



## *Keyanna and Sienna's CASA Story*

Keyanna was born with significant medical and developmental problems and was removed from her two developmentally delayed parents because, despite their love for her, they were unable and ill equipped to meet her everyday needs. Because of her numerous medical and developmental needs, Keyanna needed to be placed in a residential treatment facility in Wanaque. A year later, Keyanna's parents had another child, Sienna, who was placed in foster care immediately after birth. While Sienna also had delays, they were not as severe as Keyanna's. As such, the two siblings were in separate placements, with Sienna in a regular foster home. The parents' commitment to the children was remarkable -- they never missed a visit with the girls and, each week, would take public transportation from East Orange to Wanaque to visit Keyanna. Despite the fact that the parents complied with all court ordered tasks, reunification was out of the question, and termination of parental rights seemed imminent; the plan was for Sienna to eventually be adopted by her foster parents, and for Keyanna to remain in a residential treatment facility until the state could find a select home (a home not yet identified but that would be willing to provide for her special medical and developmental needs). Fortunately, the girls had a CASA volunteer who was able to locate an out-of-state aunt who had requested that the children be placed with her; however, the aunt had previously been denied the girls by interstate authorities because she had been a foster parent of a child who had run away. DYFS accepted the denial by interstate, but CASA pursued the issue further, contacting the aunt and the Georgia Interstate authorities. CASA helped the aunt pursue a successful appeal of the interstate decision and helped to facilitate discussions between the parents, DYFS, and the Georgia aunt and uncle. When Keyanna was 6 and Sienna was 5, they were reunited and adopted by their aunt and uncle. Both parents have also relocated to Georgia; they live in close proximity to the children and work in the family store.

Rationale for Cost Savings: But for CASA's involvement, Keyanna would have remained in a residential treatment facility indefinitely – if she did this until she aged out of the system at 21 (15 years), this would have cost the state \$1,896,240 to \$3,370,860 depending on the particular facility in question. But for CASA involvement, Sienna would have remained in foster care at least another 1.5 years (through the trial to terminate parental rights and any appeal; then through the adoption process) at a cost of \$20,780. Adoption subsidies through the age of 18 would have cost the state approximately \$102,000. Thus, CASA's work on behalf of Sienna saved the state a total of \$122,780 in hard costs. When combined with the savings in the hard costs of caring for Keyanna, the total savings to the state is between \$2,019,020 and \$3,493,640, depending on the Residential Treatment facility chosen.<sup>1</sup>

**Residential Treatment Facility to Adoption by Relatives**  
**Total Cost Savings: \$2,019,020 to \$3,493,640 depending on the Residential Treatment Facility**

<sup>1</sup> FY2010 Proposed State Budget, pp. D-35 and D-36 shows annual cost per client for Residential Placements (between \$126,416 and \$224,724 depending on the particular facility), Foster/Resource Family Placements (\$13,853), and Adoption Subsidies (\$8,498).