

**CASA - QUARTERLY
REPORT**



The Voices Update

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We're Going Green!

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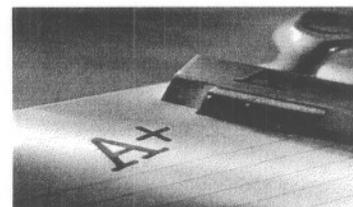
Our Report Card is In!

by Joyelle Saunders, *Executive Director*

When Judge William Moore and a small core of concerned citizens started the CASA Program back in 2004, the goal was to provide a voice and hope to children in the 5th Judicial District who were going through the court system as a result of suffering abuse and/or neglect. After enduring some growing pains, we are today much closer to that goal by expanding our service area to include the City of Franklin and Southampton County, as well as Isle of Wight County. While this is a tremendous accomplishment, my personal commitment to the Voice for Kids CASA Program and the community we serve, since arriving in 2007, is to ensure the quality of our operations as well as the child advocacy services we provide.

In 2009, Voices for Kids CASA underwent both a state CASA audit conducted by the Department of Criminal Justice Services and a national CASA audit conducted by the National CASA Association. Both examined the organizational strength and programmatic compliance of the Program. Thanks to the hard work of the volunteers, the staff and the Board of Directors, Voices for Kids CASA passed both audits with near perfect scores. Since then, we have continued to strive for excellence in the execution of our program.

Now that the end of the 2010 fiscal year has passed, it is time to grade the Program on our performance. During the year, Voices for Kids CASA faced challenges, including the failing economy and the



decrease in staff for a portion of the year. These factors impacted volunteer recruitment and supervision, but the Program was still able to maintain quality service while remaining fiscally sound.

The number of volunteers held about steady with 33 this year compared to last fiscal year (34 volunteers in 2009) **GRADE: B**

The volunteers served a total of 2,819 hours over the last fiscal year. This is equivalent to each volunteer working about 11 consecutive 8 hour days. **GRADE: B+**

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A CASA Volunteer's Story

On October 16, 2007, I stood before the judge and took the oath to be a CASA Volunteer. A few months later, I was appointed to advocate for an infant that tested positive for drugs at birth. While in the custody of the Department of

Social Service, the infant resided with family members, including the drug-addicted mother. With the goal of giving custody of the little infant to the family, the Department tried to work with the mother to help her con-

quer her addiction. I must admit that, even though my training was very thorough and informative, I was nervous to set up my first appointment with the family and to meet my CASA child.

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Report Card

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"In spite of these challenges, the Program was still able to deliver quality advocacy..."

REPORT CARD	
No. of Volunteers	B
Volunteer Service	B+
No. of Children Served	B
Accepted Recommendations	A+
Child Needs with Ser-	C
Family Needs with	B
OVERALL GRADE	B

The number of children served also held near steady at 33 compared to the previous year (32 children served in 2009).

GRADE: B

When CASA Volunteers write and submit their court reports to the judge, they are able to include recommendations for services needed by the child and the family. Of the almost 250 recommendations made last fiscal year, 96% were accepted and implemented by the judge.

GRADE: A+

Volunteers make their service recommendations based on needs that they observe during their monitoring of a child's case. During the year 62% of the children's needs identified by the program had services that were implemented to meet those

needs. Since the goal of the Program is to have at least 85% of the needs with a matching service, this measure needs to be improved by training volunteers how to better recognize the needs and research available community resources. **GRADE: C**

The number of identified family needs with matching implemented services is 50%. The goal of the Program is to have 85% of the needs with a matching implemented service. This percentage is heavily affected by the nature of each case. In some cases, though a parent or other family member may have a need identified by the Program, it may not be in the best interest for that child to be placed with the family member, or the family member may not want to cooperate with services. Therefore, the court may not order services for that family mem-

ber. **GRADE: B**

Overall: The Program had to overcome several challenges this year. The economic downturn caused us to postpone the hiring of another employee to help recruit and supervise volunteers. The extended period of time without having full staff also impacted volunteer management. This in turn limited the number of volunteers the program was able to recruit, which limited the number of children the Program could serve. In spite of these challenges, the Program was still able to deliver quality advocacy while operating under budget. The Program still has room for improvement as we seek to better advocate for services needed by the children and families that we serve. **OVERALL GRADE: B**

Board Members Needed

As the need for child advocacy services in our community has grown, Voices for Kids CASA has answered the call and grown to meet the need. This included becoming a nonprofit organization, expanding the service area, and passing both state and national programmatic audits with flying colors. Now the Program needs dedicated professionals who are willing to serve on the Board of Directors, to ensure its continued programmatic and

organizational health and growth.

While you may not have the time to personally help a child served by our Program, you may be able to help us provide a voice for that child by sharing your time, knowledge and expertise as a volunteer Board Member. The Board of Directors' primary responsibilities are to create operational policy for the Program, monitor adherence to the policies, and ensure its financial well-being

through fundraising. Board meetings are typically held every other month for about 2 hours, but they may be held more frequently as required. Attendance is also required at fundraising events, volunteer recognition events, and others. Last fiscal year, board members volunteered an average of 52 hours each.

There is an interview and application process for potential board



members, as recommended by both National and State CASA. For more information, please contact the Executive Director, Joyelle Saunders, at (757) 357-2170

1st Annual "One Voice" Breakfast Fundraiser

We did it! Our first annual Voices for Kids CASA Breakfast Fundraiser was a tremendous success! Held on May 21, 2010, the community came out for a great breakfast served by Smithfield Station and to learn about the program, its mission, and ways they could help. With

the stagnant economy causing steep cuts in the program's funding, the VFKCASA Board of Directors and staff planned the event to help fill the gap. After hearing the moving testimony of Dr. A. Terry Morris, a NASA Langley research scientist who survived unimaginable abuse as

a child, those in attendance reached into their hearts and their pockets and helped to raise about \$6000 and counting. Funds will be used to train and support the volunteer advocates as they speak up for the best interests of the children they serve.



"It is easier to build a child than to fix a broken adult."

Booker T. Washington

CASA Story

(Continued from page 1)

Overcoming my nervousness, I made the initial step on what would be a long journey. Walking into the smoke-filled house, I was greeted by family members and the baby's mother, who also dwelt there. My CASA child was suffering from a cold and its eyes looked so drawn in. As I held the baby, I noticed its little body reeked of cigarette smoke. Equally disheartening was the family's complete denial of the mother's troubled background of substance abuse; they disregarded it as recreational use. I left there with a burdened heart and a determined mind. I immediately realized that my CASA child, who could not defend or speak for itself, was in a deep dilemma if it was to be placed in such an environment. Upon investigation, my intuition started to become a reality when I discovered that this drug-exposed baby had not been examined by a pediatrician since it was born, even though it was experiencing

recurrent ear nose and throat illnesses. Furthermore, the mother had not even attempted to receive treatment for her drug addiction.

For the following year, I advocated and aggressively fought for my CASA child's medical needs and everything else that was in its best interest, while the baby's mother and family rejected any avenue of help. In lack of other options, the Department was still looking at the family as a viable placement. Therefore, I began to search for other relatives. I remember spending a couple of days browsing through the pages of phone books and records at the court house, endeavoring to locate other family members that may be able to adequately care for the child. Finally, it paid off. Without delay, I contacted them and made an appointment, at which time they expressed their desire to help. After reviewing CASA's Court Report, the judge allowed the child to be tempo-

rarily placed in their care and supervision. From that point on, my CASA child began to develop both mentally and physically. Health issues were diligently addressed and the reoccurring ear nose and throat concerns dissipated. Within the next 6 months, the new family members were awarded full custody of my CASA child and the case was closed.

It's not always easy to be a CASA. And, yes, this case was extremely frustrating at times. At times, I felt as if I was spinning my tires. But then there comes that moment...that special moment when you break free. At that instant, you realize that without CASA, the judge would not have had access to the vital facts which turned the case around. To this day, I receive pictures of my CASA child, no longer a sickly, at-risk infant, but a happy little child thriving in a kind and compassionate family. I feel privileged to have advocated and been the voice of a voiceless child.

"Equally disheartening was the family's complete denial of the mother's troubled background of substance abuse."

Voices for Kids CASA Program of Southeast Virginia

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Voices of hope in the life of a child...



NORFOLK, VA 233
HAMPTON ROADS
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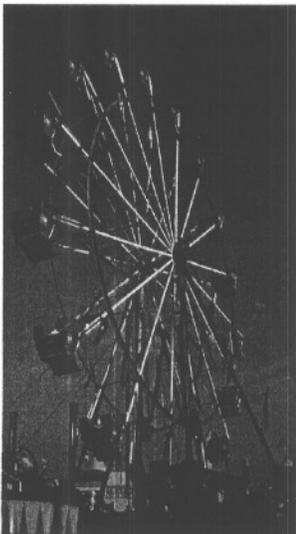
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www.voicesforkidsofsv.org

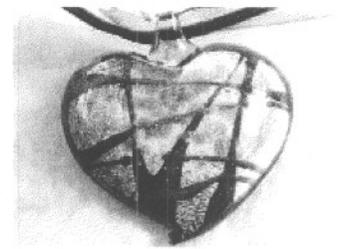
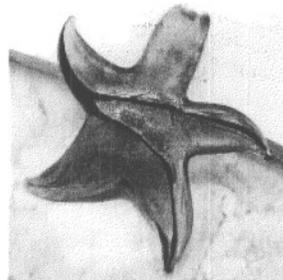


CASA at Isle of Wight County Fair



"The Fair is coming!" The 2010 Isle of Wight County Fair will be held at the Fairgrounds at Heritage Park from September 16-19, and Voices for Kids CASA will be there as well. Come on out and visit the Voices for Kids CASA Booth...and be sure to bring your Christmas Shopping List! In addition to having brochures, volunteers, and staff on hand to answer all your questions about Voices for Kids CASA, we will be getting you ready for Christmas with the sale of our beautiful Murano Glass starfish-shaped pendant

necklaces. They were a huge hit at last year's Fair, and they are sure to go quickly again. This year we are adding gorgeous and uniquely colored heart-shaped pendants to our inventory. At \$15 per necklace, both make perfect gifts



for that special someone, and all proceeds will go towards the training and support of our volunteers as they advocate for the children in our community that need a voice most. We look forward to seeing you there!