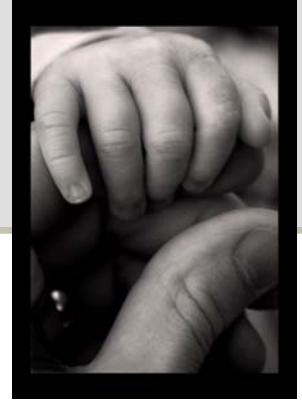


THE ADVOCATE

CASA of Vermilion County, 101 W. North St., Danville, IL 61832
www.casavermillion.org director@casavermillion.org 217-446-5975



The Importance of Reports

Every day in the courtroom the judge is making life altering decisions that affect the children we are serving. The judge has only the information provided to him or her to base these decisions on. This is why judges invite CASA volunteers into their courtrooms.

CASA volunteers have an amazing amount of authority granted to them through their court orders. The judges provide this because they believe that having a CASA investigate and advocate on behalf of the child is important. They do this as a safety net for children, whose needs can be overlooked in an overburdened child welfare system.

Every advocate should closely review his or her court order and ensure they are fully aware of the power that has been granted to them. Remember being a CASA is more than a monthly visit with the child. It is a responsibility to learn everything possible about the child's needs, by talking to every caregiver and service provider the child has to ensure the child is given every opportunity to thrive.

The strongest tool for advocating for a child is the court report. We have been told repeatedly by the judges that they look for the CASA reports, that they are read, and that

the information contained within is important. Please never assume that information you learn is already known by someone else. This includes the CASA office, caseworker(s), attorneys, and/or judge. Often you are the only source for valuable information about the child and their needs.

What should a court report include? Everything necessary to paint a clear picture for the judge and all parties of who the child is, what the environment they are living in is like, what is being done for the child, and what the child needs. It should include any potential solution or service that could benefit the child. Whenever possible include supporting documentation with your report. Child drawings and pictures are also welcome attachments.

Please track when your upcoming hearings are and be prepared to submit your court report to CASA two weeks prior to each and every permanency review, status, or best interests hearing, unless indicated otherwise by staff. Late reports create a true hardship on the office, attorneys, case workers, and the judges. This has a domino effect that diminishes the true potential of the court report as a valuable tool to advocate for the child.

**ADVOCATES ARE THE CORE OF EVERYTHING CASA DOES!
THEY ARE OUR FOUNDATION AND OUR STRENGTH!**

June's Training Class – An Evening Course.



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 June and we would love to have our largest class ever. We cannot 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.

June Training Information

Location: Danville Public Library
 Dates: June 2 – July 2
 Days: Tuesday & Thursday
 Time: 5:15 PM – 8:15 PM

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!

New CASA Website: www.casavermilion.org

Have you been to our website lately? On April 23rd we unveiled our new website. The new format is still packed with information, but has been designed for easier navigation and a more “professional” feel. This new format is only the beginning, as we are discussing many new features we would like to add in the future. These include a board recruitment page, access to past and current agency newsletters, board minutes, videos, links to our facebook page and more. Keep checking back. We would love your feedback!

In-Service Training Opportunity ~ Engaging Bystanders in Violence Prevention

FREE

In partnership with the United Way of Danville Area, Children's Home and Aid in Bloomington, and NICASA in Round Lake, the Illinois Center for Violence Prevention is excited to offer this free workshop to service providers.

The spring regional meetings will help build individual and community responsibility for violence prevention by educating and empowering people to take action to help stop violence. Participants will learn strategies to engage their constituents as bystanders who can then appropriately intervene. This model has been successfully applied to other forms of violence including bullying, teen dating violence, sexual assault, and other types of violence. Teaching youth how to intervene as a bystander and how to support a friend involved in abuse is an effective way to change their knowledge, beliefs and intentions.

Individuals who witness situations that may lead to violence have the choice to do nothing, to contribute to the negative behavior, to de-escalate the situation or offer support to the target. Research shows

that youth targets of bullying and harassment rarely seek help from adults. Therefore, it is particularly important for adults who work with youth to know what effective strategies enable peers to help each other.

Workshop Objectives:

- o Learn what roles bystanders play in an incidence of violence
- o Discover why engaging bystanders is a promising violence prevention strategy
- o Practice strategies that encourage positive bystander behavior

Workshop Date & Location:

Tuesday May 19, 2009

9:00am - 11:30am

Danville Area Community College



Visit <http://www.icvp.org/meetings.asp> or call CASA for a registration form.

Our Current Advocates

Julie Ahrens
Ellen Baxter
Barbara Bein
April Bennett
Doug DeBarba
Amanda Edenburn
Mary Ewing
Shalonda Foreman
Carrie Garlick
Janell Graham
Ken Green

Amanda Harris
Connie Huffman
Suzanne Ingram
Linda Jones
Janice Kempe
Judy Mattis
Ella Miller
Michell Monroe
Kathy Moore
John Murray
Cheryl Musson

Lawrence Nitzke
Alicia Pettigrew
Ron Pridemore
Susan Quick
Lloyd Randle
Nancy Russell
Ashlee Thomas
Juli Thornton-Busby
Wendy Wilder
Karen Wodetzki-Davis
Mary Wright

Accessing Health Records – CASA advocates

If you are a CASA advocate looking for health records for a foster child placed in Vermilion County, it has just gotten a lot easier! Barb Morgeson from the Vermilion County Public Health Department is the Medical Case Manager for foster children in Vermilion County. She is the key contact for all medical information for foster children placed in Vermilion County. To access information via Barb you will need to provide her a copy of your court order. You can drop off a copy at the Vermilion County Public Health Department attn: Barbara Morgeson, mail it to her at 200 S College St., Suite A, Danville, IL 61832 or fax it to 217-431-7485. Then call Barbara at 217-431-2662 to request access to the child's records. Please be cognizant of the costs of copying and only request the copies of specific documents that you need copies of to effectively advocate for the child.

Mark your Calendars!!

CASA's Second Annual Family Fun Hog Roast



October 17, 2009

Hickory Hollow * Kennekuk County Park

Do not miss out on the fun!