

CASA of DuPage County, Inc.
 505 North County Farm Road, 3rd Floor, Suite C, Wheaton Illinois 630-221-0889

The CASA Link

January 2009

Note from Kay



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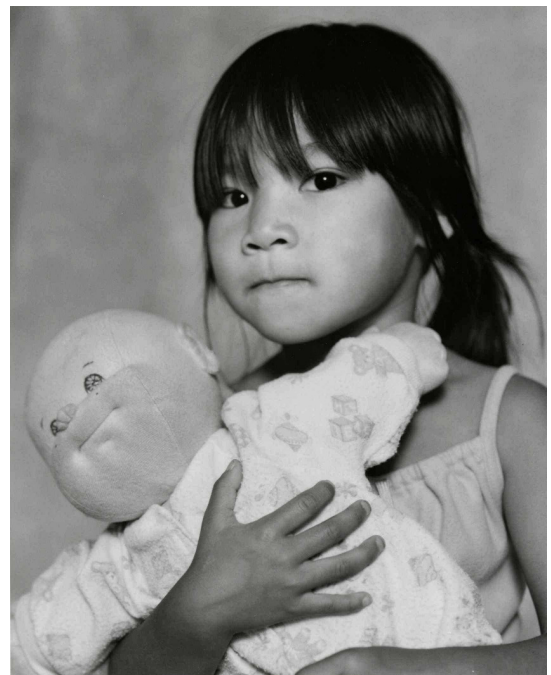
Kathleen Bondi,
 Advocate Supervisor

Ruth Laughlin,
 Training Coordinator/
 Advocate Supervisor

Kathie Paravola,
 Advocate Supervisor

As I write this, the holidays are fast approaching, and I take time to reflect on the past few months. I stay busy writing grants for operating expenses, making sure our relationships with funders remain strong and that our program delivery meets the needs of the Court. On the program delivery side we have again broken the record number of children served; a record I am sure we would all be happy if the record remained unbroken. We have served 328 children from 187 family groups for the calendar year, representing a 32.2% increase over last year.

CASA is also reflecting on the future months. Many of you are aware that the CASA Board of Directors recently revisited CASA's long-range strategic plan. During that review it was decided that it would be in the program's best interest to undertake an organizational assessment so they could better understand what business steps were indicated to move the program into the future with a stronger foundation. A committee of six was convened and they are meeting with an organizational expert in the not-for-profit field to determine our goals, initiatives and objectives through 2011. This new strategic plan will incorporate goals for fundraising (major gifts, annual campaign, grants, and special events), program service delivery; management operations; marketing and communications; and board development. We want to ensure that we provide you with the resources and tools necessary to be successful as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, and promise to keep you informed regarding the progress.



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It is through your dedication that we have been able to see that the best interests of the children are being met. Your generosity and compassion never cease to amaze me. I am blessed to work with a wonderful group of people who work to ensure that the best interests of abused, neglected and dependent children are being met.

So I will close with a Happy New Year to all. May 2009 bring you and the children we advocate for health, happiness and peace.

Continuing Education Highlights

Thursday

January 22, 2009

Book Discussion Group

- **When:** 7pm - 9pm
- **Where:** Faith Lutheran Church, 41 N. Park Blvd, Room 108, Glen Ellyn, Illinois
- **Description:** "beautiful boy" - a father's journey through his son's addiction, by David Sheff. RSVP to Ruth at 630-221-0889 ext 306.

Cost: Free

CEC: 3 Credits

Tuesday

January 27, 2009

Brown Bag

- **When:** 11:30am - 1:30pm
- **Where:** CASA Office
- **Description:** Beverly Michalski, case Reviewer for DCFS, will speak on ACR's.

Cost: Free

CEC: 3 Credits

Pre-Service Training

Another pre-service advocate training is imminent! This will be the second training I have coordinated, and it comes very close on the heels of my first. As you know by now, cases are entering the system at a record-breaking rate, and we will need each and every one of the people being trained in February and March. This becomes especially clear with the realization that the training class following the one in winter 2009 will be many months later (likely Fall 2009). We have learned that the challenges of trying to train during spring break, graduations, weddings and vacations seem to outweigh the feasibility. That said, if the trend of incoming cases continues, we may need to revisit that theory.

Winter 2009 training will be our second daytime training. I have been surprised by how very many people – even those who work – can accommodate these daytime demands. That speaks really well, I think, to the level of desire these people have to serve and it speaks well of their employers and the value they place on giv-

ing back to the community through their employees.

Training will occur for five consecutive weeks on Mondays, starting on February 2nd, from noon to 3:00 and on Fridays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm ending on March 6th. The courthouse is closed on Monday, February 16th, so there will be no training that day. Those 3 hours will be made up in homework.

By the time you are reading this, the agenda will be finalized and on the website calendar. There are a couple things of note:

- **Monday, 2/2/09** John Ellison with DCFS will be speaking again on the multiple effects on children who experience placement disruptions
- **Friday, 2/13/09** We are taking a different approach to the topics of domestic violence and substance abuse; a Family Shelter representative will speak on domestic violence from the perspective of the victim, and a DuPage County Psychological Services representative will speak on substance abuse and domestic violence with an emphasis on the perpetrator; these 2 individuals have tag-teamed before and will be available as a panel of 2 for Q & A after the presentations.
- **Monday, 2/23/09** We are again doing a “day in the life” from the perspective of a follow-up worker of children in placement and also from the perspective of a follow-up worker with intact families.
- **Friday, 2/27/09** Jean Pagorek, a retired DCFS follow-up Supervisor, is under contract with the 3 GALs; she visits children and homes and reports back to the respective GAL on her findings; she will speak on what it is she does, how she does it and what she looks for

As always, CECs can be earned by attending any session that is of interest to you. Please email me if there is something you wish to attend, so we know to expect you!

A Message from Ruth Laughlin

I have always been intrigued by the natural parents in our cases, by the stories behind their behaviors, by the causes and effects in their lives that propel them in directions it is so easy to call foolish and self-destructive when you are on the outside looking in. The fact always remains, though, that it's really hard to understand the experience of another, especially when that experience is so foreign to your own.

Sometimes a dynamic shift in my life circumstances (most likely a time of personal challenge) allows me to enter another's experience. I love that - it transforms a situation from something that must be endured and survived into something of clear value beyond the situation's immediate scope; it converts resentment and resistance into healthy regard and respect.

My mother, who lives locally, is 88. She fell in May. This was not her first fall by any means, but it is this fall that got her. Her injuries were such that she did not return home for many months; during her rehabilitation, her condition and her needs changed regularly. This had the expected impact on her local daughters. Many of us know what it is like to – with no forewarning - have our routines, our plans, our priorities, altered completely and chronically by something critical, yet out of our control. It is not for the faint of heart! This went on for many months, during which even if there was a calm, it didn't matter, because I knew the other shoe would drop. I just didn't know when. About the time my sisters and I felt we couldn't sustain this randomness much longer, we found a resolution which, knock on wood, is still in place.

That's when I learned what it means to live in perpetual triage. And I started to really understand the price a person pays when that is what life is. It is not just the tangible demands that wear and take you far afield; it's the hit to the psyche and energy level brought on by sustained anxiety, fear, guilt, anger, helplessness, resentment. It's the stressors it puts on sibling relationships. Then it occurred to me – this is what normal life is like for many of our parents. Life is always in triage. That was one big "aha" moment for me, especially when I considered how taxing I found the experience even with my wealth of resources – a functional family, supportive colleagues, faithful friends, good prospects, the knowledge that – eventually – circumstances would revert to their pre-crisis state. I doubt many of our natural parents can make these same claims.

It really isn't hard to understand why they do some of the things they do, why the cycle goes on and on and on. It isn't just the kids who need our patience and compassion.

The CASA office will be closed:

Thursday, January 1st... New Year's Day
 Monday, January 19th... Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
 Thursday, February 12th... Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
 Monday, February 16th... Presidents Day



Events

CASA Gift Wrap 2008

The CASA gift wrap of 2008 was very successful & earned \$1005.00 for CASA.

A great big thank you to all who gave of their time to provide some Christmas happiness to those who used our gift wrapping services:

Coordinators

Nancy Battaglia
Diane Garcia
Marilyn Miklos
Vivian Sharkey

Wrappers

Cathy Arciero
Nancy Battaglia
Arleen Berger
Kathy Bondi
Delaney Bondi
Holly Dobias
Bonnie Ebbert
Cathy Effinger
JoAnn Farley
Nancy Fraveletti
Diane Garcia
Doris Hanke
Chris Hong
Barb Johnson
Christine Johnson
Liz Johnson
Debbie Keegan
Dawn King
Linda LeMieux
Linda Lewis & Family
Joyce Macal
Peach & Marlan Matthias
Marilyn Miklos
Sharon Nelson & Family
Jill Peterson
Mary Pulsifer
Edie Sharkey
Vivian Sharkey
Arlene & Neil Stokke

Happy Birthday!

Carol Asselmeier
Jan Baurle
Janet Courter
Michelle Donnelly
Nancy Gage
Gloria Griseto
Barb Gulick
Mike Hammersley
Heather Jurkowski
Claudia Kappel
Tracie Lefaver
Linda LeMieux
Karen Lindflott
Susan Mareello
Marty McCarthy
Erin McLaughlin
Marsha Nathan
Laura Packer
Nina Petru
Renee Pollock
Shawn Preuss
Delanne Reiss
Eileen Robbins
Deb Wasko
Anne Wentz



Powerless Children Need Powerful Friends!

Case Assignments

Advocates assigned to new cases:

Lori Bartoli, Jan Baurle, Tom Bookler, Jane Cox, Adelyn Curphey, Bonnie Ebert, Tom Elmore, Nancy Gage, Ronika Gilbert, Mike Hammersley, Heather Jurkowski, Linda LeMieux, Erin McLaughlin, Benish Mohammed, Kathy Moller, Stephanie Riddell, Jill Rudolph, Lois Seijo, Rosemary Vallarta, Deborah Wasko, and Eric Williams.

Advocates whose cases have closed:

Vicki Colletta, Juanita Collins, Erin Gilbert, Claudia Kappel, Susan McKenna, and Deborah Wasko.

Financial News

CASA gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the following:

- Topfer Family Foundation - \$50,000
- Grace A. Bersted Foundation - \$10,000
- Anonymous - \$10,000
- Anonymous - \$3,500
- DuPage County Board - Human Services Grant Fund - \$7,920
- Walter & Kathleen Snodell - \$7,000
- Target - \$3,000
- On Board Entertainment - \$2,000
- Rotary Club of West Chicago - \$1,000
- K & B Financial - \$500



Thank you to our volunteers who helped stuff, seal & stamp for the mailing of our annual appeal letters. Those volunteers were:

Nancy Battaglia
Marianne Brouard
Ginny Rebek
Gloria Griseto

Citizen service is the very American idea that we meet our challenges not as isolated individuals but as members of a true community, with all of us working together. Our mission is nothing less than to spark a renewed sense of obligation, a new sense of duty, a new season of service.

Though government has an important role to play in meeting the many challenges that remain before us, we are coming to understand that no organization, including government, will fully succeed without the active participation of each of us. Volunteers are vital to enabling this country to live up to the true promise of its heritage.

Bill Clinton

Every problem that the country faces is being solved in some community by some group or some individual. The question is how to get connected so that the whole nation can solve problems.

A volunteer is a person who can see what others cannot see; who can feel what most do not feel. Often, such gifted persons do not think of themselves as volunteers, but as citizens - citizens in the fullest sense: partners in civilization.

George H. W. Bush