

January 2022 Issue #24  
**CASA CONNECTION**  
Newsletter



## Welcome to our newest advocate

Congratulations & Welcome to our newest volunteer advocate: Terri Lab. Terri was sworn in by the Honorable Frank J. Skorupa on September 30. We are so glad that Terri has joined our team of volunteers willing to speak up and advocate for the children we advocate for here in Platte, Colfax and Nance counties.



In November Robbin Cutsor was honored by the Columbus Sertoma Club with their Service to Mankind award. Robbin was given this award due to her outstanding service to the community. Along with the many local organizations she devotes time to Robbin has also been involved with CASA Connection for over seven years as a member of the Board of Directors and as an advocate. Since 2014 Robbin has advocated for six children. CASA Connection appreciates everything she has done for our organization.



# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Susan Jarecki

So, Lisa tells me it is time for another "A letter from the Director" for the Newsletter, and I am like...What do I write about?

Maybe I should write about our huge successes this year...?

- We have reached a total of 27 volunteers. My goal has always been 30, so we are so close I can see reaching that goal in just a few more months.
  - We succeeded with our expansion into Nance County!
  - Our AMAZING volunteers carried on through COVID restrictions and did an awesome job with keeping up with their cases.
  - We got most volunteers set up with CASA Connect and they can input their own information.
- ~ It has been a GREAT year at CASA Connection, despite the obstacles we faced.

Maybe I should write about the COVID pandemic...

- We are still struggling with getting everyone healthy.
  - Many have been vaccinated, many have chosen to not vaccinate.
  - We are still being warned about large gatherings, masks, and social distancing.
- ~ However, this is a daily topic that everyone wants to just GO AWAY.

I could talk about New Year's Resolutions...

- Mine, as always, is to get healthier. (I write this after reloading my Starbucks card).
  - Many want to lose weight, quit smoking, or save more money.
  - Maybe stay in touch with family, and friends better.
- ~ I last until about the end of February, then it is forgotten anyway.

So, I have concluded not "writing" about any of this stuff. I am just going to say Thank you to each of you for being a part of CASA Connection and wish you all the VERY BEST in 2022!!!

*Susan Jarecki*



# Thank you to all our generous donors

**THANK YOU to Grace Jewelry.** They chose CASA Connection to be the recipients of donations made by customers during their annual Early Bird Holiday Sale.



**THANK YOU to US Bank of Columbus** for the donation of baby items and infant/toddler clothing.



Annabel Buggi from US Bank makes a delivery of items to be given to CASA kiddos.



**THANK YOU to Amelia Kreber.** Amelia is the daughter of CASA advocate, Carrie Kreber. Amelia was the voice of a young girl in our recent radio ad. She is shown above in the KLIR radio station sound room with Todd Heller, Alpha Media Integrated Marketing Specialist.



**THANK YOU** to members of the Guardians of the Children Heartland chapter for the donation of toys, blankets and other gifts which we are now able to give to the children we advocate for. The toy drive is an annual community event for their group and members chose CASA Connection as this year's recipient. Our volunteers are encouraged to stop at our office prior to visiting their "CASA kiddos" and picking out gifts to take to them. Thank you to anyone who donated gifts to this toy drive.

**THANK YOU to Denise Kracl & Dee Condon** for the donation of Christmas cards and holiday wrapping supplies. We encourage our volunteers to come in to our office to pick out toys and gifts for their CASA kiddos from our supply. They can now have fun wrapping them thanks to Denise & Dee.



*Thank you to all of our loyal supporters and everyone who generously donated to Grace Jewelry, US Bank or Guardians of the Children. We are very grateful for the generosity of our communities.*

# CASA Connection Out & About

## CONGRATULATIONS TO DEE CONDON FOR BEING INVITED TO SERVE ON THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER COUNCIL.

The National Volunteer Council is a working council whose purpose is to advise and partner with National CASA/GAL to address strategic issues impacting volunteer advocacy. Dee has been a volunteer advocate with CASA Connection since November 2017.

**We are very proud of Dee for this honor!**



## Columbus Days 2021

Oh, the Places We'll Go! was the theme of 2021's Columbus Days celebration held in August. CASA Connection held its annual "I'm a Little Cutie" baby contest fundraiser.

We also hosted an outreach booth with a "guess the number of items in the jar" game. The weather was perfect and everyone had a good time over the weekend.

The Grinch even made an appearance at our booth.



**0-6 MONTH WINNERS**

First Place: Kamilla Jarecki  
2nd Place: Hazel Catherine Stempek  
3rd Place: Maliha Hernandez



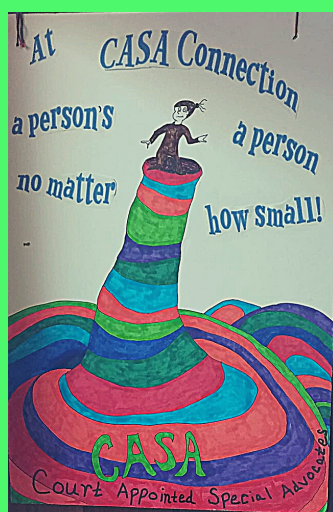
**7-12 MONTH WINNERS**

First Place: Ella McPhillips  
2nd Place: Silas Micek  
3rd Place: Kimber Schefcyk



**13-18 MONTH WINNERS**

First Place: Tatum Beranek  
2nd Place: Rayli Zimmerman  
3rd Place: Finnley Banahan



# Nebraska CASA Conference

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 2021 conference was held at the Embassy Suites in Omaha August 27 & 28th. Keynote speakers was comedian Marni Vos. Over the two days of the conference staff & volunteers had a chance to attend diverse workshops such as "Engaging Through Empathy". Nine volunteers and two staff members from CASA Connection registered for the event virtually or in-person.



Left to right: Theresa Seipel, Robbin Cutsor, Lisa Rosendahl, Susie Jarecki



Keynote speaker Marni Vos



A table centerpiece



Keynote speaker Tyre "McDowell, Jr.

## Chalk it Up for CASA

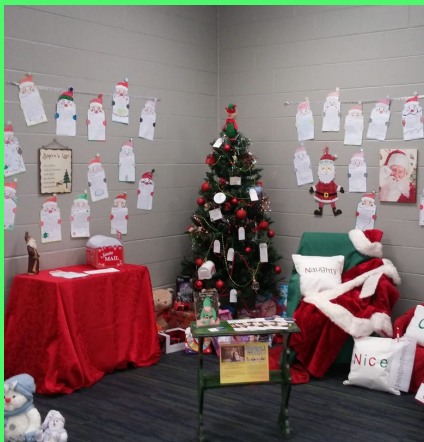
The Nebraska CASA Association held Chalk it Up for CASA in September to promote volunteerism and awareness of CASA across Nebraska. This statewide street chalk art competition was open to everyone of all ages across Nebraska. There were many entries from Columbus including one from Claire Renner. Claire Renner's chalk art of a young dinosaur with a larger one was chosen as the GRAND PRIZE WINNER. Congratulations Claire!



Grand Prize Winner  
Claire Renner from Columbus

## Festival of Trees

CASA Connection took part in the Columbus Women's Club Annual Festival of Trees community event in November. CASA Connection participated with a "Letters to Santa" themed tree display. Included were letters written by local children, Santa's suit ready for the big night, decorations made by CASA Connection volunteers & staff along with gifts under the tree which will be given to the children our volunteers advocate for. We were told our tree was a big hit at the festival.



Left to right: Joy Dannelly, Traci Barnes, Rolaine Blaser.  
Not pictured: Julie Anderson, Joan Smith

# 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

## 2021 Year-End Program Statistics

63 Children referred to our program  
53 Children served with an advocate  
33 Family groups

9 Cases Monitored  
26 Active volunteers  
4 Volunteers sworn in

## Birthdays

Cheryl Richardson	January 3
Kim Schmidt	January 5
Tricia Dusatko	January 7
Jean Britt	January 18
Travis Hill	January 14
Tara Svatora	January 14
Karina Perez	February 21
Traci Barnes	February 21
Joy Dannelly	March 12
Terri Lab	March 17
Zach Johnson	March 19
Karmen Thompson	April 16
Carrie Kreber	May 10
Theresa Seipel	June 3
Rolaine Blaser	June 7
Tom Cleary	June 13



Happy Birthday!

# Board Members

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

# Volunteer Advocates

Mike Applegate  
Traci Barnes  
Dan Britt  
Tom Cleary  
Robbin Cutsor  
Tricia Dusatko  
Renee Held  
Kaye Karmann  
Lynsey Kime  
Keith Luedders  
Jeanne Quinn  
Joan Smith  
Carrie Trofholz  
John Weeder

Julie Anderson  
Rolaine Blaser  
Jean Britt  
Dee Condon  
Joy Dannelly  
Mike Goos  
Scarlett Johnson  
Carrie Kreber  
Terri Lab  
Kim Schmidt  
Theresa Seipel  
Tara Svatora  
Karmen Thompson

**THANK YOU!**  
*Thank you!*

## CASA Connection

### Office Location:

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**Phone:** 402.563.4944

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## Staff

**Susan Jarecki: Executive Director**

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**Lisa Rosendahl: Outreach Coordinator**

**Email: [casacoord@gmail.com](mailto:casacoord@gmail.com)**

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

CASA Connection is a  
Columbus Area United Way agency.

Find Us | *We're Social*

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CASA Connection, Columbus, NE

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