

The Advocate



Why CASA?



Patti Kollman CASA Volunteer

After a personal experience in my own life, I heard about the CASA Program. I remember thinking that being an advocate would be something I'd like to do, but being a mother of four children kept me very busy. When they were young they needed me 24/7. Their lives and various activities filled my schedule. When they became old enough not to need me quite as much, I wanted to use my experiences and love of children to help others.

One day, I was searching on the internet for volunteer opportunities. After submitting my interests, suggestions were given. CASA was one of them. I immediately thought NOW IS THE TIME. When I went to the CASA Office, I was so excited! During training I actually remember thinking it was so good to finally be there, doing something I had wanted to do for such a long time.

During the swearing in ceremony, when the Judge handed me my certificate, I wanted to scream, "Hooray, I did it!" It was a moment I will always remember.

When I received my first child's case file, I couldn't wait to get started. Yes I was nervous, but I was also anxious to meet the family, and especially the child I would speak for. Not knowing what to expect, I planned questions and hoped I would be able to make everyone comfortable as they talked to me. To my surprise, it did not take much time for everyone to open up. I soon realized that preparation is helpful, but just listening is the key. Someone once told me there is a reason we have one mouth and two ears. It means we are to listen twice as much as we are to speak. Implementing this challenging practice has been a great asset to me as a CASA and in my own life.

The wonderful children I have been blessed to meet have been the greatest joy. Each child has shown such great strength and endurance. The children I have advocated for have ranged in age from infant to teenager.

Each are a challenge (and I love a good challenge), but with time they either show me, tell me, or by their interactions with others express their feelings and what they want and desire.

I love my own family but now I am grateful more than ever for them. Becoming a CASA has highlighted my own weaknesses and given me the gift of personal growth. It has helped me to see the strengths in others and with perseverance and patience, many positive things can happen. When CASA gives encouragement to the children and their families, I have seen firsthand that it really does help.

I believe that families are the foundation of our world. CASA serves children who lack that "foundation". They need to know someone really does care. Just playing a board game, listening to them read, playing legos or being "silly" brightens their day (and mine). Seeing them so happy when you walk in the door for a visit or when pulling your arm to follow them to their room to see something is like experiencing Christmas morning more than one day a year. Our precious children need to experience happiness through laughter and hugs. They need positive, supportive and caring people in their lives. Being a CASA, you can be that person.

The families I have met and the professionals I have worked with have taught me so much. I am grateful everyday for the opportunity I have had being a CASA. It has truly been a life changing experience for me. I hope that by speaking up for one child at a time, I may contribute to making their day happier, their life safer and let them know that they DO matter in this great big world.

LOOK INSIDE!



**CASA Superhero Run
a Huge Success!!**

I believe the best service to the child is the service closest to the child, and children who are victims of neglect, abuse, or abandonment must not also be victims of bureaucracy. They deserve our devoted attention, not our divided attention. **Kenny Guinn, Governor**

Welcome Our Newest Child Advocates

FALL CLASS: Lisa Howell, Sherri Bowen, Joanne Sinnenberg, Paula Stanley, Judy Beitzel, Barbara Armstrong, Latrice Gregory, Molly Shurm, Wendy Berkowitz, Gail Browne, Jack Harsh, Shery Stichter, Cheryl Moses, Sharon Banks, Dorrie Smith, Beverly Church, Ernestine White, Farrah Pinckney, Sarah Wright, Byron Porcher, Vicki Burton, Janet Weaver, Willie Charles, Milind Pendse
SPRING CLASS: Tammy Smith, Susan Partin, Melissa Grieshaber, Melanie Bailey, Marilyn Redd, Lori Turner, Laura Petrella, Kathy Froling, Jaci Seay, Harvey Gutkin, Don Martineau, Adam Beck, Brant Smith, Brady Crone, Betsy Beasley, Beth Harris, Amanda Nichols, Caitlin Kilcoin



Fall 2009 season ended with a "bang" as Henrico CASA graduated its biggest class of volunteers yet! On November 4, 2009, we graduated with a record breaking 26 CASA volunteers! The spring class, with 19 advocates, was sworn in on May 26, 2010. Our newest volunteers have backgrounds in mental health, mentoring, dentistry, technology, law, social work and real estate, just to name a few. Already equipped with a wealth of knowledge and experience, this new class is ready for action. Our graduates had this to say:



"Going to the classes and getting to know other people; listening and participating in what was being presented was informative, educational and fun. I realized how important it is to take myself out of the equation and focus solely on one person, the child. Now that I have been assigned a case, I hope I can do justice to a really dedicated group of people." ~ Sherry

"I am in the thick of my first case, and have been since I first received my call in early December. I am trying not to obsess over my duties but alas, I am doing just that. The details of the case have taken on an energy of their own and I am drawn into every facet with the urge to delve further. I am enjoying this experience, however and hope that in time my little boy will be granted the stability in his life that he so needs and deserves." ~ Barbara

"Just when you believe that you have received all the information, something else, a piece of new information comes along that can change the entire direction of the case. My advice? Be as flexible and adaptive as you can...someone is depending on you." ~ Jeff

Interested in advocating for children? Do you know someone that would be a great CASA? Now is the time! Henrico CASA will begin a new training season on September 13, 2010. The twelve sessions, presented by staff and area professionals, will be held Monday and Wednesday nights from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at the Henrico CASA office. Get the scoop on this fulfilling volunteer experience. You can contact Dayle Goldberg at 501-1675 for further information or you can also apply online at www.HenricoCASA.org. Speak up for a child!

Best Practice Changes at Local Departments of Social Services

by Kathy Dean, Volunteer Coordinator

For years there have been numerous initiatives coming from both the legislative and executive branches of state government intent on improving services to Virginia's children and families. First Lady Anne Holton's "For Keeps" initiative, along with the Commission on Youth, the State Executive Council, and the Hangar Commission, have been working diligently over the past few years to strengthen permanent family connections for children by transforming the way that services are delivered to them and their families. At the Governor's Conference on Children's Services Transformation, the Virginia Children's Services System Transformation team discussed in greater detail a comprehensive expansion plan to bring such services to every child in Virginia. The ultimate goal of the plan is to ensure that all children have a safe environment and lifelong connections to family.

"To be an effective advocate for a child, one must know the child, talk to the child and understand the issues that are of concern to that child."

The opening session of the Governor's Conference included a keynote address by the First Lady. As many are aware, Anne Holton has long been a champion of children and has focused much of her attention as First Lady on children's issues. Comments throughout focused on recent transformation successes. Such successes included the acquiring and local implementation of SafeMeasures, a web-based tool to improve local DSS performance management capacity; engaging the active collaboration of the Departments of Education, Juvenile Justice, and Behavioral Health and Developmental Studies; increasing the focus on collecting outcome data; and identifying the Family Engagement as a recommended model for aligning the strengths of children, family, community, staff, and providers in placement or placement prevention decisions. After the initial welcome and overview, the attendees could participate in one of several concurrent break-out sessions. Topics of the sessions included Advocacy Basics, Virginia Models of Family Engagement, and Kinship Care in Virginia.

Advocacy Basics reiterated what many CASAs already know: to be an effective advocate for a child, one must know the child, talk to the child and understand the issues that are of concern to that child. While this session dealt primarily with advocating to influence public attitudes and policy makers, the lessons learned are relevant to all types of advocacy, namely knowing your subject, developing relationships

with those in positions of authority, and having polite and courteous discussions of the issues basing your position on fact rather than belief.

Gwen Monroe, Frederick County DSS, and Bragail Williams-Brown, Richmond City DSS, along with others, discussed the Virginia Model of Family Engagement that Henrico will be implementing in full in the near future. For CASAs, the most significant tool to be added to all cases involving placement or a change in placement is the implementation of Team Decision Meetings. Such meetings will involve all players in a case, including the child, family members, providers, attorneys, and hopefully CASAs. Unlike past practices, the child will have significant input into who is invited to attend this meeting. It is hoped that by having all the players at the table at one time, a decision regarding placement can be reached thus shortening the process and making it more efficient and effective for all involved. Although Ms. Monroe and Ms. Williams-Brown spoke highly of this approach, questions about potential pitfalls, such as the sheer logistics of getting all parties together at one time, remain unanswered. It was suggested that each jurisdiction will have latitude to address pitfalls of implementation based upon what will work in that particular county.

Paul McWhinney, Virginia Department of Social Services and Mary Bissell of ChildFocus discussed the importance of kinship care in Virginia and the need to utilize relative placement in all cases where practicable. Mr. McWhinney and Ms. Bissell cited statistics demonstrating that placement with a relative has greater long-lasting benefits to a child than does placement in an unrelated family. Virginia does not utilize relative placement as often as it should and will be placing a greater emphasis on such care in the future. Recent changes in the law have made it easier for relatives to gain guardianship thereby making it easier for a grandparent, uncle or aunt to enroll a grandchild, niece or nephew in school or obtain medical care for him or her. Such changes are welcome but the lack of financial assistance to such relatives remains a concern.

The Governor's conference was both informative and enlightening. In 2010, all CASAs should be aware of the changes that are coming, particularly the Family Engagement Model and Team Decision Meetings. Hopefully, we will be invited to the meeting but if not, we must not be afraid to ask for a seat at the table.

Taking care of YOU!

Being a CASA volunteer is never an easy task. It is one of the most challenging and important volunteer jobs available. CASAs are asked to visit the child multiple times, make well thought out recommendations, and get their reports submitted in a timely manner. In this time when so many have economic difficulties and stress filled lives, it becomes even more difficult. Therefore, it is more important than ever that volunteers realize that they cannot do it all.

Both professionals and volunteers in the helping communities are at risk of suffering from "compassion fatigue," more commonly known as "burnout." Individuals come to this type of work because they have a strong desire to help those in need. In particular, they want to be a voice for a child who otherwise may not have one. They are passionate about what they do. They want to make it right and solve people's problems. They really care. The very reason that volunteers come to CASA can be their undoing. CASA work can evoke difficult emotions and at times can be isolating. It can be frustrating.

There are a number of things that you can do to take care of yourself:

- Get enough rest and exercise
- Maintain a good support system
- Call your supervisor when you are having challenges with your case, or to share when something is going well
- Set boundaries-nobody expects you to do it all
- Don't be afraid to say no to the little things while refocusing on the child
- Try not to worry about things you can't control
- Talk with other volunteers

A very important piece of advice for volunteers to remember is that if you don't take care of yourself, you will have a difficult time helping others.

Our Volunteers Make A Difference



By Carol Young, CASA Volunteer

In late 2007, I was assigned to my first CASA child. She was born prematurely at twenty-five weeks and was subsequently hospitalized for six months in the NICU. At birth, she tested positive for barbiturates and then suffered a grade four brain bleed. She was hydrocephalic and was diagnosed as neurologically impaired. In addition to a feeding tube, she had a brain shunt to drain fluids. Doctors indicated that she would spend her life in a wheelchair and be unable to learn.

My first meeting with this toddler and her foster mom was when she was to be examined by a pediatric ophthalmologist to determine if she was blind. Her foster mom asked me to hold her while she made a phone call. I did, but was terrified of dislodging her feeding tube. She was a loving little girl and I was immediately at ease. I knew right then I had made the right decision to volunteer with CASA.

Recently, I was privileged to attend the child's adoption ceremony. The progress this child has made is astounding. Her adoptive parents have provided the child with every opportunity to improve. With the assistance of the Department of Social Services, the new parents have located many available programs, thereby enabling these great strides and accomplishments.

She is in school and rides the school bus, is not deaf and wears glasses to correct her nearsightedness. She wears leg braces when she uses her turtle walker and can cover a full block and return home.

Her new dad told CASA that the original call for foster care came at 2:00am. He was told they had been unable to place the child they were offering. The child was blind, could not hear and was on a feeding tube. Dad responded with, "Bring her right away." When the child arrived, both the mom and dad took one look and fell in love with the child. The rest is history.

I cherish my involvement with CASA. The outcomes are worth all the time and miles I have invested to speak up for all children I serve.

By Dayle Goldberg, Program Manager

Those of us that are on staff at Henrico CASA are particularly cognizant of what volunteers mean to an organization. President Barack Obama apparently is aware of what volunteerism means to this country. Early in his first term, the president announced a service initiative "United We Serve." President Obama stated that he was "calling on all of you to make volunteerism and community service part of your daily life and the life of this nation. And when I say "all," I mean everyone – young and old, from every background, all across this country." I thought to myself, wow, our wonderful Henrico CASA volunteers are just like that!!

As Program Manager, I took the opportunity to write and thank the President for encouraging all Americans to become involved in volunteerism. I also explained to President Obama what CASA does and the enormous effort it takes by all of our volunteers to accomplish our mission. I detailed what is required of a CASA volunteer and how demanding it can be. I also shared how rewarding it is to know that the child's voice is always heard in court when that child has a CASA.

FUN FACTS: **Our volunteers are...**

- On average 48 years old
- 88% female
- 13% male
- 41% college graduates
- 44% employed full-time
- 11% retired

In the last fiscal year....

- 277 children were served by 121 CASA volunteers.
- 10,647 CASA volunteer hours were contributed with a value of \$218,583.
- 9,009 contacts were made with collaterals by CASA volunteers.

I believe the numbers reflected above tell the story of a group of

dedicated men and women who know there are abused and neglected children in our county. More importantly, these volunteers know the children need a seriously committed person to advocate for them. These same CASA volunteers also recognize that children caught in the middle of a custody battle, with allegations of abuse and neglect, need a responsible and caring person that may be the only consistent person in their life. It is frequently the CASA volunteer that offers guidance and hope to people who love their children, yet have made serious mistakes in their lives.



Do you recognize yourself in the descriptions of our CASA volunteers? I hope you do. I also hope you know how much you are appreciated by the grateful staff at Henrico CASA. We recognize everyday that we could not do it without you.

IN MEMORY OF **GEORGE PRESTON**

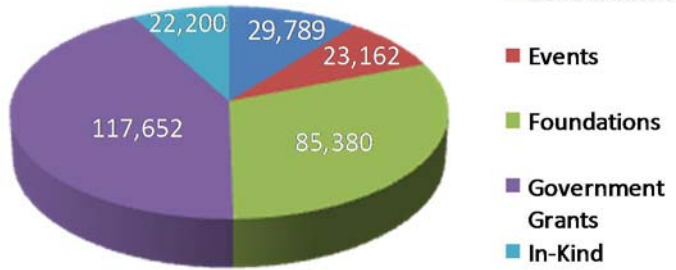
On November 28, 2009, CASA lost one of our veteran volunteers, George Preston. George had represented thirty-two children since becoming a volunteer on November 8, 2001. He was very passionate in his desire to provide a voice for children who otherwise would not have one. George had the ability to work with and gain the respect of both professionals and the families, but he never lost sight of the fact that his primary responsibility was to the child. His sound judgment and ability to help people reach a compromise in difficult situations helped make him an excellent CASA volunteer. He will be greatly missed.

~ If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else. ~ Booker T. Washington

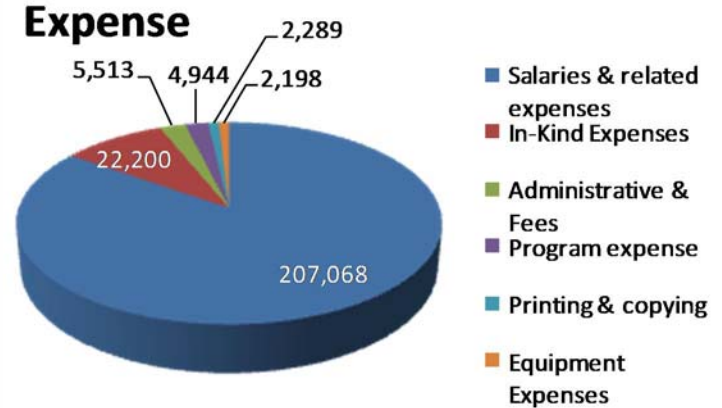
2009-2010 Annual Report

The Advocate

Income



Expense



CASA BY THE NUMBERS - MAKING SURE CHILDREN ARE SAFE 365 DAYS A YEAR

0%	Percent of children re-abused while assigned to CASA
2.1%	Number of children per 1000 who have been abused or neglected in Henrico County
2.5 years	Average length of time a CASA volunteer stays with the program
0-4 years	The age group of children with the highest rate of abuse and neglect and deaths
11.5 months	Average length of time a CASA is assigned to a case
12	Number of continuing education hours a CASA volunteer must complete yearly
16 years	Length of time Henrico CASA has been serving the community
34	Number of Virginia's children who died of abuse or neglect
35 hours	The length of training for a new CASA volunteer
37%	Children younger than 7 who were abused and neglected
71	Average number of volunteer case hours the CASA volunteer contributed
78	Average number of direct case contacts the CASA volunteer made
79%	Percent of CASA volunteers recommendations incorporated into court orders
88 minutes	Frequency of child abuse in Virginia
140	Number of CASA volunteer advocates
1,004	Approximate per child cost to provide CASA services
10,647	Number of volunteer advocacy hours provided to children served
70,900	Number of CASA volunteers nationally
278,182	Henrico CASA 2009-2010 Expenses

HENRICO CASA PROGRAM INFORMATION

- ✦ First case was assigned in December 1994
 - ✦ Current number of cases – 124
 - ✦ Cases served this past year – 277
- ✦ Cases served since the beginning - 1359
 - ✦ Current number of volunteers – 122
- ✦ Number of volunteers since beginning – 341
 - ✦ Average number of hours a year – 87
 - ✦ Average number of contacts a year – 104
 - ✦ Average length of a case – 11.5 months
 - ✦ Average volunteer commitment – 2.5 years



If you would like to receive future Henrico CASA newsletters online please provide your preferred email to: staff@henricocasa.org

EVERY CHILD NEEDS A HERO, BUT ABU



On **April 10, 2010**, the Henrico and Chesterfield CASA Board of Directors and welcome over 400 superhero runners for a morning of family fun presented by pants enjoyed a kids' mile, 5K Superhero Run, and a family festival featuring g are grateful that St. Joseph's Villa and the Superhero Foundation partnered wi event an astonishing success. Please join us next April for an even bigger and

SAVE THE DATE!! ~ April 9, 2011

USED CHILDREN NEED SUPERHEROES!!



l staff joined forces to
Nike. The partici-
games and food. We
with CASA to make this
d better event!

011 ~ CASA Superhero Run

Join our Circle of Friends!

Henrico CASA has recently formed a volunteer group of young professionals to support our mission through assistance with event planning, implementation and resources.

Program Support Needed!

Henrico CASA also relies on volunteers to assist the program to ensure that all children in need of advocacy are represented. If you can, visit our office to give time as an occasional **Development Assistant** supporting our fundraising events, as a **Public Relations Assistant** who helps with publicity for our events and the program, or maybe you prefer to **Host** your own fundraising or public awareness event benefitting CASA. To find out more about these and other exciting opportunities to support CASA, please contact Barbara at 501-1671 to get started today!

CASA Events!!!!



Bowl-A-Thon



Come join the Kappa Alpha Theta Richmond Alumnae Chapter for their fifth annual **CASA Bowl-A-Thon** on

OCTOBER 2, 2010

from 2-5pm at Shrader Lanes. The cost is \$20 per person, which includes three hours of unlimited bowling, popcorn, and a drink.

To register visit www.henricocasa.org!

Henrico CASA participates in the following United Way campaigns. Please use the codes provided to allocate your United Way and CVC funds contribution directly to Henrico CASA. This will help us reach our goal of serving all abused children who are referred for advocacy.



Local Government and Schools
Agency Code #126

United Way of Greater
Richmond & Petersburg

Contributor's Choice Corporate Campaign
Agency Code #3637



Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign
Agency Code #3651

Combined Federal Campaign
Agency Code #76476



Crossroads Art Center

Please join Henrico CASA on **JANUARY 14, 2011** for our **5th Annual Crossroads Gallery Opening & Silent Auction**

To sponsor the event or donate your artwork for our silent auction please contact Barbara at 501-1671

Special Thanks to Our Contributors July 1, 2009 - June 30, 2010

Gifts Made In Honor Of

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Dayle Goldberg
Pat Hackler
Henrico CASA Staff
Denyse and Bob Hunt
Bob Lawrence
Wendy Sprout
Becky Sutterfield

Gifts Made In Memory Of

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Chuck Schroll

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Terri Carter
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Susan Ferguson
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Carla Nelms
Judy Pollard
Ricepaper Photography
Margaret Rodriguez
Royal County Arts
Kay Shuster
Skinny Dips
Helen Trevey
Karie Walker
Jennifer Young Studio & Gallery
Greg Youngs



CASA's guests enjoy a night of art and festivities at the Crossroads Gallery Show and Open House

In-Kind

Dayle Goldberg and Bob Tappman
Henrico County
Microsoft
Janet Palmore

CASA RUN



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THANK YOU...



- Nike for presenting our 1st annual CASA Superhero Run
- Memorial Foundation for Children for program support
- Wareheim Foundation for their program support
- Kiwanis Club of Tuckahoe
- Mary Morton Parsons for an unexpected gift
- The Community Foundation and Jenkins Foundation for funds to encourage our alliance with Chesterfield CASA
- Jewelers for Children and the National CASA Association for funding an ongoing volunteer supervisor position
- Kappa Alpha Theta Richmond Alumnae Chapter for sponsoring a bowl-a-thon for CASA
- Anne E. and Walter Robins Foundation for funding volunteer recruitment and supervision
- BonSecours for program support
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- Dominion Foundation for supporting program expenses
- Family and Children's Trust Fund of Virginia for supporting our kiosks in the juvenile court and CASA office
- JoAnne Colbert Gunn for hosting a Silpada Jewelry party to benefit Henrico CASA
- Wachovia Foundation for ongoing program support
- Kappa Alpha Thetas of Randolph Macon and University of Richmond for your ongoing support and volunteer work
- Victims of Crime Act and the Department of Criminal Justice Services for their continued funding of the program
- Ann Ramsey Volunteer Fund
- Chesterfield CASA for their partnership
- The Board of Henrico CASA for their leadership
- Julie Hassen for your never-ending support of all we do at CASA
- All CASA volunteers who bring a voice to abused and neglected children

Elizabeth Myers
Brian Nalder
Jean & Susy Neaylon
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Matthew & Justine Zwerdling
Sarah Zyla

THANK YOU AUSTIN SUPERHEROES!



A Message from the Board

Henrico CASA's two greatest assets are its donors and its leaders. Together, these two groups provide the resources to support our mission day-to-day while providing for the community's future needs.

Our professional staff leaders are incomparable in the field and provide excellent program services, assess community needs and guide the program in addressing current and future needs. Our volunteer CASA advocates provide unparalleled services, through the court system, ensuring that each child does not get lost in an overburdened legal system or languish in an inappropriate foster or group home setting.



The volunteer Board of Directors and Advisory Committee are comprised of leaders recruited from the community to serve in governance roles and to assist in raising needed discretionary funds by identifying and cultivating partnerships with foundations, individuals and corporations willing to fund this valuable service. Each gift remains in Henrico County working for the children who most need CASA's help, specifically, the children of our community who have experienced severe neglect, abuse and those children who find themselves in juvenile dependency proceedings in Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court.

Our greatest assets are our donors and leaders and our greatest challenge as donors and leaders on the Board of Directors is to recruit new donors and leaders who are passionate about our mission, people who will speak out for the children who have no voice, donors and leaders who will secure the resources to support and strengthen Henrico CASA.

YOU can make a difference and a child's life will be enriched. We invite you to join Henrico CASA in changing a child's life with your leadership and support.

Rhonda Childs, Board Chair

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