



## CASA Connection Keeping Busy



**Columbus Days 2018  
"Big Red Block Party"**  
CASA Connection had a booth that included a game for children & information for adults

Ethan & Austin Shuster, sons of Mike & Misty Shuster of Columbus, along with a buddy making the tough decision of which prize to pick. Our volunteer, Eddie did a great job with all the children.



Keeping cool with fans from CASA Connection



Not all of our new volunteers-in-training had 2 legs. Karmen Thompson brought along Tanner, who is the service dog she is training, to a session. He did very well laying under the table & only occasionally distracting us from the class. Karmen & Tricia Dusatko completed their training & will be sworn in October 4.

## TRAINING

★ Executive Director, Susie Jarecki, along with Dee Condon & Joy Dannelly, participated in a Suicide Prevention workshop at Northeast Community College in Norfolk on September 6.

★ Susie & Joy Dannelly, attended a Cultural Competency workshop in Norfolk on September 14.



Attorney Jason Mielak was back as guest presenter for our September volunteer Continuing Education session. He spoke about the CASA & GAL's roles in cases, and report writing. He also stressed that he likes working with our volunteers and that he learns a lot from them.

# The annual "I'm a Little Cutie" Baby Contest and fundraiser for CASA Connection was held during Columbus Days, August 18.



## The winners of the 0-6 months category in the "I'm a Little Cutie" Baby Contest:

*From right to left are:*

3rd place winner: Brielle Prokupec/ Parents: Alec & Alyssa Prokupec

2nd place winner: Remi Jensen/ Parents: Tony & Kristy Jensen

1st place winner: Vincent Griffiths/ Parents: Trevor & Estela Griffiths



## The winners of the 7-12 month category:

*From left to right are:*

3rd place winner: Trey Wayne Gill/ Parents: Cody & Alex Gill

2nd place winner: Chloe Amelia Martensen/ Mother: Caitlin Martensen

1st place winner: Devayani Appaji/ Parents: Guru Appaji & Melanie Avis



## Winners from the 13-18 month category:

*Left to right:*

3rd place winner: Beckett Avery/ parents: Jason & Christy Avery

2nd place winner: Brookly Michelle Scow/ parents: JD & Kim Scow

1st place winner: Jennifer Moravec/ parents: Trev & Michaela Moravec



## A BIG THANK YOU to:

- ★ **Our hard-working judges** of Saturday's "I'm a Little Cutie" baby contest. *from left to right:* **Evelyn Olietti, J.P. Holys, Juana Hansen.** They had a tough job with all the cuteness.
- ★ **Our awesome emcee: Riley Scott!!** You do a fantastic job keeping all those names straight
- ★ **Renee Held** [not pictured] **for helping with the scoring** of the contest.
- ★ **Wal-Mart for being our corporate sponsor** for the baby contest. They provided our prizes for the winners & treats for all the participants.

CASA Connection is lucky to have some ladies who volunteer their time and hearts to our organization by directly working with the children we serve or being on our Board of Directors. We are so grateful for what they do for us.

## Let's start to get to know some of our LADIES OF CASA



### Shelley Stempek. Board Member

- 1. Tell us about yourself: family, job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *I am a Mom of 5 (the oldest being my husband, Trent) ha, ha! After that BIG kid I have 4 actual children: Trey (7th Grader), Teegan (5th Grader) both at CMS and Tabbi (3rd Grader), Trevan (2nd Grader) both at Lost Creek. We moved to Columbus in 2005 for my State Farm Agency opportunity and fallen in love with our community through the years! I am a proud Sertoman and also on the Big Pal Little Pal Board.*
- 2. What drew you to becoming a CASA Board member?** *I am a former Foster Parent and would still be doing it if it were all up to me. Unfortunately it tugs on the heart a lot and my hubby felt like he had enough heartbreak. Being involved with CASA is my way of still being able to work for foster children in some capacity.*
- 3. What was the best birthday wish or gift you ever received? Why?** *This is crazy but the best birthday wish I ever received was a Gallon jar of Pickles. Yes, a gallon jar of pickles. I loved dill pickles and my parents got them for me... I was seriously SO excited and will never forget it.*



### Lisa McFarland. Board of Directors Chairperson

- 1. Tell us about yourself: family, job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *I currently serve as the Chair of the CASA Connection Board of Directors. My husband Shane and I have six kids, 4 who are adopted from foster care and 2 who aren't--and we love them all as ours. We have lived in Columbus for almost 12 years now, when we moved here so I could take a job as an attorney at NPPD. I have volunteered with many different organizations around Columbus but try to limit myself to one or two at a time so that I don't get over-scheduled. I have recently helped a good friend with the Thrivent Community Projects called "Comfort Closets", which provide a variety of supplies to the schools in our area for students in need.*
- 2. What drew you to becoming a CASA Board member?** *I As a former foster parent, I was already familiar with CASA and we had a great experience with a CASA volunteer who visited children placed in our home. It is an honor to be asked to join the board by one of the current board members, and it is an honor to work for such an amazing organization in our community. I have had a lot of fun helping to plan fundraisers and try to grow the CASA Connection organization.*
- 3. What would you tell your 16-year old self?** *I would tell her to take my nose out of the book! I was way too studious and serious, and missed out on a lot of teenage fun as a result. You are only young once. Of course, maybe I did make up for it in college.*



### Wendi Petersen. Advocate

- 1. Tell us about yourself: family, job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *I am an elementary school counselor at Columbus Public Schools. I volunteer at my church-St. Bon's, Center for Survivors & have coached youth soccer & baseball. My husband Dave & I just celebrated 25 years married & have 2 kids: Macy & Blake. I LOVE sports, especially volleyball, basketball & football & going to concerts.*
- 2. What drew you to becoming a CASA volunteer?** *In my job, I see a lot of difficult situations children are in. Through CASA, I hoped I could make a difference for some families in our community by giving kids a voice in the court system.*
- 3. If you could have 1 superpower what would that be? Why?** *I would want the power to ensure all children have food, water, clothing, shelter and love.*





### Rhonda Scott, Advocate

**1. Tell us about yourself: family, job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *My name is Rhonda Scott, married with 3 children and 6 grandchildren. I work for CanCooker in Fremont, Nebraska as an Office Manager. I love to go airboat, camp, work on crafts and cross stitch, but my main thing is hanging out with family. I do volunteer for the Red Cross as the Blood Drive Coordinator for the North Bend Blood Drives.*

**2. What drew you to becoming a CASA volunteer?** *Looking for something to do in my spare time, to get up off the couch and make a difference. Put it out on FaceBook looking for a good organization to volunteer for and Suzie's sister responded with CASA. Made the call and here we are.*

**3. Who is someone you really admire?** *All the volunteers for any organization really. It is not an easy job to do something sometimes for other people. But without us things don't flow as well for sure.*



### Joy Dannelly, Advocate

**1. Tell us about yourself: family job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *I have worked as an RN for the past 45 years. I am now about 98% retired, but I still do wellness physicals for Provant Healthcare Systems part-time, and I do a little work for Craig Home Care. I do what I can to care for various family and friends when the need arises. I was a Girl Scout for 22 years, but when I had sons, I switched and was a Boy Scout leader for over 15 years. I am a TeamMate Mentor at Lakeview High School. I am active in P.E.O. Chapter FJ, and in Harmony Chapter 13 Order of the Eastern Star. I am active in my church, in N'Ergetics extension club, JRRC card club, and Di-Namic Divas Red Hat Society.*

**2. What drew you to becoming a CASA volunteer?** *I had an OES friend who was a CASA coordinator and that initially got me interested, but I felt I just didn't have the time to devote to it. Then a friend had a grand-daughter who was involved in an abuse case. Again I was interested, but just didn't have the time to devote to it. Finally I felt the time was right and volunteered. And I am feeling pressure that I don't have enough time!!*

**3. Do you have a favorite quote? If so, what is it?** *I love quotes and have a number of favorites. One I've liked recently is "There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it seldom behooves any of us to speak ill of the rest of us." My dad said that a lot! And he attributed it to Abraham Lincoln.*



### Tamara Altstadt, Advocate

**1. Tell us about yourself: family job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *I have been married for 30 years and have two wonderful kids. Jackie just got married in August and lives in Omaha with her husband Preston. Andrew is at Northeast Community College in Norfolk attending classes and playing baseball for them. I am the registrar for Columbus Public Schools and have been doing this for the last 5 years. My husband Marty works from home estimating hog confinement buildings for Win Win LLC.*

**2. What drew you to becoming a CASA volunteer?** *My job is what drew me to be a CASA. I deal with so many different family dynamics each day. A lot of the students that I enroll are bounced around from house to house and really don't have anything stable in their lives. I am the first face they see when they register for school. Some days I just want to take them home with me and let them know it's going to be alright. Then one day I was reading the newspaper and there was an article about becoming a CASA volunteer so I called Suzie and here I am today.*

**3. What would you tell your 16-year old self?** *If there was 1 thing I could tell my sixteen year self it would probably have to be, be kind, smile and include that girl/boy that sat by herself/himself eating lunch. Who knows it may have made a difference in some way or another.*





### Renee Held, Advocate

- 1. Tell us about yourself: family, job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *Habitat for Humanity, have helped on each house so far, United Way volunteer.*
- 2. What drew you to becoming a CASA volunteer?** *I want to help kids. These are the "silent" witness to adults that mess up. To keep their lives positive.*
- 3. Who is someone you really admire?** *I admire my Grandmother, she was kind, patient and loving .*



### Jean Britt. Advocate

- 1. Tell us about yourself: family job, if you volunteer anywhere else.** *I'm married to Dan; we've been married for 35 years. We did foster care for 15 years. We adopted 2 children out of foster care and we have 3 older sons. We also have 7 grandchildren & 5 great-grandchildren!*
- 2. What drew you to becoming a CASA volunteer?** *Because I wanted to stay involved with kids.*
- 3. Do you have a favorite quote? If so, what is it?** *My mantra now is "I am enough", although it took me a long time to realize this.*



*CASA Connection Volunteer Appreciation Social*  
*Tuesday, October 23rd, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm*  
*at Shadows, 6767 Shadow Ridge Place, Columbus*  
*Please RSVP the number of guests attending to*  
*Susie or Lisa at the CASA office*  
*by October 16th at 402-563-4944 or email Susie at*  
*casacon@megavision.com*

## 2018 OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS:

**President: Lisa McFarland**

**Secretary: Harriet Berlin**

**Treasurer: Robbin Cutsor**

Travis Hill Doug Pauley

Zach Johnson Shelley Stempek

**We appreciate all of our board members for their dedication to our organization.**

**What if** you were taken from the only people you really knew --even with all their problems and promised a place to live with your own bed, new clothes, but you had to leave your friends, your clothes, your pillow, your pet (the only one who ever listened!), the food you like to eat, could you do it?

Maybe expecting kids... to appreciate what they are offered... is premature unless we first recognize all they have lost.



Word-of-mouth is one of the best methods to recruit new volunteers. Do you know of any group, club or organization that would like a presentation at their meetings? Our Outreach Coordinator, Lisa Rosendahl, would be happy to meet with them and speak about CASA Connection. Contact her at 402.563.4944 or casacoord@gmail.com for more information.

CASA  
Connection



**MALE VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**



Everyone has a role to play when it comes to the welfare of children.



Teen males in foster care need positive male role models to advocate on their behalf.



**APPLY TODAY!**  
New volunteer training class starting soon



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT LISA OR SUSIE AT 402.563.4944  
OR EMAIL CASACOORD@GMAIL.COM

## CASA Connection sends a huge Thank You to the following for all of their past support, funding, and in-kind donations!

*Platte County, Nebraska  
Colfax County, Nebraska  
Columbus Area United Way  
Nebraska CASA Association  
National CASA Association  
Snow Redfern Foundation  
Cornhusker Goodwill Fund  
Walmart  
Linda K. Price  
VOCA*

### Current Program Statistics since January 1 2018

<b>20 Children referred to our program</b>	<b>45 Cases monitored</b>
<b>48 Children served with an advocate</b>	<b>19 Active volunteers</b>

### Check out our booth at these events

**November 10, 9:00 am to 4:00. 1C Church Craft & Vendor Fair.**  
The Sanctuary, 2200 28th Ave., Columbus

**December 8, 9:00-5:00. Christmas Rush Craft & Vendor Show.**  
Center 30 Mall, Columbus

## Continuing Education Opportunities

### ❖ Protecting the Innocent: Drug Endangered Children

Tuesday, November 6, Divots Conference Center, Norfolk

### ❖ November Continuing Education Series

Wednesday, November 7, Noon to 1:00, CASA Connection conference room.

Thursday, November 15, 5:30 to 6:30, CASA Connection conference room.

Wednesday, December 5, Noon to 1:00 CASA Connection conference room

Thursday, December 13, 5:30 to 6:30, CASA Connection conference room.

## **CASA Connection**

### Office Location:

1465 27th Ave.

### Mailing Address:

2610 14th Street

Columbus, NE 68601

Phone: 402-563-4944

Fax: 402-562-6178

### Email:

[casacon@megavision.com](mailto:casacon@megavision.com) or

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

### Website:

[www.casaconnectionne.com](http://www.casaconnectionne.com)

[Find us on Facebook & Twitter](#)



[www.facebook.com/casaconnectioncolumbus](http://www.facebook.com/casaconnectioncolumbus)



[@CASAConnectNE](https://twitter.com/CASAConnectNE)

CASA Connection is affiliated with the Nebraska CASA Association and the National CASA Association. CASA Connection is a United Way agency.



## Volunteer Advocates

Rolaine Blaser  
Tracy Duncan  
Carrie Trofholz  
Renee Held  
Bonnie McPhillips  
Wendi Petersen  
Rhonda Scott  
Brenda Vermeire  
Jeanne Quinn  
Jean Britt  
Dan Britt  
Tammy Micek  
Tami Altstadt  
Dee Condon  
Jamey Price  
Kim Schmidt  
Carrie Kreber  
Joy Dannelly



### BIRTHDAYS



Tami Altstadt	October 11
Robbin Cutsor	October 24
Dan Britt	November 11
Deb Wright	November 20
Renee Held	November 20
Harriett Berlin	December 6
Dee Condon	December 14
Doug Pauley	December 28
Bonnie McPhillips	December 28

