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Bank of America Assists Jackson County CASA Partner to Increase Support for Abused and Neglected Children in Kansas City

Neighborhood Builders® helps nonprofit to focus on its impact through leadership development and \$200,000 in flexible funding

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Bank of America has named Jackson County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) as the 2015 Neighborhood Builder in Kansas City. The nonprofit, which serves children from birth to age 26, is being recognized for its work to provide guardian ad litem (legal advocacy) and volunteer services for abused and neglected children and youth who enter the Jackson County Family Court system. [Neighborhood Builders](#) combines leadership development resources with \$200,000 of flexible funding intended to help increase their capacity and impact in the Kansas City community.

“We recognize that nonprofits and their leaders are on the frontlines as they tackle tough community issues that are vital to Kansas City’s economic growth,” said Gary Jankowitz, Kansas City Market President, Bank of America. “Jackson County CASA already provides vital services that help individuals and families throughout Kansas City. Through Neighborhood Builders, we hope to help this organization continue to work toward their goals of securing safe, permanent homes for children and offer guidance and support to help prepare CASA kids getting ready to age-out of foster care.”

Jackson County CASA assigns each child a three person team and together this team represents the child’s best interests. Currently, children who are not adopted or reunified with a parent age-out of the program at age 18. With the leadership development resources and \$200,000 of flexible funding from Neighborhood Builders, Jackson County CASA will be able to expand its resources and create its new program, CASA Transition Program for Older Foster Youth, to work with youth who would otherwise not have continued access to safe housing, jobs, healthcare and an education through Jackson County CASA services after turning 18. With 22 programs in Missouri, Jackson County CASA is one of the largest CASA agencies in the country. This will be the first time youth between the ages of 18 and 26 will have a case manager specifically dedicated to the Older Foster Youth program to help them obtain services and prepare to age out of the foster care system.

“Over the years we have become increasingly concerned about the challenges facing foster youth who “age-out” of the system without a safe, permanent home,” said Martha Gershun, Executive Director, Jackson County CASA. “We believe now, more than ever our CASA agency is in a unique position to offer these young people the resources and support they need to build stable, functional, independent lives. As the number of abused and neglected children in foster care grows, the support we receive from Bank of America will help us beyond the traditional CASA model to provide focused training and support for CASA volunteers serving this at-risk age group.”

Since 2004, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation has invested \$183 million in more than 900 nonprofit organizations and provided leadership resources to nearly 2,000 nonprofit leaders through Neighborhood Builders and the Neighborhood Builders Leadership Program®. This long-term investment in nonprofit leadership development and capacity building is the largest philanthropic investment of its kind.

Neighborhood Builders is just one example of our broader corporate social responsibility efforts to build vibrant communities and economies. By advancing partnerships with nonprofits addressing needs related to community development, basic human services and workforce development and education, we are working to increase financial stability and help individuals and families find the pathways out of poverty.

Bank of America Corporate Social Responsibility

At Bank of America, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is critical to fulfilling our core purpose of making people's financial lives better. A commitment to growing our business responsibly is embedded in every aspect of our company, from our policies and practices to our services, products, governance and employee benefits. An important part of that commitment is forming strong partnerships across sectors, including nonprofit organizations serving community needs, bringing our collective networks and expertise to achieve greater impact. We're proud of our employees' volunteer efforts, support of diversity and inclusion, and environmental and social responsibility. Across our company, we're focused on simplifying banking and investing, advancing better money habits and making an impact in communities around the world. Learn more at www.bankofamerica.com/about and follow us on Twitter at [@BofA_News](https://twitter.com/BofA_News) and [@BankofAmerica](https://twitter.com/BankofAmerica).

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