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# *the* CONNECTION

*News and Information from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association*

*All children  
deserve to  
grow up  
in a safe,  
permanent  
home.*



## **Advocating for Children in Rural Areas**

Also in This Issue:

Seeking Permanent Homes for Native American Children

Gardens and Children

Profile: Victoria Rowell



# inside the CONNECTION



A publication of the National CASA Association representing 978 CASA programs and 70,000 CASA volunteers nationwide.

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is a nationwide movement of community volunteers who speak up for the best interests of abused and neglected children.

CASA volunteers work for the judge to review and monitor cases of children who become part of the juvenile justice system. CASA volunteers work closely with the child and family to bring an independent assessment of the case to court, recommending to the judge what is best for the child's future.

CASA volunteers help prevent children from becoming "lost" in the child welfare system. CASA gives children a chance to grow up in safe, permanent homes.

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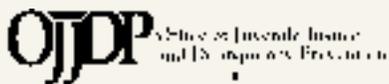
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**Editor's Note:** The winter 2004 *Connection* featured a main article addressing the mental health needs of youth in foster care. Joni Goodman, director of the GAL Program in Miami, FL, also suggests the following website as a resource on the topic: [muscedu/cvc](http://muscedu/cvc). There you will find the following publications: *Kauffman Best Practices Project Final Report* and *Child Physical and Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for Treatment*.

# A Message from THE CEO

## Legal Orphans or Waiting Children?

Michael S. Piraino, CEO



Recent press attention has focused appropriate concern on the well-being of so-called “legal orphans”—children for whom parental rights have been terminated but who have not yet found other permanent homes. Unfortunately, this press attention simplifies the issue and neglects the most important part of the story: what to do about it.

Some of the articles present only two extreme views. One blames the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) because, since its passage in 1997, thousands of children have not been adopted following terminations of parental rights. The other extreme praises the law because adoptions have risen steadily since its passage.

Both of those factual statements are true. Both conclusions about the law are questionable. The truth is somewhere in the middle.

Laws dealing with the welfare of children have both positive and negative effects—a point that will be no surprise to our volunteers. It is naive to believe that law alone will bring safety and security to abused and neglected children. We will only achieve that goal through a greater societal commitment to their well-being—including more citizens willing to get involved on their behalf—and a willingness to admit the complicated nature of this work.

Let’s put things straight. No law made these children parentless. Biological parents whose rights are terminated do not stop being the child’s biological parents. Ask any former foster child and you will probably hear that their parents remain part of them in many ways, for better or worse.

One recent headline-grabbing statement claimed that ASFA created over 117,000 “legal orphans.” That is incorrect both in its numbers and in its description of these children. Orphans are children whose parents have died. But most foster children have at least one parent who is alive—and in many cases, there is still an opportunity for some kind of relationship even if the child is adopted. The number is also exaggerated because it ignores the fact that many children freed for adoption in one year will be adopted in

future years. On average, it takes 16 months to achieve an adoption after the parents’ rights are terminated. Many of the nation’s child welfare systems have fortunately been increasingly successful in achieving that goal. But they are far from perfect and never will be until no child is left without a loving family.

I was also surprised at the naively rosy pictures painted in the press of waiting children’s relationships with their biological parents. While some may have visits, telephone calls and gifts from their parents, many do not. Many of these children simply cannot return to live with their biological parents because it would be unsafe. Each case is unique.

So what can be done?

We can start by stating the issues clearly. One question is what to do when children are living in out-of-home care, when it remains unsafe to return to the parents, and when no adoptive family has yet come forward.

I think children would be better off if we stopped using the drastic-sounding language of “termination of parental rights.” Good adoption practice now allows continued parental contact, where safe and appropriate, for adopted children. Why not simply say that the law will free the child for adoption? Parental rights could fully transfer only when appropriate adoptive parents are found.

Freeing children for adoption need not automatically eliminate parental contact. Although contact is inappropriate for some children who have experienced severe abuse, for many, it can increase their sense of security and comfort with the transition to adoption.

There are also legitimate concerns about children who are separated from their biological parents for whom adoption does not happen quickly, or possibly not at all. We need to increase the security of their current placements, assuring at least that they stay in one home that is familiar and safe. Beyond that, we must create enduring and supportive adult relationships for these children, helping them even if

*(continued on page 5)*



## *Foster Children Deserve School Stability*

*Guest Editorial  
Judge Glenda Hatchett*

One of the most heart-wrenching challenges facing children in foster care is the real possibility of being torn out of the classroom after just getting settled in. Not just once, but several times. Not just this year, but every year. That can have devastating consequences. Not just for them, but for all of us.

Vast change, such as moving from one school to another or even from one home to another while staying in the same classroom, is highly disruptive for any child. If it's hard on a child from a stable home, think how difficult it is on the foster children who carry exceptional social, emotional and psychological burdens on their young shoulders.

It's well proven that the more times a child is moved, the greater the likelihood he or she will give up and drop out.

The US Government Accounting Office reports that children who change schools more than three times before eighth grade are four times more likely to drop out of school. In fact, statistics show that only about 60% will finish school.

Shifting foster children from one school to another is really no one's doing. That's the problem. There are so many adults involved in these children's lives—foster parents, case-workers, attorneys and judges—that in most cases no single person is paying attention to what's happening to the child in school, unless a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer is speaking up for their best interests.

I want to draw attention to the issue of how our system may end up inadvertently hindering instead of helping children.

Rather than citing more statistics, let me talk about just one child—Michelle.

Michelle is one of far too many examples of how our system nearly cost a child a chance to graduate. Hers is also a story of how just one person—in this case, a CASA volunteer—made all the difference.

When Michelle was 9 years old, her father moved her and her sister from New York to San Diego. He didn't stop with that one move, however. Once he arrived in San Diego, he spent the next year shuffling his daughters from one home to another.

They were evicted time and again because his addictions used up the rent money. At one point, the only place they had to sleep was in his car. These circumstances, along with inappropriate discipline and his behavior around the two girls, resulted in an investigation and subsequent removal of the children from his care.

Michelle and her sister were placed in a relative's home, followed a short time later by a second placement with a foster family. They stayed there for two years until the boyfriend of Michelle's foster sister molested Michelle. She was 12.

Michelle and her biological sister were whisked out of that dangerous environment. Sadly, however, Michelle and her sister were separated. During the next five years, Michelle endured 12 additional placements and attended approximately 22 schools. With each new school, her chance of graduating diminished.

Michelle's family situation also deteriorated. While in one group home, her social worker allowed only supervised visits

with her father and friends. Her sister had run away by this time and was living in Mexico with a boyfriend. Michelle had no family. Without a support system to bolster her, Michelle's chances of finishing school dwindled.

In July 2001, Michelle was appointed a CASA volunteer, Susan Walton. As an advocate for Michelle's best interests, Susan gave special attention to ensuring a stable, quality education for Michelle. Susan convinced Michelle's social worker that she would be better served in a public high school rather than the group home school. Michelle was transferred to a mainstream high school. This was her last transfer.

With Susan's help, Michelle thrived. She completed the schoolwork given her, and when not in class she worked diligently to make up the high school credits she lacked, squeezing three years of coursework into one.

In June 2003, Michelle graduated from high school with a 3.4 GPA. She was one of only three graduation speakers. Having received numerous scholarships, she is now attending a local college, getting mostly A's.

Michelle's is the rare story. It has a happy ending because one person paid attention. The adult who helped Michelle succeed in school was her CASA volunteer. But it could have been a teacher, a judge, a social worker, a psychologist or a specially trained educational advocate.

I urge each adult who is involved with a foster child to do everything in his or her power to make school a point of stability in an otherwise unstable life. The point is that



*(Message from the CEO, continued from page 3)*

binding ourselves to the best interest of the child, including school stability, can help break the cycle that necessitates foster care in the first place. A stable school life is vitally important to these kids—and society.

*Judge Glenda A. Hatchett stars in the award-winning, nationally syndicated television series Judge Hatchett, now in its fifth season. She is also the author of the bestseller Say What You Mean and Mean What You Say, based on her experiences as a jurist and as a mother of two boys. Judge Hatchett was Georgia's first African-American chief presiding judge of a state court and the department head of one of the largest juvenile court systems in the country—in Atlanta's Fulton County. As a national spokesperson for CASA, Judge Hatchett will be a regular contributor to The Connection.*

an adoption does not happen. Some imaginative proposals along this line will, I hope, be tested soon.

A second issue is how to help the child welfare system make good decisions about which children should be freed for adoption and which can be safely reunited with their parents. This is happening in many places around the country, but it is an imperfect science. Making good decisions requires multiple efforts: from judges who are well trained in the dynamics of child maltreatment; from social work and legal professionals who have both good training and reasonable case-loads; and from more citizens willing to step forward and become advocates for these children so that decisions are well informed. In some cases, too, the rush to terminate parental rights needs to be slowed if parents are making progress in their ability to provide a safe home.

All these issues demonstrate the continued importance of strong advocacy for children, both prior to termination of parental rights and while they wait for adoption. Our volunteers are especially helpful in making sure that decisions are tailored to individual children and in watching over their well-being while the system looks for safe, permanent homes.

Federal law is neither the culprit nor the decisive solution to these children's needs. Once again, a more critical understanding of the issues will go much further in helping them toward safe, happy and productive lives.

# Advocating for Children in Rural Areas

By Harvey Meyer

To be a neglected or abused child is difficult enough. To be maltreated in many rural areas vexed with crushing poverty, woe-ful social services and an alarming amount of substance abuse is even more problematic.

Yet rural CASA program directors and volunteers regularly confront these challenges even as they are constrained by operational burdens: an anemic fundraising climate; scant numbers of volunteers; and rural families in denial about abuse.

Despite these despairing circumstances, rural CASA programs refuse to surrender. Many are struggling, sometimes against steep odds, but they are remaining open—almost defiantly—and fulfilling the CASA network's mission.

"It's amazing to see some of these small rural programs continuing to operate on a shoestring budget," says Paige Beard, National CASA's program specialist for the mountain plains region. "They're stubborn, self-reliant and believe so strongly in CASA's mission, they won't close their doors. It's very heartening to see that level of commitment."

Many rural CASA programs are marshalling survival skills that should inspire their big-city brethren. They are demonstrating resourcefulness in securing funds and volunteers, implementing marketing, communications and other operational strategies and ensuring that children receive appropriate services.

But this remains a demanding atmosphere for rural CASA programs, perhaps the most challenging in the network's history. Poverty in many rural regions is entrenched and even escalating. About one in five rural children lives in poverty, according to the Rural Families Data Center of the Population Reference Bureau.

*"It's amazing to see some of these small rural programs continuing to operate on a shoestring budget. They're stubborn, self-reliant and believe so strongly in CASA's mission, they won't close their doors."*

Fewer people in rural areas are college-educated and earning higher incomes. They are also less likely than their urban counterparts to secure adequate child care, and their children are more likely to receive substandard education, health care and housing.

"When you see the economy decline, you see a corresponding jump in the abuse and neglect rates," says Amy Miller, executive director of CASA of the Southern Tier in Elmira, New York. "There's more stress on the family and less patience when the income isn't there." One of three counties Miller oversees—Chemung—lost population and jobs during the 1990s and reportedly has New York's highest rate of child abuse.

In many cases, fewer employment opportunities lead to increasing substance abuse. While alcohol is still the drug of choice in rural areas, a surprising number of caregivers are using marijuana, cocaine, crack, methamphetamine (meth) and other illicit substances.

In fact, a 2000 study by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University revealed that rural and small-town adolescents were more likely than urban juveniles to use illegal substances. As for their parents, many professionals echo a county social services officer in rural Kentucky who estimates that half his county's foster children had parents who used, made or sold meth.

Forty Members of Congress are cosponsoring legislation (S. 103/H.R. 314) which would require that medicines containing

pseudoephedrine be sold as controlled substances. Pseudoephedrine, the main ingredient used to manufacture methamphetamine, is found in many cold and flu medicines. Consumers would need to provide a photo ID with birth date or would be limited to no more than nine grams of the substance. Modest funding is included to develop rapid response teams to intervene on behalf of children in danger because of their exposure to the manufacture of meth.

"It's clear that meth doesn't just affect the poor," says Greg Wright, research associate professor at the University of Nebraska (Lincoln) Center on Children, Families and the Law. "On the other hand, child neglect is strongly associated with poverty, and neglect is more common when there are drug abuse, attachment and relationship problems."

Unfortunately, substance abuse and other rural concerns are not generally on the radar screens of legislators or the mainstream press. "Often people are simply unaware of the serious challenges faced by rural communities," asserts Kathleen Belanger, child welfare professional development director and professor at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

Less visibility means less access to public dollars. From her outpost in Elmira, Miller estimates that federal and state government funding for her \$130,000-budget program declined between 20% and 30% percent over the past five years. These cutbacks are exacted upon rural and urban CASA programs alike during

a downbeat economy, but that is little consolation to Miller.

“We’ve been struggling to make up that loss (of government funding), but that’s just about impossible, especially in our most rural county,” says Miller. “When you have an increase in poverty and little industry, raising funds is very difficult.”

Just this past November, the Elmira CASA program board discussed the possibility of disbanding because of funding woes. But Miller, usually an easygoing extrovert, got her dander up; she challenged board members with an impassioned plea: “I asked them right there to tell me why they were there,” she says. “I told them there are 240 children out there who are telling me to keep doing this. There’s nothing more motivating than doing it for those children.”

Scarce funding is a perennial concern for many rural CASA programs, combined with a shortage of volunteers. And many of those who do volunteer are already booked with other community-service commitments.

In southwestern Mississippi, Franklin County CASA director Rex Mohon’s predicament is particularly dismaying. In this impoverished county (\$13,643 per capita annual income in 2000), even the CASA program’s office supplies have to be scrounged for. “Our county is so small (8,800 people) that a lot of families know each other or are related,” says Mohon. This makes volunteer recruitment especially challenging.

A dearth of volunteer board members is also a concern. It is difficult to recruit directors, especially during a lackluster economy when fundraising is even more challenging. “When times get tough, (directors) resign quicker,” observed Miller, whose board membership declined by half in recent years.

While reporting of child abuse has picked up, many rural parents still deny abuse exists. That is the case in the farming

community of Crawford County in northwestern Pennsylvania. “I think there’s still protection about what’s public and what’s private,” says program director Belinda Raczka of Crawford County CASA.

Miller added: “I recently went to one church and asked if I could give a presentation. I was told abuse and neglect don’t happen here.”

CASA programs rely on volunteers familiar with the ways and means of rural areas—volunteers willing to travel long distances to check on abused children. Since Franklin County has only one social worker, one foster home and minimal mental health services—a counselor treats children monthly in 15-minute sessions at the county courthouse—the two volunteers often drive to schools, foster families and mental health facilities up to two hours away. Meadville, Mississippi CASA volunteer Alice Bowlin cannot always visit the children she advocates for each week, but she still sometimes logs several hundred miles monthly—without being reimbursed.

“I don’t know how many miles I put in and it’s just as well my husband doesn’t know,” joked Bowlin, who is retired. “He isn’t wild about me driving at night, because he’s worried about my safety.”

Some rural volunteers are not connected to the internet, complicating communications for program directors. The fact that volunteers like those in Schuyler County, New York must call long distance to the Elmira office—and while performing other advocacy work—further discourages communications.

But while poverty, substance abuse and insufficient funds and volunteers present daunting challenges for many rural CASA programs, they appear to be up to the task. They are relying on the same survival skills—persistence, self-reliance and resourcefulness—that often sustain people living in rural regions.

Fortunately, issues confronting rural CASA programs are starting to receive more attention from entities like the Congressional Rural Caucus, the Child Welfare League of America and a growing national network of nonprofits and associations. National CASA itself has a Rural Initiative, whose annual summits produce action plans that raise awareness of concerns facing rural operations.

In Elmira, Miller says she has followed National CASA’s advice and regularly contacts the media about the program’s activities that might be newsworthy. Combined with



**The Crisis in Rural Child Welfare—  
A Special Issue of CWLA’s *Child Welfare Journal***

*By Charles L. Baker, Kathleen Belanger*

Due to budget cuts, services for rural children are often nonexistent, and rural America’s economy and infrastructure, such as fire and police protection and public water systems, are weak. This special issue of *Child Welfare* seeks to inspire and inform both rural and urban child welfare workers. It addresses child welfare work in farming communities, in frontier communities and with Navajo youth, among other areas. This wide-ranging yet thorough inspection of rural child welfare adds serious research and well informed practice to a field that has long been neglected in American child welfare. Order from [cwla.org](http://cwla.org). \$25.00

the program's collaboration and outreach activities, these efforts have increased community awareness. The result: Miller now has 76 volunteers, or more than triple the number when she started seven years ago.

National CASA representative Paige Beard says the new *Independent Study Edition* (ISE) of the volunteer training curriculum may further assist with rural recruiting. Instead of mandating 30 hours of in-person training, ISE enables volunteers to complete homework to address many program requirements. "ISE has been a huge plus for many rural programs that struggle with bringing people together for an extended time," says Beard. Another plus: National CASA is piloting an e-learning initiative that will offer in-service training on line.

A number of rural CASA programs are pursuing intriguing fundraising measures. In Elmira, an annual appeal letter and a National CASA-inspired initiative encouraging donations from board members more than tripled the amount raised from individuals.

"In a smaller community such as ours," says Miller, "people know the board members—and when they know (directors) donate, that helps when I approach potential donors."

Crawford County CASA in Meadville, Pennsylvania followed the lead of urban CASA programs to boost its fundraising. Six representatives attended a seminar conducted by Terry Axelrod's Raising More Money, which offers detailed instruction on fundraising events, focusing on cultivating long-term donors and enhancing marketing and communications strategies.

Director Belinda Raczka says a new approach to fundraising was needed because of a precipitous decline in state and federal funding. And her program was unable to

muster the expertise, time and manpower to conduct many smaller events to make up the deficit.

"The company helped us develop public awareness and a strong base of multiple-year donors who are involved with CASA because they believe in the mission," says Raczka. "Donors can give at their own pace and level, and they can give money, time or in-kind donations. It's a more flexible and respectful way of fundraising."

It is also a successful way: At a 2004 breakfast, Raczka secured \$22,000 in pledges over the next five years. Fresh money also came last year from the United Way, and a tax-credit program sparked added donations—all of which helped diversify and boost the Crawford County program's funding base.

These triumphs in the face of adversity inspire rural CASA programs, along with the heartwarming benefits of working with folks dedicated to helping neglected and abused children.

"There are days when I get extremely burned out and wonder why in the world I am doing this," says Miller. "I remember at one in-service, I was just fed up and tired of fighting the different entities in court and tired of fighting for funding. So I asked the volunteers straight up whether they thought they were making a difference in kids' lives, because I didn't think I was. In that class of 23, almost all raised their hands. I cried when that happened. So now when I get burned out, I call one of the volunteers. It picks me right up."

*Harvey Meyer is a veteran freelance writer from St. Louis Park, Minnesota who contributes primarily to national general interest, consumer and business magazines. He especially enjoys writing about community service, volunteerism and philanthropy and has crafted features for Points of Light Foundation publications for nine years.*

### **Recruiting Adoptive Parents for Native American Children**

Recruiting Rural Parents for Indian Children (RRPIC) is a five-year demonstration project made possible by the US Children's Bureau, Adoption Opportunities Program, part of the US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. RRPIC operates in 15 California counties to help find homes for children from 70 tribes. Working with tribes and county social service departments, RRPIC is developing a series of tribally approved, culturally appropriate placement practices that will be used by tribal and county social workers, dependency attorneys, judges, foster parents and others involved in establishing permanent homes for Native American children while respecting the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

The RRPIC staff is collecting and reporting data for the purpose of researching and evaluating the path of a Native child in the system. The project is also developing recruitment processes, creating collaborations and gathering and sharing resource contacts.

The RRPIC project is a collaboration among Teamwork for Children, the Independent Adoption Center and the Oregon Research Institute. Supporters include the California County Welfare Directors Association; the National Indian Child Welfare Association; the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges; the California Judicial Council; the State of California, Department of Social Services; and the California Select Committee on Indian Nations.

*For more information about RRPIC, contact Susan Quash-Mah at (541) 342-2692.*

# Seeking Permanent Homes for Native American Children: A More Culturally Sensitive Approach

By Susan Baxter Quash-Mah and Deb Johnson-Shelton, PhD

Minority children who are in foster care or adoptive placements face significant challenges in maintaining their family and cultural connections. American Indian children, in particular, may develop severe emotional and identity issues when placed in non-Indian homes. Unfortunately, the number of relative and other Indian foster/permanent homes currently available to them is not keeping pace with their needs.

To complicate the situation, Indian children who are placed in non-Indian homes—even “temporarily”—are often never reunited with their relatives and communities. The following excerpt from the Summer 2002 newsletter of California Indian Legal Services is an example of the process:

A young Indian child, Steven B. (not his real name), is removed from his mother and father at birth because of allegations of drug abuse and neglect by his parents. The county initiates a state court “dependency proceeding” under the California Welfare and Institutions Code. Pursuant to the federal Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), the county department of social services informs Steven’s California Indian tribe about the proceeding, and the tribe formally intervenes, seeking to maintain Steven’s ties to his family and tribal community. While his parents struggle to meet the state court’s requirements for reunifying with their son, however, Steven is shuffled around from one foster home to another. By the end of two years, he has been placed in two or three foster homes, all non-relative, non-Indian foster homes because Steven did not have any relatives who could take him. Despite the efforts of Steven’s Indian tribe to find an Indian placement, Steven remains in a non-Indian foster home.

Some may ask—what’s so tragic about this? Isn’t it most important for a child to

be in a safe, loving environment—no matter who the parents are? The answer is that this child will not always be a child. As a teen and an adult, one seeks a full identity. There is always the risk that missing cultural connections can hinder their self-understanding of race, community and spiritual heritage. A significant cultural norm for Native Americans is identifying, archiving and keeping track of connections with ancestors and extended family members. The sense of belonging is continually reinforced during cultural gatherings and in daily life encounters.

This is a connection that has been taken from Indian people historically—most recently through the boarding school experience and federal child welfare policies to remove Indian children permanently into non-Indian families. The latter national policy efforts during the 1950s-1970s overtly sought to sever child bonds to their families and tribes. Today, the hurt of these generational-long patterns of cultural disruption have resulted in great emotional and developmental harm to Indian youth. The suicide rate for American Indian teens and young adults in the US is greater than that for any other ethnic or racial group. For those youth raised in non-Indian homes, the suicide rates are even higher.

The Indian Child Welfare Act was passed in 1978. At that time, the federal policy efforts to “adopt out Indian children” had resulted in 25%- 35% of American Indian children nationwide being placed for adoption with non-Native families. This rate was three times that of any other race or ethnicity. Many Indian adults today describe the daily struggle in having lost their parents and families, their deepest cultural relation-

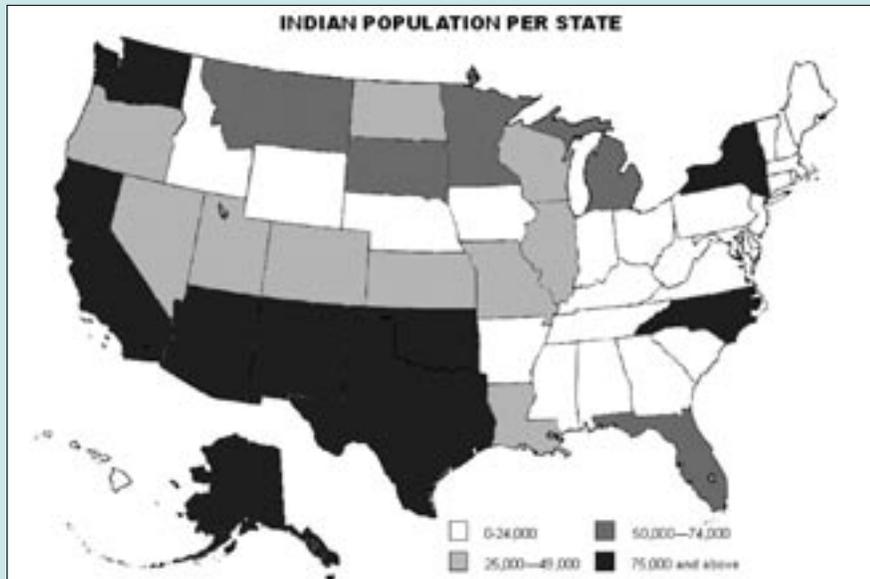
ships and the unique parts of themselves that remain hidden. ICWA was enacted to stop this cycle of trauma for Indian children, their families and tribal communities across the United States.

## ICWA specifically requires that:

- tribes be notified when Indian children are brought into state or county care
- active efforts be made to maintain the family of origin, and if that is not possible—
- the child be placed with a relative, an extended family member, a tribal community member or an Indian family located elsewhere

To date, the goal of ICWA to keep Indian children within their families and communities has not been realized. Currently, the same 25-35% of Indian children are removed from their homes and placed in foster care and, far too often, with non-Indian adoptive families. Of all children removed from their homes, American Indian children are still the least likely to ever return.

A discussion of permanency for American Indian children can only be complete when the historical framework of adoption in American Indian history is understood. The concept of terminating parental rights (required by most states as part of the adoption process) for many American Indians is a painful consequence of mainstream legal proceedings. For most American Indians, genetic, spiritual and familial ties can never be severed. The United States government’s practice of removing Indian children from their families and placing them outside of their tribes or with Anglo-Americans created generations of trauma and community destruction.



### Did You Know?

- Total population (prior to 2002) of Native people: 2,359,946 (0.9% of US population)
- 37 states have federally recognized Indian lands within their borders.
- Largest population of Native people is in California (308,571); largest percentage is in Alaska (13%).
- New York City has the largest population of urban Indians.
- 80% of all Native people do not live on Indian lands.
- 33% of all Native people have income below the poverty line.
- The population of Native people will increase over the next two decades faster than European-Americans or African-Americans.

### Urban Native Populations

1. New York City	106,444
2. Los Angeles	66,236
3. Honolulu	63,247 *
4. Phoenix	38,247
5. Tulsa	30,715
6. Anchorage	30,632
7. Oklahoma City	29,805
8. San Diego	26,791
9. Chicago	25,513
10. Albuquerque	23,016

\*Map key and city list conflict for Honolulu because map does not take into account Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander populations.

Sources: *US News and World Report*, Census Bureau, [quickfacts.census.gov](http://quickfacts.census.gov) and *Indian Country Today* (ICT).

Active efforts are now being made to recruit American Indian foster and permanent families to meet the growing need for permanent homes for Indian children among their own relatives, tribal members or other families who will maintain these children's connection with their community and culture. Indian tribes are working with social

service professionals and court personnel to build these tribal family resources.

To help address the need for Indian foster/permanent parents in California (home to the largest population of American Indians in the country—roughly 600,000), the federal Children's Bureau funded the Recruiting Rural Parents for Indian Chil-

dren (RRPIC) project in 2003. The RRPIC, a five-year project to recruit permanent families, is a partnership between the Independent Adoption Center, Inc. (Pleasant Hill, California), Teamwork for Children (Eugene, Oregon) and Oregon Research Institute, Inc. (Eugene, Oregon). Today, tribes, tribal and non-tribal organizations, state and federal governments are working to ameliorate the trauma and cultural hardships created by past child welfare practices.

Working with 66 tribes in 15 counties in California, the RRPIC project began recruiting permanent Indian parents in October 2004. Using a grassroots process that works collaboratively with tribes and county social services, recruiters will work hands-on with Indian or tribally approved parents who are interested in becoming foster or permanent parents for Indian children. Tribally approved parents could include non-Indian parents whom tribes feel are sufficiently culturally competent or who are willing to become culturally competent.

Overcoming historical trauma, assisting in developing culturally informed means of collaboration, more adequately educating the social services and court systems, and gaining and maintaining the trust required for sensitive cultural practice and policies are ongoing challenges for this innovative and much-needed project. The courage and foresight to work now for the preservation of children in their culture by communities, counties, courts, agencies and families will help build a solid foundation for coming generations of Indian children and families.

*Originally published in the November 16, 2004 issue of Native American Times. Condensed and reprinted with permission of the authors. Susan Baxter Quash-Mah, MA, director of Teamwork for Children (TFC) in Eugene, Oregon, is the implementation director for the RRPIC project; Deb Johnson-Shelton, PhD, of Oregon Research Institute (ORI) is the evaluation director for RRPIC. Please contact TFC at (541) 342-2692 for further information about the project.*

## Native American Web Resources

The following websites provide information on a wide variety of topics relating to child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse and exploitation as well as activities, programs, materials and articles that may be useful in addressing abuse issues related to Native American children. Many of the sites link to other helpful resources.

*Note: The “mandatory reporting” provisions found at some of the sites below may be specific to state or federal law rather than applicable to tribal jurisdictions.*

- Center on Child Abuse and Neglect, University of Oklahoma, Health Sciences Center, [ccan.ouhsc.edu](http://ccan.ouhsc.edu). This site includes tribal-specific resources such as Project Making Medicine, a program for mental health professionals working in tribal communities.
- Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), [cwla.org/advocacy](http://cwla.org/advocacy). This site provides up-to-date data and national policy information. CWLA has a tribal liaison office as well as many resources on federal child welfare policy and practice. Selected topics:
  - US Department of Health & Human Services final rule on the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) and Title IV-E foster care eligibility review, child and family services state plan reviews
  - State fact sheets with child abuse and neglect statistics
- The Children’s Bureau, US Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth & Families, [acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/index.htm](http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/index.htm). This website provides information to assist states in the delivery of child welfare services designed to protect children and strengthen families. The agency also provides grants to states, tribes and communities to

operate a range of child welfare services including child protective services, family preservation and support, foster care, adoption and independent living. In addition, the agency makes major investments in staff training, technology and innovative programs.

- National Center on Poverty Law, [povertylaw.org](http://povertylaw.org). This is a membership website, although two weeks of access are provided free. After that period, you may want to partner with an agency that can assist you in obtaining information from this site. Topics:
  - “The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA): In the Best Interests of the Child and Tribe,” article by Robert J. McCarthy, 1996
  - “Building Strong, Stable Communities Through the Indian Child Welfare Act,” article by Patricia Kunesh, 1997
  - “Prodigal Son: The ‘Existing Indian Family’ Exception to the Indian Child Welfare Act,” article by C. Steven Hager regarding the US Supreme Court decision in *Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians v. Holyfield*
- National Criminal Justice Reference Service, [ncjrs.org](http://ncjrs.org). Search this site for free publications, including a number of tribal-specific reference materials. There are general as well as tribal materials on child abuse and neglect. To access this information, click on the “Victims of Crime” link on the home page, then the “Child Abuse and Neglect” link.
- National Indian Child Welfare Association, [nicwa.org](http://nicwa.org). NICWA believes that every Indian child must have access to community-based, culturally appropriate services that help them grow up safe, healthy and spiritually strong—free from abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation and the damaging effects of substance abuse. Their website provides a wealth of resources for tribal child protection programs. A training calendar lists a

variety of tribal child protection program-related events. NICWA also has an online course for certification on ICWA. Other topics:

- Indian Child Protection and Family Violence Prevention Act
- NICWA’s testimony regarding the mental health needs of Indian children
- Office for Victims of Crime, US Department of Justice, [ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc](http://ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc). This site is focused on a broad range of crime victim programs and services and includes announcements for grants and funding, newly released publications and event information.
- Office of Tribal Justice, US Department of Justice, [usdoj.gov/otj/index.html](http://usdoj.gov/otj/index.html). Provides specific tribal resources and research documents.
- Tribal Court Clearinghouse, [tribal-institute.org](http://tribal-institute.org). Published as a public service by the Tribal Law & Policy Institute. The first website devoted to providing information to people working in Native American Tribal Courts. The Tribal Court Clearinghouse is designed as a resource for tribal justice systems and others involved in the enhancement of justice in Indian country. Sample topics covered:
  - Tribal Children’s Justice Act resources
  - Tribal Court CASA resources
  - Tribal Court funding resources
  - Tribal codes and constitutions
  - Searchable database of Tribal Court decisions
  - Federal court Indian law decisions

*The Tribal Law and Policy Institute developed this internet resource list with funding from the Office for Victims of Crime, US Department of Justice.*

# Gardens and Children: The Nature of Nurturing

Gardening and peaceful outdoor environments have a healing power known since ancient times. Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and considered to be the “Father of American Psychiatry,” promoted the idea that garden settings held curative effects for people with mental illness. But it was not until the 1940s that horticultural therapy—or hortitherapy—really took hold in the United States. That is when horticulture became a form of occupational therapy in the veterans hospitals. Today, hortitherapy is recognized as a practical treatment with wide-ranging benefits for many different populations. (source: American Horticultural Therapy Association and Betty Ford Alpine Gardens).

One hortitherapy program with a CASA connection is the Bee Kind Garden in Spokane, Washington. The garden is designed to help children from violent homes heal from past abuse, providing a supervised, therapeutic, outdoor learning experience for troubled children. A professional therapist is available to help children who need to process trauma and crisis resulting from past abuse. But the heart of the program is the trained volunteers who work in the garden with the children, nurturing plants and animals such as the resident turtles in the ponds located throughout the lush landscape.

“I didn’t have any idea that a garden was in my future until attending the Children’s Justice Conference in 1997,” remembers CASA volunteer and Bee Kind Garden founder Gayle Kiser. “The first session related to the link between child and animal abuse. I was expecting to be depressed, but it turned out to be one of the most inspiring lectures of the conference. Dr. Lynn Loar, then the educational coordinator for the



*Niko, Stavros and Katrina Katsantonis help CASA of Kern County with their Grow CASA campaign designed to recruit volunteers and raise funds. Plastic “grow stakes” placed in plants at Bolles Nursery and Kresha Nurseries highlight the needs of abused children and give a toll-free number to connect with a CASA program.*

San Francisco Child Abuse Council, was the presenter. She talked about plant and animal therapy as a way to help children who have experienced violence.”

In addition to inspiring the Bee Kind Garden, Lynn Loar, PhD, LCSW, has dedicated her career to facilitating behavioral change exclusively through positive reinforcement. Asked how gardening and interacting with animals benefits children, Dr. Loar responds: “Gardening and caring for animals are enjoyable activities that emphasize gentleness and nurturance as well as teaching safe and appropriate touch. Respect for living things can be taught initially through gardening and then expanded to respect an animal’s capacity to feel pain and pleasure. Gradually through collaborative work with living things, trust with people can also be cultivated.”

It made sense to Kiser to teach abused children how to cultivate a plant. After all, seedlings need the same thing that children need to develop to their full potential:

someone to nurture, feed and care about them. She also saw this as a way that individuals who cannot make the substantial commitment of becoming a CASA volunteer can make a difference by signing up for a 10-week rotation, including training.

In the days after the conference that planted the idea, Kiser and her friend Judy Thornton talked about “35 reasons it wouldn’t work in Spokane and 36 reasons it had to work there.” Kiser

had been a CASA volunteer for a dozen years at the time and decided to pursue the concept of a garden for children with other professional partners, including the CASA program, the Junior League, a local humane group, the Department of Fish and Wildlife and Lynn Loar. By October of that year, they had a complete program with a site and 88 volunteers trained.

While the garden is not a project of the local CASA program, the two are closely related. Scott Stevens, program coordinator for the government-administered Spokane County CASA/GAL Program, reports that his program served 626 abused or neglected children via 285 active GAL volunteers in 2003—nearly 90% of all children needing CASA services. The Spokane program works closely with CASA Partners, a nonprofit umbrella organization that administers the Bee Kind Garden as well as two other programs: the My Bag program providing tote-bags full of age-appropriate items to children in foster care; and Needs from the Heart,

which allows CASA volunteers to request items that that DCFS cannot pay for, such as piano lessons or summer camp.

Kathleen Brenzel, senior garden editor of *Sunset Magazine*, is familiar with several hortitherapy programs operating in the West. Additionally, *Sunset* staffers have volunteered at the Haven Family House in Menlo Park, CA, located near the magazine's headquarters, working with residents of all ages to plant a vegetable garden in raised beds. At a similar garden, Brenzel recalls "seeing the troubled faces of family members turn to joy as they watched their crops bear fruit. The whole process of gardening can be healing on many levels, including psychologically and spiritually."

Brenzel is familiar with hortitherapy projects that have benefits similar to the Bee Kind Garden, although with children involved in the criminal justice system. "There was a program in Oregon where troubled kids in custody were given easy-to-grow plants like peas and nasturtiums that provide a quick payoff in terms of results. It was amazing to watch the children plant seeds or cuttings, tend to them and observe as they grew and bore fruit or flowers. Seeing their charges come to life and thrive gave them a real sense of empowerment and accomplishment. The kids felt better about themselves. Instead of picking fights, they were nurturing something from the earth."

Researchers at Gonzaga University determined that the Bee Kind Garden provides several significant positive outcomes for participating children, with a primary benefit that is rare if not unique among other hortitherapy programs: a one-on-one relationship with a caring volunteer that lasts over a period of time.

(continued on page 14)



### Horticultural Therapy and Children's Gardening Resources

#### Websites

- American Horticultural Therapy Association ([ahta.org](http://ahta.org)): Membership organization promoting practice of hortitherapy, including publications available for sale on line, research, career and training information.
- Thrive ([thrive.org.uk](http://thrive.org.uk)): British horticultural charity promoting access to gardening for disadvantaged, disabled and older people. Includes publications, links and "cultivating basic skills" bulletin board.
- Virginia Tech Department of Horticulture ([hort.vt.edu/human/htbooks.html](http://hort.vt.edu/human/htbooks.html)): A list of books on horticultural therapy with mini-reviews.

#### Books

- *Teaching Empathy: Animal-Assisted Therapy Programs for Children and Families Exposed to Violence*, Lynn Loar, PhD, Libby Coleman, PhD et al, Latham Foundation, 2004 ([latham.org/shop/prodserv.asp](http://latham.org/shop/prodserv.asp)): Includes practical skills, interventions and resources to design humane education and animal-assisted therapy programs that are safe for both human and animal participants.

- *Teaching Compassion: A Guide for Humane Educators, Teachers, and Parents*, Pamela Raphael, Latham Foundation, 2001 ([latham.org/shop/prodserv.asp](http://latham.org/shop/prodserv.asp)): Features children's artwork and poetry on the meaning of animals in their lives as well as a teacher's narrative and lesson plans to encourage respect, responsibility, compassion and empathy. There is a section devoted to handling disclosures of child and animal abuse.
- *Learn and Play in the Garden*, Meg Herd, Barron's, 1997 ([barronseduc.com/0812097807.html](http://barronseduc.com/0812097807.html)): Hands-on fun and natural science all in one colorful book of garden projects for boys and girls ages 6-12. Instructions for planting and cultivating easy-to-grow vegetables, herbs, etc. Over 40 projects divided by season.
- *Garden Crafts for Kids*, Diane Rhoades, Sterling Pub Co., 1998 ([isbndb.com/d/book/garden\\_crafts\\_for\\_kids.html](http://isbndb.com/d/book/garden_crafts_for_kids.html)): Teaching resource and how-to book features 50+ easy projects for kids of nearly all ages, including: growing potatoes in tires, building a gardening tool station and discovering the joys of composting. Simple explanations of plant physiology and discussion of garden-relevant wildlife.

*(Gardens and Children, continued from page 13)*

### **Lavender Days in Sonoma County**

Another connection between growing children and growing plants is CASA of Sonoma County's Lavender Days project, which is entering its seventh year and has proven to be very lucrative. This project is made possible through the generous donation of an entire field's worth of lavender by a local landowner. To date they have raised well over \$80,000 through sales of the flowers and related products. In 2005 alone, they hope to raise \$30,000.

The program's director, Millie Gilson, says, "This fairly new and growing stream of funds is important to us as we seek to put in place enough new volunteers to serve all the kids who need us. Perhaps just as beneficial is that we have recruited three board members and 28 volunteers over the years due

to our lavender booths throughout the county."

Last year, the CASA program began a long-term partnership with the North Coast Lavender Guild, which hosts the Healdsburg Lavender Festival each June. The festival donates the majority of ticket proceeds from their lavender-ingredient food tastings and silent auction as well as providing the CASA program with space for their own lavender sales.

Susan Siegel of the North Coast Lavender Guild states, "We feel CASA is such a great organization doing essential work that is right in line with our desire to see all things bloom beautifully. We are very excited about supporting this great organization as they endeavor to protect the children in need in our community."



Professionals from Child Play Therapists of Spokane provide training to both CASA and Bee Kind Garden volunteers to help them understand the impact of abuse on children's development. Linda Wirtz, MA, is from this group and has been the volunteer therapist on site to brief volunteers on the typical behaviors of children on particular medications or with a specific diagnosis. She answers questions and debriefs volunteers after each session. Wirtz is also available in case the child begins to process a traumatic memory or has any kind of crisis.

Jaymie Wakefield, a CASA volunteer for four years before taking a staff role with Bee Kind Gardens as the garden coordinator, says that having this professional oversight is imperative. Even well trained volunteers lack the qualifications to provide therapy. Wakefield oversees three to four six-week sessions a year, with about six children participating in each session. She points out that 15 of the 18 garden volunteers last year were also GAL volunteers.

While Kiser has spoken to several other CASA programs around the country that have considered implementing or collaborating with a garden program, she believes that Spokane is still unique in providing these therapeutic benefits to abused and neglected children who are not involved in the criminal justice system. As she puts it, "Hopefully when they have children of their own, this little seed we've planted will develop into another way of behaving."

Please let us know if your CASA program or other group you are familiar with is bringing together foster children and gardening.  
Email [theconnection@nationalcasa.org](mailto:theconnection@nationalcasa.org).

## What Advocates Can Learn at the Movies

While Hollywood is not generally thought of as a source for information on issues related to child welfare, there are a number of commercial films that can effectively generate excellent discussion on topics relevant to child advocates. And when you consider the number of documentaries available through the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and other sources, CASA/GAL volunteers can easily create a *CASA Night at the Movies* to join together in fun as well as serious discussion.

Many CASA programs already utilize movie nights as a regular feature in continuing education efforts. But if a movie night is not a feature offered by your program, create your own by turning to movies readily available at your local video store:

*Antwone Fisher* is based on the true story of a young man raised in foster care, abused and cast out of the system at 18 with nowhere to go. It is a story of abandonment, betrayal, isolation and—only after fierce inner and outer struggles—triumph. The movie follows Antwone Fisher's life between a present-time reality of service in the US Navy and flashbacks to his earlier youth as a ward of the state. Fisher was born in a women's state correctional facility where his mother was imprisoned. When his mother failed to seek out her son after



her release from prison, Antwone became a permanent ward of the state. Although the movie and the book on which it was based offer different perspectives and details, the book guide may be helpful in generating topics for discussion: [harperacademic.com/catalog/guide\\_xml.asp?isbn=0060007788](http://harperacademic.com/catalog/guide_xml.asp?isbn=0060007788).

*White Oleander* is a fictional account of a teenage girl's journey through the foster care system after her mother is sent to prison. Through nearly a decade, she experiences multiple placements, near-death experiences, drugs, starvation, religion and how it feels to be loved. Over the years, she keeps in touch with her mother via letters to prison. And while the mother's gift to her daughter is the power to survive, the daughter ultimately teaches her mother about love. Also adapted from a book, the book discussion questions can be helpful in processing the *White Oleander* movie experience: [readinggroupguides.com/guides/white\\_oleander.asp#discuss](http://readinggroupguides.com/guides/white_oleander.asp#discuss).

*Losing Isaiah* asks the question: Who decides what makes a mother? An African-American baby, abandoned by his crack-addicted mother, is adopted by a white social worker and her husband. Several years later, the baby's mother finds out her son is not dead as she thought and goes to court to get him back.



PBS is also a good source for movie night material. The documentary *Love and Diane* follows a family coping with addiction and poverty while trying to reunify after years of involvement with the child welfare system, and *West 47th Street* takes a hard look at adults struggling with mental illness. Both films come with excellent discussion guides.

As you discuss a film, ask questions that encourage reflection and application to volunteer advocacy. Sample reflection questions might include: What would you have done if you were his advocate? Two months from now, what or who will you remember from this movie and why? What insights or new knowledge did you gain from this movie? How will you use this in your CASA/GAL work?



If your CASA program has used other films in volunteer training, please email details to [theconnection@nationalcasa.org](mailto:theconnection@nationalcasa.org).

Contributing to this article was Marion Hallum, training director of the Alaska CASA Association and a member of National CASA's Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Source: Details from IMDB.com are included in this article.

# Turning the Channel Toward Hope: *A Profile of Advocate-Actress Victoria Rowell*

by James E. Thompson

*A wise old owl lived in an oak;  
The more he saw the less he spoke.  
The less he spoke the more he heard.  
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?*

—Author Unknown

Fast-paced. Articulate. Big picture. Socially and politically astute. Aggressively forthright. But when asked to share a bit of wisdom, Victoria Rowell said: “Got your pen ready? Take this down: *A wise old owl...*”

Whether playing Dr. Amanda Bentley on *Diagnosis Murder* or Drucilla Barber Winters on *The Young and the Restless*, Rowell knows the difference between television fantasy and the often harsh, human realities foster children face. She was quiet and listened and lived life as a foster child. Today Rowell is speaking out and making the change she wants to see in the world.

Star power is a double-edged sword. Hollywood has its ways—many of which do not match the morés of the larger public. Rowell’s ways, however, are from the heart. “This past year my career has been thrilling and fulfilling. I’ve been with *The Young and the Restless* for 14 years. The work is exciting. But now my passion off the set has been married to my passion on the set. It is simply an amazing feeling to understand why I’ve lived the life I’ve lived.”

She has good reason to be proud. What started off as a small storyline on one of TV’s most popular and lasting soaps is being extended. The plot involves a quite special character—*Drucilla’s foster son*—and

is forecast to last for the next three years. *The Young and the Restless* is being justly fêted for its candor and courage in taking a step into this real-world soap opera—the daily struggles faced by foster children and their caregivers.

Obviously this personal achievement for Rowell signals progress in raising awareness about important issues. However, this is “small potatoes” in her longstanding campaign on behalf of foster children. In 1990, Rowell founded the Rowell Foster Children Positive Plan (RFCPP). The hallmark of RFCPP is to provide structure, support and encouragement for foster children through enrichment programs such as performing arts and athletics (RFCPP is detailed in the sidebar). For Rowell, one of the keys is mentoring and

preparing foster children to live and work in the landscape outside their front door.

Attendees of the 25th anniversary National CASA conference in San Diego in April 2002 witnessed Rowell’s passion. She is exuberant when it comes to the work of CASA volunteers. “CASA represents service that practices reciprocity in the finest form. Laymen learn the law, the law learns from the laymen, and a beleaguered judicial system becomes able to expedite cases. CASA walks the talk. *I like that!*”

An accomplished dancer, Rowell notes “When I was 8 years old my foster mother, Agatha Armstead, enrolled me in a classical ballet school where my interest in the arts was nurtured. Perfecting a pirouette taught me that I could fit in and get along in the world by merit. Mentors—and mentors might be teachers, moms, friends, dads, whomever—care about the daily lives of

(continued on page 18)



Rowell (far right) greets attendees of National CASA's 2002 annual conference in San Diego.

### Victoria Rowell



Born in Portland, Maine, Victoria Rowell was raised in foster care for the first 18 years of her life. At age 8, Rowell received a scholarship to the Cambridge School of Ballet through the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Following eight years of training, she flourished as a dancer and earned scholarships to both the School of American Ballet and the American Ballet Theater. After dancing professionally with a number of major companies, Rowell

decided to pursue a career in modeling, gracing the pages of *Seventeen*, *Mademoiselle* and countless other magazines, soon choosing to become an actress. An Emmy-nominated actress, and the recipient of seven NAACP Image awards, her credits include numerous television series and films. Rowell and her work on behalf of foster youth were recently featured in *Black Enterprise* and *Precious Times*.



### The Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan

Los Angeles, CA  
Phone: (323) 857-1717  
rfcpp.org

The Rowell Foster Children's Positive Plan (RFCPP) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1990 by Victoria Rowell. For over a decade, RFCPP has provided the means for foster children to fulfill their limitless potential through involvement in fine arts, sports and job opportunities.

*Victoria has opened many doors for myself and others through her genuine concern and love for foster children (and former youth) as well. The fire is still lit, and my dreams are just beginning.*

—leesha J., RFCPP client

*Success is an action that truly acts in progressive stages, but along with the sincere hearts of family and those in the RFCPP, I am now glimpsing the fruition from years of practice and determination.*

—Johnell H., RFCPP client

### Annie E. Casey Foundation

Baltimore, MD  
Phone: (410) 547-6600  
aecf.org

Since 1948, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has worked to build better futures for disadvantaged children and their families in the United States. The primary mission of the foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms and community supports that more effectively meet the needs of today's vulnerable children and families.

### Casey Family Services

New Haven, CT  
Phone: (203) 401-6900  
caseyfamilyservices.org

For over 25 years, Casey Family Services (CFS) has assisted vulnerable children and families. Today, programs operate throughout New England and in Baltimore, MD. CFS is a fully licensed and accredited nonprofit child welfare agency providing a broad range of programs to meet changing needs.

### Casey Family Programs

Seattle, WA  
Phone: (206) 282-7300  
casey.org

Casey Family Programs' (CFP's) mission is to provide and improve—and ultimately to prevent the need for—foster care. CFP operates in two ways: by providing direct services (in Arizona, California, Idaho, Texas and Washington) and promoting advances in child welfare practice and policy. Drawing on four decades of front-line work with families and alumni of foster care, CFP develops tools, practices and policies to nurture all youth in care and to help parents strengthen families at risk of needing foster care.



*(Rowell Profile, continued from page 16)*

their charges. There are some 20,000 emancipated foster kids that need to find work every year. I stay in touch with many of the emancipated youth I've had the pleasure of working with through RFCPP. What I've done in some small way is being mirrored by others, not just in 'show biz' but in all walks of life. It is not a one-shot deal for the kids—and it certainly is not a one-shot deal for me."

If all this isn't enough, this extraordinary leader is the national spokesperson for Casey Family Services. This organization (see sidebar) is part of a far-reaching support and advocacy mechanism dedicated to helping disadvantaged children, especially those separated from their parents. From establishing the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 1948 to creating Casey Family Programs in Seattle in 1965 to founding Casey

Family Services on the eastern seaboard in 1976, Jim Casey, founder of United Parcel Service, would have surely enjoyed being one of Rowell's mentors had he lived long enough.

But what about the future? When asked about pressing social concerns, Rowell immediately stated, "We need to help foster grandparents—older people who are literally dying trying to take care of their grandchildren and keep these kids out of the system for fear of losing them. They would rather die trying than ask for help. Senator Clinton and others in Congress are fully aware of this challenge and are working diligently to make a difference. I remain optimistic."\*

As Rowell lovingly states, "Foster children are good kids." With some 550,000 foster children in this country alone, we

are tapping some of our individual goodness—the wisdom of our hearts—when we listen closely and join her parade.

*James E. Thompson describes himself as a "sometimes-wise" freelance writer living in Seattle, WA.*

**\*Editor's Note:** Rowell refers to the Kinship Caregiver Act, which is expected to be reintroduced in this Congress by Senator Hillary Clinton (D-NY) and other cosponsors. The legislation allows states to use federal funds to subsidize guardianship payments to relative caregivers so that the children would no longer have to remain in foster care. Grant funds are also provided to link grandparents and other relatives to services and supports they need to raise relative children. The bill would require child welfare agencies to notify grandparents and other relatives within 60 days of the removal of a child from parental custody.

## 8th-Grader Driven to Help His Community, Including Foster Children

Naveen Nallappa is passionate about sports. He is also a straight-A student and two-time recipient of the President's Award for Educational Excellence. But Naveen, most of all, is passionate about people.

As an 8th-grader in a magnet program for high-achieving students at Margaret Mead Junior High in Schaumburg, Illinois, Naveen was selected as a school ambassador for being a role model who demonstrates superior leadership skills. Indeed, as his father says, "the best thing about him is success in any endeavor is an appetizer for him."

Like his parents, Raju and Anuradha, Naveen shows a streak of altruism. His earliest hopes have centered around bringing peace to the world and helping his neighbor. This compassionate son of immigrants, born in Chennai (formerly known as Madras) in India, came to the US in 1996.

Naveen demonstrates an astute knowledge of how and where to act in fulfilling his goals. One of those immediate goals, which started locally but has grown to include the whole state of Illinois, was to help his school and local community. This led him to become active in student councils since 4th grade. He was recently elected one of eight district representatives for the Illinois Association of Junior High Student Councils (IAJHSC).

One responsibility of a district representative is to champion a nonprofit organization in an annual competition to determine which one should become the recipient of the school year's IAJHSC state service project. After researching several prominent organizations, Naveen decided wholeheartedly that CASA would be the most worthy cause.

"I heard about CASA from my dad, who was helping me find an organization to fight for," recalls Naveen. "My dad told his co-workers about my project, and one of them told him about CASA, what it does and the official website. My dad and I checked out the website and decided that CASA was a very worthy recipient of our state service project."

As he quietly but assertively adds, CASA is about "fighting for children who don't know what love is, who have gone through so much. So it's about helping them get through hard times."

Naveen's father Raju had a very good chance of learning about CASA because his employer is Hewitt Corporation, a corporate partner closely involved with CASA of Lake County. Last year, Hewitt sponsored a Kids Helping Kids Saturday for the families of its employees. It was a chance for young people to learn about ways to help others. Attending was Terri Greenberg from CASA of Lake County, National CASA's 2004 program director of the year.

With the information Naveen gleaned by interviewing National CASA staff and making a site visit to a local CASA program, he developed a formal presentation to the IAJHSC executive board. His demonstration of CASA's advocacy services as a conduit for child development and improved emotional health—a sophisticated presentation for someone of any age—was overwhelmingly successful even though he was competing against the



*Naveen watches his brother Rabul at the piano.*

worthy projects of his seven fellow district representatives.

The association's board voted to support Naveen's cause at its meeting last October. As a result of fundraising events conducted by IAJHSC members, eight CASA programs in Illinois will receive a portion of funds this spring. The donation, historically about \$40,000, will be designated to serve children between 10 and 15 years of age.

On a special page on IAJHSC's website ([iajhsc.org/project.htm](http://iajhsc.org/project.htm)), a description of Illinois CASA is featured along with Naveen's PowerPoint presentation and a letter he sent to all Illinois junior high student councils. In the letter he proudly says, "We will be changing children's lives, by giving them a chance to be successful and make their dreams come true."

Naveen's advice for other teenagers is to get involved with community service and help others whether close or far. He leads, though modestly, by providing an inspiring and noble example. His most recent activity has been raising funds for the victims of the devastating Southeast Asian tsunami. Without a doubt, we will be hearing much more about Naveen in the future.

# Study Identifies Factors Related to Inhalant Abuse, Addiction

New research shows that young people who have been treated for mental health problems, have a history of foster care or already abuse other drugs have an increased risk of abusing or becoming dependent on inhalants. In addition, adolescents who begin using inhalants at an early age are more likely to become dependent on them. The study by Dr. Li-Tzy Wu and her colleagues is published in the October 2004 issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*. Funding was provided by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health, a component of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

The most commonly used inhalants reported by participants were glue, shoe polish and gasoline. Other inhalants used included nitrous oxide, lighter fluid, spray paints, correction fluid and paint solvents. Boys were more likely to have ever used gasoline or nitrous oxide, while girls favored glue, shoe polish, spray paints, correction fluid and aerosol sprays. There were no gender differences in the prevalence of inhalant abuse or dependence.

“These findings suggest inhalant abuse and addiction in young people are associated with a host of co-occurring problems that may be influenced by family and other social factors,” says NIDA director Dr. Nora D. Volkow. “And inhalant abuse may be escalating. Data reported in NIDA’s Monitoring the Future (MTF) Survey show that past-year use of inhalants rose 14% from 2002 to 2003—the only increase of any substance reported by MTF....”

Dr. Wu and colleagues examined the prevalence and characteristics of inhalant use, abuse and dependence among 36,859 adolescents aged 12-17 who participated in the 2000 and 2001 National Household Surveys on Drug Abuse (recently renamed the National Survey on Drug Use & Health) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Approximately 9% of the survey participants—representing nearly 2 million adolescents nationwide—reported having ever used inhalants in their lifetime. Among adolescents who reported using inhalants during the past year, 11% met the diagnostic criteria for abuse or dependence.

Analysis of the accumulated data showed that:

- Adolescents with a history of foster care placement were about five times more likely to become dependent on inhalants than those never placed away from home.
- Adolescents who reported first use of inhalants at age 13- 14 were six times more likely to be dependent on inhalants than those who started using inhalants at age 15-17.
- Adolescents who were treated for mental health problems were more than two times as likely to be dependent on inhalants
- Adolescents who abused or were dependent on two other drugs (such as cocaine/crack, marijuana/hashish, heroin, hallucinogens, sedatives, tranquilizers, pain relievers and stimulants) also were likely to use inhalants; they were about four times more likely to be diagnosed with inhalant abuse and about nine times more likely to be diagnosed with inhalant dependence.

“Our study provides more evidence that early use of inhalants may be a precursor for later drug abuse that grows to include abuse of multiple illegal substances,” says Dr. Wu. “We found that approximately 60% of the adolescents who reported using inhalants during the past year also reported the use of more than one type of inhalant.”

Adds Dr. Volkow: “Children and adolescents who abuse inhalants are at substantial risk of illness and death, so it is important for prevention programs to target children when they are young. Factors such as early inhalant use, foster care placement and coexisting mental illnesses may help identify young people who are especially vulnerable to severe drug abuse and mental health problems.”

*For more information, visit the National Institute on Drug Abuse website at [drugabuse.gov](http://drugabuse.gov).*



We welcome letters, comments and suggestions. The editorial staff of *The Connection* reserves the right to approve all content and submissions. If you do not want your comments to appear in the publication, simply include a line that says, “This letter is not for publication.” Advertising inquiries are also welcome. Articles and advertising appearing in *The Connection* do not necessarily reflect the official position of the National CASA Association or its member programs.

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## Resources for FOSTER YOUTH

### *Foster Youth and Graduates Find Their Voices*

Foster youth and graduates from foster care are finding their voice, and people are listening. Whether springing from grassroots or Department of Youth Services offices and private care foundations, all share a primary goal—to empower youth with the skills to advocate for themselves and for change. Their stories are powerful, and their insights are often poignant and pointed—they want to see change. With increased frequency, their voices are heard. Listen to their message at some of these sites:

**California Youth Connection** is a youth-run organization that provides invaluable opportunities for current and former foster youth to learn leadership and advocacy skills. Their active and dynamic web presence at [calyouthconn.org](http://calyouthconn.org) says they are “young people, who because of our experiences with the child welfare system, now work to improve foster care, to educate the public and policy makers about our unique needs and to change the negative stereotypes many people have of us.” With 22 active chapters and more than 250 members, ages 14 to 24, California Youth Connection has initiated legislation and policy decisions that facilitate youth’s emancipation process.

**Strong Able Youth Speaking Out, or Say So**, is a statewide self-advocacy group of foster youth in North Carolina. Members meet monthly to talk about their experiences and push for changes. The group started three years ago with a grant from the Kellogg Foundation and is now paid for with state money. See [saysoinc.org](http://saysoinc.org).

**Missouri Division of Family Services Youth Advisory Board** is a group of teenagers who are in foster care and know the system’s strengths and weaknesses. From this vantage point, they “try to help make the system better for all concerned.” Visit this group at [geocities.com/heartland/lake/2796](http://geocities.com/heartland/lake/2796).

**The Mockingbird Times** is a monthly newspaper designed and produced by young people who are currently, or have in the past been, involved in the Washington state foster care and group home system or are homeless. Each edition emphasizes themes significant to children and youth accessing social services across the nation. Distributed nationally and on the website, *Mockingbird Times* is a voice for young people—interacting with youth from across the nation by accepting their articles, poetry and art for publication. For more information, visit [mockingbirdsociety.org](http://mockingbirdsociety.org).

**The Youth Advocacy Center**, founded in 1991 by Betsy Krebs and Paul Pitcoff, lawyers for children in family court, is dedicated to teaching young adults to advocate for themselves and take control of their lives. Although the Youth Advocacy Center is run by professionals, it is driven by the needs of foster care youth and at-risk adolescents who have dreams and ambitions but lack the access and resources to plan for their futures. For more information, visit [youthadvocacycenter.org](http://youthadvocacycenter.org).

**More Precious than Gold—Voices of Foster Care Youth** provides a summary

of focus group interviews with foster care youth in West Virginia. Their conclusions? Programs developed for youth in care must be adolescent-centered, community-based, comprehensive, collaborative, egalitarian, empowering, inclusive, visible, flexible, culturally sensitive, family focused and affirming. Visit [nysccc.org/FCYouth/Foster\\_Care\\_Report2002.pdf](http://nysccc.org/FCYouth/Foster_Care_Report2002.pdf).

**Connect for Kids** at [connectforkids.org](http://connectforkids.org) is an award-winning multimedia project of the Benton Foundation, helping adults make their communities better places for families and children. The website offers a place on the internet for parents, grandparents, educators, policymakers and others who want to become more active citizens. Not designed directly by and for youth, it nonetheless is sensitive to the issues that bring about out-of-home placements.

*This article was adapted and reprinted with permission from **Fostering Families Today**, a magazine about the parents, children and dedicated professionals of foster care and domestic adoption. Through articles and stories reflecting professional expertise and the experienced perspective of dedicated parents, **Fostering Families Today** explores issues that profoundly affect families and children. Visit [fosteringfamilies.today](http://fosteringfamilies.today) for more information.*

Do you have a foster youth resource to recommend to *Connection* readers? We’re especially interested in featuring resources available nationwide. Send your suggestions to [theconnection@nationalcasa.org](mailto:theconnection@nationalcasa.org) with “Foster Youth Resource Suggestion” in the subject line of your message.



## Public Policy UPDATE

*National Legislation, Federal Activities and Reports of Importance  
to CASA/GAL Programs and the Children We Serve*

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Reauthorized**

Congress approved in November reauthorization of the IDEA, with a new focus on improving educational opportunities for children in foster care. National CASA worked with Senators Patty Murray (D-WA), Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Judd Gregg (R-NH) to include amendments to improve educational stability and outcomes for foster and homeless children with disabilities. The Act assures that:

- Children's educational needs are considered by the judge and the child welfare system in making decisions.
- A specific individual is appointed to advocate for each child's educational needs.
- Child welfare, school and judicial systems communicate with each other about individual foster children.
- Delays are eliminated in enrolling children in new schools or transferring school records when students move because of a new placement.

The full text of the legislation is available at [http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108\\_cong\\_bills&dclid=fh1350enr.txt.pdf](http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=108_cong_bills&dclid=fh1350enr.txt.pdf).

### **Reauthorization of CASA Slated for New Session of Congress**

Funding for the CASA program is currently authorized through FY 2005. Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), the original champion for CASA's funding, is leading the effort to reauthorize the

program in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The bill is expected to be introduced early in the new session of Congress, as Biden works with other Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Senators Hatch (R-UT), Specter (R-PA), Kennedy (D-MA) and Leahy (D-VT) have joined Senator Biden in working on VAWA legislation that will garner bipartisan support. Representative Conyers (D-MI) is expected to lead the effort on the House side. National CASA is seeking an authorization of \$24 million for the CASA program through FY 2010. Congress appropriated \$11.897 million for CASA for FY '05, which provides grants to develop and expand CASA programs and state organizations as well as training and technical assistance support. For FY 2006, National CASA is requesting an appropriation of \$17 million. The \$5 million increase is supported by a recommendation of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care to expand CASA advocacy in areas where children are underrepresented, particularly large metropolitan and rural areas.

### **Committee Chairs Named for New Congress**

The 109th Congress convened on January 4 for the swearing-in of newly elected Senators and Representatives as well as to begin the work of the 2005 legislative session with the appointment of committee chairs.

Important committee chairs opening up in the 109th Congress include both the

Senate and House Appropriations Committees. With Congress expected to tackle spending this year and attempt to begin reducing the federal budget deficit through program funding cuts, the appropriations committees will be key power centers in the debate. Picked to chair the Senate committee is Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS). Rep. Jerry Lewis (R-CA) will chair the House committee. Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH) will continue as chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, which has jurisdiction for CASA's funding.

In other changes, Sen. Judd Gregg (R-NH) moves to the chair of the Senate Budget Committee, giving up the helm of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP), which will now be chaired by Sen. Michael Enzi (R-WY). The Senate HELP Committee has jurisdiction over several key child welfare programs, including the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA).

*Adapted from Washington Memorandum, an electronic publication of the National Child Abuse Coalition.*

Public Policy Update is written by deputy chief executive officer M. Carmela Welte ([carmela@nationalcasa.org](mailto:carmela@nationalcasa.org)).

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# CASA PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

## President Bush Greeted by CASA Volunteer



President Bush with Frank and Robin Schnorbus

The *Record Courier* of Gardnerville, Nevada carried an article in October about CASA volunteer **Frank Schnorbus** and his wife Robin. In recognition of Schnorbus's work as a CASA volunteer in the 9th District Court in Minden, Nevada, the USA Freedom Corps invited the couple to greet President George W. Bush at Reno's airport. (See [usafreedomcorps.gov](http://usafreedomcorps.gov)). Schnorbus was portrayed in the article as a CASA volunteer "responsible for promoting and protecting these children's best interests during the time they are assigned to him. He is currently an advocate for two children and has assisted with three others." Frank is an active leader in the home school program for Nevada and Robin home schools their seven

children and four foster children. They are considering expanding their family through adoption. Linda Cuddy, coordinator of CASA of Douglas County, says "Frank is a CASA on whom I can always rely, in spite of his hectic schedule." Says Schnorbus of this recognition: "I am very grateful to have been able to represent so many other volunteers."

## GAL Volunteer Featured in Magazine

The October 2004 issue of *Mpls/St. Paul Magazine*, Minnesota, selected GAL volunteer **Jerilyn Birnie** as one of nine "Volunteers of the Year." Under the title "A Gift for Giving," the magazine saluted



Jerilyn Birnie with a framed photo from *Mpls St. Paul Magazine*

Birnie with a full-page photo and quotes on her passions, most challenging experience and how she finds time for so many selfless acts. An elementary school teacher who has volunteered for more than 17 years with Washington County's GAL Program, Birnie is quoted in the article that her most challenging experience is "probably my court cases—getting parents and children to work together." But she notes that, of

all her commitments, "Guardian ad Litem comes first. Once you work with those families and children, you realize they need someone to advocate for them and you want to be there." *Editor's note: Birnie was also inducted into the Twin Citian Volunteer Hall of Fame at a ceremony held at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.*

## Governor Brad Henry Appears in Oklahoma CASA PSA



(Front L-R) Taylor Rodriguez, Governor Brad Henry, First Lady Kim Henry, Austin Day (Back L-R): Champagne Reteria, Jacoby Jones, Miracle Lennox

Governor and Mrs. Brad Henry of Oklahoma appeared in a public service announcement (PSA) on behalf of CASA beginning in January. The PSA features the most recent child abuse statistics, along with information on how Oklahomans can contact their local CASA program to help. Oklahoma CASA will reach the entire state with this new awareness tool thanks to Brian Sabolich of Sabolich Video Productions.

# Pointers from PROGRAMS



## Garden Stake Project Johnson County CASA, Olathe, KS



*Kids at Stake project*

Four public relations students from MidAmerica Nazarene in Kansas selected Johnson County CASA for a final class project. Scott Lero, Clint Snyder, Sarah Stark and Kelsey Van Dyne created and held an event to help build awareness for the CASA program. Working with CASA staff, the students created the **CASA Kids**

**at Stake** project, in which they distributed specialized garden stakes to 11 local nurseries. The garden stakes, provided by Kansas CASA, pictured a young child and gave basic information, including the ongoing need for additional volunteers. Later, the four students volunteered for 12 hours on a Saturday at the Lenexa K-Mart Garden Center, resulting in 5% of the day's garden sales being donated to Johnson County CASA. An information booth was available onsite, providing program and volunteer information to shoppers. Children who stopped by the booth were greeted with a CASA balloon. Executive director Lois Rice says the four students "brought a fresh, creative approach to the Kids at Stake project. Each of them did a wonderful job in helping create publicity, locate nurseries and build an event to benefit the abused and neglected children of CASA."

## Ladies Longines DolceVita Watch CASA for Children, Inc., Portland, OR

Through the generosity of Fred Meyer Jewelers, CASA for Children in Portland is benefiting from the sale of the new "CASA Watch." The Ladies Longines DolceVita—*in polished stainless steel with 10 diamonds on a mother-of-pearl dial and a diamond-set heart at 12 o'clock*—is one of 200 limited-edition, numbered pieces. The CASA logo is engraved on the case back. The watch is available at select Fred Meyer



*Ladies Longines DolceVita*

Jewelers retail locations and also at fredmeyerjewelers.com. The retail price is \$1,250, with a portion of proceeds donated to CASA for Children. This is not the first time that Fred Meyer Jewelers has been affiliated with the CASA organization. Edward Dayoob, president and CEO of Fred Meyer Jewelers, played a pivotal role in introducing National CASA to the Jewelers for Children committee, resulting in CASA becoming one of a handful of national children's causes that Jewelers for Children supports each year.

## ProKids Annual Auction Gala Cincinnati's ProKids, OH



*Evelyn White (CASA volunteer), Tracy Cook (executive director) and Sheree Paoello, anchor/reporter Channel 5 News*

Cincinnati's ProKids recently hosted its 12th Annual Auction Gala at the downtown Hyatt Regency Hotel. More than 500 guests turned out to enjoy the live and silent auction event, which raised over \$120,000 for the organization. Channel 5's Sheree Paoello served as emcee for the gala, which was also sponsored by MOJO 94.9. Auction items included trips to Costa Rica and Keystone, Colorado as well as original artwork from local artists Barbara Heimann, Kevin Kelly and Michael Manning. Guests



*Garden stake (front and back)*

What is a CASA volunteer?  
A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is a trained volunteer who helps children have safe access to their parents and live in a safe and nurturing home. Appointed by a judge, CASA advocates for the best interests of children who have become involved in the Court system due to abuse, neglect, custody, or parenting time disputes.

Contact:  
Johnson County CASA  
100 E Park, Suite 209  
Olathe, KS 66061  
(913) 715-4040  
www.jococasa.org

Make a powerful difference in a child's life!  
Become a CASA volunteer

also bid on a private 30-person cruise, six bottles of Chateau Margaux and a Hilton Head villa vacation. The evening began with a special Friends of Children reception, hosted by sponsors Jeb and Nirvani Head. With entertainment provided by the Cincinnati Rhythm Band, the guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres, a dinner buffet and cocktails.

**Doug Mitchell, Singing for CASA  
CASA of New Hampshire**

Soulful singer-songwriter Doug Mitchell performed an acoustic concert in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, for the benefit of CASA. *The Boston Globe* once called Mitchell “a refreshing summer breeze



*Doug Mitchell*

on today’s music scene.” With both Patriots and Red Sox games taking place that afternoon, those who opted for music over sports were treated to the best of the musician’s talents. With five solo albums to his credit, Mitchell draws from a seemingly limitless repertoire of over 2,000 songs, reaching back to classic folk and constantly shifting pace with contemporary music in over 250 shows a year. Although he is not considered a traditional country performer, three of his songs were selected as Song of the Year by the Country Music Association. Two of his albums featuring those songs earned Album of the Year titles. Mitchell’s promotional manager and Seacoast Friend of CASA Tammy Benjamin helped coordinate the effort and reports that Mitchell has indicated his desire to perform again to help the children of CASA.

## Awards

**National CASA Advisory Board Member Receives the 2004 Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence**



*(L-R) William Vickrey, administrative director of California courts, Judge Edwards and Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy at the Rehnquist Award ceremony*

National CASA Advisory Board Member Judge Leonard Perry Edwards II received the National Center for State Courts’ 2004 William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence. One of the most prestigious judicial honors in the country, the award is presented annually to a state court judge who exemplifies the highest level of judicial excellence, integrity, fairness and professional ethics. Judge Edwards is currently Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge in California and past president of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Judge Edwards was instrumental in creating the CASA program in Santa Clara County (Child Advocates), and his tremendous support over the past two decades has helped the program to develop into one of the largest in the country.

Mary Campbell McQueen, president of the National Center for State Courts, calls Judge Edwards “one of the most effective and progressive trial judges in America, especially in the area of juvenile and family courts. Judge Edwards stands out, not only for his numerous achievements, but also for his leadership style, which has positively influenced courts in California, the nation and the world.” Justice Anthony Kennedy, on behalf of ailing Chief Justice Rehnquist, presented the award to Judge Edwards at a ceremony in the Great Hall of the US Supreme Court in Washington, DC. William Vickrey, state court administrator of California, introduced Judge Edwards at the dinner, while Judge Shirley Abrahamson, Chief Justice of Wisconsin and president of the Conference of Chief Justices, also spoke.

### Angels in Adoption Celebrates CASA Volunteers



Senator Mary Landrieu with Jackie Wilson, state director of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association

Jackie Wilson, state director of the Ohio CASA/GAL Association, Jerry Foxhoven, state director of the Iowa CASA Program and the Child Advocates of Fort Bend County (Texas), among others, were honored at the Angels in Adoption Awards Gala held in September at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center in Washington, DC. The Angels in Adoption Program, the signature public awareness program of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI), raises Congressional awareness about the thousands of foster children in this coun-



Jerry Foxhoven, state director of the Iowa CASA Program, with Senator Chuck Grassley

try in need of permanent homes. The gala recognizes and honors the work of constituents who have enriched the lives of children through adoption. More than 1,000 people attended, including "Angels" from all 50 states and 170 Members of Congress. Actress Jane Seymour, PGA

golfer Kirk Triplett and NBA executive Pat Williams were honored as National Angels for their dedication to adoption and foster care. Senator Carl Levin of Michigan and



Child Advocates of Fort Bend County board president Joan Damon with NBA executive Pat Williams

Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania presented awards, alongside CCAI board members Senator Larry Craig, Senator Mary Landrieu, Representative Dave Camp and Representative Jim Oberstar. A mes-

sage from the President was delivered by deputy secretary for health and human services Claude Allen.

### CASA Director Honored by Women's Fund of New Jersey

CASA of New Jersey's executive director, Rita Gulden, was named an honoree by the Women's Fund of New Jersey (wfnj.org) for her leadership and excellence in the nonprofit sector. She joins an influential and elite group of women who have made significant strides in a wide range of industries statewide. At the Women's Fund 2004 Fall Gala, held at Drumthwacket, the mansion of New Jersey's Governor, winners were honored for their dedicated service and talents. The Women's Fund has honored women advancing the fields of healthcare, banking and finance, pharmaceutical and medical technology, biotech industries and real estate.

### Colonial CASA Named Healthcare Heroes Recipient

Colonial CASA volunteers in Williamsburg, Virginia, were named recipients of the 2004 Dr. Blaine Blayton Outstanding Volunteer Award given by the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation. The award recognizes individuals or programs that have made a significant difference in the health of the Williamsburg Community. Colonial CASA volunteers were honored for



Colonial CASA volunteers in Williamsburg, Virginia were named recipients of the 2004 Dr. Blaine Blayton Outstanding Volunteer Award given by the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation

their decade of volunteer service. Colonial CASA has been serving local abused and neglected children since 1995, training 103 child advocates and advocating for safe and permanent homes for 416 children. Of those served, 98 were identified as special-needs children. Robin B. Bledsoe, executive director of Colonial CASA, says "We have an incredibly passionate and committed group of volunteers, and because of those qualities, the children we serve have a much better chance at a bright future. I can't think of anything that is more important than that!"

# Upcoming CONFERENCES

Some CASA/GAL associations offer state conferences for both staff and volunteers. Conferences cover a variety of issues, and many of these events provide an opportunity to earn continuing education credits. A list of state CASA conferences held throughout the year can be accessed at [casanet.org/conference/state-conf.asp](http://casanet.org/conference/state-conf.asp).

## APRIL

**April 6-9** *Honolulu, HI*  
**6th National Conference on Family and Community Violence Prevention—“Navigating Pathways to Violence Prevention: Exploring and Strengthening Links between Families and Communities”**  
 Family and Community Violence Program  
 Tel: (888) 496-2667 [fcvp.org](http://fcvp.org)

**April 16-19** *Atlanta, GA*  
**24th National CASA Conference: “Growing a Better Tomorrow for Every Child”**  
 National CASA Association  
 Tel: (800) 628-3233 [nationalcasa.org](http://nationalcasa.org)

**April 18-23** *Boston, MA*  
**15th National Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect—“Supporting Promising Practices and Positive Outcomes: A Shared Responsibility”**  
 Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, US Department of Health and Human Services  
 Tel.: (703) 528-0435  
[nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/profess/conferences/cbconference/index.cfm](http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/profess/conferences/cbconference/index.cfm)

**April 24-27** *Albuquerque, NM*  
**23rd Annual National American Indian Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect: “Protecting Our Children”**  
 National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA)  
 Tel: (503) 222-4044 [nicwa.org](http://nicwa.org)

## MAY

**May 2-4** *New Orleans, LA*  
**2005 Finding Better Ways Conference: “Addressing the Mental Health Needs of Children, Youth, and Families”**  
 Child Welfare League of America  
 Tel: (202) 942-0826  
[cwla.org/conferences/2005fbwrfp.htm](http://cwla.org/conferences/2005fbwrfp.htm)

**May 5-7** *San Diego, CA*  
**3rd Annual Violence in the World of Our Youth Conference: “Partners In Prevention”**  
 The Family Violence and Sexual Assault Institute  
 Tel: (858) 623-2777  
[fvsai.org/Training/Workshops/YV%202005/2005YouthViolenceCall.doc](http://fvsai.org/Training/Workshops/YV%202005/2005YouthViolenceCall.doc)

**May 9-10** *Arlington, VA*  
**2005 Head Start Performance Conference**  
 The Performance Institute  
 Tel: (703) 894-0481  
[performanceweb.org](http://performanceweb.org)

**May 18-20** *Atlanta, GA*  
**Pathways to Adulthood: “Independent Living/ Transitional Living Conference 2005”**  
 National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development  
 Tel: (918) 660-3700  
[nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/npta05/npta05call.htm](http://nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/npta05/npta05call.htm)

## JUNE

**June 1-3** *Miami, FL*  
**2005 Juvenile Justice National Symposium**  
 Child Welfare League of America  
 Tel: (202) 638-2952  
[cwla.org/conferences/2005jjsymposiumrfp.htm](http://cwla.org/conferences/2005jjsymposiumrfp.htm)

**June 3-8** *Indianapolis, IN*  
**17th Annual National Juvenile Services Training Institute**  
 National Partnership for Juvenile Services  
 Tel: (859) 622-6259

**June 15-18** *New Orleans, LA*  
**13th Annual Colloquium**  
 American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children  
 Tel: (405) 271-8202  
 Email: [tricia-williams@ouhsc.edu](mailto:tricia-williams@ouhsc.edu)

**June 23-25** *Portland, OR*  
**2005 Building on Family Strengths Conference**  
 Research and Training Center on Family Support and Children's Mental Health, Portland State University  
 Tel: (503) 725-4114  
[rtc.pdx.edu/pgConference.shtml](http://rtc.pdx.edu/pgConference.shtml)

**June 27-July 1** *Denver, CO*  
**Investigation and Prosecution of Child Fatalities and Physical Abuse**  
 American Prosecutors Research Institute  
 Tel: (703) 549-9222

## JULY

**July 6-10** *Las Vegas, NV*  
**American Adoption Congress 27th Annual Conference**  
 American Adoption Congress  
 Tel: (202) 483-3399  
[americanadoptioncongress.org/conference](http://americanadoptioncongress.org/conference)

**July 24-27** *Atlanta, GA*  
**Foster Family-Based Treatment Association's 19th Annual Conference on Treatment Foster Care**  
 Tel: 800-414-3382  
 Email: [shorowitz@mdu-inc.com](mailto:shorowitz@mdu-inc.com)  
[ffta.org](http://ffta.org)





# DONORS

The National CASA Association gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those who have contributed to the Association between July 1 and November 30, 2004.

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In honor of Mr. and Mrs. Craig Honeyman –  
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In honor of Doug Rude –  
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In honor of Andrew Shapiro and Jean Yang –  
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In honor of the Beane Family – *Vikki Pyneburg*

In honor of Mr. and Mrs. David Williams' wedding  
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In honor of Janet and Warren Ward – *Barbara Disser*  
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In memory of Johnnie Hunter – *Tom Dunn*  
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In memory of Charles H. Schroll – *Janice Skinner*

For more information on the monthly giving program, contact resource development associate D'Nika Jackson at dnika@nationalcasa.org or (800) 628-3233 ext. 263.

# Connection Sightings

Where do you take *The Connection*? Send us a photo of you or someone you know reading the *Connection* in a unique or interesting location. Since the *Connection* staff is especially interested in comments from readers, submissions including feedback about the publication are most welcome.

Send photos (minimum 4" x 6") to *The Connection*, National CASA Association, 100 W. Harrison, North Tower, Suite 500, Seattle, WA, 98119, or email high resolution photos (300 dpi scanned at 4" x 6" size) to [theconnection@nationalcasa.org](mailto:theconnection@nationalcasa.org). Include your names, address, phone number, email address and photo location/details.



National CASA board member Joyce Honeyman and husband Ron proudly display *The Connection* as they enjoy a typical San Francisco tourist outing.

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Help support our vital work for abused and neglected children by becoming a member of National CASA.

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# Types of Foster Care

## Traditional Foster Care

This kind of fostering is usually for children who have been taken from their parents because of neglect or abuse when it is believed that the parents' behavior can be changed and family reunification will occur. While the child is being fostered, the parents receive a variety of services, often including parenting education and therapy. Their behavior and progress are closely monitored by social services. There is usually a good bit of contact between birth parents and children, under supervision, as the parents learn and practice new skills. The parents know they must meet the goals of the plan. If they fail to make enough progress, their rights can be legally terminated and their children placed for adoption. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 requires states to initiate or join proceedings to terminate parental rights for parents whose children have been in foster care 15 of the last 22 months. The purpose is to allow these children the opportunity to be placed with permanent families more quickly and minimize their time in foster care.

## Emergency Foster Care

In some cases, children are left with no family to care for them, or their immediate removal from the current home is necessitated by extreme circumstances. Emergency foster families are specialists at taking children with almost no notice. Often the children are traumatized by the incident making them at least temporarily parentless, requiring intensive help.

## Fost-Adopt

Fost-adopt programs were created to bridge the gap between a child's initial need for temporary care and the long-term need for a permanent home. In fost-adopt programs, social workers place the child with specially trained fost-adopt parents before the child's biological parents' rights have been permanently terminated. Fost-adopt parents make a commitment to adopt the child if and when those rights are terminated and the child is legally free to be adopted. In fost-adopt programs (also known as foster-adopt and foster-to-adopt), efforts at family reunification may still be ongoing—or biological parents may be appealing a decision to terminate their parental rights. Children are generally considered less likely than

others to return to the biological family. One reason many foster care providers opt for this type of placement is that a high percentage of children placed in fost-adopt families are very young—including infants.

## Foster Child Adoption

It is not unusual for foster parents to become interested in adopting a child who has been placed with them after they have come to know and bond with the child. Many families become foster parents with the sole intent of providing a safe and loving interim environment for one or more children who will either return to their biological families or be placed elsewhere for adoption. But no one can predict how the heart will react, and the foster family may choose to pursue adoption if it is legally possible. For more information, go to [foster-child.adoption.com](http://foster-child.adoption.com).

## Long-Term Foster Care

Sometimes a child will come into foster care in what is expected to be a short-term placement, but events make it impossible for the child to return home. Other times, families decide on long-term foster care instead of adoption because they anticipate that they will need a high level of support from social service providers for many years and want to be sure of access to it. Or an older child will come into foster care and be adamant that he or she does not want to be adopted. Ideally, a child will stay in the same home until adulthood, but unfortunately many children are moved from one placement to another every few years or even months. In some states, foster parents and children sign a long-term foster care agreement; however, it is not legally binding. A stable long-term foster placement can seem very much like an adoption to the child and foster parents. But there is no real security because long-term fostering is rarely considered the best option, if an option at all, by social services since it is not legally permanent. In recent years, there have been a number of kinship applications for long-term or permanent foster care, often called "relative foster care." In these cases, a child's relatives have undertaken or want to undertake care but for various reasons, including legal responsibility or financial burden, are unable to. With the assistance of foster parent care allowances, the child can remain within their own family.

## Short-Term Foster Care

This kind of foster care is intended to provide short-term care to children whose parents may be experiencing special or emergency needs of their own. This kind of care may be given when parents lose custody during the investigation of improper care but it is fully expected that the children will return home within a few weeks. There is often considerable contact with the family. It may also be an option when parents find themselves in a medical emergency with no other child-care resources.

## Pre-Adoption Foster Care

Also known as "transitional foster care" and "cradle care," this kind of placement is generally for infants. The babies may need adoption, but for some reason there is no family available at the moment. In other cases, there may be a period of time before placement in the adoptive family while parental rights are terminated. Babies may also be placed in transitional care while birth parents make a final decision on an adoption placement. The amount of contact with birth family members will depend on individual arrangements.

## Therapeutic or Treatment Foster Care

Children sometimes come into foster care medically fragile or severely emotionally damaged. Foster parents may need to provide extensive medical support or mount an intensive campaign to improve these children's conditions. Some of these children may have become delinquent, self-harming or abusers of other children, animals or adults. Or they may have been involved with drugs or prostitution. The last few decades have seen the development of a corps of highly trained, dedicated specialist foster parents to look after these children and provide a therapeutic, safe environment for them which may supplement professional medical care or therapy. This is a profession in itself and in most cases is paid accordingly. As in long-term fostering, many of these children develop permanent parent-child relationships with their foster parents.

*Sources: [adoption.com](http://adoption.com), [fosterparenting.com](http://fosterparenting.com) and author Roger R. Fenton.*

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