

January 2023 Issue #26
CASA CONNECTION
Newsletter



**Welcome to our newest advocate &
to Honorable Denise Kracl**

Congratulations & Welcome to Cheryl Noonan, our newest volunteer advocate. Cheryl was sworn in by the Honorable Denise Kracl on September 27. Cheryl is the first CASA volunteer advocate to be sworn in by Judge Kracl.

Judge Kracl was appointed to the County Court, Fifth Judicial District, by Governor Ricketts in August. We look forward to working with her for many years to come.



**A LETTER FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Susan Jarecki**

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CASA Connection Happenings

Volunteer Appreciation Pool Party August 12 at the home of Travis & Tara Hill

CASA Connection board member, Travis and his wife Tara, generously allowed us to have a volunteer appreciation party at their pool & pool house. The evening was a big hit with guests enjoying the pool, the food and catching up with other volunteers, board members, staff and their guests. We are so very grateful to have such a group of big-hearted individuals dedicated to improving the lives of children in our communities.

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS & BOARD MEMBERS FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO CASA CONNECTION



Halloween Trunk or Treat in Schuyler and Platte Center

Exec. Director Susie Jarecki took her Hocus Pocus themed car on the road to Schuyler and Platte Center where she and her daughter-in-law handed out treats to the MANY trick-or-treaters who attended.



Nebraska CASA Association State Conference August 26-27 at the Cornhusker Hotel, Lincoln

CASA Connection staff & volunteers attended the Nebraska CASA Association State Conference. Held in Lincoln, the conference featured keynote speakers and development opportunities for CASA volunteers, staff and others. Pictured from left: Theresa Seipel, Joy Dannelly, Susie Jarecki and Robbin Cutsor. Also pictured: one of the keynote speakers, Dr. Alger Studstill, Jr. Deputy Director of Protection & Safety, Children & Family Services Division at Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.



Thrivent Care Packs for Kids and Giving Tuesday

During the month of October the Thrivent member network collected items such as hygiene products, books and comfort items for children served by CASA Connection. On November 29 the Nebraska CASA Association partnered up with Thrivent for Giving Tuesday for a matching funds program. During that day local donors were encouraged to come to our CASA Connection office to drop off their donations. Thank you to all who donated to CASA.



Exec. Director Susie Jarecki holds a donation check from Thrivent. Thank you to everyone who made donations.

Thank You

"I'm a Little Cutie" Baby Contest. August 13 at Frankfort Square

Our annual "I'm a Little Cutie" baby contest was another big hit this year. A BIG thank you to all the parents who entered their children. Every year the judges tell us it is always so tough to pick winners-all the children are cute enough to win. This year was NO exception. Thank you to our judges: Doug Pauley, Renee Held and Hope Freshour. Thank you to Walmart for providing the gift cards which were provided to the winners.



This year's Columbus Days' theme may have been *Nightmare on 13th Street* but the children & families who stopped by our booth weren't scared to play the spinning wheel game with "Spider Man" stopping by to see our Outreach Coordinator, Lisa Rosendahl, and her helpers. We also did a drawing for children to win several backpacks of fun items including stuffed animals, small blankets & school supplies. Thank you to everyone who stopped by and to our helpers. It was a great day to visit with people about CASA Connection and what our volunteers do to help children in our communities.



Burke Brown



Jonathan Niles

CASA Connection offers monthly Continuing Education sessions to assist our volunteer in obtaining the 12 hours of continuing education required by the National CASA Association. We cover a broad range of topics pertinent to our work as advocates for CASA. We are fortunate to be able to occasionally have guest speakers for these sessions. Recent guest speakers have included attorney Burke Brown who is the GAL on many of our cases, Jonathan Niles who is the Nebraska Camp Director for Royal Family Kids Camp and Kelly Garcia, Child Advocate with Center for Survivors.

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

Why do we 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

2022 End-of-Year Program Statistics

42 Children referred to our program
36 Children served with an advocate
28 Family groups

6 Cases Monitored
29 Active volunteers
4 Volunteers sworn in

Volunteer cases closed

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

- Renee Held Reunification achieved
- Tara Svatora- Child was adopted
- Keith Luedders- Reunification achieved

Birthdays

Susan Jarecki	January 3
Cheryl Richardson	January 3
Kim Schmidt	January 5
Tricia Dusatko	January 7
Jean Britt	January 8
Travis Hill	January 14
Tara Svatora	January 14
Karina Perez	February 21
Traci Barnes	February 21
Lisa Rosendahl	March 7
Joy Dannelly	March 12
Zach Johnson	March 19
Karmen Thompson	April 16
Carrie Kreber	May 10
Theresa Seipel	June 3
Rolaine Blaser	June 7
Tom Cleary	June 13



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
Barbara Howser
Lynsey Kime
Cheryl Noonan
Kim Schmidt
Tim Sky
Tara Svatora

Julie Anderson
Rolaine Blaser
Jean Britt
Dee Condon
Joy Dannelly
Renee Held
Scarlett Johnson
Carrie Kreber
Kim Olsufka
Theresa Seipel
Joan Smith
Annette Swantek

Karmen Thompson

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

CASA Connection is a
Columbus Area United Way partner
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
Thrivent Member Network
Linda K. Price

Colfax County, Nebraska
Nebraska CASA Association
Nebraska Crime Commission
Cornhusker Goodwill Fund

Facebook:

CASA Connection, Columbus, NE

Instagram:

@casa_connectionnebraska

Twitter:

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Office Location:

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Mailing Address:

2610 14th Street

Columbus, NE 68601

Phone: 402.563.4944

Website:

www.casaconnectionne.com



What does a *CASA* volunteer do?

Follow a *CASA* Volunteer's Journey to Help a Child Reach Permanency

THE CHILD IS PLACED IN FOSTER CARE OR RELATIVE CARE



THE CASA MEETS CHILD AND GETS TO KNOW THEM



THE CASA COMMUNICATES WITH EVERYONE INVOLVED IN THE CASE
foster family, biological family, DHR caseworker, doctor, teacher, counselor, etc.



THE CASA VISITS THE CHILD AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH



THE CASA PREPARES A COURT REPORT WITH THEIR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS & ADVOCATES FOR THE CHILD'S BEST INTEREST IN COURT



THE CASA CONTINUES TO ADVOCATE UNTIL THE CHILD IS RETURNED HOME OR PLACED IN A SAFE, PERMANENT HOME

