

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



2009 - Edition VII  
Page 1



## Susan's Scribbles

*Please accept my most sincere apologies for this belated salute to all of you during National Volunteer Month. Although we do not say it often enough, your every effort in advocating for our children is so greatly appreciated. And in these uncertain times, your experience and patience is a real gift, as we hold our breaths to see what the future budget picture looks like, and what that means to our children.*

*Please join with me in remembering that while staff, programs, and services are so critical to our families, the bottom line is the children. I think we have to be even more diligent in our efforts to keep them safe, knowing that everyone is having to do more with less. That includes our children's birth families, foster families, and adoptive families, as well as the individuals, agencies and bureaucracies that serve them, and ourselves.*

*Maybe it is time to talk a little softer, listen a little harder, and be a little more present, wherever we are, whatever we're doing, whomever we're communicating with. Be it a child, a friend, a loved one, a parent, a co-worker, they all, we all deserve to honor each other and ourselves with the gift of being in the moment. Not an easy thing these days. But perhaps more critical now than ever before.*

*It's my pleasure to introduce Gabriel Hayes, born to our CASA, Lindsey, and her husband Troy, on April 11<sup>th</sup>. I am Gabriel's 'extra' Gramma, but to him I will just be Gramma Sue. What an honor! Gabriel had kind of a tough time coming into this world, and no one is telling him life will be easy. But any challenges he faces will not be from lack of support, love, or nurturance. Family and friends have been lining up for him since his conception, and will continue to do so for the rest of his life. All of our children should be as lucky as Gabriel. He represents all that is good about family and dedication to a child.*

*Thank you, again, for your dedication to all of our children*



*Susan*

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 2

## THANK YOU!! (Jan, Feb, March & April Anniversaries)

<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Years</u>
Greg Bacon	1	Jeanette Benson	2
Meg Bishopp	1	Ruth Bramer	8
Bill Brower	2	Karyn Brown	22
Paul Brunton	4	Sister Madonna Buder	10
Kristi Burns	1	Salli Charles	3
Judy Clear	1	Cheryl Dalton	1
Deborah Dean	1	Kleone Deehr	4
Marianne DeMarco	10	Karen Desonia	2
Nancy Evans	5	Valerie Evans	1
Lori Gibson	2	La Vel Godwin	2
Renee Graybill	1	Kathleen Grier	2
Spencer Hampton	15	Priscilla Hannon	2
Kaitlyn Harris	1	JC Hart	7
Mary Harvill	3	Marian Heale	1

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 3

## THANK YOU!! (Jan, Feb, March & April Anniversaries)

<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Years</u>
Dan Hill	5	Kerry Holliday	5
Rose Ivey	1	Allen Jackson	7
Willa Johns	4	Laura Kellogg	2
Gayle Kiser	22	Dianna Koberstine	4
Connie Kohler	1	Brooke Kuhl	7
Tammie Kutina	2	Beth Ann Madsen	7
Kathy Maurer	8	Lisa May	5
Patricia McBride	2	Rebecca McKillip	2
Laurie Mead	3	Melissa Merritt	1
Sharyll Messinger	1	Crystal Miller	1
Jole Monroe	3	Randy Monroe	1
Mickey Moore	1	Hazel Newkirk	1
Karn Nielsen	8	Debra Park	3
Aurora Peck	1	Susan Piccinini	1

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 4

## THANK YOU!! (Jan, Feb, March and April Anniversaries)

<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Volunteer</u>	<u>Years</u>
Cheryl Rousey	1	Laura Sanford	4
Karla Schmeling	3	Lindsey Schmidt	2
Pamela Schmidt	1	Rosemarie Schmidt	10
Heidi Scott	1	Terri Sennett	6
John Silvia	4	Cheree Sin Clair	1
Kellee Spangenberg	8	Barbara Spencer	2
Lorna St. John	4	Sue Stine	3
Rosemarie Thurman	16	Mary Vanderwal	1
Jill Wahl	3	Moria Weaver	1
Greg West	1	Ashlee Wiese	2
Judy Williams	1	Connie Wilson	3



# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 5

## ***GET TO KNOW OUR STAFF***



**Nancy Filardo  
Office Assistant  
CASA Program**

***Nancy Filardo started with Juvenile Court Services in February of 2008. She was assigned to the Probation Unit working in Evidence Based Programs. She promoted to the Volunteer Services Unit after Joanne Napier left to work for the District Court in mid-June, 2008.***

***Nancy assists and works closely with Susan Cairy, Program Coordinator of the Volunteer Services Unit. She prepares all mailings for upcoming training sessions, sends out applications for the various programs, gathers information on applicants, prepares name badges, the class list, and so much more. Nancy does the shopping for and prepares the food that is served at the training sessions (often with the assistance of her co-worker, Mary Ann Souza).***

***As Nancy is assigned as a Multi-Unit Office Assistant, she also assists wherever needed in the other departments of Juvenile Court Services from preparing statistical reports for the Becca unit to shopping for rewards and incentives for the youth in those programs. She also has the opportunity to meet with our Interns in their orientations prior to volunteering at the court.***

***Nancy's work area is located just across the hall from the 2nd Floor Conference Room and she is available to assist our volunteers at any time. Please stop by and introduce yourself to Nancy the next time you are in the neighborhood.***

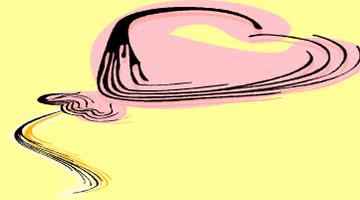
# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 6

## *A CHILD IS WAITING*



Nichole age 7, Tim age 4, Eddie age 2 and Allen age 1 are all currently in the care of their mother and Allen's father. Last summer police were contacted because Tim and Eddie were found wandering in only their diapers. Thirty minutes passed prior to police hearing from the parents. CPS and Law Enforcement went to the home and found that the four children appeared to not have been bathed for some time. The home was unsafe for children and they were placed into care at that time. The parents found structured housing and the children were returned 24 days later. The parents have marginally participated in services from last summer until March, at which time it was decided that an in-home dependency would benefit the family. If you would like to advocate for Nichole, Tim, Eddie, and Allen, or any other child, please contact your program manager. Thank you for taking the time to volunteer.



# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 7

## Brief Update From Pat

Well, spring has finally sprung, or at least is trying. It was another long winter and I am sure we are all looking forward to some warmer days.

Over the past few months, there have been some significant changes to the Dependency Program and Children's Administration. As many of you are aware, the Department took a large financial hit a few days before Thanksgiving and laid off numerous Social Workers. With this loss, many of the services were forced to change. I am not going to attempt to lay out all of the changes, but have forwarded you information in regards to children and parent service changes as they have become available to me. In short, the future services that our children and parents receive will be dramatically different. It is too early to determine the full effect of these changes, but I am sure they will make our role as CASA's more challenging, even more important to the Court, and ultimately the children.

In 2008 there was an average of 48 new children entering the Dependency process each month. There were several months where we were close to 60. You all remember the time when I asked for your help. I continue to be amazed at the support you all give to the needs of our children. With the changes to the Department, the filings thus far have been reduced significantly over the past few months. We are currently averaging 28 to 30 new cases each month. I am not real clear on why the change has occurred, but I will tell you that with this reduction, the program has been better able to respond to the needs of our children and families, and to the needs of our volunteers. It is unclear at this time what the future holds, given the current budget struggles, but I want you to know that our focus will continue to be advocating for children by supporting our dedicated and committed volunteers.

I want to thank you again for all you do for the CASA program and the children you represent. Thank you for coming forward and taking on more when the need arose. Thank you for communicating with me when things don't feel like they are going so well. I have said time and time again, a CASA volunteer is the most challenging volunteer job around. We are lucky to have all of you to help us with this difficult work.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer. I look forward to seeing you around the office and the court. Please feel free to contact me whenever you need. My door is always open.

**Thank you.  
Patrick Donahue**

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 8

## Hey Fellow CASA's,

Have you ever felt completely overwhelmed when talking to a parent's attorney? Or felt like the attorney was trying to make you look like you had no idea what you were doing? Well have no fear! Here are some helpful hints, tips, and facts from the attorneys themselves that I learned at the Public Defenders In-Service training. Print this sheet out to reference and never feel overwhelmed when talking to a parent's attorney again! Okay, well you may still feel overwhelmed, but this should at least help! Enjoy!

### **Tip #1: Don't Take It Personally!**

Several CASA's expressed frustration with the way that attorneys talk to or question them. The Public Defender's role is to advocate for their client. They need to represent the wishes of their clients (the parent). This can lead to the Public Defender's attempting to discredit what a CASA is recommending, it's their job and it is nothing against us! So please don't take it personally!

### **Tip #2: Get To Know The Parents and Establish a Relationship With Them.**

Several attorneys expressed concern that CASA's often did not meet with parents outside of when the CASA is visiting with the children. It is important that we are able to establish a relationship with the parent independently of our relationship with the child. Getting to know the parents will enable us to recognize any services the parents may need and will provide us with much more credibility in the eyes of not only the attorneys, but also the court!

### **Tip #3: Recognize What's Important When Considering The Child's "Best Interest"**

The Public Defenders expressed concern that CASA's often compare foster parents with biological parents, and because of this CASA's may make subjective recommendations. Remember that ultimately the goal is to return the child to their parent, so long as the parent is able to provide a safe environment and display an ability to meet the needs of the child. There are studies indicating that children are more successful when they are with their biological parents. It is important for us, as CASA's, to make sure we understand that it is in the child's best interest to be placed with the biological parents when parents have corrected the problems that brought their children into care. If we are able to give solid, well-informed reasons as to why we are recommending what we are, it will be very difficult for an attorney to argue against our recommendations.

### **Tip #4: Provide a Different View Than The Social Worker**

CASA's are in a unique position; that is why CASA's are valued so highly and why they the court relies on our information. The Public Defenders urged CASA's to give an independent objective review of the family. Adding positive information about a parent can add to your overall credibility.

Submitted by: Ashley Bannon, CASA

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 9

## ***IN-SERVICE AND OTHER TRAININGS***

### ***SAVE THE DATES***

#### **Circle of Security:**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2009**

**5:30pm to 7:30pm**

**Juvenile Court Building**

#### **Basic CASA Training:**

**June 19, 20, 26, 27, 2009**

**8:30am to 5:00pm**

**Juvenile Court Building**

**(We hope to have Carol Thomas**

**on June 27th but that date is**

**not yet firm.)**

**September 15 through October 13, 2009**

**5:30pm to 8:30pm**

**Tuesday/Thursday**

**Including one Saturday morning from**

**8:30am to 12:30pm (to be determined)**

**Juvenile Court Building**

# CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing \* Encouraging \* Supporting



Page 10

## CASA RECEIVES AWARD



On Friday, March 27th at the kick-off event for the OK:OB Campaign, the Spokane County CASA Program was honored by the SPO-CAN (Spokane Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) Council for the mentoring CASAs do with young children. The judges included Sheryl Billey, Early Childhood Specialist at West Boone Center, Molly Crumet, Children's Administration Supervisor, Lynne Lind, Diakonia-an auxiliary group with the Lutheran Church, Dr. Jim Perez, Interim Dean of the School of Social Work at EWU and Dan Wolfley, retired Social Service Extraordinaire. Other nominees included Chase Youth Commission, GU Kennel Kids, and Reach for the Future.

While our CASA Program isn't specifically billed as mentoring, there is no doubt that whatever time you spend with children of all ages, you just never know when something you say or do for them might stick, in a very positive way.

Please come by and have a look at the beautiful, engraved acrylic award that you ALL earned.

*Susan Cairry*

**TRAUMA SENSITIVE TRAINING  
MAY 2, 2009  
2ND FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
JUVENILE COURT**



## **JUST A REMINDER**

**PLEASE BE HERE AT 8:45 AND GET SIGNED IN. TRAINING WILL START AT 9:00 SHARP.**

**YOU CAN BRING YOUR LUNCH OR YOU MAY BE ABLE TO NEGOTIATE WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR TO LET YOU LEAVE TO GRAB A QUICK FAST FOOD LUNCH.**

*SEE YOU THERE!! THANKS FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND HARD WORK!!*

*BONNIE BUSH, DIRECTOR*