

News & Updates from the Cumberland County CASA Program

Cumberland County CASA Program
1 Courthouse Square, Suite 301
Carlisle, PA 17013

Phone: 717.240.6159 or 888.697.0371 ext. 6159

Fax: 717.240.6460

Email: casa@ccpa.net

Website: www.ccpa.net/casa

Anita Brewster, Program Director
Pamela Wysocki, Office Coordinator
Linda Rosenberry, Outreach Coordinator



Court Appointed Special Advocate
FOR CHILDREN

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CASA Volunteer Spotlight: Dan Doyle

Dan Doyle is a native Midwesterner who went to college in the Pacific Northwest and Appalachia and spent his early working career in the Great Plains before moving to Cumberland County nearly 30 years ago. Following his retirement from the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General in 2007, Dan spent a year catching up on deferred maintenance and doing other unremarkable stuff. He became a CASA volunteer in the Spring of 2008 and has advocated for six older boys, three of whom have returned to their families, one who left the system after he turned 18, and two for whom he is still their CASA. Dan regularly presents to CASA volunteer trainees and has served as a mentor to a newly appointed CASA volunteer. Dan is also a member of the Cumberland County Children and Youth Independent Living Work Group. When he is not on CASA business, Dan can be found either reading, trying to grow fruits and vegetables, or on one of his many trips around the world with his wife, Nora.



Dan Doyle, CASA Volunteer

CASA Makes a Difference for a Child

Hi my name is Emily. CASA has helped me in a variety of ways during my process of finding a happy home. My CASA Joy Gross would come to my home for visits asking me questions and providing answers for mine. As an eight-year-old little girl, I didn't know as much as I do now about CASA but I still knew it helped me a lot. If I didn't have a CASA then my process through foster care might not have been as successful as it was. Overall a CASA made the whole journey easier and a lot less confusing for me and my family. Now, I am fourteen years old and going into high school with good grades and a bright future. I have a wonderful family and a great life thanks to CASA. I couldn't have wished for anything better.

NOTE: Emily has served as a CASA spokesperson in many venues, including the PA CASA Annual Conference, the PA CASA Golf Tournament, and on a panel discussion following York County CASA's public film screening of *ReMoved*.



Emily and her
CASA Volunteer, Joy Gross

Judges Assume New Roles

With the retirement of the Honorable Kevin Hess, the Honorable Edward E. Guido became the President Judge in Cumberland County. While he continues to hear dependency cases, the Honorable Christylee L. Peck has assumed the role of primary dependency judge. Judge Peck also currently serves on the board of the PA CASA Association. We are very thankful that children in Cumberland County continue to have strong judges looking out for their best interests.



Dependency Court Judges Guido & Peck
Jason Malmont/The Sentinel. Reprinted with permission.

More Than a Volunteer

Susan Kalmar has been an active CASA volunteer since 2011, representing 10 children. In addition to advocating on behalf of their best interests in Court, Susan also assisted with CASA training for 2 years and served as a mentor for another volunteer. Susan has moved out of state, but her impact on the CASA Program in Cumberland County will continue to be felt. We know that in the next phase of her life she will find some other venue for making the world a better place. Thanks, Susan, for all you have done to ensure the well-being of children in Cumberland County!



Susan Kalmar,
CASA Volunteer
and Trainer

A Family Affair

Katitia Marietta, a CASA volunteer since Spring 2015, got interested in CASA work because her father had been a CASA volunteer in Virginia for approximately 4 years. Now she has learned that her mother, who lives in New York State, has recently been sworn-in as a CASA volunteer as well. Katitia's own CASA work involves the well-being of one child in Cumberland County.



Katitia Marietta,
CASA Volunteer

Thirty-second Class of CASA Volunteers

Kristi Davis lived in several places growing up because her father was in the military. She has lived in Shippensburg for the past 11 years. She and her husband, Ricky, have 3 children – Madison (11), Brandon (8), and Justin (5). They also have 3 dogs, Lola, Autumn, and Chloe. As a family, some of the things they enjoy are playing outside, having game and movie nights, kayaking, and traveling. When Kristi has some time to herself, she likes to bake or curl up on the couch with a good book. Kristi has 2 part-time jobs—as the Children’s Ministry Director at Mongul Church since 2009, and as a sales associate at the Volvo Construction Equipment Brand Shop in Shippensburg since 2014. Kristi has always loved working with children and believes they need to be protected and cared for. She is excited about the opportunity CASA provides for volunteers and the children.



CASA volunteers Ginny Peterman, Kristi Davis, Jim Wright, Suzanne Flinn, & Ginny Stankiewicz.

Suzanne Flinn, Executive Director of PA CASA, since February 2015, hails from Pennsylvania. She is glad to be once more at “home”. Her enthusiasm and dedication to improving the welfare and well-being of children in foster care fuels her desire to work for their “best interest”. She looks forward to leading the growth of CASA programs in PA. Prior to accepting the position with PA CASA, Suzanne was a CASA volunteer in Florida (where they are called Guardians ad litem) and a recruiter for the Program during that time. She also has been a non-relative caregiver and a licensed foster parent. Her experience while working in these capacities gave her an in-depth knowledge of the system. She is a graduate of Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA and has over 16 years of experience leading and developing nonprofit organizations. She was privileged to be appointed the Executive Director of the Ronald McDonald House of Southwest Florida and helped bring the House to fruition. She also has worked in a financial leadership role with General Electric. Prior to her time with CASA Florida, she spent six years in Georgia with The Department of Public Health, working to establish free clinics for the underserved population. She also has been a trainer of volunteers and software programs for multiple agencies. Suzanne has a passion for re-addressing societal issues, especially when it directly impacts children, specifically our most vulnerable children.

Virginia (Ginny) Iwerks Peterman grew up primarily in New Jersey with a hiatus of two years on a South Pacific island during her early adolescence. Ginny recently retired and moved to Boiling Springs where she and her husband have built a house. Ginny’s working career was varied, but primarily focused around project management, first in pulmonary research, then in landscape architecture and finally in information technology. She is interested in a wide variety of things – travel, crafts, animals, computer systems, environmental causes, cooking, gardening, and so on. Ginny and her husband have two children, a boy and a girl, and two grandchildren. Their children were both adopted from the foster care system. They were 10 and 14 at the time they came home to them around the turn of the century. The experiences that she had finding and raising their children are what led her to volunteer for CASA. Ginny would like to help other kids who are in the kinds of situations their own children survived.

Virginia (Ginny) Stankiewicz was born in 1955 in NY, but grew up in Camp Hill, PA and currently lives in Boiling Springs, PA. She retired from IBM after 37 years in March of 2015 and then accepted a fulltime position with Toshiba where she currently works. Ginny married her husband Tom in 1984. He also worked for IBM and is now retired. They have two children in their 20s, both college graduates, and a dog, Polo. She enjoys activities including kayaking, reading, guitar playing and singing. Ginny has a great extended family and enjoys spending time with them whenever she can. She realizes that she has been very fortunate to have had great parents and family, and would not be where she is without their love and support. As a CASA volunteer, Ginny would like to pass that same support to others who may benefit from it.

James (Jim) Wright is a retired applied mathematician. Jim was born and raised in West Virginia, where he graduated from Elkins High School. He has a BS in mathematics from Marshall University and a MS in systems engineering from West Virginia University. He served 20 years in the US Army, retiring as a Major. After the Army, Jim worked for the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory for 15 years, mainly as a first line supervisor performing operations research and systems engineering activities for a variety of sensitive government projects and organizations. He is now retired and living in Fayetteville, PA with his wife Bernadine. They have 2 sons and 4 grandsons. Jim is an active member of the First United Methodist Church of Chambersburg. He is an avid DIYer and enjoys remodeling and doing things with his hands. He also enjoys camping, fishing, and tinkering with his model electric trains.

Welcome, Dr. Krebs

Dr. Stephen Krebs, M.D. has agreed to serve on the Cumberland County CASA Advisory Council. Dr. Krebs brings a wealth of medical expertise to this group of people who stand ready and willing to lend their support to the CASA Program. Dr. Krebs joins Advisory Council members Lindsay Baird, Esq., Jennifer Bray, Anita Brewster, Joyce Bylander, Melissa Calvanelli, Carl Connellan, Lisa Erickson-McCarren, Marlene Fuller, Joseph Gaskin, Lisa M. Grayson, Esq., Lucy Johnston-Walsh, Esq., Robert Kline, Esq., Kathy Kohlhaas, Kate Cramer Lawrence, Esq., Laura Neal, Esq., Wanda Noll, Darlene Orr, Laura Patterson, Gretchen Petri, Tammy Shearer, Karen Shirey, Erin Smeigh, Cindy Sniscak, Kim Sweger, Monica Swidler, Lisa Verdekal, Jacqueline Verney, Esq., and Cindy Villanello, Esq.

CASA Volunteer Swearing-in Ceremony

On March 31, the most recent class of 5 new volunteers was sworn-in by the Honorable Christylee Peck. In addition, those volunteers who completed significant years of service with the Program were recognized. Sandy Evans has completed 15 years as an active CASA volunteer, representing 21 children. Pat Carey has represented 7 children in her 10 years of volunteering with the program. Michael Pimental also completed 10 years with the program and has been advocating for 1 of his 4 children for that entire time. Acknowledged for completing 5 years as active volunteers were Alison Browdie (8 children), John Gilbert (4 children), and Michelle Kuhlmann (2 children). Currently CASA Supporters, Wendy Tibbetts (15 year volunteer for 5 children) and Alison Ross (5 year volunteer for 3 children) were also recognized. The CASA Program was honored to recognize Senator Pat Vance for her years of service in supporting the safety and well-being of children. She will be retiring from the State Senate at the end of 2016. The Dickinson College Theta women as well as the Theta alums of the Harrisburg area supported the evening by providing flowers for the volunteers and a reception for everyone in attendance.



State Senator Pat Vance

Congratulations,

Judge Lori Serratelli

Lori Serratelli, Esq., served as a CASA volunteer in Cumberland County for 2 different cases from 2010 to 2012. In June of this year, she was nominated to the Dauphin County Bench by Governor Tom Wolf. Her nomination was confirmed by the Senate and she was sworn-in on July 15. She will be presiding over Family Court cases. Lori has been a tremendous presence on the PA CASA Board for many years, most recently chairing the Annual Golf Tournament and the Governance Committee. Congratulations, Lori!



Judge Serratelli with Suzanne Flinn, PA CASA Executive Director

New CASA Offices

The CASA Office relocated to a new office suite in April. You are welcome to visit our spacious new digs, which even allows space for a desk for our interns. We are now on the right side of the short hallway opposite the third floor elevators in the Courthouse.. We also want to give a big shout out to the Facilities Management crew under the leadership of Brent Durham, who renovated our new space and made the move seamless for us.

When you visit be on the lookout for our new 6-foot banner (seen with Senator Vance, above) as well as other promotional materials donated by Tammy Shearer, CASA Advisory Council member and Recorder of Deeds in Cumberland County.

Cupcake Wars



The Kappa Alpha Theta women of Dickinson College continue to support the CASA Program. In April, they held a very successful Cupcake Wars, with fraternities competing in their baking skills. There was a great turnout on a pretty spring day in Carlisle as the Thetas promoted CASA at this fun event.



Opportunity for Older Volunteers

CASA volunteers in Cumberland County, 55 years of age and older, have the opportunity to enroll in RSVP (Retired and Senior Volunteer Program). As CASA volunteers recognized by RSVP, they are eligible for some expense reimbursements and other benefits. This partnership with RSVP was made possible through an annual contract approved by the County Commissioners which began in January of 2016. Currently there are 17 volunteers who qualify to be registered with RSVP. Note to volunteers: if you have not yet registered for these benefits, please contact the CASA Office.

CASA Program Statistics: Mar 2001—June 2016:

- ◆ 205 CASA volunteers have been trained (32 currently representing children; over 100 continuing in a supportive role)
- ◆ 440 dependent children have been represented, 30 of whom also received Court appointed educational advocacy
- ◆ 1,423 CASA Reports have been written since 2001, providing additional information to help the Court make decisions

Out of the 440 children represented by CASA volunteers, those whose cases have closed resulted in 141 returning home, 167 being adopted, and 40 living with a permanent legal custodian or a fit and willing relative. 25 children aged out of the system, 1 child died of natural causes and 5 had their cases transferred to other jurisdictions.



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One Courthouse Square, Suite 301
Carlisle, PA 17013



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◆ ◆ ◆ **Introducing Diego** ◆ ◆ ◆

Cumberland County CASA is privileged to play a part in the support of the County's first Courthouse Facility dog, Diego, a sweet 2-year-old male Black Lab trained by the Susquehanna Service Dogs! These dogs assist abused, neglected and dependent children, their families and witnesses at office interviews or while at legal or court proceedings. CASA Office Coordinator, Pam Wysocki, was trained with Diego and is one of two secondary handlers. Lindsay Baird, CASA Advisory Council member and solicitor for CYS, is his primary handler. It was a 2-year-long process to bring Diego into our court system but he has already been a grand success!!!



CASA Volunteer Training

**Upcoming training dates:
Saturdays, 9am to 3:30pm
September 17-October 29, 2016**

To explore becoming an advocate for child victims of abuse and/or neglect in Cumberland County, contact the CASA Office, 240-6159 or casa@ccpa.net. For more information see 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.

Training is held in Carlisle—in the spring, 2 evenings each week from 6 to 9 pm; and in the fall, on Saturdays from 9 am to 3:30 pm.

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.

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.