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CASA OF CENTRAL VIRGINIA



Issue No. 4

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February Activity

76 Volunteers Assigned
228 Children Served by Program
24 New Children
43 Closed Children

Message from the Executive Director

IT'S ALL ABOUT HOPE

Lorna Rexrode, Angela Skarp, and I were fortunate to be able to attend the National CASA Association's 30th Annual Conference in Chicago, March 20 - March 22. Because of the generous support of the Court Improvement Program of the Supreme Court of VA, 45 CASA staff from Virginia were able to attend the conference and be reimbursed for their expenses. We joined over 1,450 CASA staff and volunteers from across the country, including staff from a CASA program which has begun in Canada, making the National CASA Association international. It was the largest attendance at an annual conference.

The theme of the conference was "Building Hope for Youth." In a nutshell, hope is what CASA is all about. Pamela Butler, a former CASA child, had this to say about having a CASA volunteer to help her through her ordeal: "To give a child a CASA is to give them a voice. To give them a voice, is to give them hope. To give them hope is to give them the world."

One of the most meaningful parts of the conference for me was hearing from Foster Care Alumni as they discussed the importance of advocating for older youth. They eloquently made the case for authentic engagement of youth in the process of planning for the transition from foster care and of concurrent planning for permanency and independent living. When youth are engaged, help to set

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FOR CHILDREN

CASA of Central
Virginia
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Lynchburg, VA
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achievable goals and focus on their strengths, they can have hope for the future. CASA volunteers can serve an important role in helping to make this happen.

Jane Francis



Volunteer Spotlight **Vernice Watts**

Advocate Manager: Jennifer Martin
Court served: Nelson and Amherst County
Occupation: Retired
Length of time as a CASA volunteer: 15 1/2 years

Most Memorable CASA Moment: Seeing my CASA children later in life doing well and having jobs and family.

What means the most to you about being a CASA

volunteer: Seeing that the children get the best possible life style and being happy in their environment. I also like to see that the other parties involved are satisfied with the way that I handled the case. I like doing good things for people. I enjoy volunteer work. It is also rewarding to meet the lawyers and DSS workers and cooperating with them.

Special Note from Advocate Manager: Vernice is such a well respected and dedicated volunteer with CASA and with many other civic organizations in her community. Vernice has been with CASA of Central Virginia for 15 ½ years and has served as a CASA Volunteer for 31 children in Amherst and Nelson Counties. As Vernice's Advocate Manager I get to witness the love and care that she has for each of the children she has worked with and the respect that the professionals in the case have for her. When Vernice is out in the community, she is often approached by her former CASA children to provide her updates on their lives. This is a testament to Vernice and to the impression that she leaves in the lives of the children she has advocated for.

National Volunteer Appreciation Week
April 10-16, 2011



Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. It's

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Lorna Rexrode,
 Advocate Managers
Jennifer Martin
Angela Skarp
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**United Way
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about demonstrating to the nation that by working together, in unison, we have the fortitude to meet our challenges and accomplish our goals. National Volunteer Week is about taking action, encouraging individuals and their respective communities to be at the center of social change-discovering and actively demonstrating their collective power to foster positive transformation. National Volunteer Week is our moment in time to celebrate volunteers. CASA of Central Virginia will be celebrating and honoring our CASA Volunteers with an appreciation event at Lynchburg College on May 19, 2011. Our volunteers are the heart of our organization and we greatly appreciate all they do!

Advocate Manager Guidance and Support Corner

CASA Volunteer Safety

The CASA of Central Virginia program is highly invested in keeping you safe. If you ever have a question or concern about the safety of any aspect of your work or if you feel apprehensive or fearful, you should immediately consult with your CASA Advocate Manager.

The safety tips below are mostly common sense and good advice whether you are doing CASA volunteer work or not.

- **Think ahead.** Know the situation and know where you're going in order to look confident.
- Meet a parent or another person in a **neutral place** initially, and if necessary, thereafter.
- **Be aware** of the immediate area.
- **Tell someone** where you'll be, how long you'll be there, and when you expect to return. If plans change, call and let that person know.
- Keep safe, but **be respectful** of the neighborhoods and homes you are entering.
- **Trust your instincts.** If you are really uncomfortable, take protective action-walk away.
- **Don't share personal information** about yourself or your family, especially your phone number(s) and address. Home addresses can easily be found on the Internet using a home phone number. All correspondence and communication should flow through your CASA program office.
- If you witness or see signs of illegal activity, **get out** of the situation as soon as you can.

2011 Awards of

CASA Volunteer Training

**Excellence
National CASA
ADVOCATE OF
THE YEAR**



**Frank West, CASA of
Grant County, Inc.,
Marion, IN**

Frank West is a bold and effective child advocate. He demonstrates an outstanding willingness to learn as he hones his advocacy skills. One example is that in his work with a special needs child, Frank investigated school programs that would meet the child's needs. When an out-of-state relative of the same child came forward as a possible placement, Frank educated himself about services that could be put into place in the other state and researched interstate compacts. All the while, he remained focused on whether placement with the relative was truly in the child's best interest. [Read more about Frank and other Awards of Excellence Honorees](#)

**IN-SERVICE - CONTINUING EDUCATION
OPPORTUNITIES**



Open to the Public

Community Resources Conference - April 8, 2011 from 8-5 in the Webster Center on the campus of Presbyterian Homes & Family Services (PHFS). The conference is sponsored by PHFS and Family Alliance. The keynote speaker in the morning is Dr. Jan Beauregard and nine breakout sessions are being scheduled in the afternoon covering topics affecting children and families. Lunch will be provided. For additional information contact Adam Pavao at 434-455-3632, apavao@phfs.org or www.phfs.org Download Flyer [Community Resources Conference](#)

The Usual Suspects: Learn to Recognize the Usual Suspects in Child Dependency Cases: Substance Abuse, Mental Health Concerns and Trauma

April 15, 2011 8:30-4 at the James River Conference Center. Presented by VA's 24th District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts, Lynchburg Bar Association's Family Law Section and the Court Improvement Program of the Supreme Court, Office of Executive Secretary.

[The Usual Suspects Training Flyer](#)

Open to CASA Volunteers

The CASA Book Club is organizing a book read/review for the book Born for Love by Bruce Perry. Participants will receive 2 hours of in-service training credit for reading the book and additional time for the group review. Date and location to be announced, but if you feel you are interested in borrowing a copy of the book from the CASA library, please contact Jennifer Martin at 434-455-5835 or jennifer@cvcasa.org. She is trying to determine the interest to know how many books she will need to order.

The CASA Library



THIS MONTH'S FEATURED ITEM

Maintaining Family Ties: Inclusive Practice in Foster Care By: Sally E.



Palmer

Maintaining Family Ties examines the behavior of children in foster care and their expressed feelings related to separation from their families. Chapter One presents theories of separation and self-concept relevant to children in care. Chapter

Two reviews research knowledge from empirical studies and practice experience. Chapters Three, Four, and Five describe and discuss the qualitative findings from workers' discussions on supervision, including children's reactions to supervision; workers' interventions; and agency influences on the handling of separation. Chapter Six draws conclusions and offers recommendations.

Many additional books, DVD's, manuals, and additional resources available for check-out in the downtown CASA office. CASA Volunteers can utilize library resources as an additional option for completing their yearly requirement of 12 hours of in-service training.

Library Resources funded by



National Child Abuse Prevention Month and the Blue Ribbon Campaign

For over twenty years, the blue ribbon has become widely recognized as a national symbol of child abuse awareness. This movement began in the spring of 1989 when a concerned grandmother, Bonnie Finney of Norfolk, VA, decided to take a stand against child abuse after her grandson's death. Her three-year-old grandson, Michael Wayne "Bubba" Dickerson, was killed by his mother's boyfriend. His death gave Bonnie the strength to encourage others to help in the fight against child abuse and neglect. She tied a blue ribbon to her van as a symbol to the community of her personal commitment to stop child abuse. Bonnie is another example of how one person can make a difference. The spirit of her Blue Ribbon campaign grew until it spread across the nation.

In Bonnie's own words, "The blue ribbon serves as a constant reminder to fight for protection for our children. We must protect our most precious gift of all...our children. Please wear a blue ribbon...put one on your car...give one to your friends...tell them what it means...you may save a child's life!"

Through a collaboration with Family Alliance/Presbyterian Homes and

Family Services, and Crisis Line of Central VA, CASA has received funding from the Family and Children's Trust for print ads, television ads, radio spots and the Blue Ribbon bookmarks. There are many events that will be occurring in the month of April in the Greater Lynchburg Area. CASA of Central VA has joined forces with other organizations to promote a greater awareness of child abuse prevention. YWCA and YMCA of Central VA, Smart Beginnings, the 24th Judicial District and Lynchburg Bar Association have joined this collaboration to present a wide variety of activities throughout the month of April. These activities include the following:

- Child Abuse Prevention Month Kick-off and News Conference featuring The Honorable Dale H. Harris - April 4th at 10:00 a.m. - YWCA - 626 Church Street
- Child Safety Luncheon featuring the Blue Ridge Thunder, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force - April 14th, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. - YWCA 626 Church Street
- YWCA's Healthy Kids Day Aims to Get Families Moving Through Play - April 16th, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m., Jamerson YMCA, 801 Wyndhurst Dr.
- Day to Celebrate Children, sponsored by Smart Beginnings - April 16th, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., Lynchburg Memorial Library, 2315 Memorial Ave. Face painting and petting zoo and other activities.
- Child Abuse Prevention Night at the Hillcats - April 27th, 6:05 p.m. Hillcats vs. Wilmington. Lynchburg City Stadium. (Admission charge.)

Upcoming Events



12th ANNUAL HEART AND SOLE SHOE MARKET

CASA's 12th Annual Heart and Sole Shoe Market will be held in the Lynchburg Armory (1200 Church Street) on Sat, April 9 (8:00 - 3:00) and Sun., April 10 (1:00 - 4:00). The Preview Party will be held on Fri, April 8 (5:30 - 8:00). Tickets for \$25 will go on sale beginning March 7 at the Visitors' Center (216 12th Street), Beacon Credit Union (6360 Logans Lane behind Schewel

Furniture on Timberlake Rd) and at CASA's Administrative Office (11 Oakridge Blvd., across from Lancaster Furniture Galleries). For more information, contact Jane at 528-2552 or check out the website, www.cvcasa.org

[Sign-Up to Volunteer at Shoe Sale](#)

[CASA Heart and Sole Shoe Sale Flyer](#)

Vendors wanted for Heart and Sole Boutique
Cost: \$250 for entire weekend or \$200 for Saturday only
For more information, call (434) 528-2552 or e-mail jane@cvcasa.org

CASA VOLUNTEERS SAVE THE DATE:

CASA of Central Virginia Volunteer Appreciation Event will be held May 19, 2011 from 5:30 - 8:00 at Lynchburg College. Invitations going out soon.

Funding for this newsletter is provided by a grant
from **Retail Merchants Foundation, Inc.**



Thank you for your interest and support of CASA of Central Virginia.

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