

RCCASA UPDATES SEPTEMBER ~ 2010

RCCASA GUARDIANS CONTINUE TO SERVE 100% OF OUR CHILDREN!!

CASA Guardians - YOU ARE THE BEST!!!! For eight consecutive months, a CASA Volunteer has been assigned for 100% of the children in need. This is ONLY possible because of the tireless dedication and support RCCASA Guardians give. Regrettably, we share the numbers of maltreated children continue to rise in our community. August was one of those heartbreaking months ~ over 70 children entered foster care. On September 1, 2010, RCCASA volunteers were actively advocating for 487 children. Since January, CASA volunteers have served 418 new children entering the system - this simply would not be possible without you. **THANK YOU** ~ for all you do ~ Because of you, our children have a voice.

388 ACTIVE RCCASA GUARDIANS SERVING CHILDREN!!

The number of active guardians slightly decreased in July and August. We congratulate our guardians who completed law school and are continuing their journey of advocacy. For those guardians who 'retired' – thank you for your countless hours of service to CASA and our children. We value each one of you and are so very thankful for all you do. If you ever need a break, please let us know so that we can make transitional arrangements and support you as best we can. Also – please let us know if any of you are ready for a new case!!!

To continue serving 100% of our children, we need to recruit more wonderful people JUST LIKE YOU!!! PLEASE – if you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a CASA Advocate, let us know!!! Guardian training begins this month and we appreciate all your efforts towards recruiting new guardians.

The CASA Volunteer Advisory Council continues to be active in their work!! The committed group of guardians have been helping to recruit, plan events, augment training opportunities, and more – We thank you immensely – if any of you are interested in participating in the VAC, please let us know!

Guardian News Flash!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

New Anthony Hamilton Radio PSAs Available Now!

Grammy Award–winning R&B recording star Anthony Hamilton is helping raise awareness of CASA volunteer advocacy with a new radio PSA. Four versions of the PSA—15- and 30-second spots customized for CASA and GAL programs—are now available for download on CASAforChildren.org/Marketing.



Special Offer from *Grand Magazine*

September 12 is National Grandparents' Day, and we are pleased to announce a special offer for CASA employees, volunteers and supporters. *Grand Magazine* is offering a complimentary subscription to the online publication. This subscription includes the September/October issue, which features a cover story on National CASA spokesman Dr. Phil and a full-page ad for National CASA. Go to [Grand Magazine's website](http://GrandMagazine's website) to take advantage of this special offer.

FosterClub Transition Toolkit Helps Youth Map Futures

FosterClub, a national network supporting young people in foster care, has developed the *FosterClub Transition Toolkit* to help youth develop a plan for transitioning into adulthood. The toolkit encourages youth to prepare their individual plan with the supportive adults involved in their lives, such as foster parents, teachers, or mentors, and is designed to help youth assess their assets, identify resources, and plan for life after foster care. The toolkit also provides a "Readiness Scale" for youth to track their progress in the following 10 areas:

- Finances and money management
- Job and career
- Life skills
- Identity
- Performance
- Education
- Self care and health
- Housing
- Transportation
- Community, culture, and social life

FosterClub's toolkit supports the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, which requires that all States develop an individual transition plan for the foster youth during the 90-day period before a youth leaves foster care.

To download the *Transition Toolkit*, visit:

www.fosterclub.com/files/transition_toolkit.pdf (3,847 KB)

•Hit on All Fronts: Parenting with Mental Illness

Parents with mental illness face extraordinary obstacles to reuniting with children placed in foster care. Challenges include: Some State laws give parents with mental illness less time to reunify; few family supports are designed to help these parents; and, biases and misconceptions about mental illness can make reunification more difficult. In the Summer 2010 Issue of Rise Magazine, parents write about how they have struggled to overcome these obstacles and safely raise their children at home. Rise magazine is written by and for parents involved in the child welfare system. Its mission is to help parents advocate for themselves and their children.

http://www.risemagazine.org/PDF/Rise_issue_16.pdf

Foster Youth Transition Checklist

This checklist from Alliance for Children's Rights is designed to help professionals ensure foster youth are prepared for their transition to independent living. Questions that should be considered before a youth's foster care case is closed in Dependency Court are listed. The questions address: contact information for the child welfare agency and agencies that may be able to provide assistance, completion of the Transitional Independent Living Plan, health needs, educational needs, housing, credit and finances, legal issues, and sibling visitation. A list of resources for transitioning youth is provided. (2010)

<http://www.kids-alliance.org/pdfs/MaterialsOnline/NextStep/ACR%20Transitioning%20Youth%20Checklist.pdf>

August 8, 2010

SC Heart Gallery

August & September exhibit locations announced.



The South Carolina Heart Gallery is a collaborative program of the Department of Social Services and the Children's Foster Care Review Board. Regional DSS Adoption Recruiters are instrumental in organizing children's referrals and locating community venues. Local Foster Care Review Boards assist photographers and donate refreshments at photo shoots. Countless churches, libraries, hospitals, and other businesses host exhibits and public receptions to highlight the resulting portraits of waiting children. For more information, please visit www.scheartgallery.org or contact Program Coordinator Millie Qualls at 803-734-2595.

Resources from FRIENDS NRC for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention

FRIENDS National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention is pleased to announce the launch of their newly re-designed web site. It features easy to find information, enhanced search capabilities, their new logo, as well as the same great information they have always had. If you have not visited their site in a while, some of the new items you will find include: Peer Review in CBCAP: A Source Document for Assessment and Best Practice; Understanding the Common Ground Between Systems of Care and Child Abuse Prevention; Promising Practices in Parent Involvement Annotated Bibliography. Visit the FRIENDS NRC website to access these resources, as well as many others.

<http://friendsnrc.org/>

Article from **SC Department of Social Services**

(http://www.imakenews.com/scdss/e_article001848438.cfm?x=bhkj47Q,bbQd46Lt)

August 19, 2010

SCDSS/Center for Fathers Join Forces!

Memorandum of Agreement signed.



Dr. Kathleen Hayes, SC Department of Social Services Director, and Patricia Littlejohn, SC Center for Fathers and Families Executive Director sign a Memorandum of Agreement on August 2, 2010.

A *Memorandum of Agreement* was signed on August 2, 2010, between the South Carolina Center for Fathers and Families and the South Carolina Department of Social Services to establish a collaborative relationship in order to enhance services for families involved in the child welfare system.

Working together, the two agencies have the common goal of improving outcomes for children and lowering the numbers of children who are entering foster care each year by increasing the active involvement of noncustodial fathers in the case management and legal proceedings handled through the SC Department of Social Services. The Memorandum of Agreement also includes a pilot project with the Upstate Fatherhood Coalition and the Midlands Fatherhood Coalition Lexington site so that all of the partners can work hand-in-hand to provide additional supportive services, where possible, to non-custodial fathers who are being considered for placement if their child is being removed from the custodial parent's care.

New Section of National CASA Website Emphasizes Importance of Equity for Children

A new section of the National CASA website —CASAforChildren.org/Equity—describes our commitment to equity for children and provides resources on topics affecting equity and disproportionality in the child welfare system.

The section will continue to grow, and we'd love to hear from you! If you have a success story or resource to share, please send it to staff@nationalcasa.org

SEPTEMBER Volunteer Spotlight ~ CASA QUARTERBACKS!!!



As many of you know, Richland County CASA birthed the male recruitment initiative “CASA Quarterbacks” – Our male guardians are nationally known for their spirited dedication to child advocacy! RCCASA currently has over 100 male guardians appointed as Guardian’s ad Litem for maltreated children ~ we thank them for their inspiration and commitment to our children. The photographs above were taken at the recent quarterly recruitment event held August 27, 2010. We thank each of you who helped make this event a tremendous success!!! GO TEAM!!!!!!!!!!!!

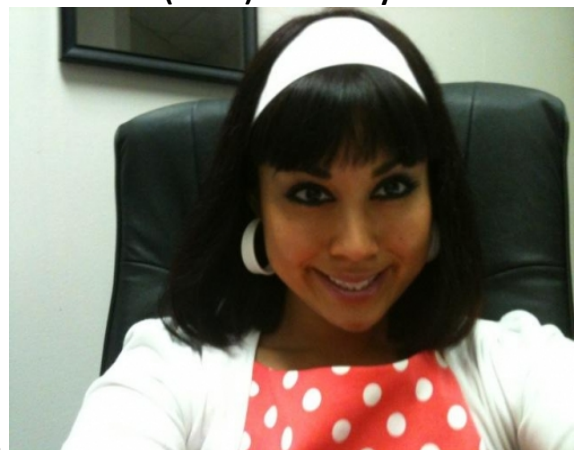
CONGRATULATIONS TO CASA’S VERY OWN ADRIENNE KELISH!!!!!! Adrienne just received the United Way’s VISTA of the Month Award!!!! Below was copied from their website!!!

VISTA of the Month

September 2010: Adrienne Kelish/

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)

- 1. Where are you from? I grew up in California and then I’ve lived in Texas and Oregon before moving to South Carolina.**
- 2. What were you doing before becoming an AmeriCorps*VISTA? I was working as a sexual assault advocate in Texas. I’ve got a Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice and a degree in Baking and Pastry Arts.**
- 3. Why did you join AmeriCorps*VISTA? I joined AmeriCorps to give back to my community. I had reached a point in my life where I was willing and able to go somewhere with the sole purpose of helping others. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) has always been an**



organization that I have wanted to get involved in.

- 4. What are your duties as a VISTA? I do a wide array of different things. I create a number of fliers and brochures and programs for various functions that CASA hosts or participates in. I also work very closely with the training of CASA volunteers. If anyone is interested in advocating for abused and neglected children, please contact James Washington at (803) 576 – 1590 or washingtonj@rcgov.us**

5. What are your goals for your year of service? I am the first VISTA at my organization and I would like to pave the way for future VISTA's. I am really enjoying the work that I have done so far and I hope that I helped to contribute to the diversity of this organization.

6. What are your plans after your year of service? I would like to go back to school for my Masters in Criminal Justice.

7. Any special accomplishments? I feel very honored to have my work represent CASA to the public. I have thoroughly enjoyed being so accepted as part of their team.

Adrienne is currently serving as an AmeriCorps*VISTA at Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). Anyone interested in Adrienne's project or interested in volunteering should contact her @ (803) 576-1724.

QUESTION:

ARE YOU ADVOCATING FOR A CHILD WHO HAS A SPECIAL NEED AND YOU CANNOT FIND THE RESOURCES TO MEET THAT NEED???? IF SO, PLEASE CALL PAM NIPPER AT THE CASA OFFICE TO SEE IF FUNDS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE CASA YOUTH ENRICHMENT PROGRAM!!! RECENTLY, SEVERAL CASA CHILDREN ENJOYED GETTING BACK TO SCHOOL HAIR CUTS AS WELL AS SPECIAL CAMP FEES!!! IF YOU HAVE A NEED, CALL PAM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

VOLUNTEERS – MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!!!

Back to School Celebration



Wednesday, September 15th ~ 11am-2pm ~ CASA office

Please join us for a 'Back To School' Drop-In honoring **OUR** children!! Stop by the CASA Office on September 15th for your CASA child's school bag filled with supplies!!

Through the generosity of the CASA Board and several Corporate sponsors ~ our kids will have the school supplies they need to enjoy a prosperous school year.

Please Bring A Friend!!!!!!

We are also hoping you will bring a friend to hear the **CASA message**. The only way to serve each child with a CASA is to recruit more **CASA Guardian's ad Litem!**

The next **CASA Training** will begin on **September 14, 2010** ~ Please let us know if you know of someone willing to **Speak Up For A Child**.

WE THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!!!!

We look forward to seeing you and your friend on September 15th!!

Upcoming Events



CasaAd.pdf (1 MB)

BREAKFAST WITH COACH TANNER!!!!

September 14, 2010 ~ New GAL Training ~ 2020 Hampton Street

September 15, 2010 ~ Back To School Recruitment - CASA!

September 25, 2010 ~ Family Day at the Village of Sandhills!

September 30, 2010 ~ Swearing In Ceremony for New GALs

October 6, 2010 ~ CASA Staff Meeting ~ 9:00 ~ CASA Office

In-Service ~ 12 Noon / CASA / Communities In Schools

October 13, 2010 ~ Breakfast With Coach Tanner! - Call CASA for tickets

October 13, 2010 ~ Volunteer Advisory Council Meeting - CASA

October 19, 2010 ~ New GAL Training ~ 2020 Hampton Street

Thank you for all you do!!



Missy Bowman Office Manager
James Washington Training Manager
Lela Allen-Haines Volunteer Manger
Vicki Raven Legal Services Manager
Tina Thomas Administrative Assistant
Pam Nipper CASA Supervisor
Hope Gossett CASA Supervisor
Sharon Walker CASA Supervisor
Thomas Clark CASA Supervisor
Heyward Hall CASA Supervisor
Carlton Boyd CASA Supervisor
Adrienne Kelish Public Relations Specialist