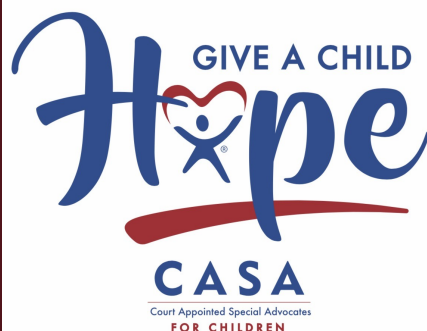


KEARNEY/BUFFALO COUNTY CASA *Winter* NEWSLETTER



Christmas with CASA



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA wanted to make sure all of the children we were serving received a Christmas gift to help make their Christmas just that much brighter. We received generous donations from the Faith United Methodist Church in Kearney in addition to the Minden United Methodist Church Women's Group. We thank you.



2018 December Volunteer of the Month: Amir Rizik



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Amir Rizik of Kearney for his advocacy for abused and neglected children. Amir has been with CASA since November 2017 and has been doing an amazing job. Amir has one case that he has had since November 2017. CASA Supervisor, Jessica Knoell shares, "Amir is an advocate with ambition. He began this case with the intent to do it greatly and that he has. Amir has great points and ideas, is not afraid to ask questions, stays in contact with the child and keeps me up to date with the case. Amir has built a great relationship with the CASA child and family, and understands what that child needs and wants."

Amir shared, "I chose to become a CASA advocate for a lot of reasons. The main reason was, I wanted to make sure that I encourage and help as many kids as possible to do the right thing and to dream big. Getting the job done is a huge achievement and a great feeling that can't be explained."

Amir wants everyone to know, "Becoming a CASA advocate is a huge deal. If you feel like you can give these amazing kids the attention they deserve, you should become a CASA."

2019 January Volunteer of the Month: Catherine Kingsley



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Catherine Kingsley of Kearney for her advocacy for abused and neglected children. Catherine has been with CASA since April 2018 and has been doing an amazing job. Catherine has served two families since she began her journey as a CASA Volunteer. Both of these families have been a distance away. Catherine has been dedicated to traveling to see her families on a monthly basis. She does an incredible job working with the team on each of her cases and communicates any questions, suggestions, or concerns she has. Catherine is fantastic about getting paperwork turned in on time. She works hard on her CASA reports and does a fantastic job in writing them. In addition to her two CASA cases, Catherine also serves on the Board of Directors and the Resource Committee.

Catherine said, "I chose to become a CASA volunteer because I love children. It means so much to me that I am able to help scared, confused, neglected and abused children who are in the foster care system. I've been wanting to volunteer somewhere for several years now, and coffee with a friend turned into a meaningful discussion about CASA. I did some research and decided I was interested in volunteering as a court appointed special advocate for children. If you would like to help make a positive impact in the lives of children and their families in the foster care system, I encourage you to consider becoming a CASA volunteer. I had no idea how important the role of a CASA was until I went through training. A CASA volunteer is the child's voice in the courtroom. We are also the eyes and the ears of the court. We help ensure foster children's needs are met, and we help them find a safe and forever home. I am proud to be the voice of children in need."

February Volunteer of the Month: Kelsi Trampe



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is honored to announce Kelsi Trampe of Kearney as CASA Volunteer of the Month for February, 2019, for her advocacy of abused and neglected children. Kathy, CASA Volunteer Supervisor states "Kelsi began training to become a CASA Volunteer in August of 2018, upon deciding it was time that she start serving children through volunteer work. From that time on she has hit the ground running and has never stopped. Kelsi took on her first case the day after she was sworn in as a Court Appointed Special Advocate and now carries two cases. Kelsi's caring personality and big heart show just by listening to her speak in regards to her CASA kiddos and she truly wants the very best for all of them. Kelsi is just one of those people you don't have to ask to do anything, whether it is to attend meetings, visit with the kids, court hearings, therapy sessions, medical appointments, daycare, etc. She already has it scheduled in her planner and is ready to go. Being a CASA Volunteer with multiple cases requires a combination of multi-tasking and organization, which seems to be very natural and easy for Kelsi. I believe with Kelsi having been a school teacher prior to this brings a lot of knowledge and understanding not only of the children, but also of the system and how it works. Kelsi lets no stone stay unturned when it comes to her CASA kids and stands up for these children when no one else would allowing them to have a voice. As Kelsi's supervisor I feel very lucky to have her be a CASA Volunteer. My wish would

be that Kelsi continue to be with CASA for many more years."

Kelsi Trampe states "I am so honored to have been chosen for this recognition so early in my service as a CASA volunteer. I have always had a passion for working with children. I graduated college with an elementary degree, and was so lucky to have taught so many wonderful children in the five years that I taught. I now stay home with my daughter due to the lack of childcare available in the Kearney area. The first year I stayed home, I struggled personally. There was something missing in my heart, and it was not having the ability to work with children outside of my own regularly. Luckily, one of my friends mentioned CASA to me. I remember thinking "What is CASA?" After looking into it more, I decided that participating in the training wouldn't hurt, then I would really know if it was for me. After doing the training, I knew CASA was where I was meant to be. After all, it would be so selfish of me if I didn't put my education background and passion for children into those that are our future. When visiting 'my children' every week, it melts my heart seeing their eyes light up when they see me, the 'I love yous' I get at the end of every visit, and their excitement to show me new things they have learned or enjoy doing. There is nothing more rewarding than being part of a child's growth. I am beyond grateful to be able to be the voice for the many children in our foster care system, and to be their 'safe place'. I hope to continue making a difference in many children's lives in the future, and witness those that I work with now to grow and thrive in our community. I encourage anyone that has a passion for children and spare time to educate themselves on what CASA provides for our youth. They deserve to have someone in their corner."

CASA ADVOCATE BIRTHDAY'S



MARCH

Sam Arehart
Kathie Merritt
Christy Bochart
Ashley Whitley
William Aviles
Emily Lyons
Bryce Ann Bell
Catherine Kingsley

APRIL

Rita Skiles
Kathleen McAdams
Sarah Jordan

MAY

Nicole Peterson
Diana Luscher
Ramona Sexson
Jean Kolbo
Courtney Arram
Denise Bryan
Jenna Josjor
Donna Ehrenberg
Seleste Bruce
Heather Crowley
Teresa Carey

CEU: 2018-2019

Each year our CASA advocates are required to complete 12 CEU's or continuing education units. Our fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. The following advocates who have worked very hard and earned their CEU's for this fiscal year 2018-2019 are:

**Rebekah Bennetts
Cheryl Echtenkamp
Barb Icenogle
Jean Kolbo
Lona Mason
Mary Louise Nelson
Kelsi Trampe
Ashley Whitley
Bob Zuehlsdorf**

Fantastic Job!!!!



Upcoming New Volunteer Trainings:

April 2019-Kearney

Why I Volunteer

"I have marveled at the number of people and organizations that care for and support vulnerable children of all ages. The dedication and hard-work of these people and organizations may not always be rewarded, but the children that they have helped will remember that somebody cared. Just knowing that sometime, somewhere, the person(s) that I may help as a CASA volunteer, will benefit from that help and will strive to become a better person."

~Robert Zuehlisdorf

"We're called to help others. This is a way we can be involved directly in someone's life and come alongside those who need help. Being a CASA volunteer has really stretched me. I'm dealing with issues I have never had to think about before. At the same time it has been really rewarding. I've had a chance to meet some wonderful, caring people and I've been really impressed with what has been happening to make sure kids don't get lost in the legal system through CASA."

~Ron Eckloff

"I am truly inspired by how hard DHHS caseworkers, GAL attorneys, and foster parents work together for the best interests of the kids. My CASA supervisor is also always there when I need her."

~Connie Broweleit

"I have strong feelings for the underdog. Especially under privileged children. There's a gratification for helping those who need it. Being a CASA Volunteer has helped me realize I have a gift to share with others."

~Tim Peterson

"Upon retirement, having served the Nebraska Courts, both in the Juvenile and Adult arenas for 40 years, I felt compelled to see if I might be able to make a difference with some of these Dependent and Neglected kids, in an effort to help them avoid making poor choices and ending up in adult court later on. So many of these kids, especially the older ones, become numb to the idea of sitting in court hearings, time after time. That mindset needs to be changed for them to live a happy fulfilled life, hopefully with the help of CASA volunteers."

~Kent Lilly

"I originally became a CASA because I felt that I had lived too many years in Kearney without doing more for a community that I consider my home. CASA is also a good fit with my general worldview in that it is focused upon supporting children and parents who lack many of the options that I was fortunate to have. I have been amazed at the diverse roles that CASAs play as volunteers such as regular conversation with children, therapists, parents, and foster parents. In addition, writing court reports, meeting with case workers and reviewing case plans and judicial rulings. Of course, there are also snow ball fights, climbing trees, running in parks, playing "cookie monster", reading stories or having a group of children take you by the hand to see a sunset from their backyard."

~Will Aviles

"I joined CASA because I remember what it was like being a foster kid & I just want to help kids find their happy ending. All I ever wanted was my own happy ending."

~Tiffany Coufal

"I wanted to become a CASA volunteer, because I believe that God gives us a heart to serve those in need, especially those without a voice. I was an Advocate for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault victims for many years; but, last year, when I moved to Buffalo County, God was leading me in a different direction. I began to learn more about the CASA Program, and realized that I needed to be part of what CASA is doing to help children. I can really see where an invested CASA Volunteer is a must, for every child in the Court System. Working with the families this last year has been so rewarding and I encourage anyone who is looking for a place to serve in their community, to consider becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate. (CASA)"

~Ramona Sexson

"I have always had a passion for foster care, but am not yet in a season of my life where taking in a foster child is an option. However, I kept getting called back and didn't know where God was leading me. One of my good friends had recently adopted her foster son and was telling me about her CASA and what a difference they made in her case and I was like "what in the world is a CASA?" After she explained that it was volunteer based I immediately knew that's what I was being called to. It is a privilege that I am given the opportunity to provide support for not only these children for the entirety of their time in the system, but their mommas, their foster parents, and even bridge communication between different parties on the case including attorneys and case workers. To be a CASA is to be the voice for your foster child and to be a face that is present and positive for the entire team in a way that can truly make a difference in both the outcome of the case and these families' lives forever."

~Samantha Arehart

In-Service: 1/29/19

An In-Service training was held in Holdrege on January 29, 2019. Our first set of guests included Attorney, Lee Greenwald and HHS Permanency Supervisor, Nicole Hersh. Lee and Nicole really did a nice job of painting a picture of the adoption process within HHS and then the court process. Christina Millsap did a nice job helping volunteers to learn what they can be doing during this time to advocate for their children.

Our next guest was Tom Maxson, LIMHP, LADC, MAC, SAP. Tom has been in therapeutic practice since 1999. He outlined three different treatment options that we often see in our advocacy which include, CBT, EMDR, and DBT. He was able to help us recognize with the children and parents we serve, how to advocate for their mental health needs.

Lastly, our last set of guests, CASA Volunteer Ramona Sexson and Mother, Jackie Richards spoke about how CASA was helpful to this family. A success story.



Give Where You Live 2018



Give Where You Live is a 24-hour fundraising event created to rally community support for local charitable causes. This unique one-day fundraiser is organized by the Kearney Area Community Foundation. Community members are asked to make donations and show support for the local nonprofit organizations that positively impact our lives every day. Kearney Buffalo County CASA was truly blessed not only this year, but every year with all of the generous donors who helped us to not only meet our fundraising goal, but exceed it!

We raised a total of \$8,058.59 during Give Where You Live!!! Thank You to everyone who donated!!

Men in Tights 2019

We had a very successful 6th Annual Men In Tights event on February 8th! The show was sold out with 516 in attendance. We at CASA, are so thankful to all that came, shared lots of laughs, and supported the Kearney/Buffalo County CASA office. Miss CASA 2019 is John Ross and People's Choice is Shawn Engberg!



Men In Tights 2019



Phelps/Harlan County Men In Tights 2019

Save The Date!!!
Men In Tights
March 21st
6pm
Ag Center



Phelps & Harlan County **CASA** Presents:

MEN IN Tights

THURSDAY, MARCH 21ST
DEADLINE IS MARCH 18, 2019

CONTESTANTS

- JASON HINES
- DR. JEFF BERNEY
- ROBERT HORST
- WESTON GUSTAFSON
- KEITHEN HAMILTON
- SETH ZELLER
- MICHAEL MCCONNELL
- SCOTT HAMILTON
- CHARLES PEREZ

TICKETS AVAILABLE

GIFTS & THINGS
HOLDREGE

THE STATION
ALMA

CALL CASA OFFICE
(308) 995-2102

EVENT LOCATION
AG CENTER 1308 2ND
HOLDREGE

SOCIAL HOUR @ 6

DINNER @ 6:30



ruralMED
MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

OXFORD

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

Donors in November and December 2018, and January 2019

**Kearney/Buffalo County CASA would like to
thank the
following donors for not only donating to**

Crime Commission

John & Maxine Lillis

Titan Machinery Inc.

KAAPA Ethanol Joldings

Faith United Methodist Church

Mr. & Mrs. Christensen

Ace Irrigation and MFG.

Krull Agency Inc.

**Contemporary Obstetrics and
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**Kearney Region Medical
Center**

**Intellicom Computer
Consulting**

Cuningham Lakeside Inc.

Wood River Dairy

Bokenkamp Family Foundation

Clevenger Propane

Caring Transitions



Quarter: November 1, 2018 to January 31, 2019

Children served:	157	<u>Children's Age Range</u>	<u>Case Outcome</u>
Cases Closed:	30	0-5: 61	Adoption: 10
Waitlist:	0	6-11: 59	Reunification: 16
		12-15: 26	
Male:	81	16-17: 8	
Female:	75	18+: 2	

<u>Our Volunteers time w/ CASA</u>	<u>Ages of Our Volunteers</u>	<u>Type of Cases</u>
< 1 year: 13	21-29: 7	Neglect: 144
1 year: 15	30-39: 9	Physical Abuse: 9
2 years: 8	40-49: 8	Sexual Abuse: 1
3 years: 8	50-59: 9	Other: 1
4 years: 2	60+ : 13	
5 years: 6		

Miles driven by our Advocates:	6045	SAVINGS: 6045 \$.545 = \$3,294.53	Mileage
Hours our advocates put in:	769	769 x \$75 = \$57, 675	Hours
# of New Advocates:	0		
# of Active Advocates:	52	\$60, 969.53	TOTAL SAVINGS
# of advocates with more than 1 case:	13		

Upcoming Events

April-Child Abuse Prevention Month
-Look for our Pinwheel Gardens!!!!

Holiday's

February 18th- President's Day

April 26th- Arbor Day

May 27th- Memorial Day



Board of Directors

Jayne Meyer-*President*
Adam Bruning-*Vice President*
Secretary/Treasurer
Elizabeth Chrisp
Nick Hansen
David Hoyt
John P. Icenogle
Catherine Kingsley
Matt Larson
Janine Podany
Delvin Schmidt
Ramona Sexson

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Adam Bruning-*Vice President*
Jayne Meyer-*Treasurer*
Marcia Davis
Lynette Elo
Nick Hansen
Catherine Kingsley
Matt Larson
Janine Podany
Alex Schwarz
Emily Thompson
Celeste Wells

Meet Our CASA Advocates!!

Lorissa Anderson
Samantha Arehart
Courtney Arram
William Aviles
Bryce Ann Bell
Rebekah Bennetts
Christy Bochart
Connie Broweleit
Denise Bryan
Seleste Bruce
Steve Buttress
Theresa Carey
Tiffany Coufal
Heather Crowley
Shawntel Daniell
Gale Dorn
Ron Eckloff
Cheryl Echtenkamp
Donna Ehrenberg
Wanda Fedorchik
Dorothy Feese
Julianne Fitch
Ellen Geist
Angela Gibreal

Maria Graham
Brandon Graves
Anna Hernandez
Ramona Hill
Cathryn Hohnholt
Barbara Icenogle
Kaleigh Johnson
Sarah Jordan
Jenna Josjor
Atricia Kenagy
Catherine Kingsley
Amanda Kirkland
Jean Kolbo
Kent Lilly
Bridget Limbach
Roberta Loescher
Emily Lyons
Diana Luscher
Linda Martin
Lona Mason
Kathleen McAdams
Vickie Meier
Kathie Merritt
Matthew Mueller

Mary Louise Nelson
McKenna Peplinski
Jessie Perez
Nicole Peterson
Tim Peterson
Griselda Ramirez
Amir Rizik
Jeri Runions
Sara Schriener
Misti Schroeder
Jere Sue Schroer
Ramona Sexson
Caroline Sikes
Rita Skiles
Jordan Smith
Robin Stevens
Kurt Tarkington
Susan Tonniges
Kelsi Trampe
Ashley Whitley
Dora Wilbur
Linda Younes
Robert Zuehlsdorf

16 W 11th Street
PO Box 2288
Kearney, NE 68848

Phone: 308-865-5675
Fax: 308-865-9202



Christina Millsap
Executive Director
Ext. 117
kearneybuffalococasa1@mnca.net



Margot Icenogle-Larsen
CASA Advocate Supervisor
Ext. 115
casa@mnca.net



Jessica Knoell
CASA Advocate Supervisor
Ext. 134
kearneybuffalococasa2@mnca.net



Kathryn Nantkes
CASA Advocate Supervisor
Ext. 146
casa2@mnca.net

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA

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Court Appointed Special Advocates are appointed by the Court judge to represent the best interest of abused and neglected children in the court system. A CASA volunteer acts as the "eyes and ears" of children involved in court proceedings, and offer judges a critical perspective of what is in the best interests of each child, based on information gathered first-hand through research, interviews, and observations. Studies show that once a CASA volunteer is assigned to an abused or neglected child that the child is much more likely to receive vital services such as health care, education, and therapy. By getting involved as a CASA, you can help create healthier families and communities and change the course of a child's life.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN



United Way
Kearney Area
Partner Agency