



## CASA Program News: Volume IV, 2/2018

### CASA of Douglas Co., Inc.

#### **STAFF:**

*Executive Director:*

Richelle Bryant

*Program Director:*

Katherine Elisar

*Program Supervisors:*

Scott Gilley &

Pam Knudson

*Agency Support for*

*Douglas & Curry Counties:*  
Cheryl Gile

#### **OFFICE CORPS:**

Monday: Needed!

Wednesday: Needed!

Thursday: Susan Crook &  
Heather Tiemann

Friday: Amber Urbaniak

Add-ons: Barb Fontaine,  
Kathe Linden, Cindi  
Johnson & Kate Read

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

*Executive Director,*

Richelle Bryant

*Board Chair,*

Valerie Trout

*Vice Chair,*

Elaine Cheney

*Secretary,*

Dan Snyder

*Treasurer,*

Matthew Kowal

Mary Gilbert

Gary Leif

Tina Roy



### 'Give Good' Award for Service

#### **Kate Read and John Granholm 1<sup>st</sup> recipients!**

CASA advocate Kate Read is the first recipient of the 'Give Good' Award for Inspired Service. Staff presented the award at January's Lunch n' Learn. Kate was chosen for going above and beyond in her service: advocating for several children, mentoring new advocates, volunteering in the office and being available for court when a child comes into care.

In February, staff selected Advocate John Granholm who has served for more than 9 years as a CASA,



Peer Coordinator and court report trainer to CASAs. John is skilled and willing to be assigned teens, particularly those in crises. Thank you, Kate and thank you, John!

As part of the award, each received a gift card from Starbucks. It was made possible thanks to Starbucks' #GiveGood award to our program!

### CASA Training!

Winter CASA Training starts soon! Sessions are on eight Wednesdays, 9:30-1:00, February 21 - April 18. There will be a week off for Spring Break. All day court observation is Tuesday, March 6. Swearing-in will be at the end of April.

There's still time to get signed up for classes! Be sure to share the training schedule with your friends and family.

### Community Outreach

CASA of Douglas County is working hard toward our goal of growing from 68 to 100 volunteers. Please join us in our recruitment efforts through social media: 'like' and 'share' our CASA Facebook page & posts! Other ways to help are by referring us to a service or church group, to pass on our contact information so that we can schedule a speaker: 541-672-7001, or Katherine@casaofdouglascounty.org

## Reflecting on Our Year: 2017

Program Staff and Advocates served 393 children in care in 2017, an increase from the 358 children served in 2016. The most significant challenge to our work was how the surge in numbers affected the processing of these cases. (A total of 764 children were in care in 2017.) The practical challenges of these significant numbers included identifying factors leading these children into care and identifying the high-risk cases to assign a CASA Advocate. With such a volume of children, it is difficult to decide which cases deserved a CASA.

The other challenge was recruitment of qualified volunteers to serve these numbers of 'High Risk' children in care. We started the year with 53 volunteers, trained 24, accepted two returning CASAs and had one CASA transfer from another program. In 2017 we moved to our new location on West Umpqua Street while still maintaining our same level of service to volunteers and children in foster care.

During this time of transition in 2017, CASA program staff were required to and trained to submit court orders and reports via the new state e-filing system. Program Supervisors use this multi-step online process now to e-file the advocate's court reports. And for the time being Program Supervisor Pam Knudson e-files court orders to the judge and to all the parties of the case too.

CASA added a new option for pre-service Training last summer, with an intensive weekend training session. It was a big success. We also added an ongoing training opportunity for existing CASAs: 'Food for Thought' at 5:00 – 6:00 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month. These are facilitated discussions centered around a specific timely topic.

In March of 2017, we said farewell to our retiring Executive Director, Susan Knight, and welcomed our new ED, Richelle Bryant. It was tremendously rewarding to experience our staff and volunteers welcome her and adapt easily, while wishing the best to our retiring ED, Susan Knight.

2018, our 25<sup>th</sup> year, will be one that requires us to robustly address the crisis regarding the numbers of children needing advocacy. More importantly, we need to ensure these children are safe considering the challenges that exist. Outlined in the recent release of the DHS Foster Care Audit of the Child Welfare System: 'Foster Care in Oregon: Chronic management failures and high caseloads jeopardize the safety of some of the state's most vulnerable children' we know circumstances exist where children definitely need a CASA to check on their basic needs including safety, and to offer support in terms of problem solving with families who may not realize why the agency is still involved or be minimally prepared with resources needed for their children's return.

2018 will also bring a transition to a new Juvenile Court Judge with Judge Luke Stanton leaving at the end of February.

Though we face new challenges, our CASA team is skilled and ready! We are confident that 2018 has the potential for CASA of Douglas County to serve more children with more advocates than ever before!

-Your CASA Team

### **CONGRATULATIONS!**

We have 8 new advocates serving Douglas County this year, including 3 in Reedsport!

Congratulations to Jason Perron, Donna Pfeiffer, Sylvia Simpson, Rona Smith and in Reedsport: Dan Forbess, Sandi Donnelly, and Thom Martin. Judge Ann Marie Simmons administered the CASA Oath to these 7 advocates in November.

Another CASA Advocate, Andy Alberding, was sworn-in by Judge Frances Burge in Roseburg in December.



### **Ideas for Self-Care as a CASA:**

- ✚ *With cold & flu season upon us, please stay home if you are not feeling well or the family you plan to visit is sick.*
- ✚ *Drink plenty of fluids.*
- ✚ *Use your hand sanitizer after visits, trips to child welfare & to court.*
- ✚ *Let us know if you need us to visit that month.*



# Three Donation Thursday!



**8:00 am: Starbucks Coffee**  
**#GivingGood**



**1:00 pm: First Interstate Bank**



**4:00 pm: Devon Leyh**  
**DKL Philanthropic Group**

The New Year started off in a very special way... with 3 donations in one day! The donations started early on Thursday, January 4th:

- **8:00 am:** We started the morning off right with \$1,000 in Starbucks Gift Cards from Starbucks Coffee. Regina Yutzie applied to the National Starbucks #GiveGood grant program on behalf of our CASA of Douglas County Program. We were selected as one of the recipients for Southern Oregon. Thank you Starbucks, Regina and our very own CASA Advocate and Starbucks Associate Amber Urbaniak!
- **1:00 pm:** After lunch, First Interstate Bank/Bank of the Cascades donated \$1,000 to CASA of Douglas County. Marketing President Gary Collins joined CASA Advocate and First Interstate Bank Associate Tabbitha Layman to present the check to board members Mary Gilbert and Elaine Cheney. Thank you First Interstate Bank and Tabbitha!
- **4:00 pm:** Our final donation of \$667 came from 9 year-old Devon Leyh! Devon is President and CEO of DKL Philanthropic Group. He raised the money through his recycled plastics and materials company. Devon started the company when he was 7 years old and donates on average \$2,000 a year! He and his father and advisor/chauffeur Christopher Leyh delivered the donation to Elaine Cheney, Board Vice-Chair and Richelle Bryant, Executive Director. Both enjoyed learning more about CASA's vital mission and a tour of the Agency, while Devon spoke of his two greatest passions in life – helping children less fortunate than himself, and the best dogs in the world, PUGS!

## CASA Wish List



As we settle into our building, we realize we have some needs for the office:

Volunteers for Office Projects - 2 hrs. each week,  
Coffee/Tea Mugs, & Small plates,  
2 hall tables: 2-3' long, Desk swivel chairs,  
Desk-top scanners, Desk lamps, & Small up-lamps that  
shine light in a corner or up a wall,  
Large Silk plants, Positive Posters for Training room,  
Windows, Space heaters,  
Large Sliding Barn Door for Training Room,  
Colored copy paper (lightweight), 8 tab notebook  
dividers.

## Advocate Resources for Families:

**211 App:** CASA of Douglas County, Inc. is on this app along with many other community resources to help you support foster families.

**Foster Family Resource and Clothes Closet:** Please remind foster parents about this resource located in the Child Welfare office in Roseburg. Clothes, shoes, furniture and school supplies are available. For hours of operation, email Jan Patton, [kenjan5966@gmail.com](mailto:kenjan5966@gmail.com).

**Respite Care for Foster Children:** T & Th at 1-3:45 at FDC; Referral to this program contact Bethany Barrows: 541-464-2135, or [Bethany.D.Barrows@state.or.us](mailto:Bethany.D.Barrows@state.or.us)



Executive Director, Richelle Bryant welcoming everyone to the 2017 PJ Event!



CASA Deb McKellar and her grandchildren helping her 'shop'!

## 2017 Pajama Event

Hundreds of children in foster care throughout Douglas County are sleeping in cozy, warm pajamas this winter thanks to dozens of volunteers who helped make the 2017 CASA Pajama Drive a success!

- Our community donated 950 pair of pajamas for youth of all sizes.
- Volunteers stitched 650 pillowcases.
- \$3,000 grant from the Ford Family Foundation was received.
- 37 businesses helped collect pajamas donated by our generous community.
- We applied and received a National CASA donation from the Toy Council of America of several toys.
- Volunteers like Margie and Doug Burbridge helped plan the event, assemble and deliver boxes and pick up PJs.
- Other community members donated money, toys, coats, quilts, and pajamas.
- CASAs like Prudy Zorotovich, Kathe Linden, Betty Steinbach, Ted Johnson, Sue Swift and Tabbitha Layman help coordinate donations.
- CASA's families such as Susan Crook's baked cookies while CASAs Phyllis and Carroll Schmidt hosted the holiday reception for CASAs.

CASAs came to our holiday party at the CASA office where they 'shopped' for all the children in the foster home, including biological children. This year, CASAs were given a thank you card, their 2017 Volunteer Service pin of a gold star and a personal message of gratitude.

There are always a few pajamas and toys remaining after the holidays. This year, they were donated to the Douglas County girl's and boy's shelters, the foster parent clothes closet, Samaritan Inn Women's Homeless Shelter, Douglas CARES and Family Development Center. Some pillowcases and stuffed animals will stay at the CASA office to take to children in newly assigned cases throughout the coming year.

### CASA Classifieds

Electric Acoustic Guitar & soft carrying case, **NEEDS HOME:** (slightly used, but loved by a youth who had a CASA & who sadly & unexpectedly passed away from an auto accident) - is looking for a very special youth in foster care whom this would make a difference in their life. This guitar would love to have a teen who has a CASA, but could belong to other youth in foster care too. E-mail: Katherine@casaofdouglascounty.org.



### Upcoming Calendar of Events

**Wednesday, February 21 @ 9:30 – 1:00** – 1<sup>st</sup> CASA Pre-Service Training Day.

**Saturday, February 24 - @6:15 Dinner, 7:15 Dance;** BPA Gala Dance & Dinner at Seven Feather's Convention Center. CASA Amber Urbaniak will compete with her husband.

**Wednesday, February 28 @ 9:30 – 1:00** – 2<sup>nd</sup> CASA Pre-Service Training Day.

**Thursday, March 8 @ 5:00-6:15pm** - CASA's "Food for Thought", facilitated discussion on 'When Placements Fail' with CASA & Peer Coordinator Penny Lapham. RSVP.

**Wednesday, March 14 @ 3:30 – 4:30pm – Peer Coordinator Huddle** - CASA Kirsten Stockton presents Capstone Power Point Presentation on optional ECE Communication Kits for Advocates' Visits to infants through preschoolers.

**Thursday, March 15 at Noon-1:00pm** - CASA's "Lunch 'n Learn", Mercy Director of Pediatrics, Dr. Aric Groshong: identifying abuse and/or neglect in the hospital. RSVP.

**Friday, March 16 at Noon – 4:00pm – CASA Office CLOSED** for Staff Training.

"Our mission is to provide children who have been abused or neglected, and are now in foster care, with qualified, compassionate advocates who will fight for and protect children's fundamental right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to learn and grow in the safe embrace of a loving family".

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