



# CASA of Kay & Noble Counties' NEWSLETTER



December 2007/January 2008

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## Three New Volunteers Are Welcomed to the CASA Family!

The Fall 2007 Pre-Service Training has yielded three new CASA Volunteers eager to “stand up” for an abused or neglected child in court! Jim Parry, a software developer for ConocoPhillips, says, “I’m excited about CASA and the opportunity it affords me to make a positive difference in a child’s life”. Staci Frazier, a teacher at the Ponca City Alternative High School, and Patty Wilson, a Process Server in Noble County, also undertook the duties of the CASA Volunteer because their deep caring for children attracted them to the CASA program. Congratulations to Jim, Staci, and Patty on their journey to “making a difference”.

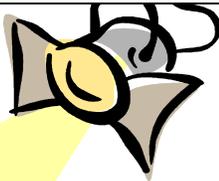


Pictured left to right are CASA Volunteers Jim Parry, Staci Frazier, Patty Wilson, and the Honorable Judge D.W. Boyd.

## CASA Volunteer Spotlight

featuring

*Teresa Rowell*



The end of summer 2005, a newspaper ad for CASA sparked Teresa's interest and she called to find out more about the program. "I didn't know that a program like CASA existed," recalls Teresa.

Teresa explains the ad motivated her to call because she felt that not enough is being done for abused children. "I had wondered how I could get involved to help abused and neglected children. I was excited to hear that CASA focused on children by providing a way for their needs and wants to be heard."

Within days, she attended a "fast track" training session which was held six hours a day for five days. "The class moved quickly with so much information to absorb, but the training was interesting and covered what I needed to know as a CASA," adds Teresa. "I still keep the manual and refer to it often."



Her first case closed recently with the children and their mother being reunified. "It was a hard case because it involved such a large sibling group and a parent who at first was very resistant to change", states Teresa.

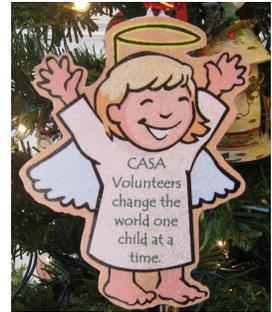
The aspect of CASA she finds most challenging is when parents do not accept their responsibilities and are not willing to change for the sake of their children. Teresa adds, "Along with understanding [the concept of] minimum sufficient level of care."

This level of care is the minimum parenting standard the parent must be able to provide in order for their children to be returned to the parent care. "Since I want to provide a higher level of care for my own children, it is sometimes challenging to set aside my own experiences when making recommendations," states Teresa.

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*The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers.  
~Everett Mámor*

## Kid-Size CASA Tree is On Display!



Our "CASA Tree" has been submitted to the Ponca City Art Association's Christmas Tree Collage and Gingerbread House display. The 4 ft. tree is adorned with clear lights, glittery angels, CASA Kid ornaments, birdhouse ornaments, and volunteer appreciation quotes...topped with a CASA logo "star"! The tree displays created by CASA and other sister agencies will be on display at the Ponca City Art Association at 8th and Central in Ponca City until December 30th.



# CASA in Noble County

- Our Americorps\*VISTA Member, Sharon Mckeown, as well as CASA Volunteers Patty Wilson and Tracy Robertson assisted Tonya May and other Perry school volunteers with the Noble County DHS Sloppy Joe Fundraiser on November 2nd. The fundraiser provides Christmas toys for children in Noble County's foster care system. Over 500 sloppy joe dinners were sold!
- Sharon McKeown also met with the newly formed Noble County Systems of Care program in Perry on November 7th. Systems of Care provides community-based mental health services to children.



CASA Volunteer Tracy Robertson (center) assists with the Noble County Sloppy Joe Fundraiser.

## In-Service Training Opportunities

CASA Training is open not only to CASA Volunteers, but also to the volunteers and staff members of our community's non-profit organizations, service providers, and citizens interested in the CASA program.

### **CASA In-Service Training:**

**Topic:** Substance Abuse Treatment with guest speaker Jay P. Casey, M.S.W

**Date:** Tuesday, February 12, 2008

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** NOYS, 2203 N. Ash, Ponca City

**In-Service Credits:** 2 hours

**Summary:** Bridgeway substance abuse counselor Jay Casey will speak about the recovery process of in-patient and out-patient drug and alcohol programs, sharing with us some of the challenges faced by many of the families served by CASA Volunteers

## CASA Book Club

“The Glass Castle” by Jeannette Walls

Jan. 14th, 2008

6:30 pm

“The Connected Child” by Karyn B. Purvis

April 13th, 2008

6:30 pm

Both sessions will be held at NOYS,  
2203 N. Ash in Ponca City.

## YES! I'D LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION TO CASA!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED IS MY TAX DEDUCTIBLE CONTRIBUTION:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER

IN MEMORY/HONOR OF \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail to: CASA, 2203 N. Ash Street, Ponca City, Ok 74601

# The Kay County Department of Human Services

For a limited time, our newsletter will feature the positions and staff members of our local DHS Child Welfare office. We anticipate that these interviews will provide CASA Volunteers and other members of the community an insight into the agency we collaborate with every day.

This edition, we'll feature

*Bobbi Bergman*

Kay County DHS Aid

Bobbi and her husband, Brett, live in Blackwell and have three children; Sky, age 20, Colt, age 17, and Shantel, age 15. She has been working for the Department of Human Services for four years.

As an aid for DHS, one of Bobbi's duties involves the supervision of visitations occurring between children in foster care and their parents. Bobbi says, "My goal is to create a good environment for the visitation to take place, and to keep the meeting upbeat and happy."

After each visit, Bobbi logs information from the visit into a DHS database. These records are reviewed by the children's caseworker to note the interaction between the parents and children, including the timeliness, attendance, and disposition of the parents during the visits. On occasion, Bobbi is called to testify in court as to the interactions of visitations and decelerations made to her during her time with the children.

She notes that during these visitations, parents are not to talk to the children about their court cases, but they are to spend the time that they have to

Other parts of Bobbi's duties involve the transportation of children in DHS custody to service providers, such as doctor appointments and therapy sessions. It isn't unusual for children to be in DHS custody for several months, even years, and so during this time, aids like Bobbi get to know the children quite well.

DHS aids are a valuable tool for the caseworkers to gauge how the children are doing during this difficult time in their lives. "The best part of my job is that I get to be around some wonderful children...it's easy to get attached to them."

However, Bobbi is exposed to many of the same stress-inducing issues that face other DHS professionals dealing with abused children and their families. "The worse part of my job is explaining to the children why their parents don't show up for the visits and seeing how disappointed they can become".

The importance of the aid's role is often overlooked, but their significance and impact to the children healing in foster care is easily seen.



Teresa, continued from page 2

A long time resident of the area, Teresa and her husband own their own business. She helps in her children's schools, as a volunteer and substitute teacher. Teresa and her husband have four children, a son who is junior at OSU majoring in criminal justice/psychology, a son who is a welding student, a son who is student body president of his freshman class and one daughter who is a homeschooled fifth grader.

Teresa encourages others to consider becoming CASA volunteers stating, "It's worth it. You have a part in changing a child's future; you can help make sure a child's needs and best interest is heard."

*Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the*



*~Elizabeth Andrew*





CASA Staff and volunteers ventured into the cold December air to gather at Zino's Italian Restaurant for lunch to celebrate the holiday season together. Each CASA Volunteer left with an oversized CASA coffee mug filled with candy, tea, and hot chocolate. Pictured above (left to right) are Sharon Clark, CASA Director; CASA Volunteers Betty Thrash and Irene Fabian, and Americorps\*VISTA Member Sharon McKeown.

### Holiday Wishes from CASA

During this time of year, many in our community generously come forward to purchase toys and other items for our CASA children, because they wish to make the holiday happy for the children. This is wonderful, and we greatly appreciate all those who have given to this year's book drive.

Presents and holiday celebrations do bring joy to the children we serve. However, we must remember the holiday season can be a sad and difficult time for many of them as they are separated from parents, siblings, and extended family.

This time of year can heighten their sense of not living a "normal" life. This can be true even for those who may be finding relief and comfort from being out of their parents' home. This is especially true of school age children who are aware that their classmates have holiday plans with family.

It is at this time that the consistency of a CASA volunteer's involvement with their assigned children can be invaluable. Furthermore, never underestimate the ongoing value of your consistent involvement with these children.

Children need consistency, no matter what their age. Even if you only have once per month contact, it does impact on their development of trust, of a sense that someone cares, of their sense of order in life.

I am so grateful to be a part of an organization that cares so deeply about family and community. Thank you for all that you have done and will do for the children that need you the most.

You can and do make a difference! Wishing all of you peace and happiness for the holidays!

*Sharon*

### A Computerized CASA...



The good news about computers is that they do what you tell them to do. The bad news is that they do what you tell them to do.

-Ted Nelson

As CASA Staff, one of our most important duties is to give our volunteers the needed tools to provide quality advocacy to children. One of these tools is the training of volunteers to use the available technology (such as computers and the internet) to efficiently and confidentially communicate with staff and submit court reports.

Please feel free to approach CASA staff with any computer questions. Staff can assist you over the phone, and are more than happy to visit you at home to guide you through the steps.

Computers are available for volunteer use at the CASA office for typing court reports. Also, volunteers can check-out USB Flash Drives from the program, which are small "doo-dads" the size of a keychain that you can use to transport your court reports and other case information. They are even password-protected to insure your information doesn't fall into the wrong hands.

Staff is always looking for simple ways to make technology work for our volunteers to make their casework easier. Please contact CASA with your case-related technology needs.



# Books and Toys Now Available for the Kids!



In a heart-warming response to the CASA program's request for books and toys that will go to children served by CASA Volunteers in foster care, several caring citizens and organizations filled the CASA office with holiday-time donations! Contributors to the project were anonymous community members, the Mu-Psi Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi, Kay County RSVP, the NOC Student Nurses Association, and Wal-Mart! All CASA Volunteers are urged to stop by the office as soon as possible to pick up books and toys for the children on their cases!



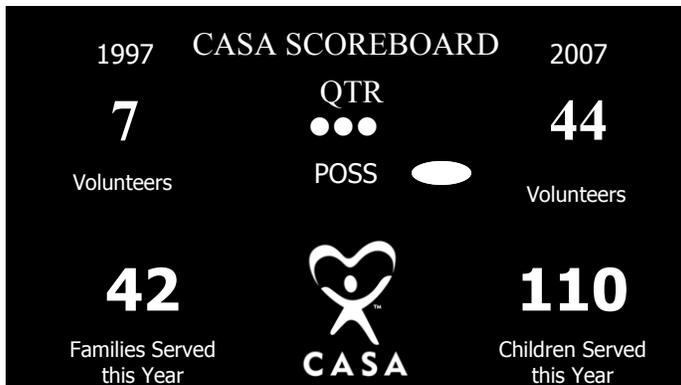
The Mu-Psi Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi donated a huge pile of books for children of all ages. Shown are Sharon Clark (left) Michelle Sitton (center), Angela Kennedy (right), and Michelle's 5 year-old son, Tanner (front).



The Northern Oklahoma College Student Nurses Association donated a large box of toys, including stuffed animals, dolls, tea sets, cars, and playsets.



Loretta Lawson of the Ponca City RSVP presents CASA VISTA Member Sharon McKeown with a donation of a box of toy horses and dreamcatchers.



A contribution was made to CASA in honor of Norma Erner.

# CASA of Kay & Noble Counties' Dates-to-Remember

## Court Dates

### December 17

I. Fabian  
L. Young

### January 7

C. Baker  
J. Jaggars

### January 8

I. Fabian (JT)

### January 14

J. Jaggars  
D. Jorgensen  
N. Murphy  
N. Niemann  
D. Topper

### January 28

A. Bandy  
S. Frazier  
S. Harrison  
J. Parry  
T. Rowell



# Happy Birthday



Irene Fabian  
Lynda Clark  
Sharon McKeown  
Teresa Doerksen  
Chuck Dow

December 7th  
December 31st  
January 5th  
January 9th  
January 24th

Remember...books and toys are available for your CASA kids! Pick them up at NOYS as soon as possible!

## Program Events

CASA Book Club  
"The Glass Castle"  
1-14-08, 6:30 pm  
NOYS Training Room

In-Service Training  
"Substance Abuse  
Treatment" with Jay Casey  
2-12-08, 6:30 pm  
NOYS Training Room

In-Service Training  
"The Indian Child Welfare  
Act" with Ponca Nation  
Prosecutor Lisa Otipoby  
3-11-08, 6:30 pm  
NOYS Training Room

CASA Book Club  
"The Connected Child"  
4-13-08, 6:30 pm  
NOYS Training Room

CASA Pre-Service  
Spring Training  
Every Tues & Thurs.  
5:30 pm—8:30 pm  
Beginning March 25, 2008

## CASA's Mission Statement

Our mission is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children by providing quality volunteer advocates who work toward a safe, permanent home as soon as possible for each child.



Don't forget! CASA Volunteer Activity Reports are due the 5th of each month!

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