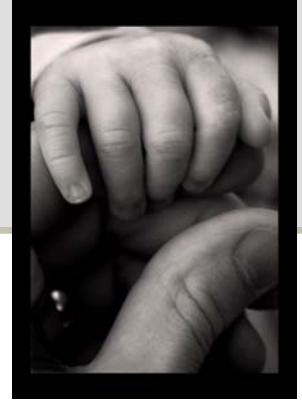


THE ADVOCATE

CASA of Vermilion County, 101 W. North St., Danville, IL 61832
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Growing, Changing, Serving

Over the first year of serving children CASA has grown from a hope to a reality. This growth is an ongoing aspect of our program and with your help we hope to continue to grow and serve more children.

Over this first year we have recruited and trained 23 amazing advocates who have served 46 children. Five of these children have been returned home and several others are waiting to be adopted. Our advocates have helped children by learning of family who were willing to provide a home for children, ensuring that specialized services were in place quickly, by working with teachers to overcome schooling issues, and by providing key information to the Judge, GAL, and other parties. This first group of advocates has been our pioneers and we are extremely proud of them.

We are working hard to build our program to ensure our advocates continue to have the support they need to effectively do their very important job. Our first fundraising event, The Family Fun Hog Roast, raised over \$7000 and was great fun for the 140+ people who joined us for a mouth watering meal, kids games, and great music.

This October we expanded our staffing by adding an Advocate Coordinator Position. Ellen Baxter assisted in training new advocates and organized a breakfast for Caseworkers and Advocates highlighting how we can work together to serve children. In December, Ellen resigned her position when she was offered a position perfectly

suiting her at Project Success. Ellen isn't leaving CASA through, as she is now looking forward to taking on the role of an advocate.

2009 is promising to be as exciting as 2008 with even more challenges and changes in the mix. First we are moving offices in the Township Building. We are moving from our second floor one-room palace, to a three-office suite with kitchenette in the basement. The transition is happening during the week of January 5th to January 9th. This new office will have space set aside for our advocates to work in!

Barbara Bein has accepted the position as our new Advocate Coordinator and will be joining us in our new offices on January 12th. This mother of two trained to be a CASA volunteer last February and has been an advocate for her CASA child and the program ever since. Barbara has over 10 years of experience organizing and managing offices and working with employees. She has already proven to be an amazing asset to the program and we are looking forward to her shining in her new role as Advocate Coordinator!



The biggest change we are aiming for 2009 is to double the number of children we are serving. There are still over 300 children who need an advocate we need to continue to gain the support of our communities finest volunteers!

Barbara Bein starts her new role as Advocate Coordinator on January 12th

Recruit, Recruit, let's fill the February Training Class!



Now is the time to be talking to friends, relatives, co-workers, and neighbors about their desire to help children in Vermilion County. Our next training class will be in February and we would to have love our largest class ever. We can not do this alone. Please tell everyone about the work you do and encourage them to sign up now! Applications are available online at www.casavermilion.org or by calling our office.

Our 30-hour child advocacy pre-service course is required for anyone wishing to serve as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. The nationally recognized curriculum includes information on the Juvenile Court Process, Child Abuse and Neglect Laws, Childhood Development, Risk Factors of Child Abuse, and much more.

Individuals who are 21 years or older, dedicated to helping children, and who can pass routine background checks meet our basic qualifications for becoming an advocate. Volunteers are asked to commit to at least one year. Volunteers manage their own schedule, and on average work 8 hours a month.

February Training Information

Location: Danville Public Library
 Dates: February 16 – March 23
 Days: Monday and Wednesdays
 Time: 9:30AM to 12:30PM

The Training and all associated materials are free!

The Board of Directors has reduced the minimum age for volunteers to 21. Now even more people can serve as advocates!

What is “The Advocate?”

The Advocate is a new bi-monthly newsletter for CASA insiders. Who is an insider? Our CASA Advocates, members of the CASA Board of Directors, and Friends of CASA are all CASA insiders. This newsletter is intended to be a source of information about the CASA program and events effecting CASA and its volunteers.

The Advocate will include updates on the program, training opportunities, and ways you can help the program be successful. Please share any training or other information that our volunteers might find useful!

Have you seen all that is at casanet.org ??

The internet has proven to be a vast resource center. Unfortunately sometimes finding what you and sorting through the muck can be worse then finding a needle in a haystack. There are a few websites though that can be great resources for all of CASA volunteers.

casanet.org is designed as a information source for everyone involved with CASA. Featured on this website is a volunteer library full of articles on common issues CASA volunteers come across as well as links to find more great resources. Ever wonder what the National Standards are for a CASA program? Look on casanet.org. Ever wonder what other programs are doing for fundraising, recruitment...? Look on casanet.org. There is also a wealth of graphics and media ads that are free for use for CASA programs.

casanet.org is also where to go to learn about the National Conference offered each year. Finally casanet.org is a great place to learn what is new in the world of National CASA. For example, National CASA is now offering podcasts available to download and listen to on your computer or mp3 player. All of the podcasts are archived so that you can pick the subjects important to you. The most recent podcast, released 12-22-08 was a presentation on the importance of intercultural communication presented by educator and intercultural consultant Kali Scolnick.

Do not forget to check out our website at www.casavermilion.org for up to date information about our program and to find more resources through our "Advocate Corner" or "Links" pages.

Illinois STARnet – Free Workshop!



The mission of Illinois STARnet is to provide a variety of opportunities for personal and professional growth for those who touch the lives of young children, ages birth to eight, with an emphasis on children with special needs. STARnet supports family-centered, researched, and effective practices in early childhood education and care.

On April 17, 2009 STARnet is presenting "Helping Families and Children Cope with Trauma". David Carrillo, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Instructor, and Psychotherapist with over 33 years of

experience will teach participants how to promote hope for children who have been affected by situations in their families such as abandonment, divorce, incarceration, and death among other situations.

Attendees will gain knowledge about prevention skills that assist families and children find hope and support. The training will be held at Danville Area Community College will run from 8:30 – 3:00 PM and is free! Participation is limited to 40 people, so early registration is recommended.

To register for this training or to review the full list of trainings being offered in the Central Region (STARnet region III) visit www.wiu.edu/starnet.

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month!

Want to help work toward preventing child abuse? April is dedicated as Child Abuse Awareness Month. Consider the ways you can promote healthy families and how to encourage more people to take a stand against child abuse.

Here are a few things you can do.

* Join us in planning CASA's child abuse awareness events. We will be kicking off on March 28th with a CASAblanca event. This dress affair will raise funds for the recruitment, training, and support of advocates. This is just the beginning and we will need all hands on deck to pull off the months events.

* Help us to spread the word about CASA in April. Contact church groups, radio hosts, service clubs, etc and ask if they would like a presenter from CASA in April. We will tailor our presentations to fit the group's needs.

* Help recruit volunteers through anyone you do business with including your favorite restaurant, hairdresser, insurance agents... by bringing them table tents to brochures and asking them to share them.

* Don't forget to support those who are parents (including foster parents) around you with a loving smile, a show of support, a word of kindness and few minutes of your time. You could be helping the next generation be the best we have ever seen.

*April is Child Abuse Awareness Month
Thank you for making it your cause ever month!*

Our Current Advocates

Julie Ahrens

Ellen Baxter

Barbara Bein

Doug DeBarba

Shalonda Foreman

Carrie L Garlick

Mary Janell Graham

Ken Green

Connie Huffman

Suzanne Ingram

Janice Kempe

Judy Mattis

Ella Miller

Michell Monroe

John Murray

Lawrence Nitzke

Ron Pridemore

Susan Quick

Lloyd Randle

Nancy Russell

Ashlee Thomas

Juli Thornton-Busby

Wendy Wilder

Karen Wodetzki-Davis

CASA Wish List

A dry erase board (~2x3' or larger)

Floor lamps (no fluorescents please)

Corkboards

Coffee Maker

Microwave

Desk chairs

File Cabinets, lockable preferred

2-3 Bookcases

A decent computer for advocate's to use

Office clocks

Small upright vacuum

Copier paper

Avery address labels

Ivory certificate paper

Non-perishable snacks and candy (for trainings)

