

July 2022 Issue #25
CASA CONNECTION
Newsletter



30 YEARS OF CASA VOLUNTEERS ADVOCATING FOR CHILDREN IN PLATTE & COLFAX COUNTIES

In July, 1992 CASA volunteers began advocating for children in Platte & Colfax county courts under then Judge Gerald E. Rouse. This CASA program was the third CASA program in Nebraska; Sarpy and Dodge counties also had active CASA programs. W. Yvonne Dugan coordinated the program and volunteer advocates included [but were not limited to] Sharon Bahr, Kathy Chadek, Tom DiCostanzo and Cheryl Richardson. Cheryl is a current member of the CASA Connection Board of Directors.

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Susan Jarecki

This month's letter is actually from a very dear lady we had as an advocate several years ago. Her name is Charlotte Griffith. Charlotte now lives in Rhode Island, close to her daughter. She recently sent us a donation with the following letter, and I felt this letter and Charlotte's loyalty to CASA needed to be shared. I hope you all enjoy this, as much as I have:

But did it help?

Charlotte Griffith 3-15-2022

"I saw a need. I stepped up to help. I gave it my best, but I'm not sure I helped at all!" Familiar feelings? Some of my most satisfying and energizing moments have come when I learned something I did made a difference. Likewise, moments that are the toughest, come when I've felt my efforts may have been wasted or even made things worse. Our family has been blessed with a story that I am going to share here that demonstrates how the effects of interaction with others can be carried for years before acting on it. To me that gives HOPE!

In the spring of 1966, my childhood family doubled in size. My parents married young and had 2 babies before my mother reached the age of 20! My baby sister died shortly after birth and my parents learned they had an RH factor problem and shouldn't have more babies. Mom had a hysterectomy, but she never gave up hope for another child. As my brother, Larry and I headed off for college, they began their search in earnest. They investigated adoption and had several short-term foster kids. Then unexpectedly, they were asked if they would take 4 siblings aged 5 through 9 for a special long-term placement. Mom let me make the call on the decision as it would be my last summer to live at home and I'd be preparing for my wedding. I'd always wished for a little sister, and here was an opportunity to have 2 of them, with 2 new brothers thrown into the mix. The first few days were rather chaotic, but my mother had a gentle strength, and consistent expectations, and gradually life evolved.

The 6 years after the kids came, their biological dad petitioned the court to have his children returned to him. He planned to combine his four kids with his girlfriends three. Mom and dad consulted a lawyer and were advised that biological parents usually got priority and things would be better for them if the kids went "home". As I think back on those years, I find I was focused on my teaching, parenting my children, helping mom and dad downsize, move to care centers and being grandparents. The girls visited mom and dad occasionally, and sometimes our trails crossed. Recently, Larry suggested we get together with our foster siblings. Only one, (the 5-year-old, who is now a grandma herself), Bethany, joined us, and it opened the door.

Neither Larry nor I had any expectation for what would happen next. Bethany called me and Larry to tell us we were both going to receive a letter from her and there would be a check in it along with an explanation. She told us that after they were living on their own, Bethany and her siblings would occasionally go out to our farmhouse when they knew mom and dad would be in church, and fill their cars with gas, or select some cookies that were in the freezer. What bothered Bethany most, though, was that she had lied to mom, telling her she had completed her GED when she had not. As the years went by, she played with the idea of saving money to repay her share and ask mom to forgive her. Then mom died, and she thought she would never be able to do it. When Larry and I reached out to her, she saw a second chance. As Bethany and I talked about how we would use the money, I thought about CASA. When I described what CASA volunteers can do to assist children her face lit up. We brainstormed actions that could have been how this story might have been different if she and her siblings could have had a CASA. No question. We had touched her life! Through writing and reflecting on this I realize it has also made a difference in ours...

CASA Connection Happenings

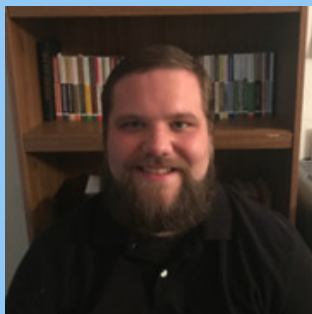
Tim Sky completed his pre-service new volunteer training and was sworn in on March 23. Tim was the last CASA Connection to be sworn in by now-retired judge Hon. Frank Skorupa who said it had been an honor to swear in so many CASA volunteers through the years.



Congratulations to CASA Connection Volunteer Advocate Kim Schmidt. Kim was recognized by the Columbus Area United Way as an Outstanding United Way Partner Agency Volunteer. We truly appreciate all you do for the children we serve!!!!



Thank you to Chaplain Nathan Joslin, Executive Director of the Columbus Rescue Mission. Nathan gave a really interesting talk on all the wonderful programs offered through the Columbus Rescue Mission. He also spoke on their expansion to a larger facility they are working on. Many of our volunteers as well as our staff were not aware of how much the Columbus Rescue Mission does in our community and this was very enlightening.



Thank you to everyone who stopped by our table during Clarkson's Czech Days festival and to Tricia Dusatko for helping me. Outreach Coordinator, Lisa Rosendahl, enjoyed talking with everyone about CASA Connection and how our volunteers positively impact the lives of the children they work with. She also spoke about our real need for volunteers in Colfax county.



Congratulations to the 30th graduating class of Leadership Columbus as they go on to be future leaders of our community. CASA Connection volunteers Karmen Thompson & Keith Luedders, as well as Outreach Coordinator, Lisa Rosendahl were members of this class. Leadership Columbus is a wonderful way for members to get involved in our community.





LOOK WHAT WE DID!!!

On July 22, 2022 Clerk Magistrate of Nance County, Shirley Stuart Monroe performed the swearing-in ceremony of the very first CASA volunteers in Nance County. Joining our CASA family are: (Right to left) Kimberly Olsufka; Annette Swantek and Barb Howser. These ladies stepped up to the plate to become advocates for the abused and neglected children in Nance County.

WELCOME!!!



2022 "I'm a Little Cutie" Baby Contest

To register for CASA Connection's Baby Contest visit our website:

<https://casaconnectionne.com/news-events/newsroom.html>

Also: Be sure to stop by our booth in Frankfort Square on
Saturday, August 13.



2022 Columbus Days
"I'm a Little Cutie"
Baby Contest
Saturday, August 13, 2021
Frankfort Square, Columbus NE

All age groups will be co-ed ~ prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place in each age group ~ Judging will begin at 8:30 a.m. with the youngest contestants and the age groups will run consecutively so arrive early ~ The contest will be completed by 10:00 a.m. ~ Contest winners will be announced immediately after each age group scores are tallied.

AGE GROUPS: 0-6 MONTHS * 7-12 MONTHS * 13-18 MONTHS

Registration fee - \$15

ALL REGISTRATION FORMS & FEES MUST BE TO THE CASA OFFICE
BY 5 P.M. ON AUGUST 11th NO EXCEPTIONS

Mail entry form & registration fee to:
CASA Connection; 2610 14th Street; Columbus NE 68601
Or hand deliver to:

1465 27th Ave. (across the alley to the north of the Sheriff's office)
Please complete form below and return with appropriate fee.

Register and pay online
at:
Casaconnectionne.com

Pre-Registration is Required

Please direct questions to: 402-563-4944 or casacon@yahoo.com

***By participating in the baby contest, parents authorize CASA Connection to take images of themselves and their children during the event and to share these images through various media only for the purpose of publicizing CASA Connection and the baby contest. ** Proceeds from this contest will benefit CASA Connection, a program that advocates for abused and neglected children in Platte and Colfax Counties. CASA Connection is proud to be a Columbus Area United Way Partner Agency. CASA Connection would like to thank Walmart for its continued support of the baby contest.*

Baby's Name: _____ Gender: male female

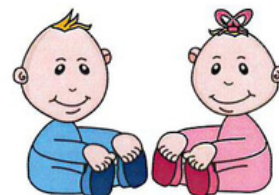
(Please list baby's name as you want it announced at the event)

Mother (first, last name) _____

Father (first, last name) _____

Best number to contact: _____

Baby's Birthdate: _____ Baby's age as of 8/13/2022 (in months) _____



Nebraska CASA Conference

Hope Needs a Helping Hand



The Nebraska CASA Conference is the annual gathering of CASA volunteers & staff, board members, and our partners in child welfare from all parts of Nebraska. The 2022 conference will be held at the Graduate Hotel in Lincoln August 26 & 27th. The theme of this year's conference is "Hope Needs a Helping Hand." Speakers at the event include Luis Sotelo, Vice President, Division of DEI at Doane University and Dr. Alger Studstill, Jr. Deputy Director of Protection & Safety, State of Nebraska DHHS.



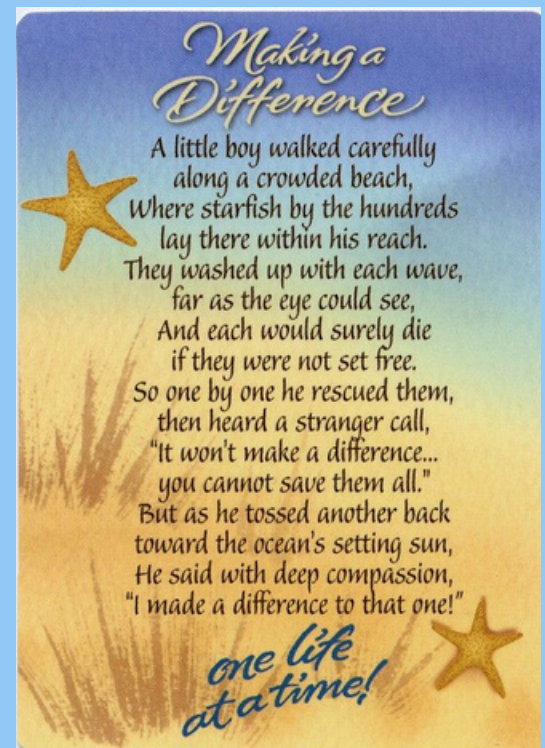
April was declared Child Abuse Prevention month in Columbus!! Thank you to the Guardians of the Children for heading this up and thank you to the city of Columbus for signing the proclamation! During April there were "Pinwheels for Prevention" displays set up all over Columbus, including in front of the building that houses the CASA Connection offices. Pinwheels symbolize healthy, happy children and families.



Volunteer cases closed

Since January 1, 2022 these volunteers have had their CASA cases closed and permanency achieved for the children

- Karmen Thompson- Reunification achieved
- Jean & Dan Britt- Child was adopted
- Tricia Dusatko- Reunification achieve
- Theresa Seipel- Child was adopted
- Lynsey Kime- Reunification achieved



We LOVE our volunteers!

Our advocates & board members
are the best!



2022 CASA Connection Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

CASA Connection's 2022 Volunteer Appreciation Celebration will be held on August 12 at the Hill Family Residence. Travis Hill, one the members of our Board of Directors, and his family have graciously invited us to host our event at their beautiful home. This promises to be an evening of fun & fellowship with our volunteers, board members and their guests. It's also a time for us to show how grateful we are for our hard-working, dedicated volunteers who strive to improve the lives of the children they advocate for.

Board Members

Scott Ditter, President
Robbin Cutsor, Treasurer
Theresa Seipel, Secretary
Zach Johnson
Travis Hill
Doug Pauley
Karina Perez
Cheryl Richardson
Nicole Saalfeld

Staff

Susan Jarecki:
Executive Director
casacon@yahoo.com

Lisa Rosendahl
Outreach Coordinator
casacoord@gmail.com

Volunteer Advocates

Mike Applegate
Traci Barnes
Dan Britt
Tom Cleary
Robbin Cutsor
Tricia Dusatko
Renee Held
Carrie Kreber
Terri Lab
Kim Schmidt
Tim Sky
Tara Svatora
Cheryl Noonan
Barbara Howser

Julie Anderson
Rolaine Blaser
Jean Britt
Dee Condon
Joy Dannelly
Mike Goos
Scarlett Johnson
Lynsey Kime
Keith Luedders
Theresa Seipel
Joan Smith
Karmen Thompson
Annette Swantek
Kim Olsufka

CASA Connection is affiliated with
the Nebraska CASA Association &
The National CASA Association.

CASA Connection is a
Columbus Area United Way agency.

CASA Connection sends a huge THANK YOU to the following for all of their past support, funding and in-kind donations

Platte County, Nebraska
Columbus Area United Way
National CASA Association
Cornhusker Goodwill Fund
Linda K. Price

Colfax County, Nebraska
Nebraska CASA Association
Nebraska Crime Commission
Snow Redfern Foundation

2022 Year-To Date Program Statistics

53 Children referred to our program
46 Children served with an advocate
36 Family groups

5 Cases Monitored
29 Active volunteers
4 Volunteers sworn in



Thank you to Nicole Lindhorst and Beyoutiful Boutique for taking part in the IPledge promotion with the Columbus Area United Way. On St. Patrick's Day, CASA Connection was represented and received a portion of sales made during their Ladies Night event.

Thank You

"The journey through the child welfare system to a safe, loving forever home is a long road made easier with the support of a CASA volunteer." Author unknown

CALLING RESIDENTS OF COLFAX COUNTY, SPECIFICALLY ADULTS 21 YEARS OLD & OLDER WHO CAN PASS A BACKGROUND CHECK: WE NEED YOU.

Why do I need you, you ask? CASA Connection always needs community volunteers to advocate for children in Colfax, Nance & Platte counties. However we particularly need volunteers from Colfax county, as we frequently get referred to advocate for children from or placed in Colfax county and not enough volunteers able to accept those cases. If the training we provide all of our volunteers is a concern I can work with you in that training via Zoom or I can come to you or a combination-whatever works for you. You can even find a friend who would like to volunteer as well so you don't feel alone in all of it. I'd be happy to talk to anyone-even groups-about being a CASA volunteer! Contact me at 402-563-4944 & I will tell you all you need to know about CASA Connection.

Lisa Rosendahl. Outreach Coordinator

Birthdays

Nicole Saalfeld July 14
Mike Applegate July 22
Lynsey Kime July 31
Scott Ditter September 19
Cheryl Noonan October 2
Tim Sky October 30
Kim Olsufka October 30



CASA Connection

Office Location:

1465 27th Avenue

Mailing Address:

2610 14th Street

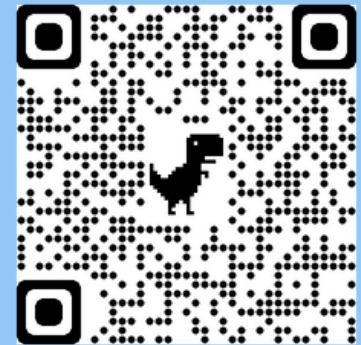
Columbus, NE 68601

Phone: 402.563.4944

Website:

www.casaconnectionne.com

**To learn more about volunteering with
CASA Connection scan the QR code:**



Find Us | *We're Social*

Facebook:

CASA Connection, Columbus, NE

Instagram:

@casa_connectionnebraska

Twitter:

@CASAConnectNE



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

