

News & Updates from the Cumberland County CASA Program

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CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

VOL. 8 No. 1

Summer 2007

KAPPA ALPHA THETA CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT OF CASA

The Dickinson College chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta has been a strong supporter of CASA since 2000 when the volunteer program was initiated in Cumberland County. Since the beginning of 2007 alone, members of the fraternity participated in numerous events benefiting CASA:



Emerson Drive band members pose with KAT members and CASA staff and volunteers.

- Rock the CASA Concert

Grammy Award nominee and Country Music Association award winning band, Emerson Drive, performed in concert on the campus of Dickinson College in Carlisle on March 23, 2007. They were greeted by an enthusiastic crowd enjoying a great night of music and high energy. All proceeds from the concert benefited the PA CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Association and its Cumberland County Program. The total raised that evening was in excess of \$3000. Dennis Hockensmith, Executive Director of the PA CASA Association, had the opportunity to introduce the CASA concept shortly before introducing the band.

The driving force behind this benefit was Kappa Alpha Theta member and Dickinson College senior, Rachel Sondag. In December, she had approached Jason Feiner, the Associate Director of Student Activities at Dickinson College, with the idea. After learning about the CASA Program he agreed that CASA was a cause worth supporting through a benefit concert. The ticket sales, as well as profits from Emerson Drive "Rock the CASA" t-shirts sold by the Dickinson College Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta, were all donated directly to PA CASA.

- Valentines for Children

In February, women of Kappa Alpha Theta used their creative talents to produce homemade valentines to be distributed to the children represented in Court by CASA volunteers.



- Hair-Cut-a-Thon

EsScents Salon owner/operator Lisa Erickson-McCarren once again supported CASA as one of the "environmental and humanitarian causes," as outlined in her mission statement, by donating a portion of all proceeds earned on March 6 to CASA during her annual Hair-Cut-a-Thon. Extra beauticians were engaged for the day, and Kappa Alpha

Theta members were on hand to schedule appointments and to work the front desk of the salon the day of the Cut-a-Thon. The \$628.84 donation also included a percentage of profits made from a raffle of beauty supplies and spa treatments, and a month's sales of beauty supplies as well as from any additional appointments made by Thetas through the end of their semester.



Meet the Fourteenth Corps of CASA Volunteers

Kevin Beam is a graduate of Carlisle High School and currently lives in Mount Holly Springs. He works for the Child Time Before and After School Program at Crestview Elementary School and is awaiting his teaching certificate from Pennsylvania so that he can become an elementary school teacher in a local school district. Kevin is an avid sports fan and enjoys playing softball. He has 4 Bichon Frise dogs.

Diane Beliveau grew up in East Providence, Rhode Island and has lived in Pennsylvania since 1978. She currently lives in Etters, PA (Newberry Township, York County) and is employed fulltime. She sees herself as a mother first, a cyclist second and then as a buyer. Her two adult sons are college graduates and have "left the nest" living in other parts of Pennsylvania, but thanks to cell phones, they remain in constant contact. Diane's passion is cycling and she has done some bike touring both in Pennsylvania and throughout the East Coast. When road conditions prevent her from cycling she enjoys sewing or doing other crafts. Professionally, Diane has been a Purchasing Agent for many years and is currently employed by xpedx, a division of International Paper, as a Facility Supplies Buyer.

Diane became aware of the name CASA through a number of public service announcements on TV, but did not know anything about the organization until she spoke to a current CASA. Once she came to understand how she could realize her dream of making a positive contribution to the world one person at a time while still working full time, the decision to join CASA was a "no-brainer".

Bruce Darney was raised in the small town of Carmichaels in western Pennsylvania, but now makes New Cumberland his home. Since retiring he has become a part-time consultant. Bruce is married and has 2 adult children and 2 grandchildren (3 counting his daughter's dog). His interests include military history and triathlons.

Beth Gelbaugh has lived in Cumberland County all her life, currently residing in Boiling Springs. She has been extremely busy the last 22 years raising her 3 children. Kristin, 22, is a very recent graduate of OSU. Jamie, 20, currently attends HACC and her twin brother Jordan is a student at Shippensburg University. Beth is a registered nurse presently employed by Amerihealth Mercy Health Plan in Harrisburg and recently has accepted a part-time position at Roxbury Treatment Center, a drug and alcohol treatment facility.

Karen Newell lived in Connecticut throughout her childhood. She moved with her family to Carlisle a number of years ago. Karen is a wife, mother, and grandmother who enjoys spending time with family and friends, walking, reading, and shopping. She has been interested in being a CASA volunteer since the program began in Cumberland County, and finally the time seemed right.

Pat Ster is originally from Perry County and now lives in Camp Hill. She is a 56-year-old retiree, who uses a cane to get around. Pat enjoys singing in her church choir and spending time with her grandchildren. Her hobby is taking and printing her own photographs.



Pat Ster, Bruce Darney, Karen Newell, Diane Beliveau, and Beth Gelbaugh pose with Judge Ebert following the Swearing-in Ceremony on April 4. Kevin Beam, left, who was unable to attend that evening, was sworn-in on May 18.



CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

OUR MISSION. . .

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 develop and present their recommendations to the court to aid in establishing a safe, permanent and nurturing home in an expeditious manner.

Swearing-in Ceremony and Sixth Annual Light of Hope



Five-year veterans Tina (Kless) Graff, Carol Sprecher, Betsy Schorpp, and Ann Raley listen as Dr. George speaks.

works at the Children's Resource Center, part of the Pinnacle Health System in Harrisburg, which does forensic interviewing and medical examinations of children who are suspected victims of abuse. In the past Dr. George also served as a CASA volunteer for the Berks County CASA Program. She challenged everyone with stories of how a CASA can make a difference in the lives of children.

Commissioners Bruce Barclay and Gary Eichelberger were on hand to deliver a proclamation declaring April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in Cumberland County, and Gary Shuey, director of Cumberland County Children and Youth Services explained the Child Welfare League of America flag which was flown later in the month in remembrance of those children who lost their lives to abuse in the past year. The evening ended the "Light of Hope" candle-lighting ceremony during which time the audience was encouraged to consider how they could make a difference for children who are neglected and/or abused. Following the vigil, the women of Kappa Alpha Theta hosted a reception for everyone in honor of the CASA volunteers.

The fourteenth class of trained CASA volunteers were sworn-in at the Old Courthouse on the square in Carlisle on April 4. Also recognized were CASA volunteers who completed training during the Fall of 2006, as well as CASA volunteers who had completed 5 years with the Program. The 5-year veterans recognized were Cheri Basehore, Carrie Collins, Tina Kless Graff, Judy Khan, Kathy Kohlhaas, Susan Kreidler, Ann Raley, Betsy Schorpp and Carol Sprecher. Volunteers being recognized or sworn-in were presented with a potted flower by Marianna Wood and Gretchen Petri of the Harrisburg Alumnae Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta.

The evening was enriched by dulcimer and harp music by Peter Winter and Mary-Teresa Summer Lee, 2 members of the group Seasons, a sibling harp and hammered dulcimer trio. CASA volunteer Linda Wisner led a music and movement presentation by young children which symbolized the work of CASA volunteers helping children feel safe and secure. Dr. Paula George, MD, a pediatrician specially trained to work with children who are victims of abuse, was the featured speaker. She currently



Children participating in the play-song pretend to be shy little puppies.



CASA volunteers Tina (Kless) Graff and Sandy Evans, along with CASA staff Pam Wysocki and Linda Rosenberry, attended the National CASA Conference in Orlando, Florida June 9-12.

Mandated Reporters Training

As part of the in-service training which all active CASA volunteers are expected to complete, Lori Lower of Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance presented a three-hour training on Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse on May 10, 2007. This training addressed the elements and indicators of child abuse, as well as requirements for mandated reporters. A mandated reporter is defined as a person who, in the course of his or her employment, occupation, or practice of a profession comes into contact with children. Ms. Lower also explained the changes to the Child Protective Services Law governing mandatory reporting which were enacted in November 2006 (Act 179 of 2006, effective May 28, 2007). Mandated reporters will now be obligated to report suspected child abuse to ChildLine without regard for the relationship between the alleged perpetrator or abuser and the child. Previously, reports of suspected child abuse were only mandated if the suspected perpetrator was a parent, a paramour of a parent, any individual age 14 or older residing in the same home as a child, or a person responsible for the welfare of a child.

Program Statistics as of June 2007:

- 74 CASA volunteers have been trained (38 are active or ready for a case; 17 are CASA Supporters)
- 291 CASA reports have been written, providing additional information to help the Court make decisions
- 151 dependent children have been or are being represented.

Of these children who have found permanence since the CASA Program was begun in 2000, 45 returned home, 34 were adopted, and 7 went to live with a permanent legal custodian or a fit and willing relative. Three children aged out of the system and 2 had their cases transferred to other jurisdictions. CASA volunteers were unable, for a variety of reasons, to continue advocating for 17 assigned children through the end of their dependency.

CASA Supporters Group Formed

Many CASA volunteers come to a point in their life where they are no longer able to actively advocate for children. They are, however, still very interested in the CASA Program and want to continue assisting the Program in some less intensive way. In an attempt to better reflect the actual involvement of volunteers in the CASA Program there is now a new designation of volunteers—CASA Supporters. In addition, this newly designated group also includes those who find that they cannot currently commit to being an advocate for a child, but who want to make a difference by supporting the work of the CASA Program through other ways such as helping with publicity, mailings, presentations or setting up at events.

CASA Training Fall 2007

To explore becoming an advocate for children with the Cumberland County CASA Program, please contact the CASA Office at 240-6159, casa@ccpa.net or www.ccpa.net/casa.

Volunteer advocates must—

- be 21 years of age or older,
- be able to successfully pass criminal checks,
- complete 36-40 hours of training, and
- be willing to make at least a 2-year commitment.

The next pre-service training will be held in Carlisle on 5 consecutive Saturdays, 9 am to 3:30 pm, from October 6 through November 3, with the swearing in being held on November 17.

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



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Meet and greet CASA volunteers and staff in an informal setting at Casa Mani Caffé. Refreshments will be available.

Friday, September 14
From 4:30 to 7:30 pm

56 West High Street
Carlisle, PA 17013

Raising public awareness of the CASA Program and of how ordinary citizens can become CASA Volunteers.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Cumberland County CASA Program
One Courthouse Square
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