



News & Updates from the Cumberland County CASA Program

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VOL. 3 No. 2

Winter 2003

CASA Recognized Nationally

The CASA concept continues to impact the lives of children across the nation. Affirming the work of the more than 70,000 CASA volunteers, including the 21 active volunteers in Cumberland County, a joint resolution was adopted at the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators at the 2003 Annual Meeting on July 31, 2003. While the effect one individual volunteer has may seem small in the face of the overwhelming number of child abuse and neglect cases in dependency court each year, the combined efforts of almost 1000 programs across the nation make a significant contribution to achieving safe, nurturing, permanent homes for many of the children who so desperately need just one person to advocate on their behalves.

CCJ Resolution 12
COSCA Resolution 6

In Recognition of CASA Volunteers Serving in Court

WHEREAS, courts are charged with providing accountability to the system responsible for protecting abused, abandoned and neglected children; and

WHEREAS, courts, children's services agencies and other governmental agencies cannot fully address the needs of abused, abandoned and neglected children without complete information regarding their cases and their lives; and

WHEREAS, citizen volunteers, including the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program, have assisted the courts in many ways in meeting the need for such information; and

WHEREAS, there are more than 978 CASA programs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia with more than 70,000 CASA volunteers who provide more than 10,000,000 hours of service to children each year;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conference of Chief Justices and the Conference of State Court Administrators:

1. Recognize and express appreciation to citizen volunteers who work with the court to assist our nation's most at-risk children, and encourage more citizens to volunteer; and
2. In particular recognize and commend the efforts and contributions of the CASA volunteers in assisting children before the court.

Meet the Seventh Corps of CASA Volunteers



Patti, Christie, and E.J. at their swearing-in ceremony on November 15 in Judge Guido's courtroom in the Cumberland County Courthouse in Carlisle.

Patti McCann is currently a senior at Penn State Mont Alto majoring in Human Development and Family Studies. She recently retired from the federal government, after 26 years at NAVICP. Patti lives near Newville with her husband Kenneth McCann and their 8 cats. Although her adult daughter lives in Ohio, Patti's mother and 3 sisters are close by in the Enola-Lemoyne area.

Christie Smith lives in Camp Hill with her significant other, their daughter, and their new puppy. Not only is she employed fulltime, Christie is also a student at Harrisburg Area Community College.

E.J. McKenna-Hieb of Carlisle is a former special education teacher, director of special education, and most recently, a special education advisor for the PA Department of Education. E.J. also served on the National Advisory Panel on Special Education in Washington D.C. She is married to Dr. Louis Hieb, a family practitioner with the Army. Their 20-year old son, Preston, is a cadet at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

Sundaes on Saturday

Members of the Dickinson College chapter of the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority served ice cream sundaes at the final CASA training session on November 15. The newest trainees enjoyed the treat along with veteran CASA volunteers who had come to share some of their experiences and to encourage the soon-to-be sworn-in volunteer trainees.

The CASA Program has been the official philanthropy of Kappa Alpha Theta since 1989. Since that time the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation has contributed over \$769,000 to support the National CASA Association in its efforts to provide services, information and support to local community CASA programs. Locally, both the Dickinson College chapter and the Harrisburg Area Alumnae chapter have conducted fundraisers, made gifts for CASA children, and sponsored volunteer appreciation events in support of the Cumberland County CASA Program and the PA CASA Association in Harrisburg.

In addition, Laura Person, our intern in the spring of 2003, and Jennifer Hammer, our current intern, have both been members of the Dickinson College chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta. Because of her experience interning with CASA, Laura has decided to focus her life on advocating for children. Jennifer is planning to spend the spring semester in Washington D.C. interning in the field of child advocacy.



Emily Goodfellow and Danielle Gower serve up generous helpings of ice cream for CASA volunteers.

Staff Additions and Changes

The office staff of the Cumberland County CASA Program has undergone some modifications recently. While Anita Brewster continues as Program Coordinator, Linda Rosenberry has assumed the responsibility of Volunteer Coordinator. This part-time position has been newly created as a result of the two-year National CASA expansion grant the program received in July 2003. Both the Program Coordinator and the Volunteer Coordinator will now share the responsibilities of recruiting, training, and coaching the volunteer advocates.

In addition the office welcomes Pamela Wysocki of Carlisle as the new part-time administrative assistant as of December 16. Along with the clerical duties, she will also have the daunting job of keeping both Anita and Linda on task and organized. Pamela comes to the CASA Office with a degree in business administration and extensive work experience.

It was a pleasure getting to meet the pool of applicants for this position who brought varied qualifications, making the selection very difficult.

“The lawyers know the statutes; the social workers the regulations. But the CASA volunteer is assigned to know the child, one child at a time.”

Anna Quindlen, January 2002, The Early Show, CBS



National CASA Adopts New Logo



A new design for the National CASA logo has just been launched. It is the hope that this design will better communicate the mission of CASA, better communicate caring for children, and be unique compared to other organizations' logos. In addition, the National CASA Association has retained the old logo by incorporating it into a new CASA Seal which can be used in conjunction with the new logo.

New members welcome!!! ☺☺☺☺☺

(The following light-hearted article was written by one of our hardworking volunteers following an extremely long and difficult hearing. Written from the perspective of her husband, she captures some of the challenges of volunteering with CASA. However, she also has stated that she wants to volunteer with CASA for the rest of her life!)

A support group for lonely **Spouses of CASAs** (SOC) will be meeting next week. The location is a secret, as is the time (we learned that from "them"). The keynote speaker will be addressing the issue, "How to Read Body Language" (since our CASA spouses are court-ordered not to tell us anything).

A seminar will follow on how to determine whether your CASA loved one has been abducted or just stuck in a hearing that lasted all day instead of an hour.

Author Dawn B. Jelus will be there to sign her latest non-fiction best-seller, How to Ignore Bad Feelings When Your Spouse is Getting Calls From Strangers and Can't Tell You Who They Are.

Slides of what life used to be like before the swearing-in ceremony will be shown, with complimentary tissues available. Those with abandonment issues will be monitored by psychologist Miss Mia Life in play therapy by the dollhouse. Medication will be prescribed for those who glue the doll spouse inside the front door.

Fundraisers to hire maids to keep up with the laundry while spouses are away "making a difference" will be held. Members are asked to put nickels in jars every time they hear the words "I can't tell you." Surplus donations will be used to pay off the national debt.

- Author Unknown

Training Opportunities

CASA Training for New Volunteers will be held from February 19 through April 1, 2004 on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6 to 9 pm. Training will conclude with the formal swearing-in ceremony in conjunction with the annual Light of Hope.

If you or someone you know would be interested in exploring the possibility of becoming an advocate for dependent children in Cumberland County, please contact the CASA office at 240-6159 or email casa@ccpa.net for more information.

CASA Statistics

Since the inception of the Cumberland County CASA Program in September 1999:

- * 36 volunteers have been trained
21 are currently advocating for children
- * 70 children have been represented
42 currently have CASA volunteers

News and Updates from the Cumberland County CASA Program is produced semiannually. Back issues are available upon request. To be added to or removed from the mailing list, please contact the CASA Office at (717) 240-6159 or email casa@ccpa.net.

The mission of the Cumberland County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program is to assist the court in determining what is in the best interest of abused and/or neglected children whose cases are in the court system. Through objective investigation and observation with the focus on the child assigned, trained CASA volunteers will develop and present their recommendations to the court to aid in establishing a safe, permanent and nurturing home in an expeditious manner.

OUR MISSION . . .