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Save the Date!!

Men In Tights

February 23, 2018



MEET OUR NEW STAFF

We at CASA are super excited to have Jessica Knoell join our CASA team. Jessica started Friday, June 16th and will work 24 hours a week. She has been an active CASA Volunteer for Phelps/Harlan County CASA for two years and has a case with four children. Jessica is a stellar CASA volunteer. She has a great relationship with the family and providers on her case, writes a fantastic CASA report, and is very timely. Holdrege is where Jessica, her husband Daniel Knoell, and 5 children call home. Her family loves having movie/pizza night and watching the Huskers, GO BIG RED! She has always loved helping others and helping to make their lives better. This is what brought her to CASA which she started in November of 2015. Jessica earned her Associate of Arts degree and is now working through her Bachelor of Science in Behavioral Science. She has a 4.0 GPA and will graduate in March of 2018.



Jessica Knoell



Darrel Miller

Also starting in the month of June: Darrel Miller. We are super excited to have hired Darrel Miller to work 40 hours a week. He started work on Monday, June 26th. He graduated from UNK in 1998 with his B.S.E , Middle School Education. He has experience teaching , Employee Resource Manager, then as a social worker for Visinet, Boys and Girls Homes, and Lifenet. Darrel has had a long experience in working with children. He went to university for teaching, taught five years, and then moved on to social work. From working with the developmentally disabled to families in crisis, he has developed a wide range of human service skills. But all work and no fun makes Darrel a duller person, so he likes to spend his time drawing comic books, reading comic books, Star Trek, Star Wars, and Mythology. Oh and he likes to walk.

June Volunteer of the Month: Kathie Merritt

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Kathie Merritt of Kearney for her advocacy for abused and neglected children. Kathie has been a CASA for 3 months and is doing a stellar job advocating for two families for whom she is Court Appointed Special Advocate. In those three months, Kathie has gone above and beyond and put in over 17 hours on her cases and driven over 114 miles. She spends this time and energy to make sure her CASA children's needs are heard and then she collaborates with the team to address the children's needs and expressed desires. Kathie makes sure all the services needed are in place for both her CASA children and the children's parents to ensure the child's needs are being met. Kathie puts in the drive time to see her CASA children at least one time each month and has regular phone contact with members of the team. Kathie is very detailed in her investigation and knows her cases well. She jumps right in and quickly establishes herself as part of the team.

Kathie shared, "I became a CASA volunteer because I know there are a lot of families struggling and need help coping with everyday life. My eyes and heart have been opened to more than I could have imagined and I already feel that CASA volunteers are needed and are an important part of our community. As intimidating as the process of our job can be (court, team meetings and reporting) I am enjoying my role in helping the future of our children."



July Volunteer of the Month: Ramona Sexson



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Ramona Sexson of Gibbon for her advocacy for abused and neglected children. Margot Icenogle-Larsen, Ramona's CASA Supervisor, says, "Ramona has been a CASA for eleven months and is doing a stellar job advocating for two families, or five children for whom she is Court Appointed Special Advocate. In those eleven months, Ramona has gone above and beyond and put in over 170 hours on her cases and driven over 1,958 miles. She spends this time and energy to make sure her CASA children's needs are heard and then she collaborates with the team to address the children's needs and expressed desires. Ramona makes sure all the services needed are in place for both her CASA children and the children's parents to ensure the child's needs are being met and that are more likely to be met in the future. Ramona puts in the drive time to see her CASA children at least one to two times each month and has regular phone contact with members of the family teams. She consistently connects with me and provides the necessary paperwork. Ramona writes a fabulous court report complete with lots of detail. She makes sure to submit her reports early to ensure the attorney's on her cases and the Judge have time to review her updates and recommendations."

Ramona shared, "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)"

CEU CENTRAL

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

Will Aviles
Steve Buttress
Tiffany Coufal
Shawntel Daniell
Gale Dorn
Cheryl Echtenkamp
Ron Eckloff
Wanda Fedorchik
Dorothy Feese
Julianne Fitch
Kathryn Gifford
Josseline Gonzalez
Ramona Hill
Robert Hobbs
Barb Icenogle
Kelly Jensen
Atricia Kenagy
Jean Kolbo
Connie Larsen

Kent Lilly
Bridget Limbach
Roberta Loescher
Diana Luscher
Emily Lyons
Katie McAdams
Lisa McGuire
Kathie Merritt
Matt Mueller
McKenna Peplinski
Nicole Peterson
Tim Peterson
Misti Schroeder
Jere Sue Schroer
Ramona Sexson
Rita Skiles
Jordan Smith
Ashley Whitley
Bob Zuehlsdorf

CASA VOLUNTEER BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER

Cheryl Echtenkamp
Juliane Fitch
Steve Buttress
Bridget Limbach
Wanda Fedorchik
Jody Lonn
Lisa McGuire
James Hudson

OCTOBER

Dorothy Feese
Jordan Smith
Marilyn Kenton
Linda Younes
Ellen Geist

NOVEMBER

Roberta Loescher
Gale Dorn

DECEMBER

Shawntel Daniell
Tammy Linner
Amy Latter
Tatiana Long
Kent Lilly
Connie Larsen
Robin Stevens
Tiffany Coufal

JANUARY

Matthew Mueller
Misti Schroeder
Robert Zuehlsdorf
Barbara Icenogle
Tim Peterson
Lisa Tolles

Upcoming New Volunteer Trainings:

Kearney

Starts August 31st!!!

For an application, call 308-865-5675!



KEEP
CALM
AND
Be An
Advocate

The Heart of a CASA

Karl Borg
August 15, 1946
~
July 2, 2017



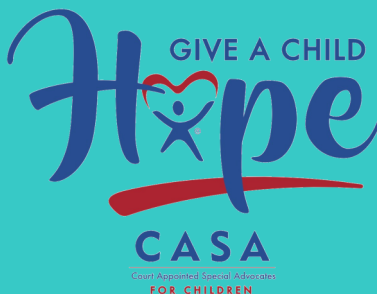
When we heard about the passing of Karl Borg (August 15, 1946-July 2, 2017) the staff at Kearney/Buffalo County CASA wanted to reflect on this special CASA volunteer.

Karl enjoyed helping others and over the years was active in Funk First Responders, Red Cross, Funk Lions, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Court Appointed Special Advocates. Karl was a CASA volunteer for Phelps and Harlan County CASA since January 2017. When we have someone step up and become a CASA Volunteer, they become our family. When we lose one, due to any reason, our family has to find strength to move on. We all wish the entire Borg family our greatest sympathy in this time of loss. Karl was an amazing CASA advocate that will never be forgotten.

Exactly what does a CASA volunteer do?

CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children in court and other settings. The primary responsibilities of a CASA volunteer are to:

- **Gather information:** Review all documents and records, interview the children, parents, family members and professionals (teachers, therapist, doctor, family support, visitation worker, case worker, foster parents, foster care support, etc) in their lives, and attend family team meetings.
- **Document findings:** Provide written reports (CASA Reports) at court hearings.
- **Appear in court:** Advocate for the child's best interests and provide testimony when necessary.
- **Explain what is going on:** Help the child understand the court proceedings.
- **"Be the glue":** Seek cooperative solutions among individuals and organizations involved in the children's lives. As one volunteer said: *Be the glue that connects the pieces in a complicated child welfare system.*
- **Recommend services:** Ensure that the children and their family are receiving appropriate services and advocate for those that are not immediately available. Bring concerns about the child's health, education, mental health, etc. to the appropriate professionals.
- **Monitor case plans and court orders:** Check to see that plans are being followed and mandated review hearings are being held.
- **Keep the court informed:** Update the court on developments with agencies and family members. Ensure that appropriate motions are filed on behalf of the child so the court knows about any changes in the child's situation.



TUTU CASA POWER!!!

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA held a fundraiser that ran from May 30th to June 30th. Our goal was to reach \$6,000. We would like to thank all of you who donated and continue to support CASA. Not only did we reach our goal, but we surpassed it, raising \$7,468. We greatly appreciate your support to our program, our mission, and most importantly our CASA Children.

Part of our fundraiser including bagging groceries at Hy-Vee for tips! Those pictured are the following: Robert Zuehlsdorf, Adam Bruning, Margot Icenogle-Larsen, Christina Millsap, Jessica Knoell, Darrell Miller, and Justine McIntire.



WAYS TO HELP KEARNEY/BUFFALO COUNTY

1. Be a CASA Volunteer!
2. Monetary donations help us to continue to train new volunteers to serve children of Kearney and Buffalo County.
3. Donate office supplies: These supplies help us to do our daily work for these volunteers and children and are always needed:
 - A. Printer Paper
 - B. Post It Notes
 - C. Security Envelopes
 - D. File Folders
 - E. White Out
 - F. Pens
4. Help us to grow our Video and Book Library for our Volunteers to earn CEU's.

Fiscal Year: July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017

Children served: 127	<u>Children's Age Range</u>
Cases Closed: 37	0-5 =68
Waitlist: 43	6-11 =53
	12-15 =15
	16-17 =5
	18+ =3

<u>Our Volunteers time w/ CASA</u>	<u>Ages of Our Volunteers</u>	<u>Type of Cases</u>
< 1 year: 12	21-29=4	Neglect: 122
1 year: 10	30-39=8	Physical Abuse: 16
2 years: 13	40-49=7	Sexual Abuse: 3
3 years: 5	50-59=4	Other: 3
4 years: 3	60+ =18	
5 years: 5		

Miles driven by our Volunteers:	24,385
Hours our volunteers put in:	2,685
# of New Volunteers:	12
# of Volunteers:	59
# of Active Volunteers:	48

Board of Directors

Dave Hoyt-**President**
Dr. David Benavides-**Vice President**
Ryan Carson-**Secretary/Treasurer**
Barbara Braun
Adam Bruning
Cody Dvorak
John P. Icenogle
Jayne Meyer
Delvin Schmidt
Ramona Sexson
Vicky Sharkey
Tanya Wegner

Resource Members

Cody Dvorak-**President**
Tim Peterson-**Vice President**
Tanya Wegner-**Secretary**
Jayne Meyer-**Treasurer**
Adam Bruning
Marica Davis
John D. Icenogle
Cody Krull
Celeste Wells

Meet Our CASA Volunteers!!

Courtney Arram
William Aviles
Christy Bochart
Connie Broweleit
Steve Buttress
Shannon Cameron
Theresa Carey
Connie Choquette
Tiffany Coufal
Gale Dorn
Ron Eckloff
Cheryl Ecktenkamp
Wanda Fedorchik
Dorothy Feese
Ellen Geist
Angela Gibreal
Kathryn Gifford
Josseline Gonzalez
Ramona Hill
Robert Hobbs

James Hudson
Barbara Icenogle
Janna Ingram
Julianne Jeffris-Fitch
Kaleigh Johnson
Atricia Kenagy
Marilyn Kenton
Jean Kolbo
Connie Larsen
Amy Latter
Kent Lilly
Bridget Limbach
Roberta Loescher
Jodi Lonn
Tatiana Long
Emily Lyons
Diana Luscher
Linda Martin
Kathleen McAdams
Lisa McGuire

Kathie Merritt
Matthew Mueller
McKenna Peplinski
Nicole Peterson
Tim Peterson
Andrea Potthoff
Jeri Runions
Misti Schroeder
Jere Sue Schroer
Ramona Sexson
Rita Skiles
Jordan Smith
Robin Stevens
Lisa Tolles
Ashley Whitley
Deb Woolen
Linda Younes
Robert Zuehlsdorf

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA

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.

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