



FAR SIDE OF THE BENCH

LETTER FROM THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

It's been an exciting year for our program. We've been able to secure several grants that have enabled us to expand our board, recruit and train more volunteers, conduct a local program survey within our district, purchase office equipment, and send myself and a board member to our National CASA convention in Atlanta, GA.

management.

During the past year we have represented a total of 29 children who were represented by twelve specially trained and certified volunteers. These volunteers have logged many hours handling their cases and have had tremendous response from the Court System towards our recommendations in each case.

administrate at all levels.

We have designed and implemented the Sixth Judicial District CASA web site www.casajd6.org and have created the inaugural newsletter that you are holding in your hands.

Thanks for taking the time to learn more about us.

Ann Schilling

Our board has spent this past year developing a strategic plan and transitioning from program development to program

Our program received National certification this past year, which is great. It was a very rigorous process which shows that we can

We are looking forward to helping the State CASA organization with their first annual Park2Park bicycle ride September 6—10, 2005. The cyclists will be spending the night of September 9th in Livingston and our program will be helping with dinner and breakfast.

If you are interested in participating in the ride itself please go to <http://www.helenabicycleclub.org/park2park.htm> to register. The event is limited to 40 riders this first year.

If you are interested in volunteering your time during the riders stay in Livingston please contact the office at 406.222.4904.

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASA STORY

The Sixth Judicial District CASA/GAL Program, Inc. was incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)(3) in July 2002 and is a full member of the National CASA Association and the State of Montana CASA. Our mission is to provide specifically selected and trained community volunteer Guardian Ad Litem to work on behalf of abused and neglected children within our court system and to undertake any and all activities necessary for the promotion of these children's best interest, including but not limited to health, safety, and welfare. The Sixth Judicial District serves two counties (Park and Sweet Grass) which cover an area of 4,511 square miles and a population of 19,303. These two counties are both considered rural and remote. Since we serve two counties there are two distinct court and social service systems. There is one presiding judge over both systems the Honorable Judge Nels Swandal.

family members, counselors, etc.), compile pertinent facts, and file a report to the court in which they offer their suggestions for what is in the best interest of the child.

These volunteers put in, on average, a minimum of 400 hours per case. In this past year our volunteers logged 3,780 hours valued at \$15 per hour for an in-kind contribution of \$56,700. Some of our volunteers are required to drive significant distances while performing their duties.

Our program is governed by a Board of Directors that oversees our Program Director. The Program Director is responsible for recruiting, training, managing, and mentoring our pool of dedicated volunteers. This staff member also acts as a liaison between the volunteers, the court, and the Department of Public Health and Human Services. In addition to general program office management this position maintains our grant and compliance requirements and acts as our public relations link within the communities.

Our corporation has put in place various policies and procedures and has achieved 100% compliance with the National CASA Association's standards of self-assessment. "The

National CASA Quality Assurance is very rigorous, and reflects our commitment to insure every child we serve has the most powerful volunteer advocate working on their behalf", wrote Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association in the certification notification. "This certification says the Sixth Judicial District CASA/GAL Program, Inc. has demonstrated to us a strong capacity to provide excellent services to the abused and neglected children within their community." We have recently established and implemented an accounting process enabling us to track restricted funds as well as our general operating funds.

CASA is the only organization that empowers everyday citizens as appointed officers of the Court who represent abused and neglected children in the courtroom. We are the voice of the child. Our program is all about caring and common sense. Through CASA we are able to speak powerfully for these children. It's about helping a child replace a life of hurt with one of hope. No matter what we do, we've given these kids so much more than they've already had. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please contact the office at 406.222.4904.

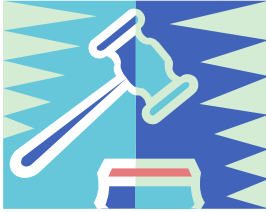
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Our volunteers are trained and certified. They are then specially selected for appointment by our District Judge to represent a child deemed abused or neglected by the court system. These volunteers are trained to interview the child(ren), their family, as well as collateral persons (i.e. teachers, extended

JUDGE'S CORNER—HONORABLE NELS SWANDAL



CASA is an invaluable asset to the youth in need of care in this judicial district. These volunteers spend many hours training and then many more hours giving their care, concern, and devotion to the youth.

CASA provides a service that was lacking in this district—not because the youth were unrepresented, but because there were too few exhausted persons representing them before CASA. Now, each youth has a CASA that represents only them, who is able to speak for them and who can help the Court determine what is in the best interest of that youth. “The trained volunteers in the program are dedicated advocates who are genuinely concerned for the children and are generous with their time... They spend many hours investigating each case and compiling thorough reports which are essential in determining the best interest of the abused and neglected children.”

The CASA Program Director works tirelessly and has created and maintains an excellent relationship with the Department of Public Health and Human Services Family Services Division, the County Attorney's Office, the Court and the families served by CASA. The Board of Directors is supportive, creative and as true to their devotion to the youth of this district as are the volunteers themselves. We appreciate CASA, our local board, the Director, and volunteers very much and fervently hope the program will stay and flourish for as long as does the district.



Nancy McCracken, Court Administrator



Honorable Nels Swandal in Court

To give a child a CASA VOLUNTEER
is to give them a VOICE
To give them a VOICE
is to give them HOPE
To give them HOPE
is to give them the WORLD

MEET THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

In September 2004 the Board of Director's accepted Ann Schilling's resignation from the Board and offered her the job as Program Management Director. Ann received a Bachelor of Science in Family Life Science with a secondary Education Teaching degree from Montana State University. Her background in management and in working with Youth Dynamics, Inc. as well as having been the Acting Program Management Director for the past year made her an easy choice for the Board. Welcome Ann.



Ann Schilling
Program Director

TREASURER'S TALLY

In 2004 our program went about the business of grant writing and fundraising. We were successful in obtaining a \$14,955 grant from the *National CASA Association* for program sustainability, a \$5,000 grant from the *Parents of Murdered Children* for volunteer training and retention, a \$3,500 grant from the *Greater Gallatin Area United Way* for program operations, a \$5,000 from the *State of Montana Court Assessment Program* general program maintenance, and \$10,000 from *Park County* (under their health, safety and welfare mandate) for general operations. Donations from individuals, trusts, and businesses totaled \$4,500.

The Board of Directors used the National CASA monies to retain a consulting firm to work with the Board on long term/strategic planning, budgeting, sustainability, board recruitment and retention. The consultants conducted a program survey of local individuals in order to identify public awareness of the program. We have just contracted this same firm to hire an individual to work with us on a public relations campaign. We utilized the funding from the POMC to train additional volunteers, create this newsletter, and acquire office equipment. The remaining funds allowed us to perform our general program operations.

Robin Haggan Elinger

VOLUNTEER CANON

The most important part of the job is that they have 20 minutes before the most important person in a child's life, THE JUDGE! This is why they do what they do, this is their job and why it is so important to investigate, research, prepare, and keep on top of their cases. They must keep up on their cases even when things are going slowly. They can't let things just slide by. It is too hard to play catch-up.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Julie Killorn
Corporation President

Julie was born and raised in Montana. Graduated from Park High School had earned a degree in dental hygiene. Julie is a founding board member of the Sixth Judicial District CASA/GAL Program. In 2001 Julie purchase Insty-Prints of Livingston. She has three children and three grandchildren

John Hykes
Board Vice Chair

John, who has an MA in social work policy, worked for Patrick Murphy, one of the founders of the CASA program in Chicago, IL spending two years on the development and support of court appointed advocates for the State. During this time he acquired a broad range of experiences in adolescent social work. John moved to Livingston in 1993 where he volunteered for the Gallatin County Fairgrounds as the Summer Fair Chairman and managed a retail store for 7 years. John is currently working as a self employed business consultant.

Barbara Norman
Corporation Secretary

Barb moved to Livingston in 1988 from Santa Maria, CA. For two years Barb worked for a local creamery and was employed as a bartender for 7 years. She is currently enjoying her employment at a local print shop. Barb has been certified and is currently acting as a volunteer advocate with the CASA Program.

Robin Hoggan Ebinger
Board Treasurer

Robin moved to Livingston from Los Angeles, CA in 1998 where she worked as an accountant for independent movie studios. She is currently the acting Executive Director of the Livingston Center for Art and Culture where she is Board Treasurer and Past President. Robin also divides her time between the Montana Film Center, Livingston Gallery Association, and independent movies that drift through Montana.

Patricia Stetson Agnew
Board Member

Patricia moved to Big Timber, MT in 1982 from Vermont. She attended University in France and the Rhode Island School of Design. Patricia worked for photographers, as well as Vogue, Harpers Bazaar and Redbook Magazines. She bred/trained Percheron and Thoroughbred horses and raised registered sheep. Patricia is a painter and owns a clothing business which employs neighborhood ranch women/seamstresses and sells exclusively retail out of a Big Timber store. Brought up in a family that believes in the importance of philanthropy, Patricia is involved in a multitude of programs focusing on education and the improvement of human conditions all over the world.

Nancy Gilbert
Board Member

Nancy moved with her family to Montana from Minnesota in 1952 and has lived in the Clyde Park area ever since, other than the time she spent in Missoula attending St. Patrick's School of Nursing graduating in 1965 with an Registered Nursing degree. Nancy worked as a registered nurse at the Livingston Memorial Hospital and Park Clinic for 40 years with the majority of her career being in the operating room. She now keeps herself busy with her bed and breakfast, "The Gibson-Cassidy House Inn" in Clyde Park, her continued endeavors with her art work, and with her grandchildren.

Rev. David Gunderson
Board Member

Reverend Gunderson is the rector of the Episcopal Churches of the Upper Yellowstone in Emigrant, Livingston, and Big Timber. He moved to Livingston from Seattle in August 2004, where he divided his time between the parish priesthood and the practice of psychotherapy. He studied literature as an undergraduate, and has graduate degrees in both theology and psychotherapy. He has also been a commercial fisherman, and is still an avid skier and mountain climber, and occasionally picks up the guitar to amuse himself.

John Kirby
Board Member


Retired Navy Captain, John holds several professional licenses and is the principal owner of Kirby Associates in Big Timber, MT. He is active in community affairs and manages his small hay farm. John is also a volunteer with the Sweet Grass County Sheriff's Department.

J. Troy Redmon

Troy was born Louisiana, Missouri and raised in Livingston, Montana. His education was at the United States Military Academy (B.S. in Engineering & Political Science, 1987) and University of Montana (J.D., MBA, 2000). Troy was admitted to the Montana bar in 2000. Troy's practice areas include real estate transactions and litigation; water law; employment law; and business and corporate law.

If you are interested in becoming a board member PLEASE contact the office at 406.222.4904

NATIONAL CASA CONFERENCE, ATLANTA, GA

 April 2005 saw Program Director Ann Schilling and Board Member Robin Hoggan Ebinger attending the 24th annual National CASA Association in Atlanta, Georgia. Our consultant Dennis Alexander was also able to attend.

The conference offered workshops and sessions on fundraising, program management, and networking. The three of us attended separate work sessions in order to better garner what the conference had to offer.

Sessions that enhanced our knowledge of the COMET (our case history software) program; Roundtables that allowed us to converse one on one with local CASA programs; Major donor development, strategic planning, and challenges in rural fundraising that gave us better understanding and tools for the challenges that face us; social entrepreneurship which was very insightful in showing us different ways to raise money; and several sessions on

running the CASA program itself. We were able to bring back numerous documents and books, we were given access to training videos, and best of all we brought all of our volunteers pecans from the South.

We look forward to being able to send a CASA volunteer and another board member to a future conference. Maybe even San Diego in 2006!



We can't control where abused children come from but we can have something to do with where they end up.

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASA/GAL PROGRAM, INC.

CONTACT US

Tel. 406.222.4904
Fax 406.222.4904
Cell 406.220.0259
Email: casajd6@yahoo.com

We are on the web at
www.casajd6.org

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Sixth Judicial District CASA/GAL Program is to provide specifically selected and trained community volunteer Guardian Ad Litem to work on behalf of abused and neglected children within our court system and to undertake any and all activities necessary for the promotion of these children's best interest, including but not limited to health, safety, and welfare.

All gifts are appreciated and allow CASA volunteers to give our children hope. Please send your donation today. Your support allows us to advocate for abused and neglected children right here in our community.

Make you tax
deductible donation payable to
Sixth Judicial District CASA/GAL Program, Inc.
PO Box 1827, Livingston, Montana 59047

SIXTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT CASA/GAL PROGRAM, INC.

P O Box 1827
108 1/2 North Second Street
Livingston, Montana 59047



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