A publication of the National CASA Association, representing 946 program offices and 57,938 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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The Connection is designed to keep CASA programs, volunteers and the public abreast of the latest news and developments affecting CASA’s work with abused and neglected children. Written contributions are welcome. Published quarterly by the National CASA Association.

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Unless otherwise noted, children in Connection photos are not from actual abuse and neglect cases.
1977 seems like a long time ago. In that year, the space shuttle made its first test glide. The first Star Wars movie was in theaters. Jimmy Carter was president, and Elvis Presley died. That year was also a milestone of sorts in child protection. For the first time, the number of children in foster care topped half a million, about the same rate of placement as today. A new phrase—foster care drift—became a popular way to describe the increasingly long time many children spent in foster care.

The times cried out for an innovation like CASA and volunteer guardian ad litem advocacy. Early on, leaders of the movement showed they were acutely aware of key issues that continue to affect the lives and future prospects of children in child protection systems throughout the country. Here are just a few examples:

- The earliest mention of CASA in a news report (see page 6) stressed the importance of participation by people of color. Inclusiveness has remained a high priority in every National CASA strategic plan since, including our current plan that runs through 2008.
- In the early years, as Judge David Soukup’s original idea quickly became known outside Seattle, attention was given to the scarcity of funds available to expand to new jurisdictions. In spite of truly phenomenal growth, expansion remains a major need. This is confirmed in our program surveys and in a recent survey of judges, who were concerned that there are still not enough volunteers for the most urgent cases.
- The National CASA Association’s first issue of The Connection in the fall of 1984 stressed that research had documented the important role of training for children’s advocates. Continued development of volunteer training remains a high priority, and a new version of the national training curriculum will be released soon.

All of us in this 30th anniversary year owe a debt of gratitude to CASA’s founder, Judge David Soukup, and to early supporters for the strength of their vision. They understood that the future success of the CASA movement—not to mention the lives of children—depended on careful attention to the quality of our advocacy.

The vision has worked well. Sometime in 2007, the CASA/GAL movement will reach an important milestone—2 million children served. But it is not just the number of children served that demonstrates the success of volunteer advocacy. For example, we now know, based on information from a 2006 federal audit, that children with CASA volunteers are substantially less likely to spend more than three years in foster care. This not only benefits kids by preventing foster care drift; it also has financial implications. At a minimum, this great outcome for children also saves close to $50 million annually.

On behalf of 2 million CASA/GAL alumni, I thank and congratulate everyone who has played a part in making this success story possible. And I ask for your support in preparing for the next 30 years of advocacy for children.
1970s

1977  King County Guardian ad Litem Program founded, later renamed Dependency CASA Program

1980s

1982  National CASA founded and managed by volunteer board
       Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 88

1983  Number of states with CASA programs: 29

1984  First 2 National CASA staff members hired
       Debut issue of The CASA Connection
       Number of states with CASA programs: 38

1985  First OJJDP cooperative agreement
       Number of children served: 10,000
       Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 159

1986  Beth Waid becomes second National CASA CEO
       First G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year award presented

1987  Number of children served: 40,000
       Number of volunteers in service: 12,000
       Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 271
       Number of states with CASA programs: 44

1988  National CASA Tribal Court program begins with grants to five tribes
       Parade magazine article generates more than 2,000 inquiries to National CASA

1989  National CASA becomes Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation's national charity
1990s

1990  National standards for CASA/GAL programs introduced
      Number of children served: 72,000
      Number of volunteers in service: 17,000
      Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 412

1994  CASA/GAL programs reach all 50 states, District of Columbia and Virgin Islands
      Michael Piraino becomes third National CASA CEO

1995  Debut of CASAnet website providing resources to staff and volunteers
      Number of children served: 129,000
      Number of volunteers in service: 38,000
      Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 642

1996  Congress amends Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to codify GAL representation by volunteers

1997  COMET software debuts to help programs manage data and evaluation
      National Bar Association endorses CASA volunteer advocacy

1998  New design of The Connection appears

2000s

2000  Number of children served: 174,137
      Number of volunteers in service: 47,063
      Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 900

2002  National Light of Hope event held on the National Mall in Washington, DC
      Judge Glenda Hatchett becomes National CASA spokesperson
      *Lighting the Way* book of essays by volunteers published

2003  Jewelers for Children begins partnership with National CASA
      First National CASA Diversity Award presented
      Online Judges’ Page debuts as first project of new Judges Liaison Committee
      National CASA unveils new logo to unify CASA/GAL network and build nationwide awareness

2004  Pew Commission recommends greater support for CASA in *Fostering the Future* report
      *Someone There for Me* book of essays by foster youth published

2005  Report released confirming that CASA volunteers are highly valued by judges
      Number of children served: 226,204
      Number of volunteers in service: 53,847
      Number of CASA/GAL program offices: 948

2006  National CASA named official “CBS Cares” charity

2007  2,000,000th child served by a CASA volunteer
Thanks for 30 Years of Volunteering

By Judge David W. Soukup
Retired Judge, Principal of Soukup Arbitration and CASA Founder

I na Hughes wrote a wonderful poem titled “Prayer for Children” in which she tells us of two kinds of children. First, she talks about those who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions, who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish, who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money, who cover themselves with band-aids and sing off-key, who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink, who slurp their soup. Then she describes those who never get dessert, who have no safe blankets to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who can’t find any bread to steal, who don’t have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren’t on anybody’s dresser, whose monsters are real.

Over 30 years ago, while sitting as a judge in juvenile court, I realized that there was no one in the courtroom whose only job was to provide a voice for those children. Caseworkers have obligations to their agency, the parent and others. Lawyers cannot investigate the facts and advocate for the mental health and social needs of the child. Our court was a court of general jurisdiction, so when I was not sitting at juvenile court I was trying civil cases, often involving large amounts of money or important legal issues. I would do the best job I could in deciding those cases and leave them at the courthouse when I went home. I wouldn’t wake up at 4 a.m. worrying about my decision.

While sitting at juvenile court, I never got a night’s sleep without waking to wonder if at least one decision I made that day had been the best for a child. It struck me that it might be possible to recruit and train volunteers to investigate a child’s case so they could provide a voice for the child in those proceedings, proceedings which could affect their whole lives.

I had my bailiff call four or five people in the community who might be resources in recruiting volunteers to ask if they would meet for a brown bag lunch at juvenile court to discuss the idea. There were 50 people in the room when I walked in for that lunch. I thought, “This idea is going to work.” It has. Tens of thousands of people like you, speaking up for hundreds of thousands of children, have proven that it does.

At one early meeting to discuss starting CASA, I was asked if I wasn’t worried that volunteers would become emotionally involved with the children. I answered that if they didn’t, we had the wrong volunteers. But for a long time I wondered who you marvelous people are who give so much of yourselves to children. Mercedes Lawry [former communications director at National CASA] then wrote her moving poem, “The Advocate,” [above right] explaining what this is all about.

After I retired from the superior court bench, I became a volunteer in our program. It was an extraordinary experience. Both the hardest—and the best—thing I’ve ever done. But I realized that, although I had slept better as a judge knowing that CASA volunteers were speaking up for the children who needed their voices, the volunteers were now up at 4 a.m. worrying about those kids.

You are to be commended for your extraordinary commitment to children and for your sleepless nights. When Aaron Ruben, a dear friend and CASA volunteer in Los Angeles, received accolades for his work he would say, “I really get uncomfortable with too much praise. When people say ‘Bless you for the work you’re doing,’ I say, ‘Don’t bless me. Get involved yourself or write CASA a check.’”

Keep passing that word on for another 30 years.
CASA Facts

The National CASA Association, together with its state and local members, supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.

- The first CASA program was founded by Judge David Soukup in Seattle, Washington in 1977. Today, a network of more than 940 program offices serves children in 49 states.
- CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of abused children and to ensure that they do not get lost in the overburdened child welfare system or languish in an inappropriate group or foster home.
- In 2006, more than 57,000 CASA and GAL volunteers served as a consistent, caring adult in the lives of 220,129 children in the dependency system.
- National CASA provides local program staff with training and assistance in a variety of areas, including funding, program development and volunteer recruitment and training.

Kappa Alpha Theta is proud to be a national partner with the CASA network in making a difference for children.

Congratulations on 30 years of service to kids.

CBS Cares is proud of its ongoing partnership with National CASA.

Congratulations to all CASA and GAL volunteers for 30 years of passionate and effective advocacy on behalf of abused and neglected children.
Celebrating the CASA Movement’s Beginnings

King County Dependency CASA Program

Concerned over making decisions about abused and neglected children’s lives without sufficient information, Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle conceived the idea of using trained community volunteers to speak for the best interests of children in court. In 1977, he created a legacy that continues to flourish when he founded what was then called the Guardian ad Litem Program and is now known as the King County Dependency CASA Program.

The CASA/GAL Network

Similar ideas were brewing around the country at about the same time, including in Hennepin County, Minnesota. Since then, CASA/GAL advocacy has grown to change America’s child welfare and judicial systems. In 2007, a volunteer will advocate for the 2,000,000th CASA child. Last year, 57,938 volunteers served 220,129 children through 946 CASA program offices around the United States.

National CASA

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association (National CASA) was formed in 1982 to provide a unified voice for CASA programs around the country. It has grown to offer leadership, training, technical assistance and grants to programs as well. National CASA stages an annual conference, engages in national public policy efforts, promotes volunteer advocacy through public awareness efforts, offers consultation and resources to help start CASA programs and provides vital assistance to established programs.

We can think of no better way to present the history of the first CASA program and of the National CASA Association than by sharing the words of three remarkable women. Carmen Ray-Bettineski was not only the founding director of the King County Dependency CASA Program, she also became the founding executive director of the National CASA Association. In 1984, Sandy Ottmar succeeded Ray-Bettineski as the local program manager. And the program’s current manager, Linda Katz, took over from Ottmar in 2000.

Carmen Ray-Bettineski
Founding Director, King County Dependency CASA Program and Founding Executive Director, National CASA

You were around from the beginning of CASA. Can you tell us about that period?

I had just completed my masters degree [her second] in social work, and I was in private practice focusing on parent-family relationships as well as consulting with nonprofit organizations. I heard that Judge Soukup had this wonderful idea. So I called him up and said I thought it was fantastic and I would like to do whatever I could to support his idea. He said, “What I need is a proposal. Can you write that?” And I said, “Oh, of course!” I developed the proposal, and the role of the volunteer court appointed advocate is pretty much still as it was written up in that proposal.

What happened in the past was that attorneys were serving children with no job description—and of course the costs involved were high. So we proposed a different model using community people who would go through screening, training and then a court appointment with supervision from the director. I didn’t know when I was writing this who the director would be. Judge Soukup presented the proposal to the superior court judges, and they voted to accept it.

The Seattle Times ran an article [see previous page] describing what we were proposing to do and asking people to volunteer. From that article came 110 volunteers. I screened each one and set up training sessions in December 1976 so that they could know what they were getting into and follow through on expectations and obligations. Our first CASA appeared in court in January 1977.

How were you involved in getting National CASA started?

I was recruited by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) for their Permanency Planning Committee and also to serve on their faculty at the Judicial College at the University of Nevada, Reno. I started going down each quarter and speaking to a group of judges. Some of them would go back to their courts and then call me from across the nation and say, “Would you come to our court? We want you here to speak to our community and our judges about beginning a program here.”

That was the beginning of our involvement at a national level. The NCJFCJ played a major role. Then the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation invited the Permanency Planning Committee to a meeting at their headquarters in New York City regarding the volunteer guardian ad litem program. They offered to set up a conference for programs that were just starting. The committee came up with the acronym CASA. We all decided that that was the perfect name.

[continued on page 8]
Sandy Ottmar
Retired Program Manager
King County Dependency CASA Program

What was your background and what were you doing when you first heard about the CASA program?
I met Carmen Ray-Bettineski as a result of our husbands playing softball together. I was a teacher and beginning to think about switching careers. In 1979, Carmen needed help at the program. I interviewed for the position and was hired as a “temporary” employee. I ended up getting hooked on the program and became the program manager in the mid-1980s until retiring in 2000.

What helped maintain your dedication over those 20 years?
The biggest reward for me was how CASA leadership has worked with judicial and social services to shorten the time that children spend in foster care. Back in the early years, it wasn’t uncommon that children were in foster care for three to four years. Judicial reform and child welfare reform continue to set new standards and goals for permanency planning. What a CASA volunteer is often able to do is set up a system and help children find their way back home.

What kept you so excited about CASA over the years?
I learned so much and was so energized by the people who served in our program. These were people who volunteered to come forward and be actual CASAs but also people willing to initiate new programs around the country. And they were the judges who supported the program and felt that at last they had a report that they could rely on to make their decisions. Because we all learned from each other, the corporate environment of CASA became one of openly sharing information.

I think my expression at the time was, “It’s an opportunity for ordinary people to do extraordinary work.” I don’t think they were ordinary, but they were an impressive cross-section of society who have contributed to the CASA movement. When people take on a lot of responsibility in the most sincere and dedicated sense, they really rise to the occasion.

What were some of the most remarkable changes you noticed over the years in child welfare and in CASA programs?
One of the biggest developments is the national trend toward finding permanent homes for children so that they don’t languish in the system. It is now part of the law and part of the practice of Child Protective Services that plans have to be made for the child to return to the original family or go to an adoptive home or guardianship. Over this time, studies documented how damaging it is to a child to go from foster home to foster home throughout their life. Foster care was the panacea at one time, but a child is much better nurtured by a permanent family. That’s not to say that foster families don’t do a marvelous job, because they do. But I think it should be a time-limited thing for a child, a remedial situation, not a long-term one.

Since leaving CASA, how have you been keeping busy?
I went on to be executive director of two other youth-serving organizations, the Northwest Network for Youth Services and the Washington State Council for Prevention of Child Abuse under governors Lowry and Locke. Now I have seven beautiful grandchildren, six boys and one girl. I’m spending time that’s not under pressure and enjoying reading former texts I researched in the past. It’s rewarding to be with friends and family and just be an active member of my community.

Sandy Ottmar

G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year award was set up by the National CASA board at that time.
I imagine that 30 years ago this was a radical idea—bringing unrelated citizen advocates into the courtroom, sharing highly confidential information with them and giving them access to the homes and lives of strangers.

It just goes to show that sometimes the most way-out ideas are the ones that can cause great advances in society.

Linda Katz

Program Manager
King County Dependency CASA Program

Linda Katz first learned of the King County Dependency CASA Program reading a newspaper article about a court case. She and her husband had just moved to Seattle; she was not working at the time and thought, “I could do that.” Katz recalls an informal interview with Carmen Ray-Bettineski, followed by a brief training consisting of a few evening sessions. She was sworn in as a volunteer in 1979, became active on the advisory board in the 1980s and joined the staff as program manager (director) in 2000. With a background in social work and adoption planning,

Katz was one of the originators of the concurrent planning model.

Katz has seen a number of trends and changes in her years with the CASA program. “Today our CASA volunteers are more closely tied in with the legal system than before. They spend more time in court, and we have more attorney staffing to represent them in contested matters. Volunteers are constantly monitoring and holding accountable all of the players—court personnel, service providers, child welfare agency social workers—to ensure that they are following through on plans necessary to achieve permanency. CASA advocacy is not soft work; volunteers have to be aggressive in policing the actions of others and be willing to ‘shake it up.’”

Carmen wrote a grant proposal to the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation to fund a meeting of 12 program managers and NCJFCJ judicial representatives in Chicago in 1980. The foundation supported this meeting and later provided funding for a first “national” conference in Reno in 1982. After this conference, Carmen worked with OJJDP and the Department of Health and Human Services to secure funding for a national office to provide support to existing and start-up programs. The funding was granted in 1984 for the official start of National CASA as a staffed program.
In 2006, National CASA began its preparation for the 30th anniversary of the first CASA program by looking for individuals who have been in continuous service as a CASA or GAL volunteer for 20 years or more. We put out a number of calls to our member programs for names and dates of first assignment.

Kathy Harvey has been identified as the longest-serving volunteer advocate. She joined what is today the King County Dependency CASA Program after her first experience as a foster parent left her confused by the system. Nearly 30 years later, Harvey is still sometimes frustrated by child welfare practices. But over the years she has gained the knowledge and experience necessary to navigate the waters of the dependency system and help children find permanent homes.

Can you explain the circumstances that led you to become a CASA volunteer?

Thirty-one years ago, when I was a young wife and mother, my husband and I decided to become foster parents as a way to eventually adopt. As a blended family, we had between us three grown children and one 5-year-old. We both felt that our biological kids were the best thing we had done in our lives and wanted to adopt one more. Ultimately, we adopted four children, who now range in age from 9 to 30. And between the blend of bio and adopted older kids, we now have eight beautiful grandchildren!

Our first foster child was a darling two-year-old girl. It was heartbreaking to us when she was returned to her birth mother a year later. The personal distress of relinquishing a child that we had hoped to adopt was made more difficult because we did not understand how the foster care and adoption systems really worked. To learn more, I volunteered for what was then called the Guardian ad Litem Program.

How many children have you served as a CASA volunteer?

Oh, I have not worked on that many cases; maybe 70 over 30 years.

Not that many, indeed! Has the nature of the cases and of CASA volunteer work changed over the years and, if so, how has that affected your role?

When I started doing CASA work, the cases were fairly straightforward. Now, the cases are terribly com-

The Longest-Serving CASA Volunteer
plicated by homelessness and mental illness. Many involve substance abuse and the criminal activity that sometimes surrounds it. That means that as a CASA volunteer, I have to have more information and a greater understanding of these complicating issues—and also be more careful and detailed in my research and reporting.

What has kept you involved as a volunteer?

With so many children in foster care, the need for CASAs is huge, and many, many cases go unserved. So I always think to myself, I’ll just take one more…and there I go again! But of course, there is more to it. There is nothing boring about being a CASA volunteer. It is interesting to do the interviews, gather all of the necessary information and follow your instincts in order to paint a picture for court that describes the situation.

I also have to credit my husband, who is my main hero. He has supported me always in following my passions and provides great insights into my CASA work.

What have been the greatest rewards and challenges?

It is always rewarding to see a child living in a good, permanent home. My background is in special education of deaf children, and one of the more rewarding cases that I worked on involved a mother who was deaf and blind and a father who was deaf. My expertise allowed me to form a relationship with the mother because I could communicate directly with her without using an interpreter. It was a difficult situation, and ultimately the parents had to relinquish their children, but I was able to make it easier for the parents and keep the children from going through a miserable court process.

When people hear about my CASA work, they say, ‘Oh, it’s so wonderful, I don’t know how you do it.’ But it’s just like anything else that people do. Some people help with their churches or the homeless or elsewhere. My CASA volunteer work is just my way of giving back. I really believe that it is the small things that people do that make the world a better place.

In a Youth’s Own Words

When I met Kathy I was 10 years old. What I remember about Kathy at the time was that she was always really nice to me. I did not know her as a person then. Now…I know her better and when I think back and remember, what she did means more to me, and I think about her in a different way. I think, wow, how could someone have so much love to give to so many children? How could she care so much about kids that she does not even know?

—Siobhan Parker, 17

A Mother’s Point-of-View

A good CASA volunteer is a blessing, and as adoptive parents we’ve been blessed twice. Each of our girls had a CASA. Kathy made things clear in a way Siobhan could understand at age 10. She was able to make our daughter comfortable, get her point of view and represent that as part of the picture in court.

When we got a call about our younger girl, our first question was “does she have a CASA?” Because our youngest is Native American, it helped that the CASA volunteer was knowledgeable about the Indian Child Welfare Act. She was very involved in talks with the tribal social worker, DSHS, Alaskan authorities—everyone at the table.

Of course the CASAs primary role is as the child’s advocate in court, but they also do things like help adoptive parents understand aspects of the case file. It doesn’t take superhuman powers to be a foster or adoptive parent, but part of what makes ordinary, everyday people able to get through the process is having people around that will support you. Our CASA volunteers have been lifesavers in that regard.

—Lisa Konick, Siobhan’s Adoptive Mother
Carolina Oaxaca
CASA of Los Angeles
Monterey Park, CA

Recognition for Carolina Oaxaca’s longtime service as a CASA volunteer has included an award from President Reagan in 1985 and the National CASA G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year award in 1992. She is also the longest-serving CASA volunteer in the CASA of Los Angeles program, having joined in 1982. Over the years, Oaxaca has served about 20 cases involving approximately 40 children. She currently has two active cases. Oaxaca has become an expert on immigration issues and was assigned to many cases for that reason.

How were you first drawn to child advocacy?
I had done political work and been involved in campaigns for various offices. When my three children were old enough to make do with less of my time, I decided I wanted to try something different. I knew I wanted meaningful work with families. Having children of my own, I thought, “Maybe some of this experience will help.” And it did.

I became involved in CASA through a friend of mine who had been on the Los Angeles County Grand Jury. She said she worked for this wonderful organization that was looking for bilingual volunteers. I asked her what it involved. Three days later, I received a brochure from her with an application form. So I did apply, went through a volunteer training, and before I knew it, I got my first case.

What do you like about being a volunteer advocate?
It’s very challenging, but I feel very strongly that I have to give something back to the community. I especially enjoy helping families that do not know the English language. They often feel lost in the child welfare system, and I can help put them at ease because I come from the same culture.

Can you tell me about one case in particular where you could really see the difference having a volunteer meant to a child?
I remember my second case very clearly. The main paper here in Los Angeles printed a story about a case of severe abuse. Cynthia was only 7 years old at the time and extremely
Gwen Bright
Richland County CASA
Columbia, SC

Gwen Bright always knew she wanted to be involved with helping abused and neglected children. When she read about a newly established CASA program in her home town of Columbia, SC, and learned about the overwhelming need for volunteer advocates, she was inspired to turn her commitment into action.

“I was reading the newspaper one day and saw an ad for CASA volunteers,” says Bright. “I knew that this is what I wanted to invest my time and energy in. So I called the office, took the training and here I am!”

Bright took her first CASA case in 1984. In the intervening 23 years, she has contributed to the program in many ways. She has raised funds as a “Friend of CASA,” served on her program’s board and helped to promote the organization as a member of the minority recruitment committee. Bright has been featured in a televised public service announcement and recognized for her work with an Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award.

Bright has held many volunteer roles with CASA, but what has kept her passionate about the work for more than two

In your CASA program, what are the most remarkable changes you’ve noticed over the years?

There are more resources today, which is good because there are more challenges—especially in the school system. Each school district is different, with its own rules. Here in California, there are many requirements that the schools have to comply with. But because of budget problems, school districts sometimes let things slide. In our program, CASA volunteers are appointed to attend educational planning sessions. Sometimes it takes a little urging on the CASA’s part to say, “Look, this child needs these services, and the law requires it. There are no two ways about it!”

bright. Her parents came from Mexico. The only connection she had was her sister, who was in another placement.

Through my investigation, I helped determine that the best place for Cynthia to live was in Mexico with her grandparents and the aunts who had kept in touch with her. Her local relatives on the other parent’s side were very insistent that she should live with them. But in spite of the cultural challenges, the best placement for her was with her relatives in Mexico.

Without an advocate, she would have fallen by the wayside. It would have been a disaster for her. Instead, Cynthia moved to Mexico to live in a loving home and went on to graduate from the University of Guadalajara with a degree in Business and International Relations. She sent me the invitation to her graduation.

What’s your response to people who say “I could never do what you do” as a volunteer?

I think that this kind of volunteer work takes real moral commitment. You have to perform. You can’t say, “I don’t feel like going out to do my volunteer work today.” To do something like this, you have to be serious about the work you do and realize that it makes a difference in a child’s life to have a CASA volunteer on their case. On the other hand, it doesn’t take special expertise. The CASA program provides wonderful training and support.

[continued on page 14]
decades is her involvement in providing direct service to children and families.

“This has been the most rewarding volunteer job that I have ever had—because I am helping the children who need help. I love it because I can make a positive difference in their lives.

One of my favorite times is during the holiday season each year when I make gifts and take them to the children. I like the idea that I can bring a little holiday cheer to them during this difficult time.”

Bright estimates that, as a CASA volunteer, she has helped more than 60 children find safe, permanent homes. In most of her cases, she worked to reunite children with their biological parent, in part by ensuring that the parents accessed necessary services and participated in supervised visitations with their children.

“I guess you’d say that I went above and beyond—I did whatever it took—to ensure that the children were able to spend time with their parents.”

While Bright counts the majority of her cases as successes, feeling that the children’s best interests were being met, she acknowledges that being a CASA volunteer has its trials. But she is adamant that unlike some forms of volunteer work, advocating for a child is something a volunteer has to see through to the end.

“Once you step into a child’s life, you have to follow the case all the way through. They are dependent on you. Those children see your face and they want you. They’ve been tossed around so many times, making it paramount that those who are guardians be an unfailing presence in the child’s life. There are going to be some bumps in the road, but you have to see it through for the children.”

Bruce D. Prizant
CASA Project of Jefferson County
Louisville, KY

In 1985, Richard FitzGerald, a Jefferson County district court judge, reached out to his friend Maud Fliegelman to tell her about CASA volunteer advocacy. Judge FitzGerald had just learned about this new organization while attending a national seminar. He enlisted Fliegelman’s help as a volunteer with the National Council of Jewish Women to create a local CASA program in Louisville, Kentucky. She in turn asked her son-in-law, attorney Bruce D. Prizant, to prepare articles of incorporation on a pro bono basis. After learning more about the organization, Prizant decided he would like to be a CASA volunteer himself.

Prizant’s first case dealt with an 8-month-old baby girl who weighed only 15 pounds. Having his own 3-month-old baby, who weighed 10 pounds, he was profoundly affected and became inspired to help even more children in need of a voice.

Over the past two decades, Prizant has served on a number of cases dealing with large families and lasting several years. He has gained great satisfaction from working with these families, sometimes numbering seven to eight siblings. He has seen, first hand, the benefits from his efforts in keeping them connected with each other. Prizant has observed that neglect can be as emotionally detrimental to children as abuse and that keeping children in touch with their family promotes their emotional and intellectual development.

Prizant is thrilled to have been involved in developing CASA advocacy in his state, which initially began with 4 programs and today counts 19. One of the most remarkable changes he has noticed over the years is that more people continue to volunteer despite the commitment necessary. His enthusiasm continues unabated as he helps children find a foundation for a stable home.
Once a permanent placement occurs and a CASA volunteer is released from a case, there is traditionally not an ongoing relationship between the volunteer and youth. However, there are instances when the youth or young adult will choose to reconnect or stay connected with the volunteer. While many local CASA programs discourage an informal relationship once the case has been officially closed, in some situations an ongoing or reestablished connection can be healthy for the youth. This is especially true in cases involving young people who will soon “age out” of foster care and have few other adults to rely on.

**Introducing Cy Gurney**

After moving to Durham, North Carolina from Germany, where she had been working after finishing her Masters in Social Work, Cy Gurney started serving as a guardian ad litem volunteer in May 1984. “North Carolina was brand new to me,” says Gurney. “So I wanted to explore volunteer opportunities that would help me determine the future course of my career.”

With a background in family/marital counseling and experience working with children through an adoption-related organization, Gurney was a very attractive volunteer to the fledgling GAL program. The feeling was mutual. “I was intrigued and immediately signed up,” she says. “In those days, we didn’t have formal training or a curriculum. National CASA was just forming. All we had was our GAL [guardian ad litem] statute, which explained our role.”

**Former Foster Youth Hasani Lee**

In her two decades with the GAL program, Gurney has seen hundreds of children enter the system and later leave it behind. “And now some call me many years later to check in,” she says. “One particular fellow I still hear from came into the system when he was 3. Hasani recently gave me permission to share his name as well as his story.”

Hasani (the i is silent) D. Lee, 30, is an activity coordinator at the Brian Center, which provides long-term care for seniors. Lee beams, “I’m the father of two children, a boy, 9, Xavier Hasan and a girl, 1, Madison Brook. I’m very active in my local church. I enjoy working in the children’s ministry; it’s one of my gifts, one of my callings.”

**Remembering “Miss Cy”**

“I remember having Miss Cy Gurney as my GAL volunteer,” says Lee. “She worked with me and my family until I was about 12. My mom had some substance abuse issues. The Department of Social Services got involved, and we were placed in foster care.”

Lee recalls meeting Gurney for the first time. “Of course I was scared. But she was really nice and approachable. I remember having to go into court one time and how she calmed me down and made sure I wasn’t too nervous.”

(continued on page 16)
Gurney took pictures of the young boy, his little brother and big sister with their mother. “Hasani now tells me that these are the earliest family pictures he has.”

Gurney learned that the Lee children had connections to other family and friends in their community. “Because the mother’s problems were so severe, it was up to me to facilitate keeping the children connected with distant relatives,” she states. “It’s important for young kids with many needs to have connections. That’s what volunteers do, while paying attention to the whole child—the child’s family, culture, everything about them.”

A Personal View on the Benefits of Volunteer Advocacy

Sensitivity is a key attribute of a good CASA/GAL volunteer. “One thing that I so admire about Cy is that in foster care I would hear negative things about my mom,” remembers Lee. “This was from professionals who should know that children understand more than people believe. And I don’t remember Cy ever saying anything negative about my mom—even when my mom wouldn’t show up for visitation time. I appreciate how Cy would assure me that I was still important to my mom, or that something must have come up. When other adults were saying these things, I’d have a hard time. Cy reassured me that the decisions I make in my life were mine. And that I could have a different life, a better life.”

Lee still contacts Gurney about once a month by phone or email. He explains, “I’ve kept in touch because of her commitment to me even when things were really hard. I wasn’t the easiest kid to get along with because I had a lot of trust issues. But no matter what I said or did, she was still always there. She was that support system that I could depend on.”

Lee also credits Gurney for indirectly helping him prepare for his future career: “She taught me to be independent while respecting other people. She understood that kids have feelings, good days and bad days. That’s really helped me growing up, especially in the field that I’m in now, working with children and the elderly. When I’m working with a child and they’re misbehaving, I know that it could be something bigger happening. Anything could be going on in their home life that they haven’t shared with anybody yet.”

When asked what impact he feels that the GAL program had on his life, Lee pauses and reflects. “Honestly, I do not believe I would have made it without Cy and some of the social workers I had. I really think I would have ended up as a statistic.” In the absence of a positive male, African-American role model, Lee credits these remarkable women for helping him become the young man he is today.

“I’m an excellent dad; I love my children,” says Lee. “I even had to take on raising my sister when she was 12. She’s a senior in high school now on her way to college. I truly believe that it’s because somebody took the time to invest in me.”

From Volunteer to Staff Member: A Deepening Commitment

After six months or so in Durham, Gurney had still not found the job of her dreams. Suddenly, there was a staff opening at the GAL program that the leadership thought was perfect for her. “I think I was hired because I had volunteer recruitment experience,” says Gurney. “At the time, that was the number one need at the GAL program. Recruiting volunteers has always been the most fun part of my job, even as I’ve taken positions of greater responsibility in the North Carolina GAL system.”

Gurney explains that she started as Lee’s volunteer before being hired by the GAL program and continued to serve in a volunteer capacity even after becoming an employee.

Aging Out of Foster Care

Lee now has a good relationship with his foster father. But at 15, he was confused and argumentative. “I threatened to run away from home. The court moved me to a group home, where I stayed until 17. It prepared me for independent living. But I continued to not follow rules and wasn’t willing to complete the program.”

At 17, Lee was ready to leave the foster care system and go out on his own. “Without Medicaid or any government assistance, I rented a room and went to work full time while going to school full time. I graduated from high school, then I started at community college. I’ve been out on my own ever since. I think I did pretty good!”

Advice From a Former CASA/GAL Youth

Lee offers this suggestion to volunteers who may become frustrated during their work on behalf of youth: “Stay committed to the child. I know it’s hard, volunteering. But look at the big picture. The child already feels abandoned and scared. And now they have a person helping them—who’s not being paid to do this, who’s doing it because they care. I felt important enough that this person was willing to give up their Saturday to visit me. That boosted my self-esteem tremendously.”

As for volunteers who sometimes wonder whether they are having an impact, he says, “Right now, it may not seem like you’re making a difference. But you are changing lives, and you are shaping someone’s future.”

The Journey Continues

When asked about his future plans, Lee announces, “I have accepted my calling to the ministry. I’m working to return to Greensboro Bible Institute and get my certification in children’s ministry so that I can be a children’s pastor one day. I believe that the things I went through in my childhood, I went through for a reason: so that I could help other children.”
Maleah Truelove, 26
Former Foster Youth

Maleah Truelove entered the dependency system twice in her life; first at the age of 8, and again at 12. These early experiences taught her to be skeptical of adults asking questions and offering assistance.

Truelove was 13 years old when she met Debra Sallee, a CASA volunteer with the Hall-Dawson County CASA program in Georgia, and—to Truelove—another adult promising to help. But Sallee was different.

**Maleah, what do you remember about your early meetings with Debra?**

I remember I was nervous about meeting her and very wary. So many times in my life I had been told “I’m on your side” or “I’m going to be here for you” and it just wasn’t true. I was used to people coming in and out of my life; nothing was constant.

But once Deb and I started talking and having more visits, the trust began to build, and I realized that she really was there to help me.

As we got older, and Deb was not my CASA volunteer anymore, I wanted our relationship to turn into a friendship—a life friendship. I’m 26 years old. I’ve known Debra 13 years—longer than I lived with my biological mom.

**What was it like to have a CASA/GAL volunteer?**

What I remember most is that there were many times when we were going through the court system that the judge would ask me to leave the courtroom. The door would shut, there would be a closed-door meeting, and I wouldn’t know what was going on. Or, when I was in the room, people would use words that I did not know. I was scared that they were going to put me back with my biological mom.

But I knew that Deb was there. She would tell me what the big words meant. Deb never pressured me or persuaded me in any way. She just listened to what I had to say. She helped me get what was best for me.

**Can you tell me what difference you think having a volunteer made to you as a child?**

Having a CASA volunteer meant having somebody that I knew was on my side. So many times the little kid feels caught in the middle and feels as if nobody hears what you have to say. The CASA is not the social worker, not the judge. They’re not going to talk in big words. Having a CASA as a child made me feel like I had somebody there who was for me, somebody who was on my team.

**What is your life like today?**

I have an associate’s degree in criminal justice and am a 911 police dispatcher for seven agencies. I have been there for two years. I believe that I found my calling—I’ve found something that I am good at. There are not many things that people can say to me that I can’t relate to—no one can tell me, “You don’t know what it feels like to be homeless,” or “You don’t know what it feels like to have a parent that doesn’t care about you.” I can relate to a lot of the things that people call in about, and I know how important it is to get bad guys off the street. It feels good to be part of that—to help stop the cycle—and to help other people.

**What have been some of the highlights of your life since leaving “the system”?**

Graduating from high school and graduating from college—I am the first ever in my biological family to do either. Getting my first home and buying a new car are other highlights. And still being a part of my foster family. They are my mom and dad, my brother and sister, my niece and nephew. I’m family—I don’t have to explain to anybody how I’m family, I’m just family. They are very supportive and have gone above and beyond the call of duty because they love me.

**Do you have advice for volunteers who may become frustrated at times while working with the child welfare system?**

Have an open mind going into it. Be patient and hold your ground for the child. Your job is to be there for that child. Sometime it is just about calling and asking, “Hey, how’s your day going?” If you’re really busy with your own life, just a five minute telephone conversation can turn their week around.
Marcia “Marty” Sink
State Director, CASA of New Hampshire and Board Member, National CASA

As a foster parent, Marcia “Marty” Sink recognized that the children in her care did not have a voice in the dependency system. When she learned that an organization called CASA was putting trained volunteers to work to benefit these children in other parts of the country, she took action and brought a CASA program to New Hampshire.

How did you learn about the CASA movement?
I was reading Parade magazine on a Sunday morning in July of 1988, and there was an article about foster care drift. At the end of the article, it talked about organizations that were making a difference in the lives of children who ended up in foster care. And one of the organizations was National CASA. I called the 800 number in Seattle and said, “I want to be a CASA volunteer. Where are you in New Hampshire?” They told me that this was one of the few states left in the country that didn’t have a CASA program and asked whether I’d be interested in getting something started.

We received a startup grant of $5,000 from National CASA. And by September of 1989, CASA of New Hampshire was formally incorporated. That month, we trained our first group of 10 volunteers.

What has helped maintain your dedication for nearly 20 years now?
Just knowing that we are continuing to make a difference in the lives of so many children. We are still challenged to meet 100% of the need in New Hampshire, so that keeps me going. But it’s also been inspirational to see the organization grow over the years and serve more children. We have about 1,000 children on our caseload on any given day, served by 400 or so volunteers. We’ve helped about 6,000 children altogether since 1989.

In addition, these kids have been abandoned in so many other ways in their lives. We need to be able to stay with them and be the grownup force that serves as their voice.

How do you and your volunteers measure success?
It can be the little things that our volunteers do, like making sure that siblings have contact after they’ve been split up in foster care. Or helping a child fill out a college application. Or banging on the door of the child protection agency to make sure that drug rehab services are available. And it’s the big things, like celebrating the adoption of a sibling group or the reunification of a family.

While we may never know the full impact of the work that we’re doing, I’m absolutely convinced that every day the thousands of volunteers across the country are altering the futures of children in ways that are tremendously significant.

What ways do you see CASA volunteers and staff raising awareness of child welfare issues at the local and national levels?
All of these trained lay people—CASA volunteers—are bringing stories back into their communities and letting people know about the horrific abuse of our children. The awareness we helped to create is changing the ways that the system is responding. This outreach involves everything from having a cup of coffee with a neighbor and sharing what CASA does to walking the halls on Capitol Hill and making sure that Congress is aware of the importance of the work that we all do.
Susanne K. Smith
Guardian ad Litem Program Manager
4th Judicial District
Guardian ad Litem Program
Minneapolis, Minnesota

In nearly 30 years with the 4th Judicial District Guardian ad Litem Program in Minneapolis, Susanne Smith has seen her program and the CASA movement grow from a handful of isolated programs in a few states to a powerful national network. Smith was part of the team that drafted the original volunteer curriculum, and she remains on the Curriculum Advisory Committee to this day.

You helped found one of the first guardian ad litem programs in the country in 1978. Can you tell us about that experience?

We started our program with a two-day training and about 20 volunteers. The volunteers had been recruited primarily from the Hennepin County Lawyer’s Wives, and a few foster parents joined the group. The initial focus was solely on termination of parental rights matters, but the caseload soon broadened to other abuse and neglect cases.

When I first became involved with the program, my knowledge about issues relating to child abuse and neglect was exceedingly minimal, and my knowledge of Minnesota’s child abuse laws and court process was zero. It was intense on-the-job learning. I found myself taking university courses, reading law books and talking with social workers, attorneys, foster parents and anybody else who would share their experiences.

How did your program get connected with National CASA?

By the end of the 70s, our Court Services Volunteer Division had over a dozen different roles for volunteers, and we were written up in several journals and reports. Carmen Ray-Bettineski saw a report that mentioned our program. She called me to say they were doing a similar thing in Seattle, and the rest, as they say, is history. What is still amazing to me is that the two programs were so similar—even though we had absolutely no contact with each other in the design and development phases. It just goes to show you that good ideas are good ideas—and when you put good volunteers in a position to advocate for children, amazing things are bound to happen!

I think it was in 1980 that Carmen took it upon herself to convene a two-day meeting of the 10 to 12 CASA-type programs that were operating across the country at that time. That first meeting was held at the Chicago O’Hare Hilton in an underground meeting room—and we would not leave that room! We just could not stop talking; there was such a need for all of us to connect and share our experiences and learn from each other.

What have been the most remarkable changes you’ve noticed over the years—in child welfare and the work of CASA programs?

I have seen the system improve over the years, although I believe that things can still get better for the children we serve. One of the most significant changes has been the recognition of our volunteers in the court process. We’ve progressed from “who are you?” to “why don’t I have a guardian ad litem on this case?”

National CASA Staff Member With Deep Local Roots

Chief Program Officer Sally Wilson Erny joined National CASA’s staff in March 1998. She was Executive Director of CASA of Jefferson County (Louisville, KY) for 13 years prior to coming to National CASA and, among other honors, was named Program Director of the Year in 1994. Erny lives in Louisville with her husband, two children and two dogs.
Helen Jones-Kelley
Director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Former Director, Montgomery County Juvenile Court CASA Program and Member of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care

Helen Jones-Kelley joined the CASA movement as a program manager 20 years ago. She served two terms on the National CASA Board of Directors, including one as president, and has been a leader in the effort to increase diversity in the network.

When asked how she became the founding director of the Montgomery County CASA program, she says, “The kind of advocacy that CASA does is the very reason that I went to law school.”

Jones-Kelley has noticed remarkable changes over the years in child welfare. “I think that we’re able to talk more candidly about child abuse issues. It’s no longer secretive. There’s also more respect for the fact that children do have rights, especially legal rights. Important new public policies and laws have come into effect to better protect children.”

As for changes in the CASA network, Jones-Kelley has noticed “improvement in the quality of the dialogue, of the training and of the advocates themselves. This whole movement has really matured, becoming seasoned and very effective in its advocacy.”

The Journey to Cultural Competence
By Helen Jones-Kelley, National CASA Diversity Committee

My daughter recently gave birth to her second son, causing me to reflect upon the world into which my new grandson was being born. It is such a different place than the one into which his mother was born 31 years ago. Or is it?

I have openly shared my own experiences with prejudice both as a child and an adult. People look shocked when I tell them how, when planning a family trip, I would have to take steps to ensure that we only stayed at hotels or ate in restaurants that would be welcoming to our African-American family. I did this because I did not want my children to have special memories marred by a racial incident.

The children served by National CASA are fortunate. As a result of the wake-up call from participants at one of our national conferences, this organization made a bold decision to engage in a diversity initiative which renders National CASA more welcoming of differences within our network.

I can recall my first national conference, where I immediately noted the lack of people of color in attendance. When I came to the San Diego conference last year, now 20 years later, I was struck not just by the significant numbers of different ethnicities and nationalities but also by the numbers of people with different lifestyles. I didn’t notice just their differences, but also the ease with which they participated.

National CASA’s Diversity Committee is the umbrella for the African-American Advisory Committee, the Hispanic/Latino Advisory Committee and the Tribal Court Advisory Committee. Energy and ideas flow in two directions. The initiative flows down from the board because it was the board that took the bold move initially. Then they receive ideas and input back through the committees. Each of the committees has very solid standing with the board. Each carries out targeted activities on an annual basis and then measures how well they’ve done.

In my opinion, recognizing the need to diversify our volunteer base was a turning point for National CASA; it was the elephant in the middle of the room. And in 1994 when our new CEO Michael Piraino addressed the issue at the national conference in Tampa saying, “We’ve got to do more,” I believe he exhibited one of his finest hours of leadership.

We have come a long distance on our diversity journey. We have developed materials, hosted trainings, adopted policies and become more inclusive in program planning. But the thing that really sets National CASA apart is that we have done more than employ administrative gestures. We are walking the talk. We confront this difficult issue without apologizing for our position. While we still have some distance to go, we have chosen to be boldly inclusive. This ensures an even higher quality of services for all of our CASA kids while enriching our own lives.

National CASA Tools for Cultural Competence and Targeted Outreach

• Making a World of Difference (manual and video, with associated training)
• Volunteer recruitment outreach to African-American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American populations (associated activities of the three advisory committees and the Diversity Committee)
• Diversity Leadership Award at annual national conference
• Activities resulting from 2006 strategic plan (outreach to targeted markets)
• Annotated Bibliography: Resources for Working With Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth and Families in the Foster Care System
Martha “Marty” Braniff
Former Director
Houston Child Advocates and
Former Board Member, National CASA

Martha “Marty” Braniff was looking for a new way to help abused and neglected children when she learned about a CASA program through a friend. She began 17 years of CASA service by founding the Houston Child Advocates program. Braniff went on to participate in the founding of Texas CASA and to serve two terms on the National CASA Board of Directors, including one as president.

What was your background before becoming involved with CASA? What attracted you to the movement?

I had no background in working with the legal system. My degree is in nursing; I had never been in a courtroom. It was the classic case of not knowing what I was getting into!

In 1983, I started a volunteer art program at Harris County Juvenile Detention Center. I worked with abused and neglected kids there. I was very concerned about these children’s welfare and was trying to think of a way to have an impact on their future.

I learned about the CASA program in Fort Worth through a friend. After gathering more information about CASA work, I decided to start the Houston program, which incorporated in 1984.

What were some of the challenges that you met with in the early years?

At first, judges did not want to talk to us. They kept saying that we had to get Child Protective Services’ permission to start this program before they would meet with us. And CPS kept telling us that they wouldn’t talk to us unless we had the judges’ permission. It was a circle of frustration.

But I called the judges’ court coordinator so many times that years later, after we had become friends, he told me, “I would have done anything just to get you to leave me alone!” He set up that first meeting. My friend and I carried a 40-lb. television up to the judges’ chambers to show them an hour-long film produced by National CASA!

In spite of the early skepticism, we were able to develop a level of respect in our working relationships that really helped us. Over time, Child Protective Services became a partner in dealing with many of the problems in the lives of children in foster care. And the local judges came to have great confidence in Child Advocates’ volunteers.

You dedicated 17 years of your life to being a CASA staff member and board member. What kept you involved?

The situations that the children were in kept me motivated—the torture, the abuse, the life-threatening neglect. If we don’t stand up and make the community aware and become part of the solution, then we’re failing these children. The other things that kept me going were my wonderful staff and the volunteers who gave up hours, days, whole segments of their lives to change a child’s life.

What motivated you to serve two terms on the National CASA Board of Directors?

I enjoyed helping move the cause forward nationally and getting the word out. I also cherished getting to know board members from other parts of the country. The shared commitment to children was so exciting. Even though we’re dealing with the most heinous crimes that can be committed against the most helpless members of our society, the esprit de corps among the people who do this work is amazing and, I think, essential to the success of the organization.

In your estimation, what difference does having a CASA program make to your community?

We know what happens to children who are moved from foster home to foster home—their chances of succeeding in life are greatly diminished. I believe that the most important and lasting effect of CASA intervention is improving the likelihood that a child will live in a permanent home. And it’s a pyramid effect because if you help one child, then when that child grows up and has children, they’re not as likely to continue the cycle of abandonment or abuse.

At the 1998 National CASA conference, President Marty Braniff (far left) is joined by CEO Michael Piraino, Gunnery Sergeant Henry D. Barrington of the US Marines (who ran 600 miles over 30 days to raise awareness of volunteer advocacy), Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year Sue Lockett (KS), Judge of the Year Commissioner Patricia Bresee (CA), Child Advocate of the Year Elinore Fram (NY) and Board Member Helen Jones-Kelley.
Renne Bilson
Volunteer, CASA of Los Angeles and Board Member, National CASA

Renne Bilson’s involvement with foster children began when she moved to California and started volunteering as a way to meet people. She did find some new friends while working with youth at a group home, but, more importantly, she found a passion for working with children. About this time, Bilson learned of CASA of Los Angeles. Once she went through the training and took her first case, she knew that this was what she was meant to do.

Bilson has been a CASA volunteer for 2 years now. Over that time, she has served on 17 cases, many with multiple children. Though each case has presented its own challenges, Bilson says that she has never considered abandoning her volunteer role.

“‘I can’t imagine not being a CASA volunteer. I love the kids; I find their tenacity to be amazing. I have never been close to feeling burned out. For me it’s very stimulating, both intellectually and emotionally. I find that each case is different and presents new challenges. Sometimes I have been lucky enough to be able to help turn a child’s life 180 degrees, sometimes only 5 degrees, but I believe a CASA volunteer always makes a difference.’”

One of the biggest attractions to volunteer advocacy for Bilson is that she has input into decisions made for the children. “In the other organization I worked closely with, we could show a child a good time for a day, or if I was lucky I could be her friend for a year. But I didn’t really know their history other than that they were abused. And then suddenly, they’d be moved. I had no ability to have a say in what was going on in their lives. As a CASA volunteer I do have that say, and that’s important to me.”

In addition to being an advocate, Bilson is a supporter and former board president of the Friends of Child Advocates in Los Angeles. She is also in her third year as a board member of the National CASA Association.

“It has made me feel terrific to support CASA because we have such an impact on kids’ lives. I’m astounded by the commitment of individual people doing this work for no pay. My friends are becoming aware of a world they didn’t know anything about, which is important. I feel like I’m having a bit of input into making society better. And I’ve become a better person.”

Why I Serve as a Board Member
By Renne Bilson

When I became a volunteer and saw the difference it made for the children, I wanted to support the program financially as well. I joined the board of the nonprofit Friends of Child Advocates. We had a lot of attorneys and some business people on the board. But it was also beneficial to have a volunteer voice. I learned how a board works and about the economics of running a CASA program.

During the time that I served as president, it became clear that the court funding was not going to grow at the rate our program needed to grow. I was able to help put together an agreement with the court that allowed the Friends to increase their funding of the CASA program without the program losing the financial support of the court. Because of this agreement, the Friends now fund more than 50% of the staff and all the training, and our program has grown significantly.

As for my national involvement, I had always attended the annual conference and began to realize that I wanted to look at the larger picture and help with the growth of CASA across the country. So I expressed an interest in joining the national board and was brought on two years ago. I find the people on the National CASA board and staff are so committed. It’s also intriguing to look at how different the programs are from place to place. I enjoy hearing people talk about their one judge, while we have 24! Yet everybody does basically the same work.

The national awareness is definitely growing. It’s wonderful to find people starting to know what CASA is when I mention that I’m involved. They’ll say, “Oh I think a friend of mine is a CASA!” That didn’t happen 20 years ago.
I was assigned to the case of a 3-year-old little boy, Gerrard (not his real name), who had been abandoned by his mother at a hospital emergency room, suffering from starvation and general neglect. When I met him, it was clear that someone had cared for him well at some point. Although he had limited verbal skills, he lit up when asked if he had a grandma. That was a lead to follow, but how? He had no name for her, only “Grandma.”

Every piece of information the mother had provided to the hospital proved to be false. After everything hit a dead end, I got permission from the court to go to the media. Two TV stations agreed to interview me and show a picture of Gerrard. This led to a police officer who remembered receiving a call from a woman from out of state asking for help in locating her daughter and grandson, and the woman had left a number!

I immediately called the number. The woman who answered said yes, she was looking for her grandson. I asked her if her grandson had any identifying marks. The description she gave was the perfect description of Gerrard, chipped front tooth and all. She tearfully told me she had raised him since birth because his mother was addicted to drugs and emotionally unstable. Her daughter had taken the child and hitchhiked across the country. The grandmother called the police, but they had told her they could do nothing as she did not have legal guardianship.

The grandmother immediately flew to Los Angeles. We went straight from the airport to the court for an emergency hearing. When Gerrard entered the courtroom and saw his grandmother, he burst into tears and rushed into her arms. It was the first time the little boy had cried since his ordeal began.

Hon. Mary Lisi, Chief Judge of the US District Court in Rhode Island, served as a local CASA director in the 1980s. She led her then-fledgling program in expanding statewide. Lisi was also a National CASA board member for eight years, including terms as treasurer and president. “In the old days,” Lisi recalls, “children literally grew up in foster care. There was no thought whatsoever to reunification of the family. There was no thought to termination of parental rights when necessary so that these kids could be adopted and have permanency. Those are the biggest things to change in the last 30 years so far as I can see. And it’s all for the better.”

Randy K. Jones and Joyce Honeyman appear at the 2004 National CASA conference in Washington, DC. Jones has been on the National CASA board since 1999 and served as president from 2002 to 2004. Honeyman was National CASA’s board liaison to the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation from 1992 to 2006 and remains active on our Diversity Committee.
Judges Speak Out
Celebrating 30 Years of Advocacy for Children

By Hon. Ernestine Gray
Orleans Parish Juvenile Court
New Orleans, LA and
Vice President, National CASA Association Board of Directors

Happy Anniversary and Thank You!

John W. Whitehead said, “Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see” (The Stealing of America, 1983). With the help of a CASA volunteer, we can be assured that the messages we send through the children who have been in the foster care system are ones of acceptance, healing, hope, joy and peace.

When children meet CASA volunteers, their lives become like a tandem bike ride with the CASA in the back helping the child to “pedal.” CASA volunteers encourage and help children to pedal so that they can go places and broaden their experiences. CASAs help children take bike rides where they learn to relax and enjoy the view; and when children get discouraged or low, CASA volunteers keep encouraging them to pedal. Once a CASA volunteer becomes involved with a case, the children’s lives are not the same.

As CASA volunteers and children ride together, the CASA is learning about the child—his or her dreams, hopes, desires, fears, needs, etc.—which they then can communicate to the judge, the child’s attorney and the social worker in their court reports or through testimony in court. CASA volunteers advocate for the best interests of the child and are always concerned about the child’s health, safety and well-being.

As a judge, I appreciate the work of CASA volunteers because they bring information to the court process that helps to give a fuller picture of the family’s situation. They go out and gather information which I may not otherwise receive. I cannot overstate how important this additional information can be to the ultimate decision in the case and a child’s life.

I hope that CASA volunteers will continue to help us remember that “we worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today” (Stacia Tauscher).

Other Judicial Leaders

Hon. Leonard Perry Edwards II
retired in 2006 after two and a half decades on the bench of the Santa Clara County Superior Court in California, where he was instrumental in creating one of the nation’s largest and most successful CASA programs. A winner of the 2004 Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence, Judge Edwards is also a past president of the NCJFCJ and in that capacity served as an ex officio member of the National CASA Board of Directors. He received the National CASA Judge of the Year award in 1992. Today he serves as California’s first Judge-in-Residence for the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Hon. J. Dean Lewis
has been a champion of the CASA movement for many years. She was a strong voice for CASA programs in Virginia, where she served in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court in Spotsylvania. Judge Lewis was National CASA’s Judge of the Year in 1997 and is a past president of the NCJFCJ. She also served for a number of years on the National CASA Board of Directors and was active on the Standards Committee, helping to pioneer the self-assessment process for local programs. Judge Lewis was the founding chair of our Judges Liaison Committee and continues to edit the Judges’ Page electronic newsletter, a co-production of National CASA and NCJFCJ.

NCJFCJ congratulates all CASA volunteers who for 30 years have made such a difference in the lives of children and families. We are honored to have been part of the inception of the CASA movement and thankful for the service you provide.
By Hon. Dale R. Koch
Presiding Judge, Multnomah County Circuit Court, Portland, OR and President, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges

As a long-time family court judge and now the presiding judge of the circuit court in Multnomah County in Oregon, I am very proud of our successful CASA program. CASA for Children, a nonprofit program based in Portland, serves Multnomah and Washington counties, the two most populous counties in Oregon with the largest number of at-risk children in the state. For over 20 years, this program has recruited and trained some truly remarkable, dedicated volunteers. The child welfare system is very large, and it is easy for a child to get lost in it. The CASA volunteers that my colleagues and I have assigned have been instrumental in making sure that the children's best interests are safeguarded to the best of everyone's abilities.

It is impossible to think about our Portland program's success, however, without honoring the memory of its founder, Judge Stephen Herrell [see sidebar], whose vision and passion ignited the volunteer CASA movement in Portland in the mid-1980s. Judge Herrell is also credited with serving as author and champion of our Oregon CASA statute outlining the CASA role and giving party status to the volunteer who is appointed by the court to advocate for the children's best interests. The Herrell family commitment to CASA is also reflected by the fact that Stephen's wife, Alice, was a long-time CASA volunteer.

In many ways, our CASA program fulfills Judge Herrell's vision of so many years ago. He dreamed of a way to involve citizen volunteers, community advisors and related professionals in playing individual and collective roles in finding permanency for children. He envisioned that such specific attention from people outside of "the system" would help bring a fresh perspective and a new resolve. His idea proved to be a successful one. Not only do CASAs help to get children the services they need, but they help to accelerate the time it takes to resolve many cases.

Although Oregon and its children lost a true friend with the judge's death in 2006, his memory lives on in our CASA program and the many organizations and causes he worked on for the health and safety of our community's children. We've come an impressively long way in 20 years: from a program that started over a breakfast meeting where Judge Herrell passed a baseball cap to collect funds for the first quarter-time staff member to an organization that now has 18 staff members and over 400 CASA volunteers. I can't help but be excited about what the next 20 years will bring and how much more help will be available for the children who desperately need it.

My thanks go out to the staff and all of those who serve as CASA volunteers. Each of you makes a difference in children's lives every day.
If CASA Had Never Been Born...

By Hon. Michael Nash
Presiding Judge, Los Angeles Juvenile Court and 2006 National CASA Association Judge of the Year

Many who know me are aware that my favorite movie is Frank Capra’s *It’s a Wonderful Life*. That 1946 classic is about a lifelong do-gooder named George Bailey, played by the great James Stewart, who finds himself in crisis through no fault of his own. While contemplating suicide, he is rescued by an angel-in-training named Clarence who is seeking to earn his wings. After George mutters those famous words, “I wish I had never been born,” Clarence shows George what life would have been like if he had never been born. When George sees all the people whose life he had touched in a positive way, he realizes that he had in fact lived a wonderful life…and Clarence earns his wings.

I have been a juvenile court judge since 1990 and have grown quite accustomed to relying on CASA volunteers. In fact, the Los Angeles program was formed in 1978, 12 years before I became a juvenile court judge. I have never known what it is like to work in a juvenile court without a CASA program. I recently began to wonder what it would be like if we had no CASA program.

Fifteen-year-old J., who has been in the system since age 5, was removed from his foster/adoptive home after a new baby was born to his foster parents. Depression set in, J. began spiraling downward, and he ultimately attempted suicide. He refused to accept help for his depression until his CASA volunteers, a husband-and-wife team, entered his life. J.’s self-esteem began to improve, and he started tackling issues with his counselor. J.’s grades improved to As and Bs, he got a part-time job, and he continues to progress. What if….

Young B. was dying of AIDS. There was little hope for long-time survival. Into the picture came his CASAs, once again a husband-and-wife team. They worked with his social worker, his attorney and his doctors to obtain what was considered an experimental treatment. B.’s health miraculously improved. In reviewing his file, his dynamic advocates located a previous prospective adoptive parent who had been encouraged not to adopt because of his illness. The relationship was renewed, and B. eventually, after many years, had what all children are entitled to—a permanent, safe, loving home. Sadly, B. eventually succumbed to his illness. Thanks to his CASA volunteers, he passed on with much love in his life. What if….

These stories are typical of the work CASA of Los Angeles does for our children, thousands of them over the years. I think of CASA’s annual “Glamour Gowns” event where this year over 300 foster girls will choose a formal gown for her prom. I think of all the CASA volunteers who attend education IEP [individualized education program] meetings for their kids. The list goes on and on.

I am happy to report that CASA of Los Angeles is becoming more and more ethnically diverse to reflect the ethnic diversity of our foster children. Our CASAs have received some training on family-finding, and we are hoping to eventually incorporate that into their work. Can I imagine a court without a CASA program? Don’t ask me—I don’t even want to think about it.

Hon. Richard FitzGerald has spent the majority of his life dealing with issues concerning families and children. He was one of the founders of the CASA program in Louisville, KY and helped bring the program to other jurisdictions in the state. Judge FitzGerald has been a longtime champion of CASA nationwide, in fact, and was National CASA’s Judge of the Year in 1993. While retired from the Jefferson County Family Court, he continues to teach and remains active with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. Judge FitzGerald is known for telling others about volunteer advocacy as a key resource in the child welfare and judicial systems.
Litany to a CASA Volunteer

By Hon. Patricia A. Macias
Judge, 388th Judicial District,
El Paso, TX and
Member of the Pew Commission
on Children in Foster Care

Protector, advocate, communicator,
assertive, relentless, tough, soft-
spoken, creative, tireless, informed,
optimistic, loyal, giving, generous, can-
do, fearless, articulate, loyal, politic,
collaborator, instigator, inspirer, patient
with kids, impatient with systemic ob-
stacles, big voice for pint-size miracles,
skilled, connected, resourceful, steady,
consistent, unflappable, unshakeable,
courageous, fierce, prepared, ready
at a moment’s notice, intolerant of
delays or continuances, leaves no stone
untorned, keeper of a promise, defender
of a parent’s love, reflector of a child’s
sense of time and space, symbol of best
interests, guardian (ad litem) of angels,
CASA volunteer, you are the answer to a
judge’s prayers.

The responsibility of ensuring a
child’s safety and well-being as well
as securing a loving and permanent
family can bring a court to its knees.
But when a CASA volunteer accepts an
appointment as guardian ad litem to
a child who has been hurt, neglected
or abandoned, it inspires confidence
in a system that is entrusted with the
most difficult and complex cases in the
courthouse.

I have experienced many memorable
CASA moments. An especially vivid one
involves a child we will call Jacob, 5
years old, and his CASA, Robert. Jacob
and his mother drifted from city to
city, homeless, finally stopping in our
community of El Paso. Jacob was placed
in foster care after his mother was
taken to the psychiatric hospital, where
she was diagnosed as bi-polar and
schizophrenic. Robert, a retired military
officer, was appointed as Jacob’s CASA
volunteer and went right to work craft-
ing his best interest recommendations.

Robert’s responsibilities included
sitting with a multi-disciplinary treat-
ment team charged with drafting a
permanency plan. Identifying Jacob’s
father and other relatives for possible
placement was included as part of the
plan. There were few leads and only a
last name. Child Protective Services was
unsuccessful at locating any relatives.
While the agency was ready to give up
the search, Robert was determined to
find this little boy’s family. Equipped
with his computer, the internet and
CASA determination, Robert found
Jacob’s maternal family in Berlin,
Germany.

This information, while valuable, did
not completely solve the problem of
gathering specific information quickly
about the German relatives. While
attorneys and caseworkers struggled
with international law, immigration
regulations, bureaucracies on both
sides of the Atlantic, as well as prohibi-
tive travel costs, Robert’s creativity and
advocacy went into action. As a former
army officer with flight privileges on
military aircraft, Robert volunteered
to fly to Germany to meet with the
maternal grandmother and other poten-
tial relative placements. In addition,
he committed to arranging a video
deposition so that attorneys represent-
ing the child, the mother, father and
Child Protective Services could gather
important information essential to
ensuring the best outcome for Jacob.

If not for Robert and his devotion to
Jacob, a positive ending to this case
would have been doubtful. Thanks to
Robert and his inspired work as a CASA
volunteer, Jacob is now a thriving
teenager, living as part of a family with
a meaningful connection to his German
relatives.

This is only one example—admitted-
ly far above the call of CASA duty—of
how a volunteer and his commitment
to a little boy shaped the outcome
of one future. That vision, simple yet
profound, changes thousands of lives,
one foster child at a time.
By Hon. William A. Thorne Jr.

Judge, Utah Court of Appeals, Former Board Member, National CASA Association and Member of the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care

Today there are over half a million children in foster care. The children in foster care will have twice the PTSD [post traumatic stress disorder] rate of Vietnam veterans. Fewer than 2% will graduate with a bachelor’s degree. Over one-third will live in poverty after they leave “the system.” At least 9,000 foster children will age out of the system this year—alone, ill equipped to deal with the modern world and without a safety net. In the words of the children: “Where do I go for Thanksgiving, where is there a Christmas present for me, and who walks me down the aisle when I get married?” One expert has summarized their fate—over half will be homeless, in jail or dead within two years of leaving the system. We need to do better—and we need to do it now.

The first CASA program was formed 30 years ago when it became apparent to Judge David Soukup that we needed to do better, that the children deserved more from us. The question, though, was how? Judge Soukup recognized that a volunteer advocate was part of the solution. A volunteer who with no other systemic distractions was free to focus on one child, one set of siblings, to bring a fresh perspective and the voice of the child to an otherwise closed process.

I recently had the privilege of serving on the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care. Two years ago we issued recommendations for reform, based upon the latest research and information. Among the recommendations unanimously adopted was an expansion of CASA advocacy to enable every child involved with the child welfare system to be represented by a CASA volunteer.

The rationale which supported the creation of the CASA movement three decades ago still applies. At the recent National Summit on Children in Foster Care, a prominent national business speaker/educator told teams from around the country that within every problem the solution is already embedded. He told the audience that if we cannot see the answer we need, there is a simple remedy. We need a different perspective. We need to find a fresh way to look at the problem. We need to solicit other points of view. After all, if we could have solved the problem alone, we would have done so already. Instead, fresh viewpoints will allow a new triangulation—a new way of looking at the problem. With the new sets of eyes and ears, the problem—and the solution—will be seen, often in a new light.

That is exactly what the CASA movement has done for 30 years—for hundreds of thousands of children. It has allowed the problems—and the solutions—to be seen from a fresh perspective, a perspective without caseloads, without institutional limitations and mostvaluably “through the eyes of the child.” Each child, each family has a unique situation, a unique context of surrounding circumstances and people. While acknowledging many similarities with other families in the system, each family and each child will need an individually tailored plan and dedicated people and services to help them find their way home again. A CASA volunteer can be an invaluable part of correctly identifying the problem and correctly identifying the solution. Professionals—judges, lawyers, social workers, therapists—cannot do it alone. We haven’t so far. Instead we need the fresh perspective a CASA volunteer can bring.

I have been privileged to have been associated with CASA as a judge, as a trainer, as a board member and as a recruiter. It is among the very best efforts I have found to help the children and the community in which we all live. Thank you to all the volunteers and staff for helping make the system work—one child at a time. You are still part of the solution!

CASA—Still Part of the Solution

Jewelers for Children is proud to support the efforts of the National CASA Association in its goal to provide a volunteer advocate for every child who needs one.

Congratulations on 30 years of success!
J. Robert Flores  
Administrator,  
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
US Department of Justice  

“Research shows that abused and neglected children—often shuttled from home to home—are at increased risk of repeating the same violent behavior they experience, and hence at increased risk of becoming delinquents and adult criminals. The CASA-supported system interrupts this cycle.

“CASA works because its volunteers make it work. The children benefit from the time, skill, objectivity and concern of the CASA volunteer for each child’s welfare. Appreciated by judicial, legal and social service communities, CASA volunteers work to change lives one child at a time.”

Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs  

“Children are doubly impacted by family violence—both as witnesses of and recipients of abuse. Children cannot get lost in our judicial system. Thankfully, Court Appointed Special Advocates fill a unique role and get child victims the help they need. Judges overwhelmingly report to me that children and families are better served by the involvement of a CASA/GAL volunteer on their cases. And, not surprisingly, in a 2005 survey, judges expressed a pressing need for far more CASA/GAL volunteers to assign to children’s cases.”

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has proudly supported the work of Court Appointed Special Advocates since 1985. CASA programs are essential allies in child protection as well as in delinquency prevention.
Marketing Campaigns Through the Ages

Here are some examples of National CASA’s marketing materials spanning the decades. These customizable ads were produced for use in volunteer recruitment campaigns by local CASA/GAL programs as well as for placement by National CASA in national publications.
Children of National CASA Staff Grow Up in Public Eye

National CASA’s policy is to not use photos of children from actual abuse and neglect cases in our materials. And to keep costs low, children of staff are often recruited for photo sessions. Here are several examples.

1999
Andrew Piraino
Son of CEO Michael Piraino

1999
Jayanti Ragubathi
Daughter of Accounting Coordinator
Coral Edward

1999
Erica Ellison
Daughter of Communications Associate
Theresa Carleton

2000
Dominick Jackson
Son of Donor Relations Manager D’Nika Jackson

2000
Sierra Tamalonis
Daughter of Evaluation Specialist
Joni Tamalonis

2001

2002

2005

Spring 2007
“How do you do this work? How can you stand to be confronted with this kind of neglect and despair day-in, day-out?” I can’t count the number of times that I was asked that question in the course of my career as a juvenile court judge. I’m sure that most CASA volunteers have grappled with it over these past 30 years; some have probably asked this question of themselves. Lord knows I have!

For many of us, the answer comes in the form of a story. This is mine.

It was during my first few weeks on the bench when a family—a mother, father and two little twin boys—appeared in my courtroom. This was not the father’s first time before a judge. Just a few years earlier, he had been convicted of killing his stepchild.

Through a set of circumstances that I still don’t understand, the father was able to enter a plea agreement and spend a short time in prison. After he was released, he returned to his home, to his children and to the wife whose son he had murdered. He was now standing in my courtroom facing accusations of physically abusing his twin boys. It was their third birthday. They were literally spending their third birthdays at a court hearing that would determine their future.

Court cases involving child abuse are—by definition—awful. This one was particularly gruesome. The pediatrician began his testimony by talking about the lacerations, the bruises and the horrible trauma that the twins had undergone. He then referred back to the details of the autopsy report for the dead child, which were so gruesome that the attorney literally ran out of the courtroom ill.

At that point, I took a recess and went into my chambers. I went into the bathroom and closed the door. I literally got down onto my knees and said, “God, I don’t know if I can do this work every day. I don’t know if I can see this kind of suffering, this kind of pain. I don’t understand the tragedy of children being beaten to death, abused in such horrendous manners. I just don’t know if I can do this day-in and day-out.” And you know what I did? I prayed: Please give me the strength to move the energy from grieving for a child that I cannot help to having the power to deal with the precious children that you have put before my hand.

And it was as if that day God put a rod in my back, and when I got up off that floor I had a new sense of determination, a passion. There was something different after I prayed. That prayer fortified me so that I did not get consumed by grief and allowed me to become fully mindful of the important work I had to do. There was nothing that I could do for the dead child, but I had to figure out what I could do for the siblings that I had in my courtroom that day.

And as unlikely as it seemed, those children succeeded. For as long as I was on the bench, those little boys came to visit me every year, usually around Christmas, bringing me a new school picture and telling me when they made the honor roll.

I kept those pictures under the glass on my desk. I’ve never had photos of any other children there, just those two boys. Those pictures were the reminder of being on that floor on my knees that day. Of just why I came to work, why I didn’t give up and why I had to come to the bench with a sense of optimism every single day. It could not become routine, it could not become a case file number; these were children, and their lives were important to me.

The advocacy performed by CASA and GAL volunteers is so essential, not only for this generation of children that we are reaching—but for their children and generations yet to be born. I don’t think there is more important work on this earth than to say that you have touched the future by reaching the heart of an abused child.

Each of us has our own story, our own photos and our own place that we go to find the strength necessary to continue to do this important work. We must succeed; we know what will happen if we give up.

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Judge Hatchett Remembers

Founding of Atlanta CASA Program

“I was appointed chief presiding judge of the Fulton County Juvenile Court in April 1991, and at that time we did not have a CASA program. As we were in the largest juvenile court system in Georgia, one of the largest in the country, it was absurd to me that we did not have this resource for our children. I knew that we needed extra hands and hearts in the court, and we needed the loving support of CASA volunteers.

“We needed to move quickly. It was my good fortune to have the support of the Atlanta chapter of the Junior League. I know in my heart of hearts that thousands of children have directly benefited because of the CASA program in Fulton County.”

The Honorable Glenda A. Hatchett is a nationally recognized authority on juvenile issues perhaps best known to the public because of her award-winning series Judge Hatchett and her book Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say!
This puzzle is also a history quiz that will require careful reading of the entire issue—or an obsession with nationwide volunteer advocacy for abused children.

ACROSS
7. What an advocate gives a child
8. Supportive judge from OR
11. Long-serving volunteer from L.A.
12. Founding director of NH program
13. Young woman once served by 22 Across
15. Celebrity speaker at 1994 conference
22. Longest-serving volunteer
24. Supportive judge from El Paso
25. Third and current CEO of National CASA
26. Has worked in volunteer advocacy for 22 years at local & national levels
29. Founding judge of Atlanta program
31. Long-serving volunteer from SC
33. Judicial organization instrumental in promoting CASA (acronym)
37. US President when first CASA/GAL program founded
38. Season in 1984 when The CASA Connection debuted
41. Hasani Lee’s home town
42. Commission that endorsed CASA in 2004
43. Newspaper that ran first press mention of GAL program

DOWN
1. Judge who originated the CASA/GAL concept
2. Editor of the Judges’ Page
3. Volunteer from L.A. on National CASA board
4. Advocacy requires these caring adults
5. Supportive judge from New Orleans
6. Former CASA youth who is also 30 this year
9. Light of ___
10. Poet quoted in Soukup editorial
14. Former volunteer with a foster youth alumnus who keeps in touch
16. Diversity leader Jones-Kelley’s home state
17. First name of 16 Down
18. Second of three National CASA CEOs
19. Founding director of Houston program
20. County where first CASA program was founded
21. Act mandates GAL representation (acronym)
23. Carmen ___-Bettineski
27. Supportive judge from L.A.
28. Second director of King County Dependency CASA Program
30. Long-serving volunteer from Louisville
32. Supportive judge from UT
34. Term for young people (usually pre-teens)
35. Current director of King County Dependency CASA Program
36. Magazine that published article in 1988 leading to many volunteer inquiries
39. Informal name for fraternity of women that selected National CASA as charity
40. Long-time staff member from Minneapolis

See page 5 for solution.
Cy Gurney reminisces with Hasani Lee [see p.15]