

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
Virginia Koser, Outreach Coordinator
Pamela Wysocki, Office Coordinator



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Spotlight on CASA Volunteer Joy Gross



CASA Volunteer Joy Gross

Joy Gross is originally from McClure, PA, and she now resides in Mechanicsburg. Joy worked for PennDot for over 36 years, where she managed 72 driver's license centers and 98 photo license centers. Six months after she retired in 2004, Joy's sister was diagnosed with ALS, and Joy spent much of her time helping to care for her sister.

Joy had read an article about CASA while she was still working. Joy knew she didn't have the ability with her schedule to volunteer then, but she cut the article out and saved it. Following her sister's death, Joy decided that then was the time to pursue becoming a CASA volunteer, and after completing CASA training, she was sworn in in the fall of 2009. Since then, Joy has advocated for 24 children in 9 cases! As a retiree with a little more flexible time on her hands, she has graciously agreed to be one of our only go-to CASA volunteers for larger sibling groups and has done so on multiple occasions. She is currently advocating for a sibling group of five children.

In Joy's first case, she says that she learned that she could play a role in having a positive outcome for a child. That particular child had a happy outcome when she was adopted, and she has chosen to remain in contact with Joy since then. Over the years, Joy has been able to witness this young lady continue to move past some difficult early years towards a positive future for herself. She has shared her experiences with others about what it was like to have a CASA Volunteer in her life while her case was involved in the court system. She and several of Joy's other CASA children have shown Joy what kind of meaningful impact a CASA Volunteer can have in a child's life.

Joy gives this advice to CASA volunteers or to those considering becoming a CASA Volunteer: "Relationships and communication between all parties is key to being a good advocate, and it might rest on your shoulders to keep those relationships and lines of communication open. But always remember that you are there for the children, no matter what!"

In addition to her commitment to CASA, Joy volunteers at her church, St. Peter Lutheran Church in Mechanicsburg, where you might also hear her preach an occasional sermon. She also became a licensed auctioneer in 2017, and since then has used that skill to benefit charity auctions, including the Cerebral Palsy sports auction and the PA CASA golf tournament. Joy has been involved in the PA CASA golf tournament in other ways too, including helping to plan the annual event. Joy enjoys reading and spending time with her mother who lives with Joy. Joy also enjoys visiting with her two daughters and three grandchildren as often as she can. Joy's one daughter lives in California and the other resides in Connecticut.

The Rick & Karen Rovegno Foundation Pays It Forward

Rick Rovegno is a former 3-term Cumberland County Commissioner, and he has served the Cumberland County community in a variety of ways over the years as well. On March 9, 2018, Mr. Rovegno was presented with the Molly Pitcher Award by the Exchange Club of Carlisle, which is an award given annually to a local resident in recognition for their exemplary volunteer contributions to the community.

For his night of honor, Mr. Rovegno had requested ahead of time that participants of CASA attend the event. During the program, Mr. Rovegno and his wife, Karen Rovegno, graciously made a \$5,000 donation to the CASA Program through the Rick and Karen Rovegno Foundation! This was done in memory of Mr. Rovegno's grandparents, Eugene and Margaret Rovegno, who inspired him to care about helping children feel valued and loved.



Pictured left to right: Pam Wysocki (CASA Staff), Judge Christylee Peck (Cumberland County Judge), Michael Pimental (CASA Volunteer), Dan Doyle (CASA Volunteer), Anita Brewster (CASA Program Director), Patricia Carey (CASA Volunteer), and Rick Rovegno

The CASA program is extremely grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Rovegno's generosity and will use those funds to support our volunteers in their advocacy work for children and to further enhance the CASA program.

Spring 2018 Light of Hope and Swearing-In Ceremony



PA CASA Association Executive Director Jennifer DeBalko and PA CASA Board member Jen Bray

The 17th Annual Light of Hope and Swearing-in Ceremony for new CASA Volunteers was held on April 11, 2018 at the Old Courthouse in Cumberland County. CASA Volunteer Peggy Shedden was recognized for 15 years of service, and CASA Volunteers Dan Doyle and Arnie Jenkins were recognized for 10 years of service. Judge Edward Guido, Judge Christylee Peck, and Hearing Officer Kate Lawrence gave advice and reviewed expectations with the 9 volunteers who made up the 35th class of new CASA Volunteers. Children & Youth Administrator Nikki McElwee helped the audience members understand the difference between a CYS caseworker and a CASA volunteer and stressed the importance of collaboration between the two for the benefit of the children. PA CASA Board members Jen Bray, Tammy Shearer, and Julie Morales also attended and supported the event.



KAT Alumnae/CASA Advisory Council Member Lisa Verdekai & KAT Alumnae Peggy Potts

The evening concluded with the PA CASA Association Executive Director, Jennifer DeBalko, leading the candle lighting portion of the ceremony. As the light of the candle was passed on, it symbolized hope and the positive difference we can all make in the lives of those around us. Our many thanks to the women of Kappa Alpha Theta (KAT) from Dickinson College who hosted a lovely reception afterwards, and to the Central PA Alumnae Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta for the beautiful potted pansies provided to our CASA volunteers. We also appreciate the continued support from the judges and our CASA supporters as well.



CASA Program Director Anita Brewster, Hearing Officer Lawrence, Judge Thomas Placey, PA CASA Board member Tammy Shearer, CASA Advisory Council member Carl Connellan, and PA CASA Board Member Julie Morales

Thirty-Fifth Class of CASA Volunteers– Spring 2018

Natalie Crowley grew up mainly in the state of Washington, but she graduated from high school while living in Tennessee. She is the oldest of four siblings. She currently resides in Dillsburg, PA and she has 5 adult children who live in various states. Natalie completed her Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and Administration. She has been working for Cumberland County Prison for the past 11 years. Her prior job experiences have been in management, retail, early education, restaurant/catering, and volunteering as a teacher and firefighter. She loves learning, creating with arts and crafts, baking, animals and people. She has often helped to bring people together through her cooking and by hosting events. She has also been an advocate before in other areas of her life and has helped others to become more independent.

Joan Duffield grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs and now lives in Enola. She began her career working with children at the Pathway School in Jeffersonville, PA as a residential counselor. There she met her husband, Rob, and decided to pursue graduate work in special education. She earned her teaching certificate at Penn State University. Joan taught for more than 23 years, most of which was spent teaching at the elementary level for the Cumberland Valley School District. She has a daughter, Katie, who is 20 years old. Joan's favorite places are the library and the yoga studio. Working as a CASA Volunteer has been a long-held goal, and Joan is very excited to have the privilege of working to ensure that children have a safe and permanent home. One of her favorite quotes is by Maya Angelou, and it says: "The thing to do, it seems to me, is to prepare yourself so you can be a rainbow in somebody else's cloud."

Robin Gipe grew up on the outskirts of Newville. After her parents divorced when she was 2 years old, her childhood was not easy. Because of that, she grew up with a lot of insecurity and did not do well in school. After she had her first daughter at the age of 20, she was determined to change things in her life. Since then, she got married, started a career with the Navy, raised three daughters, was an assistant Girl Scout leader for 12 years, attended church, finished her Bachelor's degree, received several promotions with her job, and got remarried. She and her husband have five daughters and three granddaughters together. Robin worked for 20 years in the Accounting field and now has worked for the last 10 years in managing IT systems for the Navy as a Program Manager and IT Project Manager. She also has worked for an Accountant for the last 19 years during tax season. Her interests are going to wineries, antiquing, quilting, traveling and spending time with her children. She hopes to help instill strength, security and wisdom through her CASA Volunteer role and knows that she will find that very worthwhile.

Daphne McCoy is from Queens, New York but she has been residing in Harrisburg since 1994. She and her husband have been married for 30 years. Daphne has 2 sons of whom she is very proud. Daphne has worked for the Department of Environmental Protection, at ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens), and also for the Department of Human Services at Childline and at the County Assistance Office in Harrisburg. She now volunteers as a counselor at PAL (the Police Athletic League, which is a program for adjudicated youth) and works part-time at the YWCA in Harrisburg as a visitation monitor. She is also the President of the Shades of Greatness Foundation Inc., whose program focuses on bringing immediate assistance to those directly impacted by ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease and also to inner city youth and their families in Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Buffalo, NY. The Foundation recently started a scholarship to help youth be able to go to college, and Daphne checks in monthly with the students who receive the scholarships until they graduate in order to offer ongoing support to them. Daphne is looking forward to expanding her experiences as she becomes a CASA Volunteer advocate for children.

Thirty-Fifth Class of CASA Volunteers– Spring 2018 continued:

Ginny Reid was raised in Cumberland County and still resides here. She is a government worker as well as a self-employed piano tuner and Instrument Repair Technician. Having owned a music store at one time, she also plays many instruments. She is a widow, and she has a daughter who is graduating this year from Penn State University as an honors student. Ginny has been a lifelong volunteer in the community, as she has been involved with the PTO at her daughter's school, with Girl Scouts, with the Big Sister program, as a firefighter, and as an officer at the American Legion to name a few. Having been a CASA in the past, she has renewed her dedication to the program and is excited to be back helping children and families. Her interests are in playing music, traveling, making jewelry and renovating her 1800s home.

Marie Savakinas grew up in Bethlehem, PA. She and her husband of 28 years have lived in Pittsburgh, New Mexico, and Arizona together, and they have been back in PA since 2011. Since then, she became a fiduciary for her elderly parents. Understanding the importance of giving a voice to her parents' mental, emotional, healthcare and financial needs, she became involved with all aspects of their care. As her parents' needs became more manageable, she decided to re-focus and apply her experience and commitment from being an advocate for the elderly to making a difference with another vulnerable population - our community's children. Marie derives her strength and compassion through her deep faith, and she is very involved with church activities. She dedicates her time advocating and making a difference for women and their families. During her free time, she enjoys creative outlets such as converting old family VHS tapes to DVDs, developing PowerPoint projects and presentations, hiking with her husband and daughter, discovering PA again, and hanging out with friends. Marie is excited to embrace this new phase of her life by demonstrating compassion through her CASA role.

Jacqueline Stone grew up in a small village in Cumberland County called West Hill. She was adopted as an infant by a wonderful mother and father who had also adopted a son three years prior. She attended Big Spring High School and went on to graduate from Harrisburg Area Community College with a Paralegal degree. She raised her three children not far from where she grew up, but recently moved to the Borough of Newville. She is a December 2017 graduate of Shippensburg University with a Bachelor's in Social Work, and she works with a local law firm as an Estate Planning & Administration Paralegal. Two of her children have graduated from college and her third is in their freshman year. Having witnessed her brother's struggles with substance abuse and disorders from a young age, it has long been her desire to work with at-risk youth as they transition into adulthood. Jacque views being a CASA Volunteer as one way to give back to the local youth in need by embracing kindness, practicing compassion, and standing for justice in the face of adversity. But above all, she wants to offer hope.

Sylvia Tonic grew up in Jersey City, New Jersey, in a family where there was a total of 22 siblings. She currently resides in Carlisle, and she is employed with G6 Hospitality, as the General Manager for Motel 6 in Carlisle. Her husband Charles passed away two years ago, and he was the love of her life. Sylvia describes herself as compassionate, as she feels deep sympathy and sorrow for others. She also describes herself as friendly, someone who is a visionary, and someone who is forgiving. Sylvia has a deep faith and doesn't know where she would be if it weren't for that. Sylvia is very involved with her church, as she attends all of the functions held there and is also on the Trustee Board. Sylvia is very involved with her family and travels to New Jersey regularly to be with them. Sylvia is an avid sports fan (especially football), and she is proud to have been the first female manager for her High School Junior Varsity and Varsity Football Teams. Sylvia encourages all to be respectful and kind to one another.

Tina Turner was born in Bradford County, PA. She grew up on a small, country farm with her 11 siblings. She currently resides with her wife in Carlisle. Prior to retiring, Tina worked for 25 years in various capacities as an officer for the New York State Department of Corrections and Community Services, which included her working within the Drug Investigations Unit and also within the Absconding Unit. Tina and her wife own a small horse/hobby farm in Tioga County, and together they have 5 children, 2 grandchildren, 3 dogs, and 2 horses. Tina enjoys spending time with all of her family and also enjoys camping, fishing, gardening, horses, and dogs. The best advice she was ever given was by her father when he told her that it was okay to be different. Tina is very honored to be a CASA Volunteer. She cares very deeply for children, particularly those who go through the foster care system. She has had the opportunity at different times in her life to care for children when their parents could not, and she wants to provide a voice to those who may not otherwise have one.



Spring 2018 Training Class: Back row from the left-Natalie Crowley, Tina Turner, Marie Savakinas, Intern Tammy Schall, & Ginny Reid; Front row from the left- Daphne McCoy, Sylvia Tonic, Jacqueline Stone, Joan Duffield & Robin Gipe

Swearing-In of Linda Rosenberry



Linda Rosenberry being sworn in by Judge Peck

On June 29, 2018, former CASA Outreach Coordinator Linda Rosenberry was sworn-in as the 228th CASA Volunteer in Cumberland County! Linda retired in July 2017 from the CASA office, and we are so excited that she will bring her 16 years of experience back to CASA, now in a volunteer capacity.

Linda grew up in Shippensburg, PA and graduated from Shippensburg University with majors in both English and Spanish education. She then married the love of her life and has spent the rest of her life as a pastor's wife. Linda recently completed her Master of Arts degree in Practical Theology and was ordained with the Churches of God General Conference. For over 16 years, Linda worked for the Cumberland County CASA Program until she retired.

Linda enjoys classical music, singing with Cantate Carlisle, and gardening. Linda's greatest joy is spending time with her family, including her husband, five adult children, and 2 sweet grandkids.

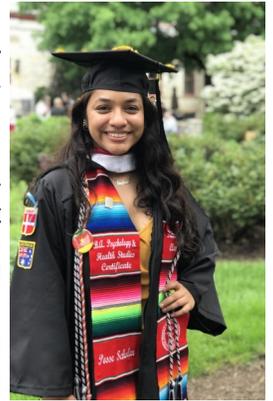
Spotlight on CASA Intern Stephanie Lopez

Stephanie Lopez interned with the CASA Office from 2015-2018 with a break during the 2016-2017 school year while she studied abroad. She grew up near Los Angeles, California, in a predominantly Latino community that was built on the foundations of social justice, activism, and pride in its culture. Her community service during high school helped her learn what her passions were, and she became interested in different ways that she could help others. She was nominated for the Posse Foundation Scholarship, which is a program that seeks to find 10 students who display academic merit and leadership skills. These students are sent to different partnering schools, one of which is Dickinson College. Stephanie started her college career at Dickinson in the fall of 2014, where she majored in Psychology.

Stephanie wanted to learn more about how to advocate for different groups of people, so she joined the Montgomery Service Leaders (MSL), which is a Dickinson community service group that provides internships in different organizations within the Carlisle community. After doing some research, she found out about CASA, and she felt it would introduce her to a new way of helping others that she had not experienced before. She learned how CASA, its volunteers, and the surrounding community help to advocate and improve the lives of many youth and families. While interning with CASA, she learned many practical skills and also learned the value of being passionate about one's work, finding new ways to thrive, involving those who share your vision for advocacy, and also appreciating the work of those around you. She also saw the help that parents needed in order to get their lives on track and improve the quality of their relationships with others.

During her time interning with CASA, she found great satisfaction in taking on small projects that contributed to the larger objective of helping the CASA staff in their day to day tasks. With the help of MSL, Stephanie applied for a grant that allowed CASA to purchase some items to show the CASA volunteers that they are appreciated for the important work that they do. In addition to this, Stephanie developed an efficient and useful method of assessing the feedback provided by the court on CASA reports.

Stephanie graduated from Dickinson College in May 2018 and decided to pursue a Master's Degree in Social Work. She will be attending the University of Washington in Seattle starting in August 2018. She will have a focus on Health/Mental Health, as she wants to help provide adults with the support system and resources necessary for them to achieve positive and healthy goals. The CASA staff wishes Stephanie well in her future endeavors and knows that she will make a positive impact on all those that she meets. Thank you for your service to CASA, Stephanie!



CASA Intern Stephanie Lopez

Cumberland County CASA Program Statistics:

March 2001—June 2018



- ◆ 228 CASA volunteers have been sworn-in (30 currently representing children; over 100 continuing in a supportive role)
- ◆ 486 dependent children have been represented, and many have received CASA assisted Educational Advocacy
- ◆ 1,623 CASA Reports have been written since 2001, providing additional information to help the Court make decisions

Out of the 486 children represented by CASA volunteers, some of the outcomes have resulted in: 156 children returning home, 189 children being adopted, 49 children living with a permanent legal custodian or a fit and willing relative, 29 children aging out of the system, 1 child dying of natural causes, and 5 children having their cases transferred to other jurisdictions.

RSVP Supports Community Agencies and CASA:

On January 15, 2018, RSVP of the Capital Region (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program) invited their partners from the Cumberland and Dauphin County school districts and local agencies to a book event. They, along with the Mette, Evans, and Woodside Law Firm, had collected over 8,000 books to donate to community children! There was a great turn out for the event and all of the books were distributed to various school district personnel and other agencies working with children. The Cumberland County CASA office was delighted to gather over 100 books for our CASA Volunteers to hand out to their CASA children.



RSVP is a program designed to benefit volunteers, ages 55+ in their community service work by offsetting some of the expenses incurred from their volunteer work, such as mileage, attending trainings, and paying for needed clearances. If you are a CASA volunteer and 55 or older, please contact the CASA office for more details. For more information about RSVP, contact Becky Gibbons, Development Coordinator of Cumberland and Perry Counties at 717-541-9521, or check out RSVP's website at www.rsvpcapreg.org. Thank you RSVP for supporting our volunteers!



Cupcake Wars to Benefit CASA

On April 5, 2018, for the 4th year in a row, Kappa Alpha Theta (KAT) from Dickinson College hosted an event called Cupcake Wars to benefit the CASA program. It featured fraternities and sororities from Dickinson entering a friendly bake-off competition to win the title of best cupcakes on campus. Participants paid a fee to taste the cupcakes and enter their vote for the best tasting ones. In addition, KAT asked for CASA Volunteers to be among the panel of judges, and CASA Volunteers Carol Sprecher, Arnie Jenkins, and Tina Turner gladly came to offer their expertise in this sweet event. From the event, the Thetas raised over \$400, which they graciously donated to the CASA program.

CASA and KAT have a long-standing connection due to CASA being named as the national philanthropy of Theta in 1989. Locally, KAT has hosted or participated in dozens of CASA events throughout Cumberland County CASA's past 18 years. Their next event will be the CASA Café in October 2018. Watch for further details. Thank you, KAT, for your ongoing support!



CASA Intern Stephanie Lopez, CASA Volunteer Arnie Jenkins, CASA Volunteer Carol Sprecher, Theta Sabrina Frost, CASA Volunteer Tina Turner, & CASA Intern/Theta Karen Siderovski



New CASA Volunteer Training Update

In March 2018, Cumberland County CASA completed its first training with the new volunteer training curriculum from the National CASA Association, which was updated in 2017. Our trainees experienced a different and more hands-on training than what the previous curriculum offered. We found the changes to be very positive, and the feedback from our trainees was also positive. New volunteer training now incorporates a fair amount of homework to be completed prior to coming to class. The classes themselves are more intensive as each topic related to child welfare is delved into in a more in-depth way. The trainees also participate in case studies to help them become familiar with various topics and also with the CASA court report. By the end of training, trainees had written a complete mock CASA Court Report, which has proven to be helpful for the new volunteers as they venture into their first case. We consider our first round of training with the new curriculum to be a success and will be looking for ways to continue to fine tune the training as we proceed to help make it the best experience that we can for our trainees.

Check out the back page of the newsletter for details on the Fall Training for new CASA Volunteers which will start on September 4th!

Cumberland County CASA Advisory Council

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Cumberland County CASA Program

Be the Voice

for an abused &/or neglected child

**Upcoming Training Dates:
Wednesdays from 4-8:30pm
September 4 through October 24, 2018**

Contact the **CASA Office** to explore becoming an advocate for child victims of abuse and/or neglect at **717-240-6159** 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 50 hours of training, and
- be willing to make at least a 2-year commitment.

**Training is held in Carlisle –
in the spring and in the fall.**

Upcoming Events:

- ◆ September 4, 2018- Our next round of training for new CASA volunteers begins!
- ◆ October 2018- Kappa Alpha Theta will host its annual CASA Cafe again! Ask us for more details!

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.