

# Family Advocates Home Visiting Program



**Family  
Advocates**

**HOME VISITING**



# Mission

- Strengthen families and communities so they can be safe, healthy and thriving.
- We do this by providing a voice in court for abused children and strengthening families through home visiting.

# Brief History of Family Advocates:

- 1978 Family Advocate began with home visiting
- 1980 CASA program was added
- 2000 - 2010 PIRC grant expanded paid home visiting staff then disappeared
- 2012 Launched volunteer home visiting

# Perspective of FA Leadership

- Prevention was too important to let go
- Incidence of child abuse and neglect continue to grow
- CASA staff saw situations that were clearly preventable
- Home visiting continues to be recognized as one of the most effective strategies to prevent child abuse and neglect

# What we know...



- Children are impacted by the relationships and environments that surround them.
- Babies may experience the general effects of trauma, addiction, attachment disturbance or relationship dysfunction.
- The period of pregnancy through age three is the most active and rapid period of development in a life.
- The experience that parents had throughout their lives will impact how they care for their baby.

# Social Capital

- 30+ years of experience with dependable and effective CASA volunteers
- 30+ years of home visiting experience
- Research of home visiting programs operating around the world using volunteers for 25+ years had strong outcomes and models



# Benefits of Hybrid Strategy:

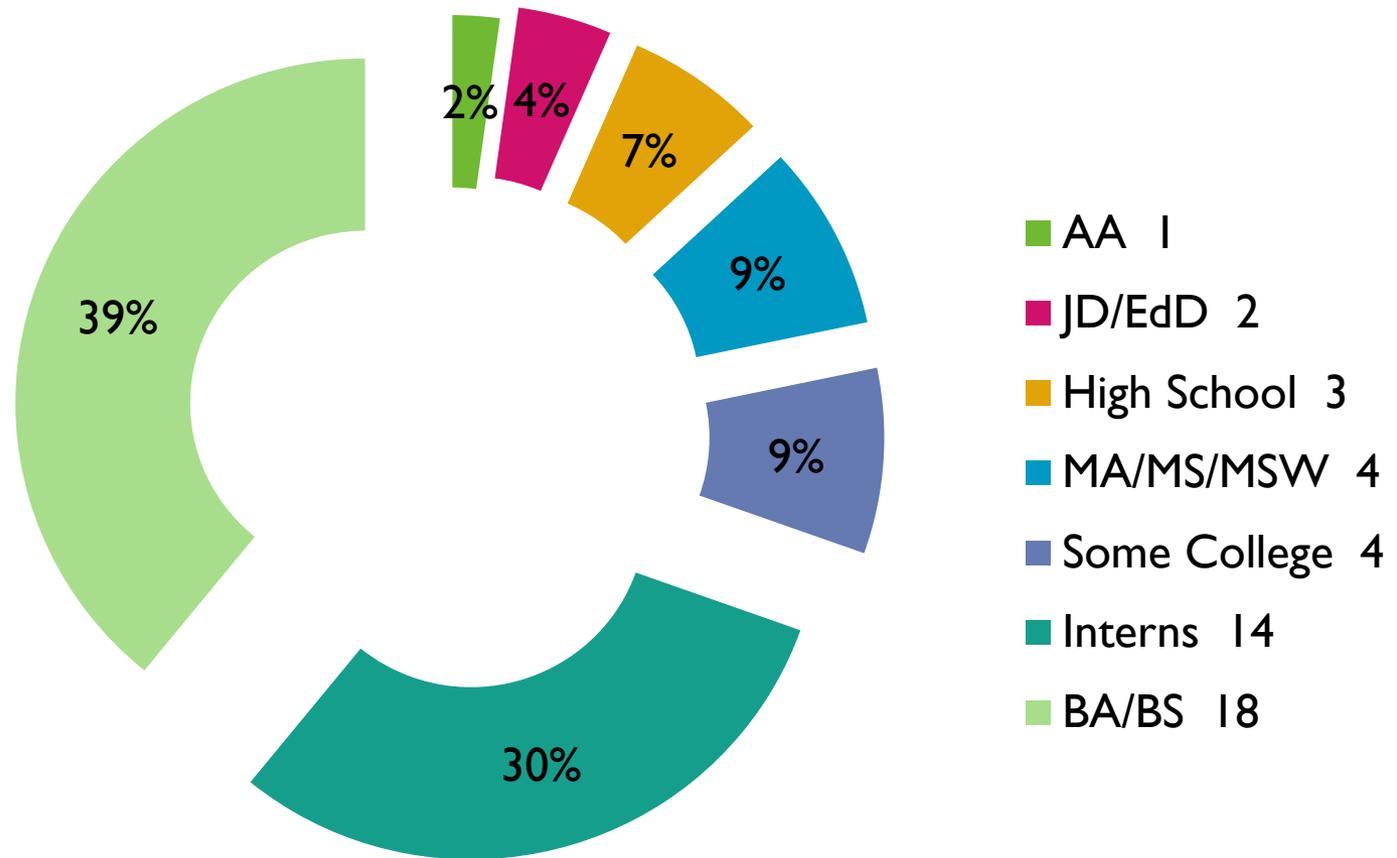
- Expand our capacity to reach more families
- Hybrid model could be both a sustainable and scalable way to achieve our goals
- Greater number of visitors who are equipped with years of professional and parenting experience
- Research indicates volunteers may be more readily accepted by clients

# Who Are the Volunteers?

- Range in Age from 22 to 78 years
- Average age 42
- 76% have children

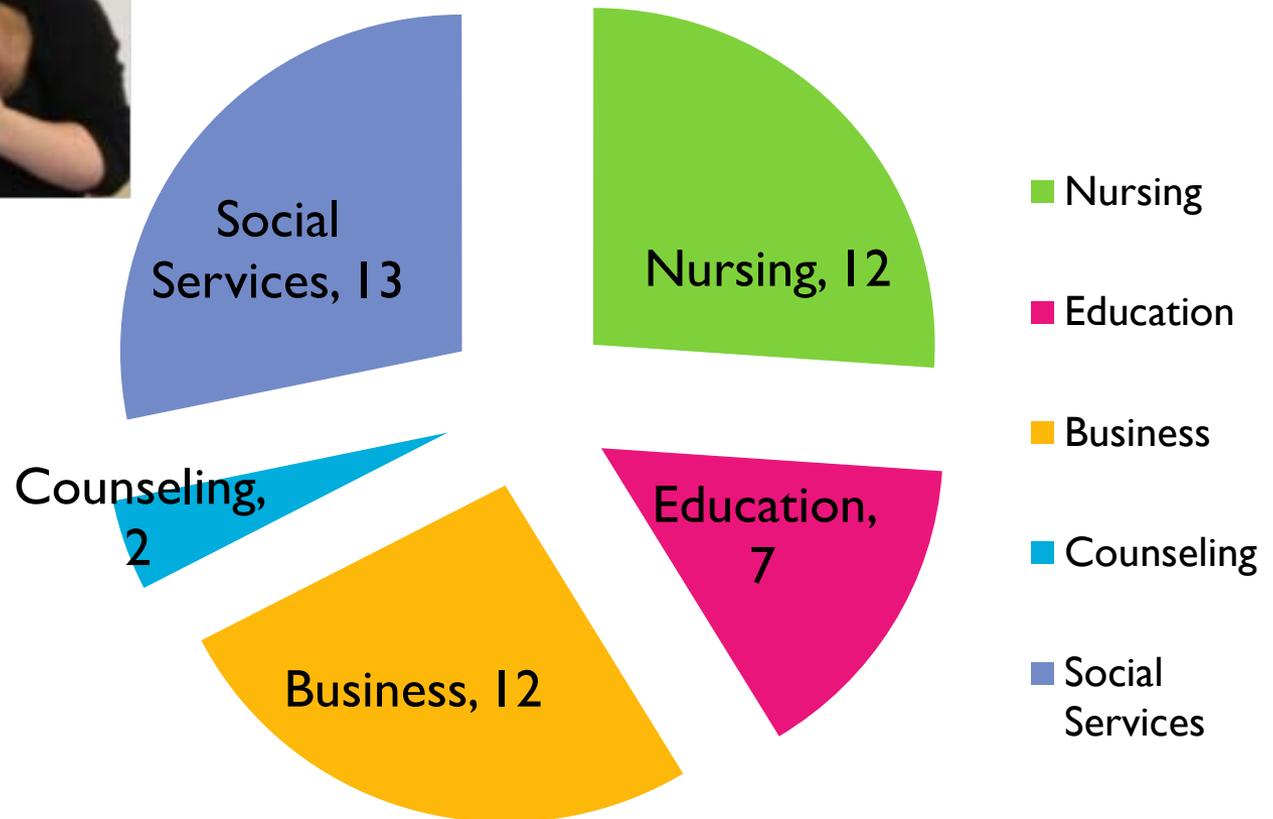


# Education Level of Volunteers



*\* Interns are seniors in social work, nursing and early childhood education*

# Experience of Volunteers



# Additionally All Volunteers

- Pass background check
- Are Tdap immunized
- Complete 20 hours of training



# Key Features of Our Model

- Emulate the Visiting Mom program of Greater Boston: Application process & interview; Cohort model and Monthly supervisory meetings



- All training based on Strengthening Families Framework
- Weekly visits
- Staff conducts all intake visits
- Data collection informs practice and monitors impact

# The Value of Strengths-based Home Visiting



- When we approach people and identify their strengths, we encourage participation in change.
- Change happens in relationship
  - Authenticity leads to real engagement
  - Mutual empathy and empowerment fosters growth
  - Relationship growth increases confidence
- Building protective factors strengthens families, reduces the risk of abuse and neglect and promotes optimal development.

# What do we know about protecting children and strengthening families?

- All parents want the best for their babies
- All moms benefit from support and social connection
- When a parent treats a child with respect, love, and understanding, it affects the child for a lifetime - making it easier to develop and keep friendships, succeed in school and work, and parent effectively.
- Unfortunately, many factors can limit parents' ability to protect and nurture their children, putting them at risk for abuse and neglect.
- Certain factors – Protective Factors, have been shown to serve as buffers against these risks, enhancing parents' coping skills and helping them to raise happy, healthy children, even under stress.



# Our Successes Year One

- Trained over 50 volunteers
- 42 active visitors
- Referrals from over 10 community partners to date
- Early data suggests that parents are increasing their protective factors, symptoms of postpartum depression and increasing health care usage.