

CASA E-COMMUNIQUE

Informing * Encouraging * Supporting



2009 - Edition VIII
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SUSAN'S SCRIBBLES

Hello My Friends,

I hope this summer has been restful and joyful for all of you. There has been a bit of a lull recently in Volunteer Services, but we know it's only temporary, with our next CASA training beginning September 15th, the State CASA Conference being held here in Spokane in October, and all that the changing seasons and new beginnings bring.

*A recent case caused me to wonder how many of you have experienced a sense of loss when your case is resolved. Whether it is by adoption, guardianship, relative placement or reunification... I do not know if we talk about that possibility enough in training. In this **3-Boys case**, which has been assigned to the same CASA for three years, the pending (hopefully) adoptions seem very close at hand. When the original assignment was made it was expected to be short-term, as all three were placed in a wonderful adoptive home, and it was just a matter of crossing the t's and dotting the i's before it was final. Unfortunately, the adoption derailed with disclosures and acting out that no one anticipated.*

That in itself was a heartbreaker. Then to see what the children went through with further disclosure, as they tried to come to terms with what had happened, the loss of what they, and everyone else believed was their forever home, and being moved once again, was a further reminder of the trauma our children experience. Fortunately they were all placed in a therapeutic foster home that totally met their needs. They are thriving and the youngest is in an adoptive home in another county. The oldest met his potential adoptive parents last week, and several people are being considered as a family for the middle child. Yes, they will probably all be placed separately, but all efforts are being made to insure that they stay in touch with each other.

So the sense of loss a CASA might feel is potentially huge. You have seen many things happen, good and bad, the roller coaster for you, the children, their parents, the length of time it has taken to find and be ready for adoption or return, the losses, the hope, the laughter, the tears. And now they are going 'home', and you are moving on. It is what you have worked so hard for, what you always wanted to see happen. It is why you exposed yourself to such challenging work, dealing with the attorneys, social workers, therapists, reports, hearings. It is what kept you awake at night. It is what made you hold your own children and grandchildren or nieces and nephews closer. It is what you signed up for in the beginning, but still...

*Please take as long as it takes to acknowledge whatever sadness, relief, joy, frustration, pleasure, success you might feel. There is certainly a place for all of these things in this kind of work. You stuck with the children. You did what needed to be done. Sometimes it all wore on your heart, and you, and the children, just kept putting one foot in front of the other. **BRAVO!!** We appreciate you, and so do the children, although you may never hear them say those words. They are better off for your efforts. What a gift you have shared!*

Susan



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THANK YOU!! (May, June, July & August Anniversaries)

| <u>Volunteer</u> | <u>Years</u> | <u>Volunteer</u> | <u>Years</u> |
|------------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Joan Allbery | 4 | Maria Anderson | 1 |
| Barb Bittner | 3 | Joann Blaz | 5 |
| John Brindle | 6 | Susan Cairy | 3 |
| Melanie Cantu | 9 | Kristen Cejka | 3 |
| Diana Cote-Smith | 4 | Samantha Drummond | 4 |
| Dean Duncan | 13 | Jennifer Dyer | 5 |
| Mary Flores | 9 | Marlee Griffith | 1 |
| Linda Hodge | 7 | Shelley Inderrieden | 3 |
| Betty Ledbetter | 8 | Diana MacDowell | 12 |
| Ronda Martin | 2 | John Mascardo | 5 |
| Linda Mintun | 7 | Kathy Miotke | 15 |
| Susan Moore | 2 | Sharon Moran | 10 |
| Jennifer Moses | 1 | Ron Oscarson | 3 |
| Robert Pearson | 2 | Shana Piper | 2 |

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THANK YOU!! (May, June, July & August Anniversaries)

| <u>Volunteer</u> | <u>Years</u> | <u>Volunteer</u> | <u>Years</u> |
|------------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|
| Tina Rodeen | 2 | Elaine Rosato | 26 |
| Sean Rowe | 1 | Kathleen Ruth | 4 |
| Amy Sellers | 2 | Deborah Shaffer | 1 |
| Gary Sigler | 4 | Mildred Staley | 15 |
| Louise Stamper | 13 | Faye Swinyard | 4 |
| Ramonda Vernon | 8 | Holly Weller | 5 |
| Kali Woods | 4 | | |



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GET TO KNOW OUR STAFF



Denni Babcock
Secretary
CASA Program

I grew up in a small town called Rice, Washington (named after my grandparents) and the house that we lived in was the house my mother was born in. Rice is located about 25 miles south of Kettle Falls along the Columbia River or Lake Roosevelt whichever you want to use. I went to a one room school in Rice consisting of 5 grades and then in the sixth grade they closed the Rice school and I started attending the schools in Kettle Falls. I graduated from Kettle Falls High School, moved to Spokane, started working for the court in 1976 and have been here ever since. I have one older brother and one older sister. My husband's name is Gary. We like to go camping when we can. My favorite thing about my job is meeting new people and working with such a terrific bunch of people at Juvenile Court. As long as I have worked at the Juvenile Court, especially in the Dependency/CASA/GAL Program, there is usually always something different going on or changes occurring. I have enjoyed the 33 years that I have been working here. I want to thank all of the CASA/GAL's for the tremendous job that they do for the children that they represent. I know that sometimes their job is overwhelming, but hope they look at the positive side of what they do for the children.

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A CHILD IS WAITING

Jacob (age 2.5) and Reed (age 1) are currently in separate placements. These two children were brought into care due to concerns regarding the young mother's inability to follow through with all of Reed's medical needs. Reed is a medically fragile child who has a chronic lung disease and a history of respiratory distress. He struggles with swallowing so it is important that he receives his nutrition through feeding tubes. The mother and children were living in a structured living environment at the time of the removal. Jacob is placed with relatives and Reed needed to be moved from relatives to foster care because of his extensive medical needs. The father has had minimal contact with the children but has agreed to follow through with recommended services. Both the mother and father are on supervision with the Department of Corrections. If you would like to advocate for Jacob or Reed or any other children please contact CASA staff.



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SAVE THE DATES



Tell Your Friends, Family, Co-Workers

The next and final CASA Training of 2009 is September 15th through October 13th, Tuesday and Thursday evenings, 5:30-8:30 p.m. , with one half-day Saturday session on September 19th with Carol Thomas, 8:30-12:30. PLEASE let friends, relatives, and co-workers who may be interested know. Remember, we do not ask anyone to make a commitment to the program until AFTER training, at the final interview with the staff supervisor/mentor.

WASHINGTON STATE CASA CONFERENCE COMES TO SPOKANE

This year's statewide CASA conference will be held October 16-17 at The Red Lion Inn at the Park in Spokane, WA. Registration will begin online in August - stay tuned for more info!

Special CASA Rates:

*\$185 - full conference package: includes two days' registration and one night's hotel stay **Best deal!***

\$100 - registration only

\$75 - one day registration

www.washingtonstatecasa.org



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A Few Quick Notes from Pat ~

Hello everyone. I hope you are all having a wonderful summer. I have a few bits of information that I would like to share with you. First, Spokane has been selected by the Legislature to be part of the Dependent Youth Interviews Project (DYI). The program was developed after research was conducted with adolescent youth in the dependency process. Youth who were interviewed expressed a feeling of NOT being heard by the court during their dependency. The Legislature put DYI in place, requiring that youth 12 years of age and older be appointed their own attorney, and be invited to each court hearing, starting with Shelter Care. This program will be monitored through Court and child evaluations through June 30, 2010. Information will be gathered to determine what changes in representation need to be made for our dependent adolescents. For those of you who continue to represent this age group, you are aware that many have already been appointed an attorney. You, as a CASA, have the option to remain on the case, or to be discharged. At this time, it is the responsibility of the SW to invite and arrange transportation for the youth to court. As a reminder to all, **we never provide transportation** to any youth, ever. I will keep you posted on any protocol that comes from our Court regarding implementation of this new Legislation.

Secondly, I just received some interesting information that Commissioner Ressa provided to her Native American Team. This information could be very beneficial to CASA volunteers in regard to what the court looks for in making their decisions to reunify a family. The following is a very brief view of the full document that was provided by the Tulane Infant Team. You can Google the team for more information about their research project. I hope you find this information helpful in working through your cases:

Tulane Infant Team Benchmarks for Assessing Parents' Response to Treatment and Readiness for Reunification

- 1) Parents must accept responsibility for the child's maltreatment and the need to change their own behavior.
- 2) Parents must acknowledge longstanding psychiatric, substance use and/or relationship difficulties that potentially compromise their ability to provide safe and effective care to their child.
- 3) Parents must place the needs of the child ahead of their own needs.
- 4) Parents must demonstrate a capacity for change and a willingness to try different approaches within a reasonable time frame (reasonable from the child's perspective as defined by Adoption and Safe Families Act).
- 5) Parents must work constructively with involved professionals to address their problem areas.
- 6) Parents must make use of available community resources.

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Finally, I just want to thank all of you for your dedication and commitment to the CASA program. I am in the process of putting together the fall In-Service training schedule. Remember that Spokane is hosting the **17th Annual Washington State CASA Conference October 16 and 17**. Due to budget concerns, each CASA program will be given 1 scholarship for a volunteer to attend. This is a huge change from years past. I hope you all plan on attending. I will also be presenting a State of the CASA report in the near future to discuss our own budget and our successes as a CASA program.

Thanks again for all that you do. Remember that my door and phone are always open and if you ever need to talk with me, I am here.

Have a great remainder of the summer. I look forward to seeing you all around the Court soon.

Pat

METHAMPHETAMINE/PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE IN-SERVICE TRAINING

**September 28, 2009
6:00pm to 8:00pm
2nd Floor Conference Room**



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OTHER DATES TO REMEMBER:

CIRCLE OF SECURITY

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

5:30pm to 7:30pm

Juvenile Court Building

STRICTLY CASA

Monday, September 14, 2009

Noon to 2:00pm

Global Credit Union

1520 W. 3rd (downtown)

