

# News & Updates from the Cumberland County CASA Program

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## Sixteenth Annual Light of Hope

The Annual Swearing-in and Light of Hope Ceremony on April 11, 2017 celebrated 16 years of fruitful partnership between the Cumberland County CASA Program and members of Kappa Alpha Theta. In attendance were Dickinson Thetas past and present. "I fell in love with the organization when I realized just how many children go through the system and how they don't always have someone who is always there for them," said Elizabeth Smith, Kappa Alpha Theta of Dickinson's CEO, who has been interning with CASA for a year. "I've been able to see just how important CASAs are to both the children and the judges. Their work truly is beneficial in the courtroom, and rulings have been swayed because of the CASA's opinion."



Gretchen Petri with her daughter, Liz Delaney

Theta alumna Gretchen Petri was given special recognition for her 17 years of collaboration with the CASA Program. From the very first swearing-in ceremony through to the present, Gretchen has helped connect the dots between the CASA Program, the Dickinson College Thetas, and the Theta alumnae in the Harrisburg region.

Also on hand was Molly Talley, an advisor to the local Theta chapter, and Jenn DeBalko, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania CASA Program, who has been working with CASA since her sophomore year at Dickinson. "I thought interning for Cumberland County CASA would be a great way to build a stronger connection between Theta and the local community, and I saw the power of a volunteer to positively impact the life of an abused and neglected child," DeBalko says, noting that the state organization oversees 19 local CASA



Chuck Bussard

programs serving 24 counties in the state. "I am inspired to help these programs ... so that all children in Pennsylvania can experience the comfort of having a CASA volunteer advocating for their best interest through the intimidating journey through the courts and child welfare system."

Also recognized during the event was outgoing PA CASA Treasurer Chuck Bussard who served to keep the state organization financially stable for more than 15 years. Chuck was instrumental in the successful development of all the new programs in the state since 2001, and he contributed to every successful grant application. He touched the lives of thousands of children with his time, expertise, and financial support.

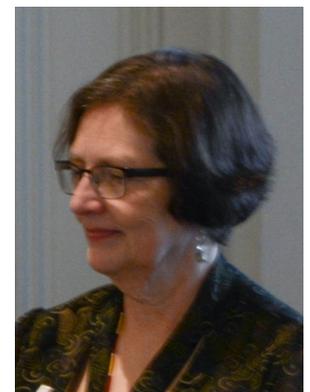
## The Times They Are A-changing!

On July 28, the CASA Program bid farewell to Linda Rosenberry who has decided to join her husband in retirement. Linda has been part of the CASA Program since March 2001 when she was hired as the administrative assistant. Her role changed in 2003 to that of Volunteer Coordinator, with the job title later changing to Outreach Coordinator to better reflect the scope of the position. Linda says it is bittersweet to leave the CASA Program which has been an integral part of her life for over 16 years, but she looks forward to supporting the Program in other capacities.



Virginia Koser

Stepping into the position of Outreach Coordinator is Virginia Koser, who will begin fulltime on August 21, 2017. Virginia comes to the program with a rich background in social work, as she was a caseworker with Cumberland County Children and Youth Services from 2005-2015. She then became a case-work supervisor in 2015. Virginia is married, and she and her husband have 1 child together, who is 9 years old. She resides in the Carlisle area and has been rooted to Cumberland County since her college days at Shippensburg University. Virginia has a strong passion for advocating for the best interests of children, and she is excited to be able to continue on in this important work through her new role in the CASA office. She looks forward to getting to know all the CASA volunteers and everyone who supports this important program.



Linda Rosenberry

## Thirty-fourth Class of CASA Volunteers

**Lily Bowers** was born in Africa but grew up in Mechanicsburg, PA after being adopted when she was seven years old. After having three biological children, her parents adopted six more. She and her twin are from Africa, two brothers are from Korea, one brother is from Philadelphia, and a sister is from Pittsburgh. After graduating from Cumberland Valley High School in 2012, Lily got her own place and now lives in Carlisle. She has worked fulltime in elder home care for about four years. She recently received her certification to be a massage therapist and will be studying to be a CNA. Lily describes herself as a realistic, logical person who has a good sense of humor. She is compassionate, outgoing, and caring. She is very driven and motivated and can be very stubborn. She is easy to talk to and a good listener. Lily enjoys hiking, going to the gym, and working out and would like to dabble in photography and boxing. She enjoys doing anything outdoors. She loves dogs and likes other animals, but is not a huge cat fan. She would like to volunteer in an animal shelter. She also enjoys playing sports for fun and used to play sports when she was younger. Lily likes to be active as much as she can. She is starting to enjoy reading and likes to hang out with her friends.



President Judge Edward E Guido with new volunteers Lily Bowers, Alison Trautmann, Jola Rothman Amanda Martinez, Andrea Hoffman, Sheryl Grinberg, Natalie Crowley, Minka Saracina, and Laura Cover

**Laura Cover** is originally from Chambersburg, where she grew up with 2 older brothers. After graduating high school, she went on to study nursing at HACC, Gettysburg. She has 1 son from a previous marriage and is currently in a long-term relationship that includes a total of 5 children and 2 mastiff service dogs. Laura's hobbies are painting, crafting, building furniture and refurbishing things, and sports – including horse riding, soccer and football. Her main interest is giving back to others. As a teen, Laura traveled to Oklahoma City with a Salvation Army Disaster Relief team to help those affected by tornadoes. She is also involved with Women In Need, where she mans the Crisis Hotline. She is a Big Sister with the Capital Area Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and has helped start a support group for foster/adoptive parents at her church.

**Natalie Crowley** was born in Utah and is the oldest of four siblings. Because her mother was French, she spoke little English until she went to public school. Growing up she lived in Washington State and Tennessee. She returned to Utah to attend Brigham Young University, but due to an abusive relationship with another student, she left college and returned to living with her family, who were at that point in Colombia, South America. She also has been to France numerous times to visit her mother's relatives. Natalie has 5 adult children who live in various states. Currently she works as a Correctional Officer at Cumberland County Prison.

**Sheryl Grinberg** was born in Silver Spring, MD and raised in Hyattsville near the University of Maryland in College Park. She is the youngest of five siblings: two brothers and three sisters. She thus has a large extended family with many nieces and nephews, some nearly as old as she is with children of their own. Building and maintaining family and friendships is important to her.

Sheryl attended parochial school through high school and then earned dual associate's degrees in Hotel and Restaurant Management, and Business from Prince George's Community College. She spent over twenty years in department store retail management and enjoyed working with both customers and employees. She met her husband of 22 years, David, while he was serving in the United States Marine Corps, and moved with him to Jacksonville, NC. While in North Carolina, and still working full-time, Sheryl earned her bachelor's degree from Campbell University. Sheryl and David returned to Maryland in 2000, where their son, Aaron, was born in 2002. They also served as foster parents over the course of several years. They moved to Harrisburg in 2012. Sheryl now spends her time helping out with her husband's business, doing volunteer work with her son's Boy Scout troop, and helping to plan and run an annual Marine Corps Ball for veterans. She enjoys baking, gardening, shopping, party planning, and traveling. About her volunteer work, she says, "I have the time to volunteer and feel that working with children is the best way to give back to the community."

**Andrea Hoffman** has lived most her life in Central Pennsylvania with her parents and 5 siblings. She sees herself as very independent, a critical thinker, and a person who enjoys challenges. She has traveled extensively, having taught English in China for over a year, worked in refugee camps in Greece, and traveled to several other countries. Andrea works at a Thai restaurant and spends her time investing in other people. She enjoys creating, building, painting, cooking, playing the piano, writing and reading. She currently lives in the Dillsburg countryside where the sun rises over a cornfield, sets over the mountains, and a train passes by 2 dozen times a day.

**Amanda Martinez** likes to be called Mandy. She resides in Aspers, in Adams County, with Jose, her husband of almost six years. They have a four-year-old daughter, Liliana, and a two-year-old son, Silvano. She managed to complete CASA training before the due date of their 3rd child! They also have a three-year-old male English Bull Terrier named Chico. Mandy works full-time as a Legal Secretary II, at a Magisterial District Judge's Office in Cumberland County. She has earned an Associate of Arts in Business Administration from Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) in 2011 and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in 2014 from Eastern University, but she is back at HACC to take Psychology, in order to obtain a career in Human Services. After successful completion of this semester, she will have her Associate in Arts of Social Sciences. In her spare time she enjoys spending time with her family as well as attending her daughter's soccer practices/games. She looks forward to the opportunity to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer, as she wants to help ensure that the best interests of children are met.

**Jola Rothman** was born and raised in Poland. Her parents, brother, and his family are still in Cracow, Poland. After meeting and marrying her husband, Jola moved to the United States, first to Washington, DC and then to the Harrisburg area where she currently lives. Her husband grew up in Camp Hill so they are now closer to his family. Jola is a proud mom to three wonderful children Sofia (14), Teddy (12), and Cecilia (6). She enjoys every aspect of being a parent. She has been involved in her children's preschools and school events and is a regular volunteer in her daughter's classroom. She enjoys being part of her community through different events that she has helped to organize. She likes to challenge herself and learn new things. Overcoming difficult times while growing up under a communist regime, she believes anything is possible if you try hard enough. Jola enjoys outdoor activities like biking, running, hiking, skiing, and playing tennis. She also loves to cook and bake for her family and she spends her Sunday afternoons at her in-laws' house with her extended family. She believes that the time spent with family is the best gift that can be offered to children and ourselves. She is very happy to be given a chance to be a part of CASA and she hopes that she will be a great asset to the program.

**Minka Saracina** grew up in Delaware County, PA on a very small farm with her mom, dad, grandfather, a sister and two brothers. She and her husband of 51 years moved to Cumberland County in the 1970s. For almost 18 years they both have loved living in their home in the country on about 2 acres. They have four grown daughters, 11 grandchildren, and one great granddaughter. Minka enjoys working outdoors, going to the gym, reading, and being an active member of her church. She worked in retail for 25 years before retiring. Minka enjoys traveling with her husband, visiting their daughters and their families, and being involved with her grandchildren. In addition, she is an active member of the Carlisle Garden Club, where she serves as an in-house speaker on various topics a few times a year. She is also a member of the Cumberland County Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Minka is excited to volunteer for CASA. Being involved with children has been a big part of her life and she is looking forward to finding out how she can play a part in finding solutions for children who need a voice.

**Alison Trautmann** is the Children's Services Manager at the Cleve J. Fredricksen Library in Camp Hill, PA. She comes from a close knit family of a set of twins (boy and girl) and two loving parents. She loves books and reading, but in her spare time she also volunteers on a Sexual Assault hotline and sews and crafts like crazy. Alison is passionate about good books and movies and always has a recommendation that you might like.



**Cupcake Wars for CASA**

For the second year in a row, the fraternities at Dickinson College baked mini-cupcakes for a tasting contest with the proceeds going to support the CASA Program. Kappa Alpha Theta women, pictured above, organized the event and after all votes were in and tallied the Delta Sigma Phi Fraternity walked away with first prize for the best cupcakes.

**CASA Program Statistics:  
March 2001—June 2017**

- ◆ 220 CASA volunteers have been sworn-in (30 currently representing children; over 100 continuing in a supportive role)
- ◆ 460 dependent children have been represented, 30 of whom also received Court Appointed Educational Advocacy
- ◆ 1,546 CASA Reports have been written since 2001, providing additional information to help the Court make decisions

Out of the 460 children represented by CASA volunteers, those whose cases have closed resulted in 148 returning home, 177 being adopted, and 44 living with a permanent legal custodian or a fit and willing relative. 26 children aged out of the system, 1 child died of natural causes and 5 had their cases transferred to other jurisdictions.



# CASA CAFE

Presented by Kappa Alpha Theta  
Benefiting Court Appointed Special Advocates

**SAVE THE DATE!!!!**

**10/5/2017**

**Allison Community Room**  
**Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA**



Cumberland County CASA Program  
One Courthouse Square, Suite 301  
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# Be the Voice

for an abused &/or neglected child

Contact the CASA Office to explore becoming an advocate for child victims of abuse and/or neglect at 240-6159 or casa @ccpa.net

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 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.