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Summer 2005  
Vol. 21, No. 2

# *the* CONNECTION

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

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



## **Relative Care Creates Powerful Bonds for Children**

*Also in This Issue:*

2005 Conference Review

Foster Youth Art Contest Raises Awareness

Profile: Kim Klein—America's Premiere Grassroots Fundraiser



## Connection Sightings



*Jane Stevenson, retired executive director of Advocates for Children, Inc. of Orange, TX (and current CASA volunteer) visited Paris in May with her Connection magazine in hand. Stevenson traveled with a group from Lamar University of Beaumont, Texas, where she is working toward a master's degree in criminal justice.*



*While vacationing in Oaxaca, Mexico, Jefferson County GAL program coordinator Mike Beers (Port Townsend, WA) stopped in at La Mano Magico, a Mexican folk art store where he shared his Connection magazine with this skeletal "pal." Skeletons are common figures in Mexico where the culture views death as a recognized part of life; skeletons also serve a prominent role in "Day of the Dead" celebrations.*



*National CASA Association member Janelle May poses with her canine family, Noah and Beckett, and The Connection on a recent visit to Predjama Castle in Slovenia (a region formerly part of Yugoslavia). May is currently living in Aviano, Italy, where she is a teacher with the Department of Defense.*

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

Send photos (min. 4x6) to *The Connection*, National CASA Association, 100 W. Harrison, North Tower, Suite 500, Seattle, WA, 98119, or email high resolution photos (300 dpi scanned at 4x6 size) to [theconnection@nationalcasa.org](mailto:theconnection@nationalcasa.org). Include your name, address, phone number, email address and photo location.



## Mark Your Calendar!

**2006 National CASA Association  
Annual Conference**

**April 1-4, 2006**

**San Diego, CA**

**Town and Country Hotel**

# inside the CONNECTION



A publication of the National CASA Association representing 954 program offices and 51,674 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.

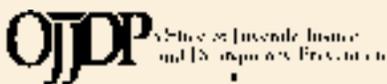
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Children in *Connection* photos are not from actual abuse and neglect cases.



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**On the Cover:** Josephine "Jo" Martinez (left), recipient of the 2005 G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year Award and Marcia Sink, National CASA Association board president.



## *A Message from* **THE PRESIDENT**

### **Taking Care of our Kinship Caregivers**

*Marcia Sink, President*

I was glad to see this edition of *The Connection* magazine addressing the important topic of kinship care. Nationwide, more than six million children—1 in 12 children—are currently living with a grandparent or other relatives. Grandparents share the great majority of the caregiver burden, providing homes for more than four out of every five children in kinship care. Kinship care is a solution for foster children that is increasingly receiving attention, both at the state and national level.

While I believe kinship care can often be an excellent solution for many children, it is a solution that needs to be considered objectively and critically. After all, critical thinking, with a clear eye to what is in the best interests of the child, is what CASA and GAL volunteers do best.

If kinship care is an available solution for the child, our first responsibility must be to ensure that we are placing these children in environments that are capable of giving them the safety and nurturing care they need. This begins with a proper home study of the child's potential new home. Our biggest concern must always be what is best for the child. The last thing we want to see is another placement crumble, with disastrous results both for the children and the relatives attempting to care for them. So whether we are considering kinship care or foster care for a child, we need to look at all possible solutions critically. We owe it to the children we serve, and to their families as well.

Once a child has been placed with a relative, the work of a CASA volunteer is often just beginning. Kinship caregivers, who often become parents unexpectedly, face many challenges—financial and emotional. At the National CASA level, the board of directors' Education and Public Awareness Committee has made the Kinship Care Support Act, introduced by Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (NY) and Olympia Snowe (ME), an important part of our national legislative agenda.

At the local volunteer level, CASA volunteers can be instrumental in making sure the child's new family finds all the resources that might be available to them. With older caregivers, you often find health issues that can be exacerbated by the addition of a child into the household. What resources and counseling services can we provide them? How can we connect these

parents with financial services to help meet the significant additional expenses that will stress the typically fixed incomes of older caregivers?

In some states, it is possible for kinship caregivers to become foster parents. Often there is emotional resistance to this option, particularly among older caregivers who believe they should be able to care for their grandchildren on their own. The CASA volunteer can help them recognize the value of having these services and resources that are uniquely available to foster parents. It can be a tough decision, but ultimately it can benefit the child and also make caregivers' lives a bit easier.

After-school programs can be especially helpful, both for the children and the caregivers. These children all come with baggage, and caregivers are going to need respite. Simply finding a way for the grandparents to be able to take a weekend off periodically can make all the difference in long-term success.

It is obviously important for any child to have that invaluable connection to a family. Often that is more easily done when a child is placed in kinship care. By carefully assessing and advocating placement of a child with their biologically extended family, a CASA volunteer can help a child find a sense of place and belonging that goes with them well into their adulthood. This sense lays the groundwork for them to become healthy, functioning members of society.

In closing, I would like to thank everyone who made the effort to attend our 24th National CASA Conference in Atlanta. What is it I like about CASA conferences? The connections with other program people/staff, volunteers and board members and the variety of interactions are so rich. It is talking to other state directors and having the opportunity to sit down to lunch with volunteers from Minnesota or Georgia and hearing their stories. It is meeting a judge who started a CASA program in Oklahoma or talking with a board member who is being recognized with one of our national awards of excellence. Attending one of our National CASA conferences is a truly unique opportunity to see that we are all a part of this huge, diverse network, all of us working together to do amazing things for thousands and thousands of children. And it's really cool to see that.

# *A National Need to Support Kinship Caregivers*

*Guest Editorial*

*Shay Bilchik, President/CEO  
Child Welfare League of America*



During my tenure at the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), I've tread a well-worn path between my downtown Washington office and Capitol Hill. One can never show enough support for laws benefiting the nation's vulnerable children, nor can one do enough to voice opposition for those posing risks to kids. Luckily, when it comes to kinship care, CWLA has had much to rally behind in our nation's Capitol.

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of speaking at a Senate briefing in support of new legislation making more funding available for kinship care placements. Sponsored by Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME), the legislation is part of a continued nationwide trend of federal, state and local governments moving toward policies that encourage holding families together and placing children in alternative permanent homes when possible. This includes placing children within their network of kin.

It is estimated that about one-quarter of children in formal foster care are living with relatives. However, in most cases current federal law does not formally recognize these families as kin providers. Many families never make contact with the system but provide critical caregiving roles.

By definition, kinship care is the full-time care, nurturing and protection of children by relatives, members of their tribes, godparents, stepparents or any adult who has a kinship bond with a child. This definition is designed to be inclusive and respectful of cultural values and ties of affec-

tion. Beyond its formal definition, kinship care provides an opportunity for a child to grow to adulthood in a family environment. For many children, it is a lifeline to a safe and productive future.

But successfully placing a child in kinship care does not necessarily give us license to turn our backs and congratulate ourselves on a job well done. We may be placing children with relatives who have never cared for children, or who have not cared for children in many, many years. A grandmother suddenly swept into a parental role must learn where and how to enroll her child in school, research available child care and investigate her legal rights to health records—basic things many full-time parents take for granted. Therefore, providing abundant supports for kinship caregivers is critical. CWLA has partnered with the Children's Defense Fund, Generations United and many other groups to highlight these families and better educate policymakers about supporting them wherever possible.

Congress has recognized the vital role kinship caregivers play. As an example, Congress passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act in 1997, directing states to move children more quickly through the system into permanent family settings, such as adoption or reunification. As part of this strategy, Congress recognizes kinship placements as an important permanency option. Unfortunately, while limited funding is available for some adoptive and foster care families, the same is not true for kinship caregivers. The new legislation sponsored by Senators Clinton and Snowe (S 985) would allow

states to draw Title IV-E funding to support kinship guardianship placements. Clinton's and Snowe's legislation would also assist states in establishing navigator systems for all kinship families who may not know where to turn for information and support on issues they may face as kinship caregivers.

Beyond Washington, on the local level, it is also important to focus on guiding the child welfare system in the direction of kinship care when appropriate. This will help prevent cases of children moving through the foster care system for years without anyone realizing solutions may lie right there within children's family networks similar to the case of Antwone Fisher, whose life story about growing up in foster care is told in the 2002 film bearing his name.

This is where the role of court appointed special advocates becomes essential. CASA/GAL volunteers build special relationships with children and youth in the child welfare system and—unlike caseworkers who may not have time to closely watch all the children in their care—may be able to better identify relatives willing to care for a child in need. In between court hearings, and in face-to-face meetings with a child's family members, it is possible for CASA volunteers to take a closer look at aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents as potential caretakers. These individuals could be the answer to a child's hopes and dreams of a stable childhood, and by exploring the possibility of these kinship placements CASA volunteers have the ability and opportunity to make those hopes and dreams become a reality.

# Relative Care Creates Powerful Bonds for Children

By Mary Bissell

*So boy, don't you turn back.  
Don't you set down on the steps  
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.  
Don't you fall now –  
For I'se still goin', honey,  
I'se still climbin',  
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.*  
Mother to Son, Langston Hughes

The family, with all its strengths and complexities, is a cornerstone of American culture. For generations, grandparents and other relatives have stepped forward to raise children whose parents cannot. And while family members still provide a vital safety net for children at-risk, the obstacles facing these families are more formidable than ever. “Fifty years ago, the entire family and the community were expected to join together and do their part to help,” explains one Washington, DC grandmother raising three grandchildren. “These days there is no one else to help. No one wants the responsibility. No one wants the heartache.”

Substance abuse, incarceration, domestic violence, physical and mental illness, teen pregnancy and other serious problems have resulted in more than 6 million children who currently live in grandparent-headed households. According to the most recent US Census, 2.4 million grandparents report they are responsible for their grandchildren's basic needs. Increasingly, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and siblings are also taking on the role of substitute parents—either through family agreements or under the supervision of state child welfare agencies and courts.

## The Changing Face of Relative Care in America

Inside and outside the foster care system, life is not easy for children raised by grandparents and other relatives. Without court-sanctioned legal custody or guardianship, family members find it difficult to access even the most basic benefits and services. “If children are living with relatives informally, their caregivers are often unable to enroll their grandchildren in school, obtain medical care and make all the other day-to-day decisions parents take for granted,” says Sherry Neal, director of the Grandparent/Relative Caregiver Project at Atlanta's Legal Aid Society.

The emotional stress of raising a child is also hard on caregivers, especially for older, disabled or poor caregivers who may have serious health problems of their own. Children raised by grandparents and other caregivers are more likely to have a range of special needs including complications from low birth weight, ADHD and other developmental and behavioral issues that result from parental substance abuse. These problems can be exacerbated by the parents themselves, who often move in and out of their children's lives unpredictably and with little accountability.

Even caregivers who are caring for children under the “watchful” eye of the child welfare system are often at a disadvantage. “In our experience, relatives are offered and receive fewer services than non-kin caregivers,” says Legal Aid's Neal. “A lot of times, the agency views relatives as a way to prevent children from coming into the system in the



first place, so they rarely provide the services necessary to truly support the placement.” In many cases, the lack of services to relatives when a child first comes into care can also result in additional complications for court personnel. “One reason that so many CASA programs are pressed into serving children who appear before the court in guardianship and domestic custody cases is because a lot of these cases should have been adjudicated as abuse and neglect in the first place,” explains Janet Ward, National CASA program specialist for the Midwest region, “Instead, they are coming into the family court in droves.”

## The Myth that Hurts Children and Families

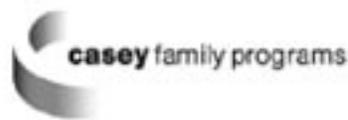
According to many relative caregivers, the most painful barrier they encounter is not the lack of services and financial supports. It is the antiquated notion that the “apple doesn't fall far from the tree” — the misguided assumption among some social workers, lawyers and judges that if the child's parent aren't able to raise the child, the rest of the family must be equally dysfunctional. Experts who work most closely with caregivers and the children they are raising contend that shattering this myth is the first step in getting these families the community understanding and support they need most. “I've lost count of how many times I have seen grandparents beat themselves up over what they did wrong.

A grandmother can have three other adult children who turned out great, but she still thinks it's her fault," says Carol Boyer, director of Generations Together, a Delaware support program. "Every parent knows that sometimes there are influences beyond even their control."

Caregivers say that these common misperceptions are not only hurtful to them, they unfairly brand the child they are raising. "We say that the apple may not fall far from the tree, but we're not responsible for how far it rolls," says Brigitte Castellano, executive director of the National Committee of Grandparents for Children's Rights, a national advocacy organization. "Not only are we advocating for the child, but we also have to fight the prejudice against us."

### **Relative Care as a Source of Stable Placements for Children**

Despite its critics, most agency leaders and expert practitioners agree that an appro-



priate placement with caring relatives can often provide a loving, familiar and stable setting for a child at-risk. "Grandparents are usually the first line of defense from abuse and neglect," says the National Committee's Castellano. "When a parent can no longer care for their children, why should those children lose their entire family?" Placing a child with caring family members also has other advantages for the child, such as helping to preserve a child's racial and ethnic identity, and sometimes their ability to stay in a familiar and supportive neighborhood. "Grandparents and other relatives are also more likely to keep siblings together," adds Kikora Dorsey of Casey Family Programs in Seattle, a fundamental consideration that is

often overlooked when agency placements are made.

The most important reason to place the child with qualified relatives, however, is also the most obvious: they already know and love the child. "Grandparents know the history of the child and the family," says Boyer of Generations United. "They know the child personally and intimately. And the child knows them." Preserving family connections is especially important in cases involving older children. Explains Karen Worthington, director of the Barton Law & Policy Clinic at Emory University School of Law, "the adolescent years are the time when many children most need that sense of belonging. Family members can often provide that support in ways others may not be able to."

Casey Family Programs' Dorsey agrees. "Raising adolescents in a changing world

*(continued on page 8)*

### **Federal Benefit Programs for Children and Caregivers**

State child welfare agencies sometimes place children in the homes of relatives without ongoing court or agency supervision. Relatives caring for children in foster care may also be raising siblings or other at-risk children who are not involved with the formal system. In both these cases, CASA volunteers can connect families with the following programs.

**Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF):** Low-income relative caregivers can apply for cash through the TANF program (which has a different name in each state). In addition to a regular grant, relatives can apply for a "child-only" grant based only on the

child's income. For local eligibility rules, call (800) 333-4636 or log on to [acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/stlinks.htm](http://acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/stlinks.htm).

**Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP):** Most children being raised by relatives are eligible for free or low-cost health coverage even if their caregivers do not have court-ordered legal custody or guardianship. Eligibility is based solely on the child's income. For a copy of Children's Defense Fund's guide to health insurance for children, call (202) 662-3568 or visit [childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinshipcare/guides.aspx](http://childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinshipcare/guides.aspx).

**Food Stamps and Other Nutrition Programs:** Children raised by low-income grandparents and other relatives may be eligible for food stamps, the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program, free school lunches

and other nutrition programs. For a copy of the Children's Defense Fund's guide to federal nutrition programs, call (202) 662-3568 or log on to [childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinshipcare/guides.aspx](http://childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinshipcare/guides.aspx).

**Financial Support for Seniors:** The National Council on the Aging (NCOA) provides Benefits Checkup ([benefits-checkup.org](http://benefits-checkup.org)), a website that allows seniors to find out whether they are qualified for financial assistance and other government programs. Local Agencies on Aging also provide local service referrals through the Eldercare Locator at (800) 677-1116 or [eldercare.gov](http://eldercare.gov).

*For a complete list of federal programs that benefit children and caregivers, contact the AARP Grandparent Information Center at (888) 687-2277 or [aarp.org/life/grandparents/](http://aarp.org/life/grandparents/).*

(Relative Care, continued from page 7)

can be challenging for anybody, but especially so for grandparents and other relatives who may not be prepared to deal with a teenager. It's even more complicated if the child has special needs and these needs have not been met as the child grows."

### Children, Caregivers and the Courts

While grandparents and other relatives may be certain of their love and commitment to a child, they are much less sure of their relationship with child welfare agencies and the courts. Even when children are placed with relatives through a child welfare agency, caregivers' roles in subsequent dependency proceedings are poorly defined. While federal law now requires that foster parents and relatives caring for a child in foster care must be given notice of and an opportunity to be heard in any hearings or reviews involving the child, some courts interpret this provision narrowly or overlook it altogether. "In many states, there is no uniform procedure for gathering information from caregivers," explains Cecilia Fiermonte, an attorney with the American Bar Association's Center for Children and the Law. "Judges might put a written report in the file but not consider it as evidence. They may not ask the caregivers if they have anything to say, so the relatives end up missing their opportunity to speak at all."

There are additional complications when a caregiver tries to navigate the judicial system without counsel. "Generally, caregivers are clueless about the court system and what rights they may have," explains Carol Boyer. "They don't understand why parents'



interests are represented by an attorney and they're not given counsel even though they are the ones raising the child." Caregivers who decide that they might be better off hiring their own lawyers often find themselves in a legal Catch-22, earning too much to qualify for the limited number of free legal services and too little to afford the high costs of a private attorney.

In addition to feeling pitted against the parents of the children in adversarial court proceedings, relatives often report feeling unfairly judged by agency representatives and court personnel. Sometimes dismissed as "intrusive" or "meddlesome," grandparents are afraid that if they speak up in court, the agency or judge might retaliate against them and take away the child. The situation can be worse for relatives who become involved in an abuse and neglect case late because they had not even been told that the child had been placed in foster care. "Often kin are out of the loop or waiting on the sidelines hoping that the child's parents will get their acts together," says Barbara Kates, director of Family Connections, a

### Subsidized Guardianship: A Growing Permanency Option for Children in Foster Care

An increasing number of states offer "Subsidized Guardianship"—programs that provide ongoing financial support for children who can no longer live with their birth parents and for whom adoption is not appropriate. Although many grandparents and other relatives choose to adopt children in foster care, others feel that guardianship is a better way to maintain family bonds with birth parents, honor the wishes of older children and maintain cultural norms. Subsidized guardianship programs are currently available in 34 states and the District of Columbia. To find out whether subsidized guardianship is available in your state, order *Expanding Permanency Options for Children: A Guide to Subsidized Guardianship Programs* by the Cornerstone Consulting Group and Children's Defense Fund by calling (202) 662-3568 or visiting [childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinship-care/subsidy\\_guide.pdf](http://childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinship-care/subsidy_guide.pdf).

grandparent outreach organization in Bangor, Maine. "Just because relatives don't participate in the court process immediately doesn't mean they are not committed to the child. Sometimes they just don't know where or how to start."

### Relative Caregivers as a Resource for CASA Volunteers

Although some courts may still be struggling to define the appropriate role of extended family members in abuse and neglect proceedings, grandparents and other relatives can still be an invaluable resource for CASA volunteers helping a judge to determine what is best for a child.

First and foremost, relative caregivers can be a source of helpful information. “It’s important for CASA volunteers to recognize family members as vital allies in the process of developing a permanent placement for the child,” says Atlanta Legal Aid’s Sherry Neal. “Even when a family placement doesn’t turn out to be the best one, relatives can still give the court important information on the child’s background, medical history—even her likes and dislikes. They might also be able to recommend alternative placements with family friends and help to maintain important family connections for children regardless of where they end up.”

The information and insight family members can provide are especially important for CASA volunteers who have been tasked with difficult cases. “Because there are often more cases than volunteers, we sometimes get the cases that need the most attention,” says Jennifer Miller, a child welfare policy expert and CASA volunteer in Providence, Rhode

### State Fact Sheets for Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children

These comprehensive fact sheets provide state-specific information and resources for relative caregivers, including statistical data, information on local support groups, and summaries of relevant state laws. A joint effort of AARP, the Brookdale Foundation, the Children’s Defense Fund, Casey Family Programs, the Child Welfare League of America and Generations United, you can find your state’s fact sheet at [aarp.org/life/grandparenting](http://aarp.org/life/grandparenting) (click “State Fact Sheets”).

Island. “For kids living in shelters or group homes, children dealing with seriously addicted parents or those in large sibling groups, we need to be asking how relatives can help—even if they are not a possible placement.”

Miller also points out that volunteers can also play a key role in assuring that children are placed and remain in safe and stable homes. “Family is vital, but we have to stop the practice of assuming that kids are automatically OK just because they are with grandparents or other relatives. The advantage of being a CASA is that we get to look at each case on an individual basis.”

### CASA Volunteers as Liaisons for Children and Families

Just as family members can deepen a CASA volunteer’s understanding of a child’s needs, volunteers can find new ways to support children as a “front-line” resource for caregiver families. When a child first enters the system, volunteers can help overworked agency staff to identify and build strong relationships with grandparents and other relatives who might be willing able to provide temporary care for the child or ongoing emotional support to the child or the parents. In addition to providing family members with information on available public benefits and support groups, CASA volunteers can also help relative caregivers learn to manage and monitor children’s safe, consistent visitation with their birth parents. In situations where a child can be safely reunified with his or her birth parents, CASA volunteers can encourage relative caregivers to play a positive role in the child’s return home. In cases where a child is unable to return home, CASA volunteers can help social workers and court personnel move the permanency process forward through adop-

### National Resources for Children Raised by Grandparents and Other Relatives

The following national organizations offer a variety of resources for children being raised by relatives inside and outside the child welfare system:

**The AARP Grandparent Information Center** ([aarp.org/life/grandparents](http://aarp.org/life/grandparents)) provides tip sheets and public benefits information for grandparents raising grandchildren and has a national database of local support groups.

**The Brookdale Foundation Group Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP)** ([brookdalefoundation.org](http://brookdalefoundation.org)) provides seed grants for a limited number of state agencies and local nonprofits to create support groups and other services for relative caregivers.

**Child Welfare League of America** ([cwla.org](http://cwla.org)), an association of public and nonprofit child welfare agencies, offers tips on parenting, discipline and child development as well as guidelines for relative caregivers in the child welfare system.

**Children’s Defense Fund** ([childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinship-care/default.aspx](http://childrensdefense.org/childwelfare/kinship-care/default.aspx)) provides a variety of publications and resources on programs and legislation affecting children raised by relatives, including the comprehensive *Kinship Care Resource Kit for Community and Faith-Based Organizations*.

**Generations United** ([gu.org/proj&co.asp](http://gu.org/proj&co.asp)) runs the National Center on Grandparents and Other Relatives Raising Children to provide helpful information and resources on innovative programs, updates on state and federal legislation, legal options, housing and public benefits.

(continued on page 10)

(Resources for Children, continued from page 9)

**National Adoption Information Clearinghouse** ([naic.acf.hhs.gov/](http://naic.acf.hhs.gov/) [search under “grandparents”]) is a government website that offers an extensive list of publications and resources for children raised by relative caregivers, including videos, newsletters, booklets and other publications.

**National Committee for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren** ([grandparentsforchildren.org](http://grandparentsforchildren.org)) is a grassroots coalition of grandparents that advocates and lobbies for legislative and program changes for grandchildren at risk.



**A national gathering of relative caregivers will take place at the United States Capitol on September 14th at 1:00 p.m. in Washington, DC when Generations United hosts the 13th Biennial Intergenerational Conference at the Washington Marriott. The GrandRally is sponsored by the Children’s Defense Fund, AARP, Generations United, CWLA and the National Committee of Grandparents for Children’s Rights.**

**Visit [GrandRally.org](http://GrandRally.org) for more information.**

(Relative Care, continued from page 9)

tion or guardianship. Finally, volunteers can help to ensure that grandparents and other relatives have an opportunity to share their perspectives on the child with the court and agency personnel in dependency hearings and related reviews.

In seeking out the information that only grandparents and other relatives can provide and by supporting caregivers who are raising almost one-third of the children in foster care, CASA volunteers can be an invaluable resource for agency and court decision-makers and, most importantly, for the children they represent. “While caregivers carry the past, they can also help envision a better future for children. They are the bridge that many children stand on,” says Carol Boyer. “If we really want to help kids, we need to do a better job of recognizing that.”

*Attorney Mary Bissell is the Casey Family Programs Fellow at the New America Foundation, a non-partisan, nonprofit public policy institute in Washington, DC.*

## Join the National CASA Association

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

### Your Member Benefits:

- *The Connection*, our quarterly magazine, full of information about CASA advocacy, child welfare and the children we serve.
- *The Powerful Voice*, a semi-annual newsletter showing how your support is making a difference.
- Discounts on National CASA conferences, merchandise and publications.
- Updates on legislation impacting abused children, with ways you can take action.
- A vote in the election of National CASA’s board of directors.
- Satisfaction of knowing you’re helping a network of CASA/ GAL programs to support abused and neglected children.

**Thank you!**

Mailing Address: National CASA Association, 100 W. Harrison, North Tower—Suite 500, Seattle, WA 98119

### Membership Information Form:

Please check any of the following that apply:

- I am a new member.
- I would like to renew my membership to National CASA.
- I am a CASA/GAL Volunteer.  
CASA/GAL Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like additional information about the National CASA Association.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

- Enclosed is a check for the \$35 annual membership fee
- Please charge \$35 to my VISA or Mastercard:

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 2005 National CASA Awards of Excellence Presented in Atlanta



Extraordinary people in the CASA and GAL network help provide hope to abused and neglected children in communities across the country. The Awards of Excellence, presented each year at the National CASA Association annual conference, recognize the exceptional contributions and dedication of child advocates, program directors, judges, board members and CASA programs excelling in diversity efforts. Awards were presented during the conference banquet held April 17th in Atlanta, GA.



(L to R) Marcia Sink, National CASA Association board president; Kevin Gardner, Milpitas, CA, recipient of the National CASA Board Member of the Year Award; Jo Martinez, Los Angeles, CA, recipient of the G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year Award; Karen Cox, Austin, TX, recipient of the Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year Award; Michael Heaton, accepting the Diversity Leadership Award on behalf of Crooked River CASA of Prineville, OR; and Michael Piraino, National CASA Association CEO.

## **Josephine Martinez** **G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year** **CASA of Los Angeles, CA**

Josephine “Jo” Martinez accepted her first case as a CASA volunteer in 1994. She has advocated for many children since then, and in each case her bilingual skills have been critical to serving the children effectively. Martinez has been generous in lending assistance to CASA of Los Angeles’ efforts to recruit more volunteers from the Hispanic community, especially those with bilingual skills. She frequently speaks for CASA at service organization gatherings. In addition, Martinez’s volunteer service has been featured in several Los Angeles-area newspapers, including the widely read *La Opinion*.

In accepting the award, Martinez said, “It is a very humbling experience for me to receive this award. And I receive it on behalf of all of you CASA and GAL volunteers sitting out there—all the work that you do with the children... I know that we are like a big circle, and the only time we open that circle is when we let another advocate in because they are so badly needed.”

Just one example of the difference Martinez has made is the case of “Juan.” Juan’s foster family had expressed interest in adopting him but later began sending mixed signals. With patient persistence, she learned that their ambivalence turned out to be because the boy had special therapeutic and educational needs. While the foster parents loved Juan very much and sincerely

wanted to adopt him, they had never received any help in getting services for him. With two children of their own, the family did not feel they could take on the added financial responsibility of raising a third child with special needs. Once Martinez understood this, she put all of her efforts into seeking out resources for the family and advocating for appropriate educational and therapeutic services for the boy. Because of her persistence, the foster parents moved forward with adoption.

## **Karen Cox** **Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director** **of the Year** **CASA of Travis County, TX**

Karen Cox became a CASA volunteer in 1989 as a way of repaying the help of her grandparents. Two years later, she was testifying before the Texas House Appropriations Committee on behalf of CASA programs: that was the first year any funds were appropriated for CASA through the Texas legislature. Having volunteered with CASA of Travis County as an advocate, she then served on the board from 1993 until 1996 when she became executive director.

In accepting the award, Cox told of her own heartbreaking childhood dealing with a mentally ill, volatile father. At 12 years of age, she wanted desperately to go live with

(continued on page 12)



(National Awards, continued from p. 11)

her grandparents, who were already caring for her older sister. "I said to the judge, 'I would rather go to jail than go home.' The judge never asked me why. He just stared right through me and ordered me to go home. I cannot tell you how devastating it is to be the child who speaks in court and nobody listens. And CASA makes sure that never happens."

Cox has led the program to increase its percentages of volunteers from the Hispanic, African-American and male populations to better reflect the children served. As a result, CASA of Travis County has grown exponentially during her tenure. In the last two years alone, the program has served more children than it served in its first 12 years of existence.

She paid tribute to CASA and GAL volunteers in her acceptance speech, "I had an extended family that stepped in and took care of me. And we don't have that very often anymore. We move too much, and we live far from relatives who are that safety net for children. And you provide that."

**Kevin Gardner**  
**National CASA Association**  
**Board Member of the Year**  
**Child Advocates of Santa Clara**  
**and San Mateo Counties, CA**

Kevin Gardner has been a board member for Child Advocates of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties for seven years, the last two as board president. As a former advocate, he has demonstrated passion for the organization's mission. Gardner has championed key fundraising efforts including Child Advocates' annual dinner and auction, major donor initiatives and outreach to corporations. In large part due to his efforts, the agency now has an endowment of \$1.2 million.

But his leadership is about more than money. Gardner explained one of his innovations as he accepted his award, "We start every meeting with a story, a story of one of our children.... It might be a board member telling a story or a staff member. It might only be a simple anecdote about a child. But it's a story that makes that child come alive in front of us.... Sometimes it makes us laugh; sometimes it makes us cry. But it always inspires us to do our best and keeps us focused on our mission."

Gardner also shared a lesson learned during his agency's recent strategic planning process. "We were talking about advocate retention.... And one volunteer said something very succinctly.... 'You know when volunteers come to us and they choose a child, they just jump right in and fall in love with that child. And they'll do everything...in order to do what's needed to serve that child. And sometimes when they're finished, the case is closed, they really can't move on to serve another child.... But when the advocate can serve that second child, that's when we know that they've taken the leap from loving a child to loving our mission.'"

He summed up by telling the 1,000+ banquet attendees: "I really believe that...if everybody in this room goes back home and helps our donors and volunteers take the leap to loving our mission, we might be able to serve every child in America."

**Chief Justice Kathleen A. Blatz**  
**National CASA Association**  
**Judge of the Year**  
**Supreme Court of Minnesota**

Before becoming Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1998, Kathleen Blatz had served eight terms in the Minnesota House of Representatives, authoring numerous laws to improve the

state's child protection system. At the time of her appointment, more than half of the children involved in the state's child protection proceedings had no one speaking for them. As a former juvenile court judge, Chief Justice Blatz believed the best way to address this problem was through the appointment of a volunteer guardian ad litem for every child who needed an advocate. Due largely to her efforts, over 90% of Minnesota's children in need today have a court appointed special advocate.

As Chief Justice Blatz says, "Whenever people ask me what they can do for children, I tell them to volunteer as a guardian ad litem." Since her appointment as chief justice, she has personally recruited volunteers; promoted the program in the media; worked in the legislature to ensure adequate funding for programs; and created a statewide initiative to improve the child protection system.

In 2001, Blatz spearheaded the Children's Justice Initiative, a joint venture of the judiciary and human services working to improve the processing of child protection cases and outcomes for abused and neglected children. She has presented her blueprint for change to the Pew Commission on Children in Foster Care. Blatz is cited in the 2004 Pew Commission Report *Fostering the Future*, and many of the report's recommendations in the area of strengthening the courts had already been implemented in Minnesota under her leadership.

At the 2002 statewide conference of the Minnesota Association of Guardians ad Litem, Justice Blatz spoke about how guardians ad litem make a difference for children. As a judge when there was no GAL on the case, she said she found it "almost impossible" to have any confidence in her decisions about the child.

(continued on p. 15)



*Marcia Sink, National CASA board president, welcomes conference participants to the 2005 Awards Recognition Banquet.*



*Moving in the Spirit performs the Red Silk Chinese Ribbon Dance.*



*Andrea Loney (left), former state director of South Carolina GAL, and Brenda Perryman. Perryman, who read her poem, "A Tribute to CASA Volunteers" at the opening session, has taught speech and drama and developed programs that utilize drama as a means of informing students about conflict resolution. Author of several poetry books, she was recently the featured poet at An Evening With Maya Angelou at Detroit's Orchestra Hall.*

## 2005 Conference Highlights



*(L to R) Dan Michael, executive director of CASA of Memphis and Shelby Counties, TN and National CASA board member is pictured with John Storms and Randy Kane Jones, National CASA board members.*



*James A. Hush, vice president, strategic securities department of the Coca-Cola Company (center), wife Ginny Hush (left) and Bev Levy, executive director of Dallas CASA (right).*



*Meagan Lorraine Stegall, 17, speaks at Sunday's luncheon. A former foster child, she now resides with her family and is a sophomore in high school. Stegall plans to attend college and is considering various career choices.*



*Terene Bennett, National CASA program specialist—Southern Gulf region (second from left) and Eric Johnson, Sr. and family of CASA of Jefferson County, Harvey, LA.*

## 2005 Conference Highlights, *continued*



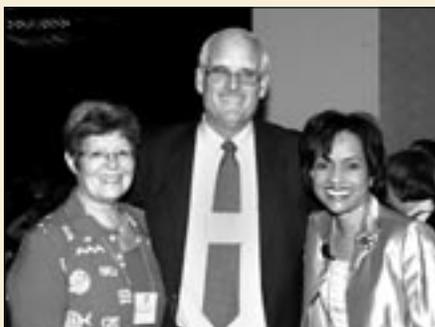
*Moving in the Spirit utilizes dance as a fun and creative tool to develop workplace values and life skills, reinforce school curriculum, give voice to issues pertinent to youth today and address issues of self-esteem. It also teaches the values of respect, commitment, accountability and responsibility through the arts and the discipline of dance in an intensive training program for teenagers.*



*The annual conference provides the opportunity to network with other child advocates from around the country.*



*OJJDP Administrator J. Robert Flores (right) speaking with Daniella Anderson (carrying her baby). Daniella was featured in *Aging Out*, a 2003 documentary by Roger Weisberg and Vanessa Roth, which chronicles the daunting obstacles that three young people encounter as they leave foster care and are forced to fend for themselves.*



*Bill Hansell, NACo president-elect and commissioner of Umatilla County, OR (center) stands with his wife (left) and Judge Glenda Hatchett.*



*Kappa Alpha Theta representatives and Theta conference participants included (L to R) Allie Chang Ray, Sue Chessber Teng, Cortney Ferris, Program Director of the Year Karen Cox, Harriet Stafford Curry and National CASA board member Joyce Harrison Honeyman.*



*Naomi Haines Griffith speaking at Tuesday's closing plenary session. Griffith, who worked in the North Carolina and Alabama child welfare systems, became executive director of Parents and Children Together (PACT) in 1984, a pioneering child abuse prevention agency she helped found. A national speaker, consultant and author on child welfare issues, she uses humor and her own experiences to challenge and inspire her audiences. Griffith is a member of the Alabama Corporate Foundation for Children and has worked as a consultant to the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse.*



*(L to R) National CASA CEO Michael Piraino, OJJDP Administrator J. Robert Flores, National CASA Board President Marcia Sink and Deputy CEO M. Carmela Welte.*



(Awards, continued from p. 12)

**Crooked River CASA Program  
Prineville, OR  
National CASA Association Diversity  
Leadership Award**

The Crooked River CASA Program serves Crook County, Jefferson County and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs—a large, struggling rural area in Central Oregon with significant Hispanic and Native American populations. Over the past five years, director Michael Heaton's leadership has helped make the Crooked River CASA program a model of the inclusion necessary to best serve local children. Heaton is now joined by one volunteer coordinator who is Native American and another who is African-American, bilingual Spanish/English and part of the Hispanic community.

Over the years, the Crooked River CASA Program had participated in and sponsored many trainings and conferences on cultural competency. However, the program's leaders recognized that no amount of training can substitute for participation by someone of the same cultural background as the target population. Diversity among volunteers is expanding as a result of a staff that now reflects these communities.

Heaton explains how they developed their tribal office: "After two years of laying the groundwork, we sought and received the funds to start a satellite office. It was important to us and the tribal members that CASA in Warm Springs have a Native face." The tribal member hired to coordinate this effort now supervises 12 tribal volunteers serving Native American children in Tribal Court and state court. The CASA program has also increased its number of Hispanic volunteers from 0 to 5. See the sidebar for Heaton's remarks upon accepting the award for his program.

When I first started thinking about diversity as a fairly typical middle-aged, blue-eyed white guy, I thought diversity only had to do with skin tone. I was very mistaken.

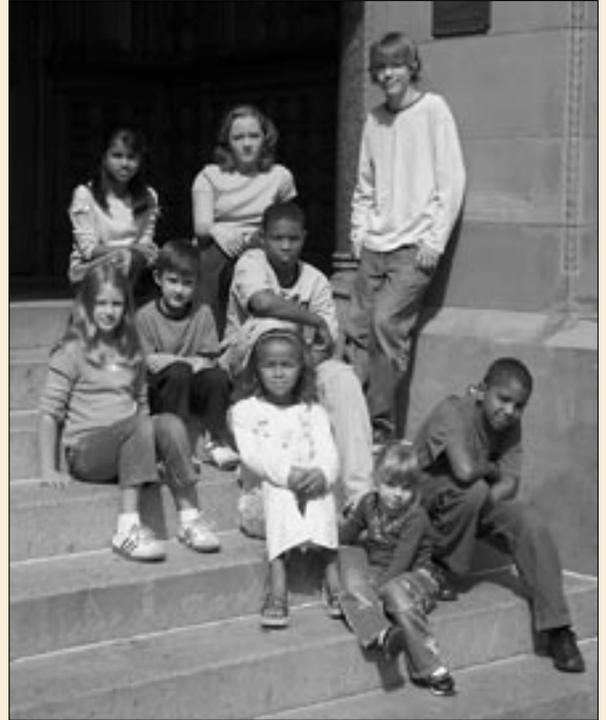
Diversity can be found in many ways. In a recent study that was done on pain and pain medication, it was found that Jewish-Americans wanted the pain medication after they were told all of the consequences and the side effects. Italian-Americans didn't care about consequences, didn't care about side effects—they just wanted the pain medication. And, closer to my heritage, Irish-Americans thought their lot was just to suffer. Now with that information, you can imagine the difficulty when an Italian-American patient goes in for gall bladder surgery and has an Irish-American doctor.

We all tend not to see things as they are. We see them as we are or how we believe things are, and we take our positions much too seriously. We all should remember that angels can fly because they take themselves lightly.

In this great land of ours, we can see diversity just when we look at the moon. Western Europeans, we see a man in the moon; Eastern Europeans see a woman; many Asian cultures see a rabbit; and some, as in the Pacific Northwest Native American cultures, they see a frog. Now it is the same moon—but it's seen differently, and each group takes their metaphor for granted. With the very best of intentions, two or more of these groups can talk about the same, one and only moon but never know it because they are talking in metaphors of men, women, rabbits and frogs. So we notice the obvious but not the mean-

ing behind it. We miss the intentionality behind the behavior. We must strive to understand the why of the behavior.

Diversity work cannot be done in a time of crisis, like arguing about whose face is on the moon. We must all look for our community connections, our liaisons



and our guides, those who know the local name of the moon. And then we must listen, listen, listen. We must be like the wolf and always look twice. As the wolf moves away, he turns back to get a different perspective.

Black Elk, the famous Native American mystic, said that the medicine wheel would begin to be healed in the 7th generation. Some believe we are now in the 7th generation. And as Judge Hatchett said this afternoon, we're doing work that exists beyond our lifetime. The diversity work that we do will live on in the 8th and 9th generations.

—Michael Heaton, Director  
Crooked River CASA



## 2005 State of the Network Highlights



The following is an excerpt from National CASA CEO Michael Piraino's "State of the Network" speech at the 2005 national conference.

I was in Washington, DC, recently and my friend, Shane Salter, executive director of the DC CASA program and a former foster child, joined me for a speaking engagement. Afterwards, talking about diversity and inclusion, Shane said: "our children need everyone. They need white people just as much as they need blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Indians. They need middle class people as much as they need poor and wealthy people. They need men as much as women."

If we take such a grounded look at ourselves, what do we see? First, we must acknowledge what is obvious. That is the underrepresentation of at least two groups within our volunteer network—people of color and men. We have made progress in recruiting more people of color as volunteers. For example, last year the participation of African American volunteers in our network increased by more than 25%. However, we still have far to go. For example, I wonder why it is that men make up nearly half the volunteers with Big Brothers/Big Sisters, but only 18 percent in our network.

I want to emphasize that when we talk about diversity and inclusion, it is not a question of bad motives. We can assume that everyone is acting in good faith. That assumption can help us approach the issues critically.

A beautiful approach to inclusion can be found in Michael Schermer's book *The Science of Good and Evil*. He believes that the deepest moral and ethical values do not belong to individuals, but to all humans. It's a position that takes a strong stand against dividing people into good and bad groups. According to Schermer, the trend in human history over the last 500 years has been towards greater inclusiveness.

In order to achieve a deeper understanding of diversity, we must first be able to talk about it. But speaking about diversity, and about race in particular, is not something we are very good at in this country. In his book *Race Matters*, Cornel West writes that this difficulty suppresses the best in us because it means we do not critically discuss the complexity of race.

So why do we talk so much about inclusion now? Because of this. Who would have thought, when David Soukup started that first program in Seattle in 1977, that it would grow to serve well over 200,000 children in 2003? In order to do more of

this for the many more children who need us, we need all people involved.

We seek to understand. We seek a better future for our children. We seek to be alert to opportunities to change the child protection system's behavior to reduce its negative impacts, especially on children of color. In order to do all this, ours must be the broadest possible group of advocates.

We must be more than tolerant; we must welcome all the many people our children need to have safe, secure and happy futures.

### Books Referenced in Michael Piraino's State of the Network address at the 2005 National CASA conference:

*Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness*  
by Jon Kabat-Zinn

*Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking*  
by Malcolm Gladwell

*The Science of Good and Evil: Why People Cheat, Gossip, Care, Share, and Follow the Golden Rule*  
by Michael Shermer

*Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...and Others Don't*  
by Jim Collins

*Songs of the Gorilla Nation: My Journey Through Autism*  
by Dawn Prince-Hughes, Ph.D

*Race Matters*  
by Cornel West

### The National CASA Association Extends its Grateful Appreciation to These 2005 Conference Sponsors:

- OJJDP
- Strategic Security Department, the Coca-Cola Company
- Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption
- Wendy's International Foundation
- Jewelers for Children



JEWELERS FOR CHILDREN  
A GUY OF LOVE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

## America's Premiere Grassroots Fundraiser Shares CASA Perspective



Kim Klein is internationally known as a fundraising trainer, consultant and publisher of the *Grassroots Fundraising Journal*. She is also the author of *Fundraising for Social Change*, which National CASA provided as a resource last year to all of its rural programs.

Klein has worked in all aspects of fundraising as staff, volunteer, board member and consultant. She is best known for adapting traditional fundraising techniques, particularly major donor campaigns, to the needs of organizations with small budgets working for social justice. Widely in demand as a speaker, Klein has provided training and consultation in 19 countries and all 50 states.

Klein presented three workshops on the following topics at its annual conference in April: fundraising in times of crisis, challenges in rural fundraising and developing major donors. She sat down with editorial staff from *The Connection* to discuss her take on CASA's prospects.

**Connection:** *I know you're at a stage in your career where you're very selective about taking on new causes or clients (and you like to limit your travel). What is it about CASA that brought you to Atlanta this weekend?*

**Klein:** I've noticed over the past 10 years or so that there are always CASA and GAL groups that show up to my public workshops. I've continued to be impressed with how dedicated these programs are to their missions, to their volunteers—and how really grassroots a lot of them are. Also, CASA has used many of my materials over the years, so that made me curious to know more.

**Connection:** *You spent all day today training CASA and GAL staff, volunteers and board members. Do you have some thoughts about successful fundraising strategies specifically for small CASA programs?*

**Klein:** One important strategy that's underused by programs is asking their CASA volunteers for money. I know that it's a little bit controversial in some places, but people who volunteer are very likely to be donors. Seven out of 10 adults in the United States are donors. And the three out of 10 who are not also tend not to vote or to volunteer. So volunteers are givers. And if you don't ask your volunteers, you need to know that they're still giving away money—just to someone else.

Some volunteers might not want to give, but that's their choice. It's your job to ask them. I see this resistance among many small volunteer-based organizations. But it's not on the part of the volunteers, it's on the part of the askers. If you look at hospital auxiliaries and symphony leagues and other more traditional groups, volunteers make up a large percentage of their donors. I also think volunteers can be a great source of new donor prospects because they know people who don't have time to be a CASA volunteer but who like what they hear.

**Connection:** *While here in Atlanta, did you learn about any particularly successful fundraising strategies or events that CASA programs are working on?*

**Klein:** Today somebody told me the story of getting churches to participate—a program called “One Child, One Church.” They get a church to sponsor one child at

\$1,000. The CASA program then publishes the names of the churches in their newsletter. And the more names that they publish, the easier time they have recruiting the churches that haven't done it yet. Somebody else told me about teen dances that her program puts on. Teenagers get together and have a good time and raise \$300-500 for CASA. The third example I remember is somebody who gave me a copy of their invitation to a phantom event—like staying at home and having a cup of tea instead of going to a tea.

**Connection:** *How does involvement of diverse volunteers fit into these strategies? And how do you invite these folks in?*

**Klein:** I think racial diversity, which I know is a goal for CASA programs, fits right into fundraising. Think about this: The median age of White people in the United States is 38, but the median age of Black people is 32. For Asians, it's 29, and for Latinos 27. Basically, behind us Boomers is a huge cohort of people who are people of color, and they're a lot younger. So one thing I'm helping groups do is figure out how to raise money in these communities to get people involved.

We also need to learn mechanisms by which different ethnicities give—who they trust in a world that's still very much affected by racism. This trust issue is profound. Whereas I might get a direct mail appeal and think “that's probably a good group,” someone else might say “that looks like a lot of White people—I don't know if I trust this organization.” So there are still plenty of barriers that need to be broken down.

*(continued on page 18)*

*“Donors want a place to give that they can trust the money is being used well, where there’s not a lot of waste and the staff isn’t overpaid. For all the questions that are being asked out there, CASA answers them very well.”*



*(Klein Profile, continued from p. 17)*

One group I’m working with is doing its appeals in Spanish and English. Even though a lot of the Latinos they’re appealing to don’t speak Spanish, their response is “Oh, this group is welcoming.” Another group that serves Asian seniors uses little red return envelopes that look like the ones used for gifts on Chinese New Year. Little touches like that show that you have at least a vague sense of the culture. It means something to folks.

**Connection:** *Why did you choose to title your latest book, Fundraising in Times of Crisis?*

**Klein:** I think this is the singularly most hostile environment for nonprofits that’s existed in my time in the field—over 25 years now. It’s the convergence of the war in Iraq, the war on terrorism and a very difficult and uncertain economy along with massive government cutbacks. CASA programs—and all nonprofit programs across the board—are being asked to do more and more with less and less. I wrote my book two years ago thinking that this was the worst time and it was just a question of how people would get through it until better times arrive. But now it’s looking like a chronic situation. Many groups don’t know what to do or where to turn. But there is certainly still hope for nonprofit organizations that have a mission as compelling as CASA’s.

**Connection:** *What’s your response when a program director from a small CASA program says “But I don’t know anyone with money?” or “It’s too hard to ask.” or “I’m a one-person shop—how do I find the time?”*

**Klein:** I have sympathy for their situation. Maybe you don’t know anyone who has \$5,000, but you have to know somebody who has \$50. And every person who gives money knows someone else who gives money.

For an executive director to say that they don’t want to ask for donations—that’s like saying “I don’t like to be in meetings!” That’s your privilege, but can you really be an ED if that’s your attitude? Now at the same time, that person cannot do all the asking. That’s what you have a board for. And there’s a need to gently move people off the board who don’t want to help in this way. I think nonprofits in general need to be a little stricter in this regard.

Another idea is to carve out a little bit of time every day. A friend of mine says he makes what he calls the “three calls of terror” every morning because he hates fundraising. So from 9:00 to 9:30 he does something related to fundraising—a half an hour every day and then maybe a couple of hours on Friday. You just schedule it, like exercise or anything else that’s important but not necessarily fun.

I think if someone had said to us 12 years ago or however long we’ve had email—“someday you’re going to have this communication medium and you’re going to spend two hours a day on it”—we all would have said “That’s absurd! Where are we going to get that kind of time?” But the reality is that we figured out where. It’s a question of discipline and priority. And often in the



*Klein confers with National CASA Program Specialist José Sahagún.*

one-person shop, the one person focuses on responding to whatever’s right in their face at the moment. The priorities are all about what’s “urgent” instead of what’s necessarily important for the organization.

**Connection:** *Do you have any other message or thoughts for CASA/GAL volunteers and staff?*

**Klein:** This is a great program. No one is against the mission of helping children. It’s successful and has been so since 1977. Donors want a place to give that they can trust the money is being used well, where there’s not a lot of waste and the staff isn’t overpaid. For all the questions that are being asked out there, CASA answers them very well. I think it’s a matter of going out and putting yourself in front of people and showing them what a good deal you have to offer. Remember that people are going to give away their money. They’re either going to give it to you or to someone else. You might as well ask for it and put it to use helping abused and neglected children.

# Celebrations Light Hope Throughout the Country

During April, CASA/GAL programs from around the country celebrated Light of Hope, an annual event aimed at focusing public attention on children suffering from abuse and neglect. These events attract new volunteers, honor existing ones and draw supporters to CASA's goal of offering all children a safe and permanent home. While traditional candle-lit vigils were held in many cities, many programs added unique details to create memorable and moving local events.

Programs hosting events often invite local leaders and elected officials to participate (see sidebar). More than 130 **Arkansas CASA** volunteers and staff from around the state gathered in Little Rock to recognize Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month while Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee proclaimed Court Appointed Special Advocate Day.

CASA programs often use Light of Hope events to partner with community groups to raise awareness of issues surrounding child abuse and neglect. In an event designed to recognize all volunteers who spend time helping crime victims, **Seward County CASA, NE**, invited four abuse survivors to address volunteers and community members at the Light of Hope Dinner and Candlelight Vigil sponsored with other local organizations. Survivors told their stories of abuse and the way volunteers had given them a light of hope. The **2nd Judicial District CASA Program—Story, Marshall & Hardin County, IA**, joined forces with the Iowa State University Kappa Alpha Theta chapter. Theta members created and sold buttons reading "A Child Waits..." with the outline of a child's hand against a dark background. At the Light of Hope event, ISU intern Emily Fries spoke of her CASA work and Father Everett Hemann of St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church spoke



*(Left to right): GAL Linda Finley, CASA Supervisor Yvette Lebbly, Richland County CASA Executive Director Paige Jones, PR Officer Sherri Scharf, Hand Middle School Art Teacher Sharlyn Turlington and Volunteer Coordinator Heidi Vaughn.*

on behalf of the child victims. As a powerful backdrop, Kappa Alpha Theta put up a clothesline with children's pink and blue T-shirts and the name of each child victim who died this last year.

After 38 lamps and shades were donated by local retailers, quick-thinking **Richland County CASA, SC**, partnered with Hand Middle School, to utilize the donation in an innovative way. Guided by art teacher Sharlyn Turlington, 7th-grade student artists designed lampshades exclusively for CASA's Light of Hope event. During the school district's annual art show, the student artists held their lit lamps in a moment of silence to recognize the plight of Richland County's abused and neglected children. Local CBS affiliate WLTX aired the event during its evening newscasts. After the ceremony, the lamps were sold and the proceeds went toward recruiting and training new volunteer advocates.

No matter how events are carried out in communities around the country, one thing remains: Light of Hope events draw community members together to pause and reflect on the important work being done by volunteer CASA and GAL programs and the need for communities to continue taking action on behalf of abused and neglected children.

## Light of Hope Events from Around the Country

**Coos County CASA, OR** worked closely with the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians to hold a vigil on the Coos Bay Boardwalk. Miss Oregon, Brook Roberts, was one of the featured speakers.

Carrying a torch, Saline County Circuit Judge Gary Arnold, who was instrumental in establishing **Saline County CASA, AR** led participants to the candle-lighting ceremony.

**CASA of Kern County, CA** promoted a candlelight vigil at the Marketplace Grand Fountain in Bakersfield, CA.

**CASA for Children of San Luis Obispo County, CA**, held their event in downtown San Luis Obispo during Kids Night at Farmers Market.

Participants attending the **Alcovy CASA Program, GA**, supported a proclamation declaring Child Abuse Prevention and Awareness Month; the proclamation was later presented to Juvenile Court Judge Billy Waters in honor of his work with abused and neglected children.

**CASA Jefferson, Harvey, LA**, sponsored the third Light of Hope on April 12th to raise awareness in the Jefferson Parish Community.

New volunteers were sworn in at the annual ceremony hosted by **Cumberland County CASA, PA** followed by a candle-lighting ceremony and the raising of a Child Welfare League of America memorial flag, which represents children who died in abusive homes.

**Monroe CASA, NY** held a service at noon at a downtown Rochester church to attract employees during their lunch hour. Local media covered the event featuring remarks from Mike Green, Monroe County district attorney and the Honorable Raymond E. Cornelius, supervising judge for Family Court.



## Resources for FOSTER YOUTH

### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning (LGBTQ) Youth

Approximately 5-10% of the general population is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender—or questioning whether they might fall into one of these categories (LGBTQ). LGBTQ adolescents make up an even higher, disproportionate share of the foster care pool. Leading professional organizations have long affirmed homosexuality is not a mental or physical disorder, and it has no “cure.” It is a core part of a gay person’s identity, just as a heterosexual orientation is for a heterosexual person (source: Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund).

Being transgendered is not the same as being gay, lesbian or bisexual. “Transgender” is a term for individuals whose appearance, characteristics or sense of their own gender identity differ from traditional sex stereotypes, regardless of the individual’s sexual orientation.

Because of the stigma and social pressures they face, LGBTQ youth are at higher risk for violence, homelessness, pregnancy and suicide. The following organizations, websites and publications can be helpful to LGBTQ youth in foster care:

#### **American Psychological Association (apa.org)**

Follow this link to the new APA Briefing Sheet on Same-Sex Families and Relationships ([apa.org/ppo/issues/lgbfamilybrf604.html](http://apa.org/ppo/issues/lgbfamilybrf604.html)).

#### **Child Welfare League of America (cwla.org)**

CWLA has teamed up with the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund to promote awareness of LGBTQ issues, to moni-

tor public policy and to develop support systems and networks for LGBTQ youth in transition ([cwla.org/programs/culture/glbqtq.htm](http://cwla.org/programs/culture/glbqtq.htm)).

#### **Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund (lambdalegal.org)**

LLDEF is a civil rights organization advocating for the lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual community. Lambda’s website provides information regarding the current legal environment affecting LGBTQ people, including foster youth.



Lambda also serves as a legal resource for youth to learn about their rights and how to be safe within their community. The Foster Care Helpline, a service of Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, answers questions about LGBTQ-related discrimination or abuse. The line is staffed Monday-Friday, 6:00 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (Pacific Time), but callers may leave messages 24 hours a day at (866) LGB-Teen (542-8336), ext. 350.

LLDEF publications include:

*Youth In The Margins: A Report on the Unmet Needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Adolescents in Foster Care*

For a free online copy of this report, and to download Lambda’s poster affirming the rights of LGBTQ youth in foster care, visit [lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/documents/record?record=899](http://lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/documents/record?record=899). To obtain hard copies, email [lambdalegal@lambdalegal.org](mailto:lambdalegal@lambdalegal.org) or call (212) 809-8585.

*Getting Down to Basics About Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (“LGBT”) Youth in Foster Care*

This fact sheet is aimed primarily at adults working with LGBTQ youth in foster care, covering LGBTQ facts, ways to support youth and definitions of terms ([lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/resources.html?record=1027](http://lambdalegal.org/cgi-bin/iowa/news/resources.html?record=1027)).

#### **National Center for Lesbian Rights (nclrights.org)**

Multiple sites and information pages provide legal and educational resources for LGBTQ foster youth as well as opportunities to learn their rights and how to fight for them.

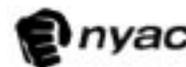
#### **National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (ncjfcj.org)**

The NCJFCJ provides a web page with links to LGBTQ programs and information ([http://training.ncjfcj.org/gay\\_lesbian\\_youth.htm](http://training.ncjfcj.org/gay_lesbian_youth.htm)).

#### **National Runaway Switchboard (nrscrisisline.org)**

This hotline caters to LGBTQ youth in crisis. Phone (800) 621-4000 or obtain a brochure at [nrscrisisline.org/litdownload.asp?REF=35](http://nrscrisisline.org/litdownload.asp?REF=35).

#### **National Youth Advocacy Coalition (nyacyouth.org)**



NYAC is a social justice organization that advocates for and with young people who are LGBTQ in an effort to end discrimination against these youth and to ensure their physical and emotional well-being. Though this organization is not specifically geared towards foster

*(continued on next page)*

## CASA Served Youth Returns to Share Military Success

It was the story of success built out of a disrupted, deprived childhood; the story of how a child was bounced from so many foster homes and social workers that she lost count during the nine years she spent in the system before aging out. But at age 12, Laura Nunes was assigned CASA volunteer, Sally Payne. It changed everything. According to Nunes, Payne became a stable influence in her life, helped make her the person she is today and helped her be a better friend to people in her life: “She taught me how to listen.”

Marine Corporal Nunes recently returned from her second tour with Operation Iraqi Freedom where she was part of

the explosive dismantling unit. Nunes recently stood proud in her dress blues addressing participants at the Light of Hope Dinner benefiting CASA of Santa Barbara County, CA.

Nunes spoke of the importance of having caring people in the lives of the children CASA serves; she stressed the importance of her education and choosing the right friends as a teen as other keys to her success.



Marine Corporal Laura Nunes and her former CASA volunteer, Sally Payne.

*(Resources for Foster Youth, continued)*

youth, NYAC can be a valuable resource for other information such as health care and legal help.

### Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (pflag.org)



PFLAG is dedicated to the equality of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons. Their website is a good resource for researching options for LGBTQ foster parenting or adoption. PFLAG also provides information on and links to adoption and foster care laws that affect LGBTQ parents and youth ([pflag.org/index.php?id=268](http://pflag.org/index.php?id=268)).

### The Safe Schools Coalition ([safeschoolscoalition.org](http://safeschoolscoalition.org))

Based in Washington state, this organization seeks to develop safe school environments for lesbian, gay and transgender youth. The following link provides information for LGBTQ foster youth seeking shelter or legal help nationwide ([safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-homeless.html](http://safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-homeless.html)).

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

### Effort Underway to Find and Support Former Foster Youth Now in Military

The National Foster Care Coalition and the United Service Organizations (USO) have partnered to identify former foster youth serving in the military in Iraq and Afghanistan. Over the course of the year, the two organizations will implement a program providing letters and care packages to soldiers who may not have family or other people to offer support to them while they are away. To volunteer to participate in the letter writing campaign and care package collection, visit [natl-fostercare.org](http://natl-fostercare.org) and complete an online form. If you know a former foster youth on active duty in the military who might benefit from the program, call (202) 454-5608 or email [nfcc@connectforkids.org](mailto:nfcc@connectforkids.org).



## Association NEWS:

National Association of Counties Approves Resolution  
Endorsing Expansion of CASA/GAL Volunteer Programs

CASA PSA Wins National Award

Oprah Magazine Features CASA PSA

National CASA Board Member Pens Memoir



Pictured from right to left: Brie Allio, CBS senior editor; Jim Clune, National CASA chief communications officer; Matthew Margo, CBS vice president of Program Practices (holding award) and Josie Chiles, CBS editor.

### National Association of Counties Approves Resolution Endorsing Expansion of CASA/GAL volunteer Programs

On March 7, 2005, the National Association of Counties (NACo) board of directors adopted a resolution that states: the “National Association of Counties supports a 5-year reauthorization of the CASA program under the Violence Against Women Act at a level of \$24 million.” The NACo resolution further supports annual appropriations increases until the program reaches its fully authorized level.



The National CASA Association is deeply honored that the National Association of Counties has stepped up to support the CASA cause in such a powerful and valuable manner and particularly appreciative that Bill Hansell, NACo president-elect, has chosen National CASA as his Presidential Initiative during his term (beginning in July 2005 and extending for one year). As president of NACo, Hansell has committed to working with National CASA to raise awareness among county officials about the CASA cause in order to build support for local CASA programs and grow the CASA and GAL volunteer base.

NACo President-elect Hansell appeared at the National CASA annual conference in April and has invited representatives of National CASA to the annual NACo conference this July. Additional planned collaborations between National CASA and NACo include a promotional video that communicates to county officials and other local audiences the importance of the CASA program. National CASA will prepare a “Call to Action” packet of materials about the CASA program that NACo will distribute to relevant NACo committees and caucuses and the chief elected official in each NACo member county.

The National Association of Counties is the only national organization that represents county governments in the US. NACo’s membership totals more than 2,000 counties, representing over 80% of the nation’s population. The association acts as a liaison with other levels of government, works to improve public understanding of counties, serves as a national advocate for counties and provides them with resources to help them find innovative methods to meet the challenges they face. NACo is involved in a number of special projects that deal with such issues as sustainable communities, volunteerism and deterrence of methamphetamine production.

### CASA PSA Wins National Award

The Holmes Group awarded the National CASA Association a 2004 SABRE award for best public relations TV PSA, for the CBS Cares TV PSA featuring Simon Baker. The Holmes Group SABRE Award acknowledges superior achievement in branding and reputation and demonstrates the highest standards in innovation, technology and effectiveness.

Jim Clune, National CASA chief communications officer, presented the award to CBS, thanking them for their support of CASA by co-producing and generously airing the CBS Cares Simon Baker spot. CBS network airings of the Simon Baker TV PSA reached over 121 million viewers during 2004.

### Oprah Magazine Features CASA PSA

The June 2005 edition of *O, The Oprah Magazine*, features a full-color National CASA ad on page 184. The ad was placed at no cost to National CASA. The new National CASA print campaign is scheduled to appear in additional national magazines in the next six months including *In Style*, *People* and *Martha Stewart Living*.



(continued on page 24)

# Public Policy UPDATE



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

## **Congressional Budget Resolution Requires Reductions in Entitlement and Discretionary Spending Programs**

On April 28, Congress passed an FY 2006 budget plan that sets federal spending levels for the coming fiscal year. The budget resolution also includes directions for Congress to pass legislation to reduce federal spending for entitlement programs by \$35 billion and to cut taxes by more than \$100 billion. The budget resolution specifically directs the Senate Finance Committee to cut \$10 billion in mandatory or entitlement spending. Although it is widely assumed that all \$10 billion will come from Medicaid, the Finance Committee can make its own decisions about what programs to cut to achieve the \$10 billion in savings. That could mean other programs under the Finance Committee's jurisdiction are also vulnerable, such as Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance.

At the same time, because of the way committee jurisdiction is set up, the House Commerce Committee, which has jurisdiction over Medicaid funding in the House, has been directed to cut \$14 billion from programs under its authority. The House Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over Title IV-E programs, as well as TANF, Child Care, SSBG and several other programs, must cut funding by \$1 billion. Substantial cuts have also been assigned to other committees.

Once the respective committees pass legislation that incorporates their recommendations about program changes that result in reduced federal spending, all recommendations will be combined into one omnibus reconciliation bill for consideration.

By September 21, some of the same committees must also pass legislation that cuts taxes by \$70 billion. The budget resolution actually calls on Congress to pass \$106 billion in tax cuts, but only \$70 billion in tax cuts will be passed as part of the fast-track legislative process that reconciliation provides.

## **Budget Resolution Will Force Additional Discretionary Spending Cuts**

The budget resolution also reduces FY 2006 federal spending by \$23 billion for nonentitlement, or discretionary, programs. Unlike entitlements and other mandatory funding programs, the yearly funding provided by Congress for these programs is not automatically tied to need or the eligible population. Rather, funding for these programs depends on annual congressional spending decisions.

Congress will make these annual funding decisions through the appropriations process currently underway. Congress will have a challenging appropriations process this year. The Senate is required to act on House legislation but frequently acts at the same time as the House.

*Adapted from Children's Monitor Online, Vol. 18, Issue 18, an electronic publication of The Child Welfare League of America*

## **58 House Members Sign Letter of Support to Expand the CASA/GAL Program**

Representatives Dennis Cardoza (D-CA) and Pat Tiberi (R-OH) circulated a letter among Members of the House of Representatives in April urging House appropriators to recommend \$17 million in funding for the CASA program. In all, 58 Members signed on to the letter expressing their support for expansion of CASA/volunteer GAL programs. We are very grateful to Representatives Cardoza and Tiberi, and their staff, for leading this effort as well as to all Members who joined in voicing their support.

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Science, Justice and Judiciary marked up the appropriations bill the week of May 23.

## **Revision of the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children Stalls**

What had been envisioned as a fast track to significantly revise and improve the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) has been delayed in an effort to allow further discussion and consensus among State Compact Administrators and agencies involved in implementing the compact. The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), which serves as secretariat for the compact, had originally planned for a revised compact to be ap-

*(continued on page 24)*

(Public Policy, continued from page 23)

proved by the Association of Administrators of the ICPC at its meeting this spring.

In July 2004, APHSA assembled a development and drafting team consisting of 17 representatives of state, local and national stakeholders to rewrite the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children. The draft revision, completed by the drafting team in December 2004, was intended to provide a better framework for ensuring timely placement of children across state lines, the suitability of prospective placements and the provision of needed support services. The National CASA Association was a member of the drafting team, and through two comprehensive surveys of the CASA/GAL network was able to provide substantive, significant input from volunteers and staff on the proposed revisions. Several key provisions of the revision are still being debated within the Association of Administrators of the ICPC.

National CASA will continue to work with other national organizations to protect children and to facilitate timely placements of children across state lines.

Contact M. Carmela Welte (Carmela@nationalcasa.org) with questions or to request additional information.

Timely public policy information is also available from the National CASA Association via email. To subscribe directly, send an email request to staff@nationalcasa.org and enter "Public Policy Update" in the subject line.

### National CASA 2005 Legislative Agenda

In this legislative session, the National CASA Association encourages Congress to:

1. Fund the CASA program at \$17 million for FY 2006.
2. Reauthorize CASA in the Victims of Child Abuse Act/Violence Against Women Act at \$24 million through FY 2010. Include authorization for CASA/GAL programs to request criminal background checks for prospective volunteers from the FBI National Crime Information Center.
3. Provide support to state child welfare and alcohol and drug treatment agencies to form partnerships to address treatment needs of families in the child welfare system.
4. Extend Title IV-E reimbursement of foster care and adoption services to Native American children and their families. Provide funding for GAL advocacy for children in tribal court dependency proceedings.
5. Provide funding to states to provide mental health services to seriously emotionally disturbed children.
6. Allow states to use federal funds to subsidize guardianship payments to relative caregivers so that the children no longer need to remain in foster care. Fund states to link grandparents and other relatives to services and supports they need to raise relative children.
7. Preserve federal foster care maintenance and adoption assistance as an entitlement (Title IV-E) to reimburse states for services.

(Association News, continued from page 22)

### National CASA Board Member Pens Memoir

National CASA board member Shane Salter recently released his biography, *Trouble Don't Last Always—When a Child Becomes a 4-Year-old Parent*. In this moving story of a person who overcame so much and has asked for nothing in return, Salter tells how he was born to a teenage mother whose hopes and dreams for her son were frustrated by her own drug addiction. Then, at age four, he began parenting his younger brother when their mother walked out on them, until they were found by a police officer and placed in the first of many foster homes. With all odds against him, he survived and emerged more determined than ever to succeed. Indeed, when the system wrote him off, could they have thought that someday this baby boy would walk among mayors and presidents? Salter served as chief of staff for Children, Youth, Families and Elders in the office of Washington, DC's Mayor Anthony Williams. Previously, he was director of Foundation Giving at the Freddie Mac Foundation, national director of the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities and deputy executive director and chief operating officer at For Love of Children. Most recently, Salter founded CASA for Children of DC with members of the community and Leadership Washington, Inc.

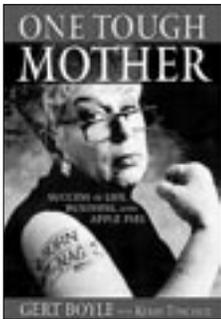




## Pointers from PROGRAMS

### Book Sale Benefits OR Program CASA for Children Serving Multnomah and Washington Counties, Portland, OR

Proceeds from the sale of *One Tough Mother* will benefit CASA for Children in Oregon. In *One Tough Mother*, Gert Boyle offers insights into succeeding in business and in life. She documents her remarkable



journey from childhood in Nazi Germany to fame and fortune in America. Her story is also about individuals who face circumstances beyond their control. As Mary Jaeger, direc-

tor of CASA for Children said, "She has a special affinity with the underprivileged, especially kids who are victims through no fault of their own." When a heart attack claimed Boyle's husband in 1970, the housewife and mother of three found herself at the helm of Columbia Sportswear, a small and financially struggling outerwear manufacturer in Portland. With no business experience, Boyle was faced with the challenge of running Columbia, founded in 1937 by her father, an immigrant who fled Hitler's Germany. Though many expected the company to fail, she and her son Tim instead flourished: Columbia Sportswear now has more than 2,000 employees with annual sales approaching one billion dollars. Boyle has also been a generous contributor to CASA for Children; for the past three years she offered a private dinner for auction

and now proceeds from the sale of her new book. Books can be purchased at [casahelpskids.org](http://casahelpskids.org). Visit Events/Fundraisers and click "*One Tough Mother*."

### CASA & Country 4 Kids Eastern Montana CASA/GAL, Inc., Hardin, MT

Eastern Montana CASA/GAL recently presented CASA & Country 4 Kids at the Bojangles Convention Center in Miles City, where performers from Nashville, Tennessee opened the evening's entertainment and inspired listeners to take to the floor. Country musician Patricia Ryan was joined by Keith Cochran, Barbara Fairchild, Moore & Moore, Pirates of the Mississippi and the Dakota Country Band. Over 400 guests attended, raising \$24,000. Among the items donated for the auction held the same evening were two original drawings of the legendary Minnie Pearl by famed artist Bill Rains, who has been commissioned by Grand Ole Opry to portray many of its members.

### "A Few Good Men" Recruit More Volunteers Richland County CASA, Columbia, SC

It started with a brainstorming breakfast of ten dedicated male CASA volunteers that ended with a challenge from the group's leader: bring in ten more. Richland County CASA's executive director, Paige Jones, promised these "good men" that she would create the first-ever male-only volunteer guardian ad litem training course if the group made good on their challenge: "What we learned from this group of men is that using an interactive approach that

allows current volunteers to teach works better than a straight textbook approach taught by our staff," she said. The all-male training course, where all chapters from the National CASA curriculum were covered, began with a welcome from male community leaders who reinforced the importance of having men advocate for their community's abused children. All trainers were carefully matched to each session depending on their individual areas of expertise. The new volunteers were sworn in by Richland County Family Court Judge Leslie Riddle who noted, "It's wonderful to see more men stepping up to the plate." The recent graduates, many of whom are community leaders and current or former



Judge Leslie Riddle and the new volunteers serving Richland County CASA.

CEOs, represent a 30% increase in male volunteers for the program.

### A Firefighter's Picnic Capital Area CASA Association, Baton Rouge, LA

More than 170 CASA children, CASA volunteers and special guests came to Capital Area CASA Association's annual picnic. The picnic included carnival games, a spacewalk,

*(continued on page 26)*



(From right to left): CASA volunteer and picnic host Roy Hebert, District Six Fire Protection District Chief Joel Hancock and firefighter Dusty Breaux.

(Pointers from Programs, continued from p. 25)

ice cream, a snow party and picnic fare. Special chefs for the day were District Six Fire Protection District Chief Joel Hancock and firefighter Dusty Breaux. Teens kept busy at a Teen Tent while younger children enjoyed crafts and games led by Kappa Alpha Theta members.

**Glamour Gowns Project**  
**Friends of Child Advocates, Los Angeles, CA**

A donor's idea to give foster girls a chance at dressing up is helping to fulfill

the "Cinderella dreams" of foster girls and grabbing community attention as well. During the fourth Glamour Gowns Project for the Friends of Child Advocates, over 1,000 mostly new dresses were made available by local high schools, the general public and bridal shops and donated to foster girls looking for prom attire. Nearly 300 foster girls came and were escorted through the collection by volunteer Kappa Alpha Theta members who served as "personal shoppers." Both CASA and church volunteers also helped out as well as KTLA TV Morning News anchor Michaela Pereira. Nancy Davidson, executive director of Friends of Child Advocates Los Angeles said, "The glamour gowns project helps us reach out to high school girls and help one of their dreams come true—a beautiful dress to wear to their prom. The changes that take place in these girls from the time they walk in the door until they leave with their beautiful dress, are worth any effort.



A Kappa Alpha Theta member from the University of Southern California volunteers to help the Glamour Gowns Project.

The event continues to grow every year because it touches everyone's heart, from those who collect and donate dresses, to those who serve as personal shoppers at the event, to the girls themselves."

## Awards

Barbara Buddendeck, program director of Montgomery County CASA, OH received the Dayton Bar Association Liberty Bell Award at Courthouse Square. The Association presents this prestigious award annually to a citizen who has rendered outstanding service to the community. According to the citation, Buddendeck has dedicated herself "to working with others within the court system, the child welfare system, the network of social service organizations and others. Her sense of community and willingness to work diligently and collaboratively to improve the lives of our children has no boundary." The award was given on Law Day USA, established in 1958 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower to "strengthen our great heritage of liberty, justice, and equality under law."



Barbara Buddendeck and husband Paul after she received the Liberty Bell Award.

## Chief Justice Honored for Foster Care Work

The Edmund D. Edelman Children's Court in Los Angeles County honored the Hon. Ronald M. George, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California, for his leadership in improving the lives of foster children in a ceremony marking National Foster Care Month in May. (See the back cover for a photo of Chief Justice George presenting an award to artist Pedro Martinez.)



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The National CASA Association gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those who have contributed to the Association between December 1, 2004 and May 31, 2005.

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For more information on the monthly giving program, contact D'Nika Jackson at [dnika@nationalcasa.org](mailto:dnika@nationalcasa.org) or (800) 628-3233, Ext. 263.



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## Closing words

from

# JUDGE HATCHETT

by Judge Glenda Hatchett

For just a moment, I want to have you simply close your eyes and imagine that you are standing center court of your favorite NBA basketball arena, whether it's the Staples Center in LA, or Madison Square Garden in New York. Imagine you are standing in that arena all alone at center court and every one of the 20,000 seats, more or less, is empty. Now, I want you to imagine you've opened your eyes and every single seat in that arena is filled with a child. Now imagine 40 sports arenas with every seat filled by a child. That will give you an idea of how many children are currently in the foster care system right now in America—over 1/2 million children; not statistics, not numbers on paper—but children. And the thing is, we don't have 40 NBA franchises in America. We don't even have 40 professional basketball arenas in America, but we have enough children to fill 40 of them to capacity.

I want to share with you a prescription for hope for all these children. We can make a difference in children's lives—I've seen it over and over. And the difference we make can live on beyond our lifetime.

I am told that Walt Disney was very fond of paying tribute to a person, the ultimate tribute, by saying that person could dream beyond his or her lifetime. Think about that—the ability to dream beyond

your lifetime. When Walt Disney talked about dreaming beyond your lifetime, I believe he was talking to each of us.

When you pick up a child's case file, you have decided to touch a child's heart. By doing so, you are going to change his or her life forever. But it's not just this one child that you are working and advocating for; you are also helping to provide a wonderful head start on the lives of that child's children, and their children and their children's children's lives. When you change

and a lot of hurt and pain. It is so much suffering, and so I've come to tell you: "Be ye not discouraged." This work is hard, but I believe if you're willing to do what you can for these children, the rewards will be paid for generations that you can't even begin to imagine. Now if you're waiting for a ticker tape parade with the mayor of your town or the governor, if you're waiting for some big proclamation or celebration—it's not going to happen. But let me tell you how the thanks is going to

come: it's going to come when the desperate crying of that one child stops and it's replaced first by a silence, and then the silence is broken by the laughter and joy of a child.

So be ye not discouraged. Remember a line from an old song my grandmother loved: "walk together with the children, and don't you be weary. Run on, and see what the end will be."

*The Honorable Glenda A. Hatchett is a nationally recognized authority on juvenile issues and a passionate spokesperson for the National*

*CASA Association. While perhaps best known by the public because of her award-winning, nationally syndicated television series Judge Hatchett and recent book Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say!, Judge Hatchett has also gained deep respect from her peers. She is the former Chief Presiding Judge of the Fulton County Juvenile Court in Atlanta. Among her numerous awards are the NAACP Thurgood Marshall Award and Emory University's School of Law Outstanding Alumni of the Year Award.*



Judge Glenda Hatchett with former foster youths Christin (left) and Meagan Stegall (right).

the life of a child, you are also changing the lives of children for generations way beyond our lifetime. I like to think of the work of CASA volunteers as prenatal care for our future generations.

We take these children where we find them, and we never know the burdens that these children bring to the lives they find in foster care. But there are such deep stories about how they got there to begin with,

**“Too many people have so many stereotypes about foster children... What tonight shows is that these children, and their feelings and dreams, are real and human.”**

*– Judge Scott Bernstein, attending the Miami event*



*National CASA Association CEO Michael Piraino and youth artist Hope Morrison. (Photo courtesy of Richard Cervantes, Los Angeles DCFS).*



*Miguel & Xavier, artists in collaboration at the Miami art event.*

**“This art project is an example of how we can produce awareness projects that benefit both our CASA programs and the children we serve.”**

*– Bryan Borys, executive director of CASA of Los Angeles*

## Portraits of Hope Raise Awareness and Support for Foster Youth Artists

In April, the National CASA Association partnered with CASA of Los Angeles and Miami Voices for Children to pilot an innovative awareness concept around foster children and art. Ten foster care youth, ages 12-18, were invited in each city to participate in special workshops hosted by prominent local artists Judy Baca, artistic director and cofounder of the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in Los Angeles, and Xavier Cortada in Miami.

The finished artwork was celebrated at receptions and art auctions at Tamayo Restaurant in Los Angeles and the Water Colors art gallery in Miami. Over \$4,000 was raised for the participating artists. In total, media covering the two art projects reached over 4 million potential volunteers in Miami and southern California.

**“It’s incredibly inspiring to see each child produce an art piece that reflects their self-identity and their hopes for the future.”**

*– Nestor Rodriguez, executive director of Voices for Children Foundation, fundraising arm of Miami’s 11th Judicial Circuit Guardian Ad Litem Program*



*Youth artist Pedro Martinez and Judy Baca. (Photo courtesy of Richard Cervantes, Los Angeles DCFS).*



*Miami art reception.*



*California's Supreme Court Chief Justice Ronald M. George presents an award to Pedro Martinez, whose painting was a part of the National CASA Association "Where Have I Been? Where am I Going?" art project carried out in collaboration with the Los Angeles Foster Care Awareness Campaign. (Photo by Lee McLaren, Superior Court of Los Angeles County)*

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