

CASA CHRONICLES

RCCASA FACILITATES WORKSHOP AT THE NATIONAL CASA CONFERENCE!

RCCASA was honored to be chosen as one of the facilitators at the National CASA conference in Orlando, Florida.

What started out to be a class of no more than 50 people turned into class of almost 200 participants. There was standing room only!! RCCASA lived up to its reputation. Many participants were drawn to the workshop due to the energy of the staff and volunteers !!!!

RCCASA was able to share their successes and assist CASA programs nationwide on recruiting male volunteers.

The Child Welfare League of America reports that 53% of the children in the child welfare system are males. In Richland County, 48% of the children in foster care are males.

RCCASA received numerous e-mails, letters, and phone

calls regarding the information RCCASA presented at the National Conference.

"Thank you all for your fabulous presentation. I left inspired and thinking about how I can implement some of your ideas in Chicago." CASA of Cook County.

"Thank you so kindly for sharing this excellent information. Your workshop was awesome." Inglewood Unified School District.

**RICHLAND
COUNTY CASA**

SEPTEMBER 2007



"Your seminar was the most entertaining and one of the most informative at the seminar." Coastal Plain CASA.



"You all are truly an inspiration for all programs and exactly the inspiration I needed."

"Not only are their ideas incredibly insightful and creative, but brilliantly successful."

"I attended your wonderful and upbeat CASA Quarterbacks session. I thoroughly enjoyed the session. There are some really helpful tools to help jump start our male Recruitment."

RCCASA RECEIVES 2007 NATIONAL DIVERSITY AWARD

Richland County CASA received the 2007 National CASA Diversity Association Award. RCCASA was recognized for its efforts in diversifying all levels of the organization so it is representative of the abused and neglected children served by CASA in Richland County. RCCASA's goal for the future is to ensure all children have the best volunteer match. When assigning cases, RCCASA is diligently trying to find the best possible match between the volunteer and the child. RCCASA understands volunteers may have

certain ages of children they want to work with or may have limited time schedules. As with the volunteers, the children we serve have unique needs. Many of the male children our agency serves may relate to a male GAL better than a female GAL. This holds true for our female children as well. They often feel more comfortable relating to a female GAL. As with everything, it depends on the needs of the child and the information we gather when he or she enters into the court system. RCCASA feels the same way about our volunteers. The more we know

about you the better we are able to assign a child or a sibling group to make that "perfect match."

Please take the time to participate in our events or drop by our office because we want to know you.

We would never have been able to win this award without your help in recruitment initiatives. "Diverse people recruit diverse people."

Thank you for all that you do for RCCASA.



Paige Greene accepting the 2007 National CASA Diversity Award!! In blue, CASA volunteers and CASA staff!! Several members of National CASA were asked to join the RCCASA team on stage because of their support and assistance in helping us to diversify our program. The best part of receiving the reward was the ability to network with CASA programs nationwide.

The National CASA Association Standards Committee has revised the 2007 standards to include Inclusiveness and Diversity. Critical to the administration of a quality CASA/GAL program, this new standard encapsulates National CASA's vision for diversity: a diverse CASA network helps us to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our multicultural world, enabling us to respond to each child's unique needs. (Update from the National CASA Standards Committee 2007.)

RCCASA CELEBRATES OUR VOLUNTEERS IN APRIL

RCCASA hosted a banquet honoring our valued volunteers. It was a night full of food, drink, laughter and fellowship. April is volunteer appreciation month and this gives RCCASA to show how much we appreciate all the work you do for the children of Richland County.

Our beloved GAL and Richland County Officer, Officer Watson sang in harmony with

his group, the Caleb Singers. RCCASA also rocked out to the Brian Rudisell band.



*To laugh often and love much;
to win the respect and the affection of children;
to earn the approbation of honest citizens and
endure the betrayal of false friends;
to appreciate beauty;
to find the best in others;
to give of one's self;
to leave the world a bit better,
whether by a healthy child,
a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;
to have played and laughed with enthusiasm
and sung with exultation;
to know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived...*

This is to have succeeded.

We do appreciate everything that you do and wish that we could host events every month in honor of our volunteers. There is never enough words or appreciation we can give you for the work that you do on a daily basis for the children that you serve.



Vicki Raven, Brenda Wallace and guest



RCCASA volunteers know the meaning of success!!

RCCASA presents in Hilton Head at the SC Association of Counties.

RCCASA presented at Hilton Head on August 2, 2007 to compete with other counties for J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award. Although, RCCASA did not win, it was an honor to be chosen and acknowledged for the work

RCCASA has accomplished. The CASA program was proud to be able to represent the County of Richland and to compete against counties statewide.



RCCASA RECEIVES GRANT TO HELP MENTOR VOLUNTEERS

RCCASA has been blessed to receive a grant to fund a part-time position to give additional support to our new volunteers and volunteers who feel they may need help in certain areas. RCCASA is pleased to announce Birch Cannon has agreed to fulfill this part-time position.

Birch has personal experience in what it is like to be from a business background and be “thrown” into an unfamiliar system. It can be intimidating for a new volunteer to attend a meeting at

DSS for the first time or to go on the initial home visit. On his first case, Birch worked diligently on trying to keep the children home. When the parents had a setback and the children were placed in different foster homes, Birch had to deal with placement issues and having five children placed in different homes. He truly knows the frustration many volunteers may encounter while working on their case.

Birch has been a strong advocate and assisted CASA in training, recruiting, and has been involved

with the planning and development of new ideas. RCCASA is very grateful that Birch is willing to utilize his knowledge in mentoring new volunteers and current volunteers.



Birch training at 2007 National Conference

RCCASA WELCOMES THOMAS CLARK!!!!

RCCASA is pleased to announce the hiring of Thomas Clark as a new CASA Supervisor. Thomas was employed at Richland County Department of Social Services. RCCASA first heard of Thomas after receiving numerous compliments from volunteers such as “what a pleasure he was to work

with”, “how he always returns calls in a timely matter”, and “how easy he was to work with during the court process.”

When a new position became available, RCCASA was very excited to see that he had applied for the position. Thomas has experience not only with

child welfare but also with DJJ and in corrections. Thomas has worked previously in a supervisory position and RCCASA feels that with his wealth of experience he will be a great asset to the volunteers of CASA.

THE BOARD MEMBERS OF RCCASA

The board of RCCASA plays a major role in the funding of positions and also assists in ensuring additional supports are in place for the RCCASA volunteers. This year RCCASA is welcoming new board members and also con-

gratulating several board members on their new positions as board members.

Congratulations to Lesley Lampert as the new Chair of the Board, John Florence-Vice Chair, Deborah Dawson-Treasurer, and Edna Torian

as Secretary. Our board members are Heyward Bannister, Jack Bonnaville, Steve Schar, Dee Stogdill, Karen Horn, Jessie King, and Darcie Strickland!!!

RCCASA is looking forward to all of their future endeavors!

RCCASA UPDATING FILES

Within the next several months, RCCASA will be updating files. As a volunteer, you will see several polices being mailed out to you. One of the policies is the transportation policy. Many of our volunteers are very invested and committed to the children they serve. Volunteers want to take children on outings or to their scheduled meetings.

RCCASA has a strict no trans-

port policy. Also, CASA does not allow volunteers to take children to their homes or buy expensive gifts for their children.

Finally, CASA wants to reiterate the importance of seeing the child. Many of the children only have a voice in court, through you, the volunteer. It is imperative to see the child and give the CASA Supervisor up-dated reports. This allows

the Supervisor to assist you and handle situations that may arise if you are not available.

If you are having a difficult time seeing the children, please let us know. **WE CAN HELP YOU!!!!**

COURT SURVEY

Within the next month, RCCASA will be requesting you complete a short survey after court. RCCASA understands how overwhelming the court process can be and would like to assist you in whatever way possible. Please take the time to complete the survey after court. It will take approximately five minutes and

can be completed on-line at :

www.rccasa.org

If you do not have access to a computer, our office will assist you. It is important that we receive your feedback. The questions are as follows:

1. Did negotiations for your case begin on time? (2)Were you given adequate time to voice your opinion(3)Did you feel your recommendations had a

positive impact on the negotiations and outcome?(4)Did you make compromises on your recommendations? If yes, do you feel satisfied with the compromises you made?(5)Did you have adequate communication and assistance from your supervisor prior to court?(6) Did you receive a phone call from the CASA attorney prior to court?(7) Was your case put on record before the judge? If no, would you have liked to have your case put on record?(8)Did you feel satisfied with the outcome of your case today?

RCCASA WEBSITE!!!

RCCASA hopes you are enjoying our new and improved website. The website provides information on up-coming events as well as future trainings. The court report format and court report writing tools, monthly monitor reports, and

the Foster Care Review Board report form can be downloaded from our website. RCCASA has also added videotaped In-Service trainings to the site in an effort to meet the needs of our volunteers. Please feel free to give

any feedback regarding the website. This is your website.

www.rccasa.org

CASA FOR CASAS

For the 5th consecutive year, the CASA's Board of Directors is pleased to announce its partnership with the Columbia Homebuilders Association. This special fundraiser takes place at the Parade of Homes held annually. This fundraiser is only a success with the help of the volunteers. Not only do the volunteers help with selling tickets to raffle off a playhouse, last year several of the volunteers built the playhouse.

This year several of the volunteers have already stepped forward to begin building this

year's playhouse. This fundraiser is imperative in the recruitment of new volunteers and the support of our current volunteers. This allows more of the abused and neglected children of Richland County to have a voice in court. This fundraiser truly comes from the heart and soul of every volunteer and the need for children to have a safe and stable home.

This year's Parade of Homes will be held at Turner's Point in Lexington. The event dates are September 15th-30th. The event is open seven days a

week and the volunteers serve on all three shifts: 11:00am-2:00p.m., 2:00p.m.-5:00p.m., and 5:00p.m.-7:30p.m. If you would like to volunteer for a shift, please e-mail runyanc@rcgov.us. Please write your name, phone number and the shift you wish to volunteer for.



CASA QUARTERBACKS

Many volunteers may wonder “what is a CASA Quarterback?” In 2004, male children accounted for 53% of the abused and neglected children in Richland County. Nearly all of the volunteers at the time were women. Just as many of our female children would not relate to a male volunteer RCCASA was experiencing some of the same barriers with the male children. During this time, RCCASA had 13 active male guardians. RCCASA requested the assistance of its current male volunteer pool and asked if they would each recruit one new member for RCCASA. This began the development of a dynamic group of male volunteers who have “branded” the name CASA Quarterbacks. Today, RCCASA has over 80 male volunteers. These male volunteers take cases where there may have been no positive male role models in the child's life. They also are able to take many of the male teenagers who may have a violent past and can only relate to a male influence.

The CASA Quarterbacks have taken it upon themselves to engage in the recruitment process and also to assist in the training of the new male volunteers. They host sponsored events to meet quarterly and share their cases and also bring new potential volunteers into the program. RCCASA is blessed to have these volunteers to help be strong advocates for the children they serve.

WHY? WHAT? HOW?

Q. As a GAL being an advocate for my child, why do I not have the ability to move the child I serve from one foster home into another more appropriate foster home?

A. Even though many times, the GAL has the most information regarding the child and believe it is in the child's best interest to be moved from a foster home or be placed with a certain relative, the child is still in the custody of DSS Richland County. As a GAL, you are able to give a recommendation, but you do not have the authority to have a child moved. As a GAL, if you have a strong belief the

current placement of the child is not in the child's best interest, please call your CASA Supervisor to discuss what options you may have. RCCASA may need to request an earlier court date or there could be a need to call the child abuse hotline for immediate action on the case. RCCASA will assist you in what steps you may need to take.

Q. As a CASA volunteer how can I help achieve permanency for a child?

A. One way you can assist the child is to assure that all options are fully explored—including maternal and pa-

ternal relatives. Also, always address the permanency of the child at meetings, in court, and ask questions and voice concerns. Next, pay close attention to the timeline of these hearings. There is a misconception that *children and youth don't need legal permanency*. Most youth in care have promises that were not kept. They need demonstrated, concrete ways to know they belong to a family for life. Finally, be aware that a permanent placement is not the end of the process. The CASA volunteer can be a strong advocate in ensuring the child's return to the biological home or placement in a pre-adoptive home is a smooth transition.

RCCASA WANTS TO GIVE MUCH THANKS TO THE CLERK OF COURT FOR HOLDING THE SPAGETTI LUNCHEON ON JULY 25, 2007 AS A FUNDRAISER FOR CASA!!!! RCCASA IS GRATEFUL TO HAVE SUCH STRONG SUPPORT FROM A VARIETY OF DEPARTMENTS WITHIN RICHLAND COUNTY FROM GIVING THEIR TIME TO VOLUNTEER AS WELL AS HOLD EVENTS IN HONOR OF CASA.

CASA SERVES UP CHILI IN APRIL

RCCASA used chili to assist in their efforts to raise public awareness about the tragedy of child abuse in Richland County during the month of April proclaimed as the National Child Abuse Prevention Month. RCCASA served chili

in the courthouse, having people vote on the best tasting chili.

Also, **GREAT THANKS** to the USC Law School for holding a chili cook off in honor of RCCASA!!!!



Richland County CASA

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WEB!!
WWW.RCCASA.ORG**

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- August 25-Crane Creek Community Expo (Crane Creek Community Recreation Center) 9:00a.m.-2:00p.m
- August 31st-Richland County School District One presents information on Social Work for children in the School System-CASA office 12:00p.m.-1:15p.m.
- September 5th-6th-DHEC Conference on SC Violence Prevention & Data Dissemination.
- September 11th-DDSN presents children available to children from the Department of Disabilities and Special Needs-CASA Office 5:30p.m.-6:30p.m.
- September 15th –30th-Parade of Homes, Turner's Pointe, Lake Murray-Come out to support CASA for CASA'S.
- September 28th-Dr. Luberoff presents compelling session on Identifying Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect-CASA Office 12 noon-2:00p.m.
- September 29th-Mt. Zion Cannon Church-Community Expo 9:00-1:00p.m.
- October-New Guardian ad litem Pre-Service Training-contact office for exact dates.
- October 9th-DJJ presents services provided to children in foster care by the Department of Juvenile Justice-CASA office-5:30p.m.-6:30.
- October 26th Richland County DSS, Treatment Services for children-CASA office 12:00p.m.-1:00p.m.
- November 13th-Richland County Sheriff's Department-Role of Law enforcement Dealing with Children-CASA Office 5:30p.m.-6:30p.m.
- November 30th-Baptist Medical Center-Presents role of Mental Health & Services provided to children-CASA Office 12:00p.m.-1:00p.m.