

# THE VOICE Real People. Real Lives.

# **WINTER** 2018-19

#### HOW YOUR DOLLARS MAKE A DIFFERENCE Learn more on pg. 8

### LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



#### Greetings,

Each and every one of you reading this letter and publication has contributed by donating, volunteering and/or connecting some way to the CASA organization! I am beyond grateful for what you continue to make possible and will always be available for your feedback to better meet our needs to serve the mission.

As a nonprofit organization, we understand that trust comes from our donors' beliefs that the cause is just, the organization is sound, and with blind conviction our donors know that their gifts are used in a fiscally responsible way. Donor and volunteer confidence is built on the firm conviction that those in need will benefit from gift support. I've always been a firm believer that everyone can do something and together we are better. Kind of cliché I know, but spot on when you are wanting the social change that began with the CASA movement formed in 1977.

Unfortunately, the passage of time is magnified for children in the foster care system in both anxiety levels and direct effect. Three years is a not a terribly long period of time for an adult. For a six-year old, it can mean the difference between finding an adoptive family and failing to gain permanence because of age. If too much time is spent in foster care during these formative years, lifetime problems can be created. Our core mission is to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children and our goal is to always find a safe and permanent home with the least amount of changes. Over 90% of the time it is the CASA/GAL who remains the most consistent person in their lives.

Permanency for children is guardianship, adoption or return home. We cannot always create a utopia for all children. If they are returned home, then parents have learned to be better parents and get the help and support they need. As a nonprofit organization serving the best interests of children, we focus on effectiveness and the ultimate human experience for our kids beyond the courtroom walls. Our kids are of course terrified of the unknown and some become defiant and have trust issues from this uncertainty.

It is our entire organization's hope that when a CASA child has grown they will remember that during one of the hardest times of their life, someone cared about them. Thank you for helping us persevere on behalf of our kids in need to ensure they have a safe and loving home where they can thrive.

Here are examples of what we've accomplished with your support:

- Recruited and trained 36 new CASA/GAL Volunteers
- Training center for Volunteers and Staff
- · Mediation for children and families
- Mandated Reporting partnership packet with the States Attorney's Office, DCFS and Regional Office of Education
- Expansion of our gift and gas cards for youth in care
- Experiences for our kids to attend theatre, pumpkin farms, baseball games, etc.

Thank you for continuing to believe in the CASA Kane County organization, our judiciary and the children who need us the most. Many blessings to you and your families throughout this holiday season and well into 2019.

#### Sincerely,

**Gloria Kelley Executive Director** 

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#### THANK YOU TO OUR MISSION PARTNERS



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## What do CASA/GAL Volunteers do?

#### A CASA volunteer is the person that says,

"I care about you, and I will be there to offer support when problems arise. I will do my very best to guide you, and to be that watchful eye to ensure your safety and well-being."

"As a CASA volunteer, I will show you how to care, trust and live the way society expects from us, and if the CASA organization didn't exist, there would be approximately 600 children in our community that would not have a CASA/GAL (Guardian ad Litem) volunteer to see them through these challenges and to be the eyes and ears to our Judge."





## A CASA/GAL Volunteer is...

Lying awake until 3:00 a.m., wondering *"What if?"* 

Getting calls from the parents saying, "Do we really have to do what the judge says?"

Having a staff member say, "I've got another case that needs your special touch – will you do it?"

Discovering places in the county you never knew existed.

To learn more about becoming a CASA/GAL volunteer, contact Maha McDiarmid at maham@casakanecounty.org

# 



Bob Stell, Doris Hunt, Keith Brown & Dan Dolan



Doris June Howey Hunt was born in Hyde Park. In 1956, Doris and Max moved from Glen Ellyn to St. Charles where they were blessed to raise their six children. Doris spent over twenty years developing worthwhile organizations and cultivating strong relationships within the community to ensure their success.

Doris and Max gave true meaning to the word philanthropy and did so for decades in Kane County and its surrounding areas. Doris was known to her family and friends as more of the quiet motivator, but when Doris Hunt called you to ask for your help in her fundraising efforts, it was rare that the word "no" was ever muttered. In 1995, Doris received CASA Kane County's first Doris Hunt Volunteer of the Year Award, named in her honor. This award exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding volunteer to the CASA Kane County program. In fact, the Hunts sponsored our annual Volunteer Recognition Evening at the St. Charles County Club for years, and they did so without ever seeking recognition for their generosity.



Mary Ann Lindquist, Dee Schlagel & Doris Hunt

Doris' leadership as both a volunteer and donor has inspired us all. Through her vision and dedication, CASA has grown into a thriving organization that is appointed to 100% of all abuse and neglect cases in Juvenile Court. In addition, Doris and Max were one of CASA's largest financial contributors, allowing the program to expand and accomplish great things for the children we serve.

## DORIS' LEADERSHIP AS BOTH A VOLUNTEER AND DONOR HAS INSPIRED US ALL.

On behalf of the leadership and staff at CASA, we are so very grateful for the inspiration that Doris has brought to the organization with her soft approach, eloquent grace, and honorable dignity.

# THE 2018 TAX SAVY DONOR

By, Rick L. Law, Attorney Law ElderLaw | 630-585-5200

#### DID YOU KNOW ...

The Tax Cuts & Jobs Act of 2018 resets the table when it comes to making tax savvy charitable contributions. The new act discounts most of the prior personal income tax rates from 3% up to 9%. Based on the numbers that we have run for our clients, most people will be experiencing an income tax decrease even though State and Local Taxes (SALT) deductions have been capped at \$10,000 per year.

Senior taxpayers have a great tool to benefit themselves with both the standard deduction and charitable contribution deductibility. That tool is a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) directly from their IRAs. Persons over 70 who are required to take required minimum distributions (RMD) can satisfy that obligation by directing your IRA custodian to distribute directly to CASA. Using this method you are shielded from income tax on the RMD's and still get to use your full standard deduction.

Non-senior tax savvy donors should consider grouping multiple year donations in the one year. For example, if an individual ordinarily gives \$2,500/per year, from a tax standpoint, it may be better to lump several years of gifts into one large donation.

Modern estate planning, done right, is much more than the just the usual documents, it should also include multiple generational income tax planning. In the right circumstances, charitable donations combined with tax savvy can provide more tax free dollars passing to the next generation. The new tax act still protects and promotes significant charitable contributions.

We would love to help you consider some of the tax incentives. Please contact me directly for more information or connect with Vicki Shaw, Senior Director of Advancement at CASA at **630-444-3100 or vickis@casakanecounty.org.** 

### CASA 3RD QUARTER OUTCOMES ARE ACHIEVING RESULTS FOR CHILDREN IN KANE COUNTY!

Below are CASA Kane County's 2018 outcomes from January - September 2018:









of youth ages 14+ will reside in four or less placements for the duration of their case.



100%

of children had two or less placements throughout their case in Probate Court. 76%

of children had three or less placements throughout their case in Abuse/Neglect Court.

## ADVOCACY CORNER THANK YOU CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS



#### **GOING THE EXTRA MILE,**

CASA/GAL Pete C. has been our longest running CASA/GAL, serving over 25 years in this advocacy role. Pete has served 33 children throughout his years at CASA and delayed his own retirement from the program to see his final case through to the end. Pete advocated for a young girl for 11 years until it recently closed ending in an adoption outcome. He fought diligently for the rights of this child - often knowing more about what this medically complex child needed than the ever-changing caseworkers and providers in her case. Pete has been a true child's champion and CASA has been blessed with his years of service. Thank you, Pete, for making a difference in the lives of children!

CASA/GAL Kevan has advocated for a little boy that came into care at 2 years old and shortly after DCFS took custody of the child, it was determined that he desperately needed to be seen by a dentist. The CASA/GAL reported that the child had teeth that were black and appeared to be rotting or dead. Parents reported that the child was on a lot of antibiotics and they were told this was the cause. Since a pediatric dentist who accepted the Medicaid card would be required, CASA got to work. Through local relationships, CASA found a pediatric dentist who would see the child. After evaluating his teeth, this dentist told CASA that the little boy would need to have most of his teeth extracted and that it would be a major surgical procedure and would involve anesthesia.

#### THE SURGERY CENTER AGREED TO PROVIDE FACILITY AND ANESTHESIA SERVICES TO THE CHILD AT NO COST.

After learning about CASA's advocacy work, the Surgery Center agreed to provide facility and anesthesia services to the child at no cost. The new dentist performed the extractions without incident and has also offered to provide pro bono dental care to the young boy until age 11.

We were all amazed at the response and generosity of community providers coming together to help this boy and help change the course of his future. CASA Kane County's CHILDREN'S CHAMPION CELEBRATION

# THE PLACES Joull Go

SATURDAY, MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2019 Q CENTER | ST. CHARLES

## **EVENT SPONSORSHIPS**

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Ads start from \$250 to \$3,000 | Individual Tickets are \$200 each.

Register now at casakanecounty.org! Sponsor, Attend and/or Purchase a Program Book Ad. Contact Stephanie at stephaniem@casakanecounty.org or call 630.444.3108.

# HOW YOUR *Dollars* MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Served 100% of every Abuse/Neglect and Probate case that came into the 16th Judiciary.
- Provided 12-20 continuing education hours for 225 CASA/GAL volunteers.
- Recruited and qualified 36 new CASA/GAL volunteers in a 50 hour training class.
- Hosted small group trainings CASA by CASA Case by Case and Child by Child.
- Formed a new education and training center for our CASA volunteers and staff.
- Created CASA University for greater advocacy and educational needs.
- Hosted Hands Around the Courthouse Child Abuse and Neglect Awareness Event with our county leadership to be preemptive in the month of April.
- Hosted the Annual Volunteer Recognition Evening to celebrate and acknowledge the mission work of our CASA/GAL volunteers.
- Provided 17 new laptops for greater effectiveness to work in abuse/neglect and probate court & office.
- Provided thousands of dollars in gift and gas cards for youth incidentals, experiences and educational needs.
- Gave 300 backpacks, baby and duffel bags to children coming into court.

## 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SUPER HEROES LUNCHEON



#### WHAT IS A SUPERHERO?

To us, that's easy - it's a CASA/GAL volunteer, Court Appointed Special Advocate that works alongside the court system to provide a caring and guided voice that serves the best interests of abused and neglected children at a time with so much uncertainty.

Along with our donors, leadership and staff, we asked 600 new friends and loyal supporters to do a few things - learn more about the CASA movement by volunteering, donating or connecting. Guests were reengaged by hearing from Exavier B. Pope, a product of the Illinois Foster Care System, who overcame the odds because one person in his life believed that he was 'special.' CASA IS PROUD TO HAVE 200 DEDICATED AND CARING CASA/GAL VOLUNTEERS...

**YOU** too can be a super hero and to learn more about attending next years event - please contact *Vicki Shaw*, Senior Director of Advancement, at **630-444-3100**.

#### THANK YOU TO OUR EVENT SPONSORS

**REGIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION** 









Ed & Karen French Mike & Rosalind Lusk Last year **267** CASA volunteers

spent 22,000 hours advocating

# for 607 abused & neglected children

in the 16th Judicial Circuit Court System.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING THIS POSSIBLE!

## WORDS FROM OUR JUDGE ON THE BENCH,

I rely on CASA volunteers to provide the court with an independent recommendation specific to each child. It is comforting to know the volunteers are meeting with these children, their families, their doctors and teachers—with all those who impact the children's lives—and compiling all of this information in a report to the court.



- ABUSE AND NEGLECT JUDGE



## NEWS FROM THE BENCH

By, Nydia Molina Director of Case Management CASA/GALA Staff Attorney A substantial transformation of the courtroom practices occurred in the past six months. Currently, the courtroom's emphasis focuses on closing cases within the mandated time frame of the Juvenile Court Act (JVA). The JVA mandates a closure date of one year following the court taking temporary custody of a minor. In the unfortunate situation where a minor may not be safely returned home within the mandated time-frame, the court reviews all permanency options to determine what is in the best interest of the child. How does this emphasis impact CASA? It means that we must strive to continue to work harder, ensuring that youth in care receive services as quickly as possible. CASA needs to ensure referrals and meaningful participation by parents takes place promptly following the temporary custody of a youth by the court.

Over the course of the next few months, anticipate requests for more inquiries about the status of visitation plans, referrals, and services for parents earlier in each case. The Court's and CASA's goal is to ensure that youth in care reach permanency goals as quickly as possible and more frequent status hearings seemingly eliminate some of the impediments to that goal.

### ANOTHER EXCITING DEVELOPMENT IN THE COURTROOM INVOLVES CREATING A SPECIFIC DAY EACH MONTH EMPHASIZING THE NEEDS OF OUR OLDER YOUTH IN CARE.

Another exciting development in the courtroom involves creating a specific day each month emphasizing the needs of our older youth in care. Another goal of this undertaking is to provide a forum, with the assistance of our DCFS partners, to immediately resolve any problems, questions, or concerns that arise in court. The Court is highly encouraging the older youth to come to court for their hearings and participate in the discussion of their needs, lives, and future.

Armed with that knowledge, CASA Kane County and our courtroom partners developed new strategies to avoid delay and reach permanency within the required statutory periods. Some of those strategies include modifying existing court orders to make them understandable for parents by clarifying parental obligations and requirements, while also providing more detailed explanations of the court process. CASA Kane County and our courtroom partners believe offering additional assistance from the mediation program at temporary custody hearings will be extremely beneficial. Together we are creating the collaboration our kids need and deserve.

#### CHAIRMAN'S ADVISORY PANEL

A group of community minded professionals that provide support to CASA's mission.

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Nydia Molina Director of Case Management/ CASA Staff Attorney

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CASA Kane County is a non-profit, volunteer organization that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the Juvenile Court system.

PLEASE RECYCLE ME!

#### P: 630.232.4484 F: 630.232.4562 casakanecounty.org 2019 SAVE THE DATES CHILDREN'S CHAMPION CELEBRATION Saturday, March 2 HANDS AROUND THE COURTHOUSE Thursday, April 11 **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION EVENING** Thursday, April 25 **BENEFIT CONCERT** Saturday, May 18 **CLAYS FOR KIDS TOURNAMENT** Friday, September 20 **GOLF FOR A CHILD INVITATIONAL** Monday, August 26