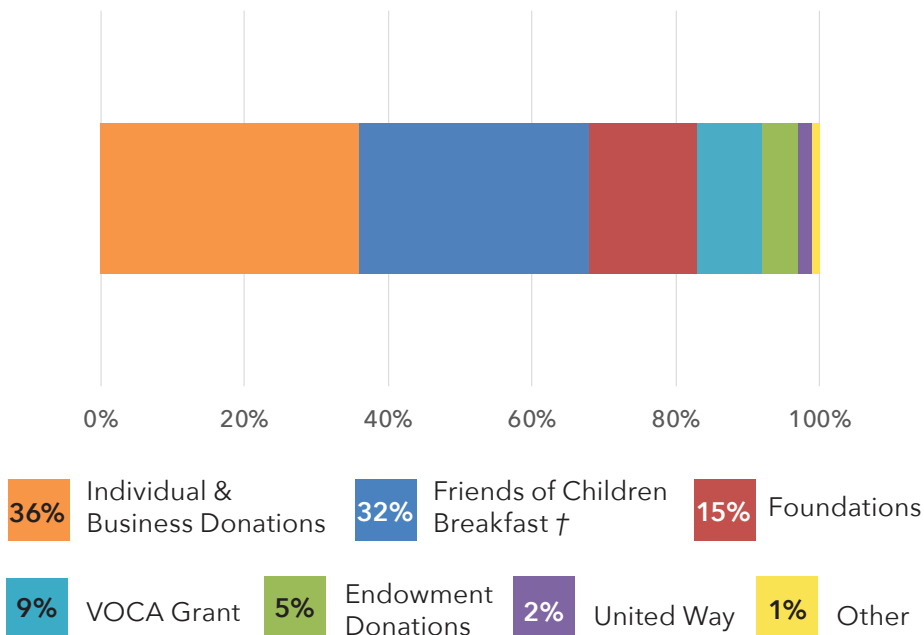


"With current events, like our public health situation and the economy, we have an expanding need in our community for CASA Volunteers. What they do for children in crisis is seldom available elsewhere. We facilitate the process to get services and assistance for children and their care providers, which is critical much of the time. We've been trained to do this as quickly as possible because every day matters in the life of a child. That's why we need more CASA Volunteers: because we have to make sure that more community members are specially trained to work with these children."

Read more at prokids.org/HopeandHealing

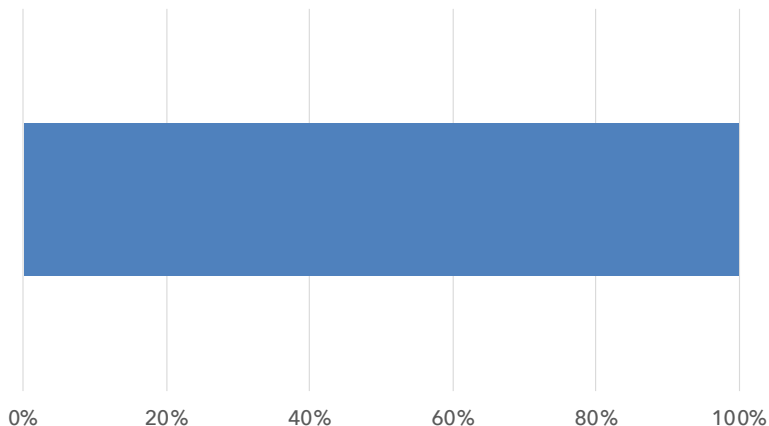
Financials*

2019 Revenues \$4,803,863



† Includes future promises to give. For a list of our 2019 Friends of Children Society members, visit www.prokids.org/2019.

2019 Expenses \$2,645,144



Change in Net Assets \$2,158,719 (includes Investment Return of \$1,082,590)

*Unaudited; see prokids.org/HopeandHealing for updates

Our work of advocating directly for children in crisis has never been more important than now.

While all of this is unprecedented, it's clear that it's going to take more of us to ensure that our children are safe, secure and move as quickly as possible to permanent homes where they can thrive.

Not doing so will have ramifications that last generations. When children do not have stability as they grow up, they are more likely to suffer chronic health conditions, become mentally ill, be homeless and unemployed as adults and have other outcomes, which mean the next generation is more likely to repeat the cycle.

This is where you come in.

Join. Being a part of ProKids means that you are someone who cares about our community's future. It means that you have an open heart and an open mind. And it means that you want to solve problems – by giving about 10 hours of your time a month – before those problems become unsolvable. Our volunteers are from all walks of life, and, thanks to our training and ongoing support, they are making a meaningful difference. You can too.

Begin with a one-hour Snapshot information session. Make a reservation at www.prokids.org/Snapshot.

Contribute. Your financial support enables ProKids staff and volunteers to speak up for abused and neglected children in Hamilton County. Donate online anytime at www.prokids.org.

Create. By making a gift to an endowment or by including ProKids in your estate planning, you create a legacy for the future well-being of our community. For more information on these options, please contact Jennifer at (513) 487-6445 or jmckettrick@prokids.org.

Share. Subscribe to our monthly newsletter, Inside ProKids, by visiting www.prokids.org. Be a part of our social media outreach and help us build awareness throughout our community. You can also support ProKids through Amazon Smile or Kroger Community Rewards.



www.prokids.org

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