



CASA MATTERS



CASA of the Tennessee Heartland, Inc.

Court Appointed Special Advocates for Abused and Neglected Children

Holiday 2010

Holidays are...

For most of us, holidays are a time to get together with friends and family. To eat a lot of sweets, bake a lot of cookies and exchange a lot of gifts. It can be so easy to take these things for granted, wishing we didn't have to sit through another family dinner hearing the same old stories and jokes that our parents, uncle or cousins have told every Holiday season as far back as we can remember! Maybe to think that it would be nice not to have our homes overrun with out of town family coming in to visit for the holidays. Maybe even to think that going through the hassle of pulling the boxes of decorations up from the basement and hauling in a tree getting pine needles everywhere isn't worth it.

I remember when I was a college student, the buzz around campus after Thanksgiving break was unbelievable! Christmas trees would start going up, everyone would be in the library studying for finals, and the end of semester paperwork would come out letting us all know when the dorms would be closed. Many of us would try and take our finals as early in the week as possible so we could book earlier flights home, or make plans to carpool with others to get back to our hometowns. Not once while I was in college did I wonder where I would be going for the holidays. I never got concerned about trying to stay in my dorm room for as long as I was allowed. I knew I was going home. I would be with my family. My stocking would be hung with care over the fireplace and there would be dinner in the oven. I knew there was a place for me where I had a bed to call my own and people that would be excited to see me. It's not like that for everyone. Many of the children we see in the court age out of the system without ever getting a forever family.

So many of us help at this time of year to give younger children gifts to open on Christmas morning, but we don't think about the college age children who have never been given the gift of a safe and **permanent** home. This year, why not provide a voice of hope to a child in the court, to advocate for them and help find them a permanent placement as quickly as possible, so they will never have to wonder where they can go for the holidays. Give the gift of a CASA volunteer and give a child a forever family.

Thank you! - *Naomi*





From the desk of our Board President...

This fall, the Board of Directors held a strategic planning retreat facilitated by the Knoxville Leadership Foundation's own Stanley Taylor. I left feeling impassioned, energized, and focused and excited about what needs to transpire this year and how the organization will be able to benefit in the short term as well as the long term. I am excited for the future of this agency and know we can make a significant difference in the communities in which we serve.

I was very impressed with not only what Stanley Taylor did but how he did it. He did not direct he merely asked all the right questions, which guided the conversation to allow us to come to our own conclusions regarding what needed to be done and why. The planning session focused on answering the following questions before tackling the need to develop a strategic plan; who we are, what we do and how do we do it. By the end of the planning session, we emerged with the following definitions of who we are, what we do and how we do it.

Who We Are: We are court appointed volunteer advocates who speak up on behalf of abused and neglected children in the juvenile court.

What We Do: Work with the courts to provide a CASA volunteer for every child who needs one within Anderson and Scott County.

How: Empower CASA volunteers through training and utilization of agency resources to speak for the best interest of abused and neglected children in juvenile court.

Four key components were examined as part of the development of this year's strategic plan.

- Increase Financial Vitality
- Develop a Long Term Strategic Plan
- Improve Program Development
- Improve Board Structure and Organization

Goals were established under each of these categories and I would like to share some of the goals with you. Under Increase Financial Vitality, we plan to identify and implement cost saving measures and research and apply for additional grants. Under Develop a Long Term Strategic Plan we plan to develop three and five year Plans in addition to identifying skills needed for future board members. Under Improve Program Development, we plan to increase our efforts in recruitment, retention and recognition of our volunteers as well as utilizing non-court volunteers for special projects. Under Improve Board Structure and Organization, some of the things we plan to do is develop a standardized new board member orientation packet, incorporate non-board members into our committees, establish a succession plan for committee chairs and officers and development of several new committees to support our overall plan for the year.

I would like to add how honored I am to be in this position and to be working with a board who is so passionate about what we are doing. I am excited for the future of this agency and know we can make a significant difference in the communities in which we serve.

Thank you for your continuing support and your help to make a difference in the lives of hundreds of children each year.

- Valerie Smith

A Message from the Executive Director

It's hard to believe that it is the holiday season again already! Although, as I look around and think of everything that we have accomplished since this time last year it almost seems as though it has been a lot longer than 12 months. There has been a lot of transition, but things are moving ahead with full force and the number of lives being changed is continuing to rise. We are counting our blessings this year that as a non-profit agency, we are able to keep our lights on, heat running and offices staffed to support our growing numbers of volunteers changing lives of hurting children in our communities.

Although we are headed in the right direction, we are still in desperate need of more volunteers to reach our goal of providing an advocate for every abused and neglected children in our court systems. This means we have a need for financial support to recruit, train, retain and supervise more individuals from our community to step up and be voices of hope for the many hurting children in our communities. If you, or someone you know, would be interested in finding out more about becoming a CASA volunteer, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Please remember us and the growing number of children coming into custody due to abuse and neglect when planning your year-end giving.

Thank you again for your support!

- Naomi

Who's Who?

President of the Board

Valerie Smith

Treasurer

KC Wright

Board Members

Gary Brandon

Camille Hall

Nicole Geier

Zabin Mansoor

Sarah Roberts

Erika Schmelter

Michael Simpson

Executive Director

Naomi Asher

Administrative Assistant

Carolyn Andrews

Newsletter Editor

Naomi Asher

Vice President

Karen Crutchfield

Secretary

Janis Williams

Board Members

Emeritus

Kay Brookshire

Chris Hayes

Don Jared

Bob Wilkinson

Anderson County

Program Coordinators

Lisa Givonetti

Ashley Bryant-Cheney

Scott County

Program Coordinators

Christy Harness

Rosemary Armstrong



Penguin



What's coming up?

Come join us for the
5th annual Penguin Plunge!
 Saturday, March 5th, 2011
 Oneida City Park
 Registration starts at 11:30AM
 The Plunge will commence at
 approximately 2:00PM

8th annual
Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash
 February 19th, 2011
New location: Hollingsworth
 Center, 2135 N. Charles Seivers
 Blvd. Clinton



Good food, good music, good friends! Live and silent
 auctions - to benefit CASA of the Tennessee Heartland!

Stories from the front lines...

Anderson County Program Up-

dates...

We are currently serving 75 children! Unfortunately, there are an additional 62 children waiting for a CASA volunteer.

We held an Ice Cream Social on August 10, 2010. We made some new CASA friends and had some time to socialize - we are hoping to schedule more events like this, so keep a look out and come join us!

We finished training our new class of volunteers on September 28th! We are now 3 great new CASA volunteers stronger!

We are working on scheduling a Meth training for both our volunteers and other agencies. This Meth training would be given by Dave Clark (the Anderson County District Attorney) and the Meth Task force. This training will be open to the public. More information coming soon!

Mentoring - we are beginning a new CASA mentoring program and already have 6 volunteers who are stepping into mentoring positions! These individuals will be assisting new CASA's on their first case, possibly going on their 1st home visit, answering questions and providing general support. Our first mentor training is coming up soon!

For more information about volunteering with the Anderson County program, call us at (865) 463-6850.

Scott County Program Updates...

Currently, our program has over 50 children waiting for an advocate. Thankfully, we are currently providing a voice for 48 children in our court system.

We want to welcome Rosie! Our new Advocacy Coordinator who started in October and really hit the ground running! She will be doing volunteer supervision, recruitment and retention. We are blessed to have her working with us!!

The days are becoming a bit colder but your heart can be warmed by saving the date of March 5, 2010 to be in attendance for CASA's 5th Annual Penguin Plunge at the Oneida City Park. Event participants, also known as human penguins, will don bathing suits or costumes and their courage to benefit CASA. Come join us!

Also, remember that the 1st Monday of every month at El Rey's is Dine Out for CASA! El Rey's generously gives a portion of their proceeds that day to our program. Not only do you get great food, but you can also help in providing every abused and neglected child in our community a CASA volunteer. El-Rey's is open from 11:00am to 10:00pm.

Former foster child Pamela Butler says "To give a child a CASA volunteer is to give them a voice. To give them a voice is to give them hope, and to give them hope is to give them the world." For more information on becoming a CASA volunteer or other ways to help the Scott County program, please call (423) 663-8943.

CASA's Volunteers of the Year!

Misty Blevins - Misty has served a total of 11 children, since being sworn in as a Scott County CASA volunteer in November 2008. Several of these cases have entailed numerous hours of researching medical, mental, health and alcohol / drug treatment records. Because of Misty's relentless investigation, the lives of the children she has served have been changed for the better. Misty has provided very lengthy reports to the court in an attempt to make available all the information possible for the Juvenile Court Judge. Judge Cotton has commended Misty on numerous occasions for her hard work and dedication to CASA and the children she works with.

Hella Peterson - Hella has been a dedicated volunteer in Anderson County for 6 years. She is the consummate professional. Her reports are outstanding, and her insights are always helpful to the Court. Hella is persistent, and her ability to draw information from people always impresses us. She has been a role model to many of her fellow CASAs; in trainings she is often looked to for advice from her peers. Hella never backs away from a challenge. When we have given her a choice of cases, she always takes the worst, most painful case, telling us that she wants to help where she's needed the most. She has taken cases where previous CASA volunteers had to step down and gives her all to achieving the best possible outcome for the children involved.



Where are we?

Administration Office:

12 Van Hicks Rd.
PO Box 4426
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Anderson County
Program Office

Anderson County
Court House, Rm 115
Clinton, TN 37716

Scott County
Program Office

575 Scott High Drive
PO Box 158
Huntsville, TN 37756

www.casatnh.org

**If you would like to receive email updates from us, please send an email to:
Naomi@casatnh.org - Subject: newsletter**



If you have questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact us, or stop by one of our offices. We are available by phone, fax, regular mail or email. We would love to speak with you!

Contact information:

Administrative Office:

865-425-0888 (P) / 865-482-9977 (F)

Naomi - Naomi@casatnh.org

Carolyn - Carolyn@casatnh.org

Anderson County Program Office:

865-463-6850 (P) / 865-463-9197 (F)

Lisa - Lisa@casatnh.org

Ashley - Ashley@casatnh.org

Scott County Program Office:

423-669-8943 (P) / 423-663-8945 (F)

Christy - Christy@casatnh.org

Rosie - Rosie@casatnh.org

Save The Dates

Come visit our booth at the Jackson Square
Holiday Market December 3rd-4th

Catch goodies from us at the Anderson County
or Scott County Parades December 4th or the
Oak Ridge Parade December 11th

Make plans to attend the 8th annual "Barbeque
and Bluegrass Bash" February 19th, 2011

Start building your bravery for the 5th annual
Penguin Plunge, March 5th, 2011

Keep your eyes open for chances to go on sale
for our "Take a Chance for CASA's Kids"
raffle, drawing will be held June 25th, 2011



CASA of the Tennessee Heartland

P.O. Box 4426

Oak Ridge, TN 37831

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Community Partner

