

The Advocate *A Child's Voice!*

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Talbot County



Winter 2011

From the Executive Director



Making a positive difference for one child at a time has been CASA of Talbot County's motto for over 20 years, and it's still spot-on. I was reminded of this recently by a judge who believes that CASA's work reinforces the fact that, notwithstanding the surplus of societal problems in the daily news, we each have the capacity to help improve the world. That goal sounds lofty in light of the substantial problems that we as

a human race currently face, but, broken into bite-sized pieces, perhaps it's one that more of us should embrace. Certainly this belief continues to serve as the underpinning for the existence of this CASA program, and it is the reason that we have agreed to expand our services to more children who need us.

Last year, CASA of Talbot County embarked on a project at the request for help from the Dorchester County Circuit Court. There were, and still are, Children in Need of Assistance in Dorchester County who need Court Appointed Special Advocates assigned to their cases. We have been serving 100% of Talbot County's Children in Need of Assistance for many years and fortunately had enough CASA volunteers to share with our neighbor. So began our expansion into Dorchester County, where, just as in Talbot County, individual CASA volunteers tackle our community's problems by speaking up for one

abused, neglected, or abandoned child at a time.

Studies have shown that children with CASA volunteers have their needs identified more quickly than children without CASAs, and that services to meet those needs are provided sooner. State social workers are often overburdened and simply do not have enough time to attend to all of the pressing needs in all of their cases, so judges have come to rely on CASA volunteers for their in-depth knowledge and assessments about their assigned children.

At a luncheon in December, Dorchester County Circuit Court Judge Brett Wilson joined Talbot County judges in praising the work of CASA, stating, "I have found CASA to be an

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immensely positive and effective addition to the processing of child neglect and abuse cases in Dorchester County. Although the trial table at a Child in Need of Assistance hearing is crowded with social workers, parents, and attorneys representing the Department of Social Services, the child, and the child's parents, none of

those are as uniquely qualified to see that the child's interests are brought to the fore as the Court Appointed Special Advocate."

Judge Wilson's comments reinforced CASA's very reason for being by stating, "One person alone cannot hope to fill the needs of [abused and neglected] children, but by coming together in organizations like CASA we can make a difference." Quoting Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the judge eloquently spoke directly to the heart of everyone at CASA: "Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little pieces of good put together that overwhelm the world."

Robin Davenport

CASAs Attend In-service Training

As part of their ongoing training program, CASA of Talbot County provides monthly training opportunities to all CASA volunteers. Cory Fink, Assistant Regional Director of the Department of Juvenile Services, poses with Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers after providing an overview of the juvenile services system at an In-service Training session.



Back row, from L to R: Howard Zwemer, Claude Edwards, Betty Bartlett, Gerry Rollefson, Hanna Woicke, Mettah Kollman, Susan Rabenhorst, and Cory Fink. Seated, from L to R: Alice Kaspar, Edith Hayman, Robin Gordon, Sara Jane Davidson and Martha Slaughter.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF TALBOT, INC. COUNTY

2011

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9 New CASA Volunteers Sworn In



Nine new CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteers were sworn in at two separate ceremonies in Talbot County Circuit Court and Dorchester County Circuit Court on November 1, 2010. Robin Davenport, CASA of Talbot County's Executive Director, stated, "This is an exciting and historical day, as it marks the first time that our CASA program has graduated a class of individuals from both Dorchester and Talbot Counties. These new volunteers will be dually designated to serve children in both counties, thereby expanding our current project serving Dorchester County children as well as Talbot County children." The newly sworn CASA volunteers are: Philip Cohan, Jane Crawford, Richard Eckardt, Tierra Jenkins, Bonnie Morro, Stephen Rideout, Terry Taylor, David Webster, and Jenna Willey.

CASA plans to continue serving 100% of the Children in Need of Assistance in Talbot County and is pleased to offer assistance to children who need CASA volunteers in Dorchester County. CASA's expansion into Dorchester County has been applauded by the Dorchester and Talbot County Circuit Courts, and is sup-

ported in part by Maryland's Administrative Office of the Courts and the Governor's Office on Crime Control and Prevention.

Presiding over the Swearing-in Ceremony in Talbot County were Judges "Bo" Earnest, Wm. H. Adkins III, Sidney Campen, and William S. Horne. In his welcome remarks to the new CASAs, Judge Earnest stated that CASA volunteers provide a valuable service to the court, adding that "the real beneficiaries of what CASA does are the children." Judges Earnest, Campen, and Horne commended CASA for the important information contained in their insightful court reports, and congratulated all CASA volunteers for their superb efforts on behalf of children.

In welcoming the CASAs to his courtroom, Dorchester Circuit Court Judge Brett Wilson emphasized the high value of CASA's service to children. Master Karen Ketterman joined Judge Wilson in welcoming the new CASAs, calling them "unsung heroes" for their willingness to open their hearts to Children in Need of Assistance who need CASA by their side.



Back row, from L to R:
Philip Cohan, Jane Crawford,
Richard Eckardt, Tierra
Jenkins, Bonnie Morro,
Terry Taylor, Jenna Willey,
Stephen Rideout, and
David Webster
Seated, from L to R:
Judge "Bo" Earnest,
Judge Sidney S. Campen, Jr.,
and Judge William S. Horne



Back row, from L to R: Judge Brett Wilson and Master Karen Ketterman. Front row, L to R: Philip Cohan, Jane Crawford, Richard Eckardt, Tierra Jenkins, Board President Stephanie Handy, Bonnie Morro, Stephen Rideout, Terry Taylor, David Webster, and Jenna Willey.

Celebration of Children Annual Benefactors' Luncheon



Photo courtesy of Roxanne Watts of the Star Democrat.

At a luncheon for CASA's Benefactors, Robin Davenport, CASA's Executive Director; Judge Wm. H. Adkins, III; CASA Board members Christina Hoff, President Stephanie Handy, and Vice President Judge William S. Horne; Judge Brett Wilson; Master Karen Ketterman; and Judge Sidney S. Campen pose for the camera.

CASA of Talbot County Presents *The Magic of CASA*



Abracadabra! CASA of Talbot County presents this year's fun-filled fund-raising event, *The Magic of CASA*, on April 9, 2011, an evening you and your friends won't want to miss! From 7:00 – 10:00 p.m., plan to stroll through a magically-transformed Gold Room in the Tidewater Inn while enjoying gourmet cuisine, fine wines, shows of illusion, and magical tricks galore. The evening promises plenty of wizardly whimsical surprises and illusions that will delight even those with the keenest of eyes.

Back by popular demand is CASA's spectacular Silent Auction, featuring unique and extraordinary items personally selected by Auction Co-Chairs Mary Lou McAllister and Bruce Wiltsie. A sneak peek at some of the fabulous offerings include: a week in Tuscany, a cooking class for 8 with Scossa's Chef Giancarlo Tondin, fly fishing, a bronze sculpture by artist William H. Turner, a week in Nantucket, a ski adventure at Capella Telluride, an extravagant crab feast for 30, a watercolor portrait of your home by renowned artist William A. McAllister, and several exciting weekend get-away packages, including one to New York City!

This annual benefit raises needed funds to support CASA's work with children who are under the court's protection due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers are dedicated community members who are trained to advocate for the best interest of children who are under court protection due to maltreatment. CASA volunteers accomplish this valuable work by providing a consistent presence for the child, a voice of hope, and assessments and recommendations to the court about what each of these children needs to be safe, happy, and healthy.

Please call 410-822-2866 to make your reservation now for a magically enjoyable evening, knowing that your support helps us to make a difference in a child's life. Tickets are \$150 per person, and sponsorship opportunities exist as well. All proceeds support our work with abused, neglected, and abandoned children.

We regret that the names of the following individuals were inadvertently omitted from the Annual Donor Report for Fiscal Year 2010 that was published in our summer 2010 newsletter:
Mr. and Mrs. W. Rembert Simpson – Sponsor Giving Level
Dorchester Lodge #223 I.B.P.O.E. of W. – Advocate Giving Level

Christina Hoff Honored at Local Event

On October 25, 2010, CASA Board member Christina Hoff was honored by the Talbot County Council as a Maryland You are Beautiful nominee. Part of the annual Governor's Volunteer Service Awards recognition program, the Maryland You are Beautiful project recognizes local volunteers who help to make Talbot County a wonderful place to live and visit. Christina was commended for utilizing her dedication and empathy for abused and neglected children by skillfully working to create successful events that raise much-needed funds for CASA's work. The County Council praised her for donating thousands of hours in her quest to ensure that CASA of Talbot County is able to provide a CASA volunteer to every child who needs one. *Congratulations, Christina!*

The Spirit of Giving



The spirit of giving was delightfully present in the CASA office during the holidays. First, Santa helpers extraordinaire Sharon and Paul Baiers spent the year collecting new toys, many of which the Baiers presented to CASA. Then, at the Tidewater Toastmas-

ters' holiday luncheon, new stuffed animals were collected in lieu of tickets and were generously donated to us. Adding to that, CASA friend Richard Voelker donated a collection of lovely teddy bears to be given to children served by CASA. We thank all of these generous individuals for helping to bring smiles to the faces of the children we serve!

Remembering Lynne Rich

1941 – 2010

CASA of Talbot County lost a dear friend, strong leader, and dedicated advocate with the passing of Lynne Rich on December 20, 2010. Lynne first walked through CASA's doors in 1997, bringing an array of talents that would end up benefiting a multitude of children over the ensuing 13 years. Sweet, soft-spoken, and with a spirited twinkle in her eye, Lynne possessed a lovely sense of humor as well as a quiet strength that was nothing less than inspiring. She also had a deep resolve for helping vulnerable children, leading her to serve as a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate and, later, as a member of CASA's Board of Directors. To both roles Lynne dedicated intelligence, energy, compassion, wisdom, amazing spirit, and unflagging enthusiasm. We are all better for having known her.

