



Paul's CASA Story

Paul became the CASA volunteer for Jacob (15) in February, 2007. Jacob's family had been involved with DYFS since 1988 because of allegations of parental drug and alcohol abuse, domestic violence, and neglect. Jacob's mother left the family when Jacob was just two years old, and her whereabouts are still unknown. Jacob was initially taken from his father and placed in foster care in 1997, when he was four years old, because of his father's neglect. Although briefly reunified in 2002, Jacob's father quickly relapsed and was hospitalized. While his father was in the hospital, Jacob himself suffered from destructive outbursts, resulting in his own psychiatric hospitalization. Jacob's father passed away in 2005. By the time that Paul was appointed in February 2007, Jacob had spent 10 years in out-of-home placements including a shelter, a therapeutic foster home, residential treatment facilities, and group homes; he had several psychiatric hospitalizations and had been in a group home for over two years. DYFS's goal for Jacob was long-term residential care because, according to his records, Jacob could not thrive in a family because of his serious emotional and behavioral problems. While Jacob continued to struggle with outbursts, a hospitalization, and a resulting move to a more structured facility, Paul carefully reviewed Jacob's file. In that file, Paul noticed that Jacob had an uncle who, in 2005, expressed to DYFS an interest in becoming more involved in Jacob's life. Paul contacted DYFS and was informed that there had been no follow-through by Jacob's uncle. Paul forged ahead and started a dialogue with Jacob's uncle; he also initiated and facilitated meetings between DYFS and Jacob's uncle. Once Jacob's uncle and aunt passed the DYFS screening process, Paul advocated for visits and subsequently, overnight stays for Jacob at his uncle and aunt's home. Finally Paul's diligence paid off and, in August 2008, Jacob was placed with his uncle and aunt. He hopes to be adopted in the next few months.

Rationale for Cost Savings: Had Paul not been on Jacob's case, Jacob would have remained in long-term residential care under the DYFS plan until the age of 21 (for six years). Instead, Jacob is in a foster placement with his uncle and aunt, with plans for either adoption or kinship legal guardianship by the end of this summer. This saved the State between \$758,496 and \$1,348,344 in the cost of residential care depending on which facility Jacob was placed in.¹

**Group Homes and Residential Treatment Facilities to Adoption by Relative
Total Cost Savings: \$758,496 to \$1,348,344 depending on the Residential
Treatment Facility**

¹ FY2010 Proposed State Budget, p. D-36 shows annual cost per client for Residential Placements (between \$126,416 and \$224,724 depending on the particular facility) and Group Home Placements (\$82,486).