

PROGRAM IMPACT: ADVOCATING FOR FAMILY, ENSURING PERMANENCY



When “Ana”, “Alice”, and “Athena” entered foster care after a profoundly traumatic event, their lives could have been fractured not just by circumstance, but by separation. Thanks to the steadfast advocacy of Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Barbara, the girls’ story is not one of separation, but of unity — one marked by family resilience, compassion, and the enduring impact of advocacy.

Appointed to the case in 2024, CASA Barbara stepped into a complex family dynamic already in motion. The three sisters, bright, spirited, and deeply bonded, had been placed with their maternal aunt and uncle following their removal from their biological mother’s care in 2022. While the aunt and uncle provided a safe and loving home, they initially declined to pursue legal guardianship, wanting to maintain their role as extended family rather than permanent caregivers.

Throughout the case, CASA Barbara maintained consistent visits with the girls, listening, observing, and nurturing their sense of stability. She met them where they were: from joyful afternoons spent choosing toys on a holiday gift card budget, to reading books to shelter animals, to laughing and playing at the park until

the sun began to set. These moments became the foundation for trust, healing, and growth. CASA Barbara paid attention not just to their needs, but also to their joy, development, and individuality. Ana, a natural leader, thrived in the student council. Alice, patient and steady, found pride in her accomplishments. Athena, playful and curious, is thoughtful in her schoolwork and demonstrates care when printing her letters, as well as keeping her backpack perfectly organized for each school day.

CASA Barbara didn’t just advocate for the girls; she supported the entire family system. When discussions around out-of-county adoption emerged in early 2025, she became a critical link between the aunt and uncle, social services, and the court. She held space for the aunt and uncle to voice their fears of losing connection with the girls. She helped them navigate the complexities of legal guardianship, providing information about available financial support and what a long-term commitment could entail for their family.

In May 2025, the aunt and uncle reached out to CASA Barbara with a life-changing decision: they would pursue legal guardianship. They shared that their love for the girls had only deepened, and with a better understanding of the support systems in place, they were ready to provide their nieces with a forever home. The court granted legal guardianship in the summer of 2025, and the dependency case was formally closed.

This heartwarming outcome, three sisters remaining together in a home they know, with a family that cherishes them, is a direct reflection of CASA Barbara’s tireless, child-centered advocacy. She ensured Ana, Alice, and Athena’s voices were heard. She listened and empowered their caregivers to step into a permanent role. Through her consistency, compassion, and commitment, what began as a temporary placement became a forever family.

Names and identifying details have been changed to protect confidentiality