

SPEAK UP!

June 2011

A Newsletter from Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Cook County



CASA of Cook County
Celebrates **25** years

A Quarter of a Century

of *Excellence!*



CASA Advocate supervisors, Lani Aquino and Tina Razzak. Lani led the CASA staff in raising funds.



CASA Board members and friends enjoy the race

CASA Steps Out Against Child Abuse

April 23rd brought friends and family of CASA of Cook County out to sprint, stroll and cheer from the sidelines in the 14th annual Wrigley Start Early 5K/10K Run & Walk. CASA won an award for the sixty-seven **enthusiastic walkers and runners** who braved a chilly, damp morning to help increase awareness of the issue of children in foster care who need a caring CASA volunteer advocate. The push to raise critical funding to help some of the most vulnerable children in Cook County was fueled by **121** generous donors who contributed **\$6990!**



MARK Program supervisor Susan Larrick was a star fund raiser.



Erin Wright of Kappa Alpha Theta and Lanetta Haynes Turner, CASA Executive Director at the finish line.

A Message from CASA Leadership

A Message from the Executive Director



Greetings CASA Family,

It seems like only yesterday when we started the year celebrating our 25th Anniversary with an intimate breakfast and presentation at the Women's Athletic Club on January 12, 2011. As the morning ended, the energy and inspiration in the room could not be denied and it set the pace for the entire year to come.

Since then, we have moved full speed ahead and have kept that energy and inspiration throughout our fundraising and program efforts; participating in the 14th annual Wrigley Start Early Run with an award winning number of registered CASA team members and a healthy fundraising competition that surpassed our goal; we are also quickly approaching the goal for our \$25,000 challenge grant; redefining our key messages to the larger community with the assistance of the Taproot Foundation and wrapping up our new three year Strategic Plan with goals around Growth and Organizational Structure (Increasing the number of children served by 20% by 2014), Fundraising (Increasing our individual and corporate donors and engaging them long term), Marketing (continuing to raise awareness of CASA within the larger community through outreach; public relations and social media) and Board Effectiveness (to build a stronger, diverse board with connections to untapped resources).

As we close this fiscal year on June 30th, we also open a new chapter of a new year that promises to be memorable and full of celebration at our 25th Anniversary Silver Lining Celebration on October 13, 2011. CASA of Cook County has grown so much over the years and we have done it with consistent and diligent advocacy for our children; passion for our mission and the resiliency to weather the economic storms that have come our way.

I am humbled to be part of such a wonderful organization and I thank each of you for being a champion for our children. Your voice and your hard work on their behalf makes sure they are not forgotten. I extend a heartfelt welcome to all of our new donors; welcome back to those donors who have rejoined our efforts this year and thank you to all those donors who have continued to be staunch supporters over the years.

Without your help our children in foster care would not have a second chance to have a better quality of life- they thank you as well!

Sincerely,

Lanetta Haynes Turner

A Message from the CASA Board President



As the new Board President of CASA of Cook County I am humbled by the work ethic and commitment of staff and volunteers who advocate for vulnerable children in Cook County foster care.

In these challenging economic times, we have asked our advocate supervisors and support staff to do what most organizations must do these days; more with less. It is a testament to the dedication of our staff that they willingly put the needs of the children above their own self interests during this trying and hopefully brief economic recession. The CASA of Cook County board of directors is honored and working tirelessly to support the heroic work of both the volunteers and staff.

During this past fiscal year our CASA Friends Network and Advisory Council continued to support the mission by participating in fund raising, sharing their ideas during our strategic planning retreat, and giving insights on our programs. You are very much a part of the success of CASA of Cook County and we appreciate your efforts.

The CASA Board of Directors remains committed to the mission as we say farewell to some members and welcome a new group. We are thankful to Stacey Goodwin, immediate past board President, for her tireless leadership and support. Stacey is continuing to serve on the board by contributing her substantial knowledge and leadership skills on the Executive and Finance committees. We are forever indebted to Stacey for her efforts as an officer of the board for the last four years.

We are also appreciative to outgoing board members: Sean Fogerty, Mary Kenney, Leticia Reyes, Kathryn Samuels, Shanita Smith, and Jay Young who donated their time and resources in support of CASA for many years. Their efforts made a difference and we look forward to them remaining connected to CASA of Cook County.

Welcome to an enthusiastic group of five new board members during the last fiscal year: Northwestern Hospital Director, Susan Campbell; NorthShore Health System Vice President of Operations, Gabrielle Cummings; Navistar Program Manager, Melanie Saenz; TIAA CREF Director, Kendra Smith; and Illinois Tool Works Associate General Counsel, John Tuhey. The talent and experience that these new board members bring to CASA of Cook County is terrific.

CASA of Cook County is blessed to have such great staff and volunteers who help give a voice to children in the court system. For all of you who advocate for a child, assist in fundraising, or spread the word about the work of CASA of Cook County, you are helping to change the world one child at a time.

Scott Stringer



25th Anniversary Celebration

Save the Date

We are only a few months away from CASA's *Silver Lining Celebration*.... *Then and Now* on Thursday, October 13, 2011. Join CASA of Cook County for a wonderful program highlighting accomplishments over the past 25 years and a lovely *seated* dinner at the Arts Club of Chicago. Advanced tickets are \$175 and sponsorship opportunities are still available. For more information on how to purchase tickets or to sponsor the event, please call Yvette Johnson-Hardwick at 312-433-4926.

The Challenge Continues



CASA of Cook County is excited to announce that we are **close to** reaching our goal of \$25,000 in the first year of a two year challenge grant from an anonymous donor!

When you donate now to CASA of Cook County at <http://casacookcounty.org/donate>, a contribution of equal value comes from the challenge grant to effectively double the impact of your gift! Your gift gives a child a voice and can reach the more than 4,600 children in foster care who still need an advocate! Thank you for helping us today and visit us at www.casacookcounty.org to make a donation.

CASA Advocacy in FY11

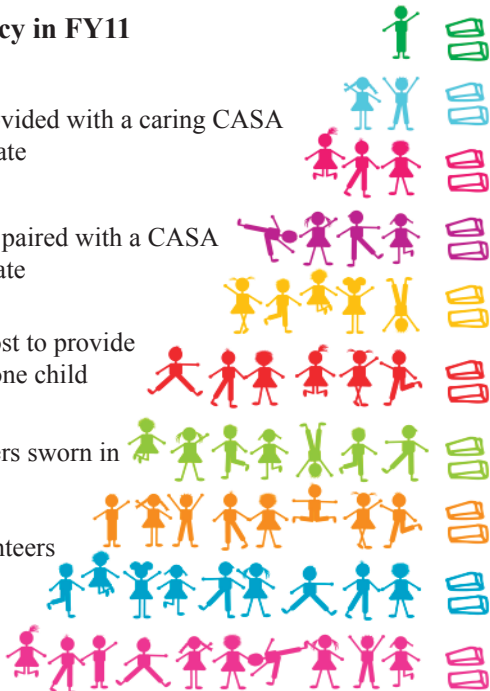
624 children provided with a caring CASA volunteer advocate

85 new children paired with a CASA volunteer advocate

\$1200 annual cost to provide a volunteer for one child

89 new volunteers sworn in

354 active volunteers



Mean Green News Machine

CASA goes green every other month with the new and improved *Speak UP!* newsletter where you can find updates on the latest developments at CASA including vital information for volunteer advocates. Let us know your thoughts about CASA's new bimonthly format at info@casacookcounty.org.

more
forever more cupcakes.

Sweet Success! This spring More Cupcakes offered a special vanilla raspberry cupcake with proceeds of the treat being donated back to CASA of Cook County. This year over \$1,000 was raised. This is a great example of wonderful corporate community partnership.

National Foster Care Awareness Month

On May 26th an expert panel led a timely and relevant discussion on the state of the child welfare system and



advocacy for children in foster care. Over 64 guests, staff and board members were in attendance at the reception and lively conversation with the Honorable Helaine

Berger, Cook County Juvenile Court, Child Protection Division; Erwin McEwen, Director, Department of Children and Family Services and Professor Bruce Boyer of the Loyola Civitas Child Law Clinic.



For regular updates follow CASA of Cook County on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/CASAofCookCounty> or subscribe to our Twitter feed at: <http://twitter.com/CASAofCookCo>.





VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT

Andrew Rowles
CASA Volunteer Since: February 2009
Number of cases: 2

Why did you decide to become a CASA volunteer?

I decided to become a CASA volunteer after I left my job and I had a lot of time on my hands to do something worthwhile. I was familiar with CASA in the late 1990's when I worked in northwest Indiana and I had forgotten about it until I received a newsletter from the local Phi Delta Kappa chapter about having someone speak at our monthly dinner meeting about CASA. I immediately looked up the information for the local CASA organization and contacted them to volunteer. I have worked in the public schools for 38 years, mostly as a school counselor and I believed this experience would be helpful in working with these youth.

Do you have any advice for other CASA volunteers?

I would advise any and all CASA volunteers to not be afraid to ask questions and seek help from their supervisors and other professionals when you have any concerns and are not sure how to proceed on a case. The monthly educational programs are informative and helpful.

What has been one of your most memorable moments as a CASA volunteer, good or bad?

I cannot say that I have had only one memorable moment as a CASA volunteer because when I meet with other CASA volunteers and the juvenile support staff I am impressed by the dedication and hard work these people put into their work to help these youth find a voice.

What keeps you motivated on your case?

When I am working on a case there is much to do and I am the type of person who likes to cross all the "t's" and dot all the 'i's.' I always try to do the best job I can do. So I try to check out all the levels of needs that are unmet and can possibly be met for healthier and more viable outcomes for the youth and their foster families.

What do you do in your spare time for fun?

In my spare time I enjoy reading and I am doing some stained glass work. I also have been fortunate to teach some classes at the university level which I enjoy. I like to travel and enjoy the fine arts. I love the longer daylight hours of summer and all the opportunities to do things outdoors in this season. Finally, I like pets, especially beagles.

Five Fun Questions

Favorite Childhood toy? My favorite childhood toy was my imagination.

Favorite Food? I love Mediterranean food, especially Greek and Italian cuisines.

Best Vacation Ever? A vacation I really enjoyed was in 1996 when I visited Russia which was an eye-opener. I learned the obvious first-hand that Russians want the same things we want in our lives.

Favorite quotation? I have since I was a child liked the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Dream Job when you were a kid? When I was younger a job I thought I wanted to pursue was to work in the foreign service for my country.

CASA of Cook County Continuing Education classes are held on various days each month to accommodate as many schedules as possible. Unless a registration cost is listed, classes are free. Some classes may offer professional CEUs.

NOTE: Dates and times are subject to change.

Saturdays and Some Tuesdays - Special Education Rights Informational Seminars

Time: Every Saturday or the first Tuesday of each month
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Location: Family Resource Center on Disabilities,
20 E. Jackson Blvd., Room 300, Chicago

RSVP: Pre-registration is required for all seminars.
312.939.3513

June 28, 2011 -CASA of Cook County Continuing Education Class

Topic: Volunteer Roundtable Discussion

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Location: 2nd floor multi-purpose room

RSVP: to tina.razzak@casacookcounty.org

***due to the confidential case information being discussed this training opportunity will be open to volunteers only.**

July 28, 2011-CASA of Cook County Continuing Education Class

Topic: TBD

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Location: 2nd floor multi-purpose room

RSVP: to katelyn.graham@casacookcounty.org

Congratulations to newly sworn in volunteers:



March 23, 2011 - Dominique Anderson-Alexander, Patricia Bussie-Sams, Minnie Cobb, Candace Colins, Lorriane Eaker, Rosie Fleming, Adrian Govis, Hilda Gutierrez, Tammy Hogan, Shannon McGovern



May 4, 2011 - Parminder Batra, Kristin Brasuel, Michel Buchanan, Tennie Clark, Amy Harriaman, Dorothy Leaks, Betty Lindsey, Rena Maritote, Addie Myles, Kalpana Plomin, Charlene Rivkin

Thanks to Our Donors

We continue to succeed even during tough times because of your generous support. On behalf of all the children your efforts help, we thank you. Your support ensures that more children each year will receive a voice in court and a chance at a better future. *List includes donors from 7.1.10 to 6.30.11. We sincerely apologize for any misspellings or omissions.*

Anonymous	Ann Chellman	Lewis Goldstein	Jerome Lappe	Duane Parkin	Michael Sobel
Sally Acker	Dorothy Chin	Barbara Goodman	Joseph Lattanzio	Dorothea Patterson	Stephanie Socall
Muriel Adams	Jim and Linda Clark	Sarah Goodwin	Jesse and Carolyn Lee	Linda Pawling	Irma Sokolnicki
Peggy Adams	Kendrea Clark	Stacey Goodwin	Princella Lee	Carol Peacock	Ronald and Kathy Sonenthal
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Helen Alfrevich	Judith Cohen	Joyce Graham	John Leonard	Mary Peterson	Margo Stern
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E. Belinda Bauer	Kathleen Curtis	Kathleen Hayes	Charles Maloney	Deidre Redding	Churie Townsend
Jennifer Baustad	Raquel da Fonseca	Lanetta Haynes Turner	John Manilow	Kathy Redpath	Karen Trom
Nancy Bein	Dale Daguro	Valerie Hedge	Karen Manilow	Matthew Reilein	John Tuhey
Wendy Berg	Karen Dahlquist	Kathleen Heinrichs	Lewis Manilow	Meredith Reimer	Clifton Turner
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Jenny Brandhorst	Patricia Elrod	Stacy Janiak	Robert McQuinn	Jill Sanford	Nathaniel Wright
Brian Brennan	Amberlynn Farashahi	Paul and Barbara Javaras	Alicsa Melczer	Carlos Saplala	Keishia Yates
Alison Brock	Daniel Feeney	Cathleen Johnson	Maryellen Mencimer	James Saranteas	Lottie Yates
Ted and Elizabeth Brombach	Jerrold Fink	Elige and Marlene Johnson	Sheila Merry	John Scanlon	Brianna Yelle
Christina Brown	Marita Finnegan	Yvette Johnson-Hardwick	John Miraglia	Patrick Schell	Laura Yocky
Jennifer Brusa	Mike Flannery	Carol Jones	Nancie Mishlove	Katherine Scherer	John and Nora Zapata
Sean Bryne	Sean Fogarty	Ramon Joson	Gisele Morris	Sara Schwanke	Joe Zefran
Sharon Burge	Edward Foreman	Stanley Jozefiak	James Morris	Wendy Selene	Meghan Zefran
Helen Burke	Barbara Fosco	Todd Kahn	Ann Morrone	Debi Seligmann	
Anita Butler	Julie Fregetto	Helen Kaminski	Barbara Moss	Justin and Karmen Serbinski	
Kathleen Bryne	Barbara Frohman	Samantha Katzbeck	Candace Mueller	Raj Shah	
Kristin Callis	Ralph Fujimoto	Emily Keaney	Margaret Mueller	Erryn Shannon	
Charlie Calvin	Warren and Nancy Furey	Tara Keller	David Murphy	Sharon Shariatzadeh	
Ann Camp	Matthew Gallagher	Mary Kenney	Elizabeth Murphy	Kara Sheaffer	
Beth Campbell	Carin Galvin	Khary Kenyatta	Neva Murphy	Jean Shepherd	
Carolyn Campbell	Kay Gareis	Emily King	Sonya Naar	Elizabeth Shinn	
David Campbell	Le'Toya Garland	Thomas King	Mandi Nardella	Jacqueline Shoop	
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Our Mission CASA of Cook County speaks up in court for abused and neglected children and ensures that children live in safe, permanent homes. CASA of Cook County's trained volunteers research cases and provide valuable information to the court. Judges rely on this additional information to make the best decisions about children's futures.