

The CASA Brief

A Newsletter for Volunteers, Friends and Supporters of Douglas County CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children - SEPTEMBER 2009



CASA Outreach at Family Arts Festival

Douglas County CASA was honored to participate in the Lied Center's Family Arts Festival on Friday, August 21, prior to the Free Outdoor Concert. As a family-friendly prelude to the concert, this special festival featured community organizations in the Lied Center's garden courtyard. With beautiful weather and interesting displays to entice visitors, the CASA display table welcomed many guests. Pictured above are children who stopped by the CASA table and were excited to receive their choice of free decals. Adults enjoyed the opportunity to learn more about our CASA agency and volunteer opportunities. Following the information festival, musical entertainment was provided by Amanda Shaw.

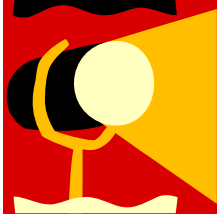
*Welcome to
Kansas CASA*

Kansas CASA Association Launches Website for Agency and Local Programs

The Kansas CASA Association launched a newly designed, comprehensive website on August 26. Found at www.kansascasa.org, the site is designed to profile the state CASA association, while streamlining information used by all 24 local programs in the state and giving each program their own webpage.

"Our goal was to showcase the state association, provide information about the need for CASA volunteers, and quickly link site visitors to information about their local programs," said Janette Meis, State Director of the Kansas CASA Association. "The site effectively does this, while also providing information about how to donate, the effectiveness of CASA programs, how to report suspected cases of child abuse, and much more." Kansas has CASA programs in 77 counties throughout the state of Kansas providing over 57,000 volunteer hours of service to children. Douglas County CASA is a member of the Kansas CASA Association and the National CASA Association.





Volunteer Spotlight: Tracy Harrison

VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE

By Kitty Ware

Tracy Harrison has a long track record of being a volunteer and an advocate for children in need. She states that her primary occupation is being a mom to her two children, but even as a busy mother, she has found time to contribute in various ways to the well-being of her community. How did she become involved as a CASA? Tracy explains, "I had been a Girl Scout leader and a PTO mom for five years. When my children got older I was looking for a volunteer position with a bit more bite. Driving to the Kansas City airport, I heard a CASA radio ad. I Googled CASA when I got back home, and that was the beginning. From a personal standpoint, the prevention of child abuse has always been a passionate and personal issue for me. I saw CASA as an opportunity to make some contribution toward the alleviation of children's suffering."

Tracy completed her training in September 2007, and received her first case in November 2007. She has found being a CASA to be a rewarding experience. "It was a good feeling to work through a case to a successful closure. Two years after my CASA kids were first removed from the home, they are now back in the legal custody of their mother," she states. She has experienced challenges as well. The hard part is "dealing with setbacks in the case, and coping with the knowledge that for my CASA kids, a best-case scenario would still be a less-than-ideal scenario."

Aside from family obligations and work as a CASA, Tracy has found time to contribute to her community in many other ways. She notes, "I've served on the Baldwin City Library Board of Trustees since 2003, and as secretary since 2005. I also write grants for the Lumberyard Arts Center in Baldwin City, have served on its Board of Directors since 2005, and as Board Secretary since 2007."

Tracy is a person of many interests – and considerable talent. She explains, "I am a lover and writer of poetry. Most recently my poems appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of *Inscape*, a publication of Washburn University. I also shoot black and white art photography, though I have stubbornly resisted the conversion to digital photography. Most of my prints are developed using classic darkroom wet processing and printed on silver gelatin paper. My photos have been exhibited at Mid-America Bank in Baldwin City, Baldwin City Art Walks, and the Lawrence Own-Your-Own-Art Show." As if that was not enough to keep her busy, she adds, "I've recently taken up knitting, one of the items on my 'fifty things I want to do in my life' list."

Besides a daughter at Lawrence High School and a son in Junior High, Tracy and her husband have two cats -a brother and sister named Viola and Sebastian, after characters in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

Tracy Harrison is yet another admirable example of a CASA volunteer. She shows the many ways a concerned, dedicated person can positively influence the life of a child and her community as a whole. Without folks like Tracy, CASA could not fulfill its worthy mission, to help ensure that children of Douglas County grow up in safe, permanent and loving homes.

Tracy is pictured above holding a "My Stuff Bag" to give to her current CASA child. This bag was donated by Payless ShoeSource, the stuffed animal was donated by Kappa Alpha Theta, and the other contents were made possible by donations as well.



“There are now almost 69,000 people in the National CASA network. You are part of the largest – and I would say best – volunteer-based child advocacy movement in the world. What makes an organization sustainable? It’s not rules or coercion or regulations – an organization is successful when its members are compelled by principles and values to do the right thing, no matter the situation. I think that describes the CASA/GAL network.” - Michael, Piraino, National CASA CEO

In Memory Of Linda Lou Shewmake Penny - 1939-2009



Douglas County CASA is honored to be a beneficiary of memorial gifts in memory of Linda Penny, a former CASA volunteer. Linda was a caring and talented woman, and an active community volunteer who touched many lives. Her legacy continues to make a positive difference in the lives of abused and neglected children. Our gratitude is expressed to the following individuals who contributed to the *Linda Penny Memorial Fund* at Douglas County CASA:

Aileen Ball
Betty Buell
Bill and Veneta Chapin
Robert and Cindy Christensen
Erland and Carol Crupper
Alan C. Goering
Phil and Mary Lou Hinz
Jane Hosey Stern
Mr. and Mrs. S.P. Howe
& Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wilson
& Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Burford
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Keiser
Michael and Barbara Keltner
Hon. Peggy C. Kittel
Mark and Jill LaPoint
Judi A. Lewis
Rebecca H. Lewis

Allan and Sandra Miller
Jeff and Mandi Pritchard
Harlan and Sidney Roedel
John and Valerie Roper
Garry and Betty Schnoebelen
Harry Schupbach
Hon. Jean F. Shepherd
Arthur L. Slamal
Janelle Spangler
Carolyn Penny Wilken
Marianne Wilkinson
Elsiann D. Wilson

(This list reflects memorial gifts received as of September 3, 2009)



Make a Difference in the Lives that Follow – Consider a Planned Gift to Douglas County CASA



Thank You! Our agency was honored to receive two 2009-2010 Lawrence Youth Football discount cards and a cash donation for our CASA volunteers to use for activities and treats with their CASA kids. We are grateful to this thoughtful donor who wishes to remain anonymous, but “shares an interest in helping children enjoy childhood.”

Still on our “Wish List” ... backpacks and diaper bags for CASA children; a Van Go bench; a new digital camera. In-kind gifts and financial donations to CASA are greatly appreciated!

The Advocate

A special section for our Douglas County CASA Volunteers



A Warm Welcome to our Newest Volunteers!

We are pleased to welcome five new volunteers and one new staff member who recently completed 30 hours of CASA volunteer training in August. Our newest recruits include (pictured from left to right) **Danae Johnson, Elizabeth Day (Volunteer Supervisor), Mallory Loudenback, Todd Davidson, Jessie Daniel, and Susie Nightingale.** As always, we are grateful to the staff and volunteers of *Big Brothers Big Sisters* for sharing their facility

during our training sessions. We also appreciate assistance from Judge Jean F. Shepherd at the “legal night” session of the training curriculum. We are pleased to welcome this new group and wish each of them a long and rewarding tenure with Douglas County CASA.



“Judges sleep better knowing that children in foster care have a CASA volunteer watching over them. In a perfect world, one without abuse and neglect, children would not need a CASA volunteer. Until then, I hope that one day every child in foster care will have a CASA volunteer. Thank you, advocates everywhere, for speaking up for the children.” – Hon. Douglas Johnson, President, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

“It is possible to save children. It is always possible for a child to grow. You can break the cycle ... The CASA role really is what is going to prevent children from falling through the cracks.” - Jo Anne Vanin, CASA Volunteer, Friends of Children, MA



“If I could say one thing to Joe (my CASA volunteer), I would say: ‘Keep doing what you are doing. You helped make my life a whole lot better.’” - Matt, IL

The quotes above are highlights from www.casenet.org/JudgesPage



A Heartfelt Thanks!

"I want to express my gratitude to each and every one of you for all the good wishes, cards, gifts, and retirement party. You have all made my experiences at CASA for the last 7+ years a truly wonderful job. The CASA volunteers, board members, and co-workers are all amazing and I have been honored to be a small part of this outstanding organization. I will miss everyone but hope to see you around from time to time." - *Sammie Londer*



CASA Volunteer News and Reminders ...

- **Tuesday, September 29, 5:30 pm** – Volunteer Roundtable gathering at the home of Sherry Catt, 2022 Camelback. Help us give a warm CASA welcome to Elizabeth Day, our new volunteer supervisor! Refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to 832-5172 or dmosher@douglas-county.com by Friday, September 25.
- **Tuesday, October 27, 5:00-7:00 pm** – Volunteer In-Service. Janice Storey from Bert Nash Mental Health Center will explain SED Waivers (tools for helping children get mental health services). Light snacks will be provided. Location to be announced. Watch your email! Please RSVP to Elizabeth Day at eday@douglas-county.com.
- **Thursday, October 29** – *What's Happening to our Kids in Kansas?* 4:30 pm – Registration; 5:00-6:30 pm – Children of Trauma; 6:45 pm– Methamphetamine and the Impact on Children; 7:45 pm - Solutions for Involvement to Help Kansas Children; 8:15- Q&A. **Free** public educational event, Countryside Covenant Church, 940 E. Northview, McPherson, KS. **Friday, October 30, Drug Endangered Children: Bringing Disciplines Together** (\$60 registration), Grand Prairie Hotel, 1400 N. Lorraine, Hutchinson, KS. To register for either event, contact Shirley Faulkner at faulknersa@pvi.org or 620-662-4700 by October 19.
- **Looking for low-cost activities to do with your CASA child or teen?** Don't forget activities sponsored by the Lawrence Public Library. September highlights include: 9/14 – 4 pm, *Tween Times*; 7 pm, *Ancient Music from China*. 9/17 – 4 pm, *Craft Day* for Teens. A variety of Storytime sessions are also offered for babies, toddlers, and children. Visit the library website at www.lawrencepubliclibrary.org or call 843-3833.

The CASA Cook's Corner: Tex-Mex Ravioli Casserole

Courtesy of Diana Frederick, Director



This is a quick and easy favorite that satisfies the vegetarian in our family!

Ingredients: 1 (16-oz) jar mild salsa; 1 (10 ¾-oz) can tomato puree; ½ tsp. ground cumin; 1 (28-oz) bag frozen cheese ravioli, unthawed; 2 (19-oz.) cans black beans, rinsed and drained; ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro; 1 bunch green onions, thinly sliced; 2 cups (8 oz.) shredded sharp Cheddar cheese; 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese. **Instructions:** Combine first 3 ingredients. Pour ½ cup sauce mixture in a lightly greased 2-qt oval or 11- x 7-inch baking dish. Top evenly with frozen cheese ravioli. Layer with black beans, chopped cilantro, green onions, and remaining sauce mixture; top evenly with shredded Cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses. Bake, covered with aluminum foil, at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until bubbly. Remove foil, and bake 5 more minutes. Let stand 5 minutes. Makes 6 servings. Top with sour cream.

If you have a recipe to share, please send via email to casa@douglas-county.com.

Douglas County CASA, Inc.

Board of Directors: Cara Nossaman Anderson, Mary Boatright (*Vice President*), Julia Butler, Mark Emert (*Secretary*), Beth Kelley, Brad Kemp, Eve Kemple, Jill LaPoint, Missy Martin (*President*), Karen Oberzan, Chris Phalen (*Treasurer*), Lisa Ramler, Ruthi Rapp, Becca Braun (*Kappa Alpha Theta*)

Staff: Diana Frederick, *Executive Director*; Sherry Catt, *Volunteer Supervisor*; Elizabeth Day, *Volunteer Supervisor*; Carolyn Johnson, *Volunteer Supervisor*; Diane Mosher, *Administrative Assistant*

Contact Information: Douglas County CASA, Inc., 1100 Massachusetts St., Suite 302, Lawrence, KS 66044; Phone: 785-832-5172; Fax: 785-832-5359; E-mail: casa@douglas-county.com; Web site: www.dccasa.org; for newsletter questions or suggestions, please contact Diana Frederick at dfrederick@douglas-county.com.

Our Mission:

CASA strives to ensure that children of Douglas County grow up in safe, permanent and loving homes by advocating for the best interests of children who have been abused or neglected and are under the protection of the Juvenile court.



Douglas County CASA, Inc.
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Lawrence, KS 66044