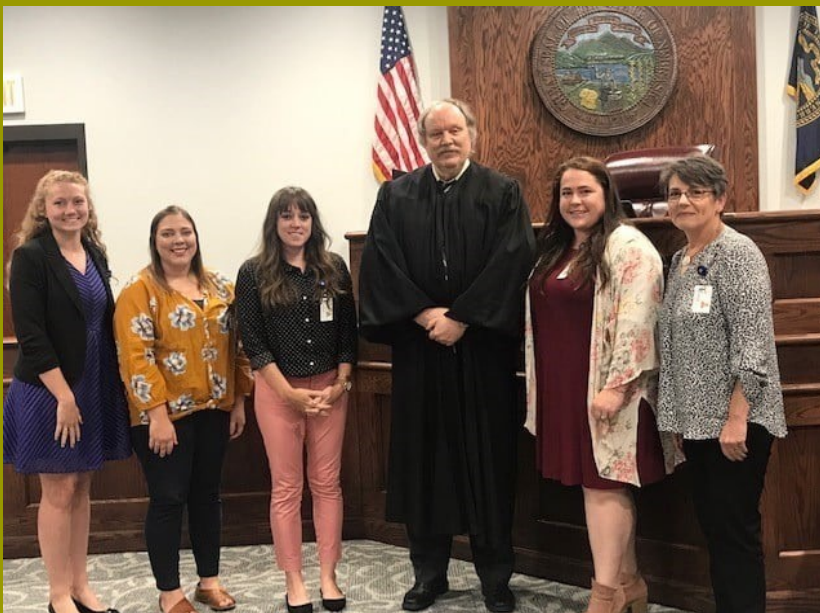


KEARNEY/BUFFALO COUNTY CASA *Fall* NEWSLETTER



Volunteer Training



The volunteers
were sworn in on
September 2, 2019
after 4 weeks of
training.

Welcome to the CASA Team

Penny Jeffrey
Emily Perrin
Mary Rackley
Megan Seyler
Breinn Sullivan



Kent E. Lilly
December 9, 1946-August 25, 2019



When we heard about the passing of Kent Lilly, the staff at Kearney/Buffalo County CASA were deeply saddened and wanted to reflect on Kent and his humanitarian spirit. Kent spent his life looking out for others and helping everyone he could. Kent began his CASA journey in April of 2014 when he completed the New Advocate 30-hour pre-service training. He served as a CASA advocate in over two cases from 2014 to 2019 and spent many hours working with his CASA family, totaling 76.9 hours. Some of the children he served were not placed in Kearney and he spent a lot of time on the road, totaling 803 miles. In addition to all of the time and miles, Kent continued to earn continuing education credits. He put in 23.25 continuing education credits during his time with CASA.

Kent gave so much to CASA and the CASA children he served. Kent has helped so many in his life along the way. Kent enlisted with the U.S. Air Force and served for four years. Upon his discharge from the Air Force, he attended Kearney State College and earned a bachelor's degree in business administration.

He married JoAnn in 1967.

Kent served the state of Nebraska as a state probation officer in Kearney. He was appointed a chief probation officer in 1979 serving nine Nebraska counties in what was then referred to as Probation District 17. Following a restructure in the probation system, he served as chief deputy probation officer in District 9 serving Buffalo and Hall counties. He ended his decorated career in 2012 after 40 years of dedicated service.

During his career, he served on many committees both as an adviser and chair, including Region III Alcohol Advisory Services Board, statewide policy procedure committee and others. He was instrumental in helping write statewide policies over the years. He also helped to establish the Kearney Probation Reporting Center, which now offers a wide variety of services to offenders. In 2006 he was awarded the Nebraska Probation System Supervisor of the Year award.

Kent was an active member of First Presbyterian Church where he served as a deacon and elder. He also served as a scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 136.

Kent will always be remembered for his heart and strong will to serve others.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 2019

KENT LILLY



It is our Honor and Privilege to award Kent Lilly as CASA Advocate of the Year for Two-Thousand Nineteen. This is the first year this award has been given to anyone and we couldn't be more proud to have this go to Kent. Kent's supervisor Kathryn Nantkes states, "When those of us here at CASA made the decision to honor our very first CASA Advocate of the Year, we all knew right away we wanted our first one to be Kent. Kent has just been such a huge blessing to CASA and he has given so much of his time to all of his cases and to the children that are involved, and has accepted them with absolutely no complaints and always with a smile on his face."

"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



SEPTEMBER VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

MARY LOUISE NELSON



is

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Mary Louise Nelson of Kearney for her advocacy for abused and neglected children. CASA Supervisor Jessica Knoell shares, "Mary Louise has been a CASA Volunteer for a year now. She recently had a case close and she still stays in contact with her CASA kid. She has a special way of communicating with the teenagers on her cases and is able to build a lasting bond with them. She currently working on another case where she travels to Lincoln to visit her CASA kid. Mary Louise is such an extraordinary and dedicated CASA."

Mary Louise shares, "I retired from teaching in 2017 and quickly realized how much I missed being around kids. CASA has re-opened that door for me and I have made meaningful relationships with the children who are assigned to me. I believe every child deserves an advocate, especially those in troubling situations. In my short time with CASA, I have seen such a positive impact on the children we support. I am proud to help children achieve successes in life in spite of the obstacles placed in front of them."

JULY VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

SUSAN TONNIGES



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Susan Tonniges of Kearney for her advocacy for abused and neglected children. Susan has been with CASA since June 2018 and has been a blessing. Kathy Nankes stated "From that time, she has been carrying two cases, which is obviously double the work. Susan is always ready to help however needed. Her personality is such that she can get along with anyone, which is so important when you are a CASA Volunteer, as you are constantly having to work with many people on your case or in Susan's case, both of them. It is also so important to stay organized and be prepared for meetings, court, child visits, etc. Susan

excels at this part of her CASA Volunteer duties as well.

Susan states "I believe that it is important for all of us to help others. Help comes in many forms; from being involved in a large organization to showing kindness to a single person. I do believe that it is important to focus your efforts in areas that make a difference. As a CASA Volunteer, I am not changing the world or making it a better place for everyone, but I have the opportunity to help make it better for one child. I can focus my energy on helping this one child through a very difficult time and hopefully be a positive influence in that child's life. It breaks my heart to think of a child in the Court System, trying to cope and express their needs and wants to an adult world. As a CASA Volunteer, I can give this child a voice and make sure his or her needs are made known. I can give this child a sense of stability and be a consistent presence in a sea of changing faces and situations."

CASA ADVOCATE BIRTHDAY'S



MAY

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

JUNE

Ron Eckloff
Leslie Muff
Anna Hernandez
Atricia Kenagy
Linda Martin
Kelsi Trampe
Lorissa Anderson
Susan Tonniges

JULY

Jeri Runions
Brandon Graves
Jere Sue Schroer

AUGUST

Jessie Perez
Connie Broweleit
Caroline Sikes
Amir Rizik

CASA ADVOCATE BIRTHDAY'S



SEPTEMBER

Cheryl Echtenkamp
Julianne Fitch
Steve Buttress
Maria Graham
Amanda Kirkland
Bridget Limbach
Rebekah Bennetts
Wanda Fedorchik
Christine Pfeifer
Mary Rackley
Eva Linn
Griselda Ramirez

OCTOBER

Christina Teager
Dorothy Feese
Jordan Smith
Linda Younes
Ellen Geist

NOVEMBER

Roberta Loescher
Gale Dorn
Cathryn Hohnholt

DECEMBER

Bill Elliott
Lona Mason
Sara Schriener
Julie Bernhardt
Robin Stevens
Tiffany Coufal

CEU: 2019-2020

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. Here are some opportunities for CEU

November 8th—Mental
Health First Aid—Lexington

April-Nebraska CASA
Conference

June 16-17 2020—Nebraska
Young Child Institute-Kearney

Keep Up the hard work!

Upcoming New Volunteer Trainings:

January 2020-Kearney

Why I Volunteer

"I grew up in a home with loving parents who took the time to meet our needs as well as create individual relationships with all five of us children. They were excellent role models while doing so. As a child myself, I saw kids I knew struggle with abuse and neglect. At that time, I believed I helped by befriending them. Those were memories of feeling helpless to make things better but still hoping for something better. Then in later years, as a teen, I realized that kids don't tell. They suffer silently or together, still loving the adults that are mistreating them. Through the years I continued to see children that wouldn't tell and suffered. These children were overlooked partly because the signs they displayed weren't recognized as warning signs. My heart and soul have been burdened since I can remember for these children. Some of them have grown to be adults and still suffer from their past. I've been able to help at times and at other times said prayers from a distance. Several years ago, the HUB ran an article about CASA to which my interest to participate was great but the needs of my own family were foremost and prevented a decision to participate. Recently at the beginning of this year, a colleague and I discussed their involvement with CASA and what was required. After that discussion, I felt in my heart that it was time to get involved. This is an opportunity to love these children, to be someone they can trust, to be their friend, and to be their voice to the court. I am honored and grateful to be able to be a part of the CASA program—to make a difference in the life of a child." - **Denise Bryan**

"Deciding to Volunteer was not a question deciding where to volunteer was the question! I wanted to volunteer for something that I truly believed I could make a difference and an impact which led me to CASA, I have truly been blessed with the families and children I have worked with I know that volunteering for CASA has very much made an impact in my life showing me that the time in is not what's important it's the HEART that is put in that makes the difference." - **Heather Crowley**

"I love making a difference—even if it's only one person at a time." - **Bridget Limbach**

"I used to be a teacher, I have four grown children of my own, but all of my grandchildren live far away. Being around these youths and their families is a good kind of challenge – something I've missed. I really enjoy building relationships with them and knowing that I play a vital part in my CASA kids' well-being. Children cannot pick their parents, but as they grow, these children can affect their future, and I want to have a part in that. To anyone looking for a valuable way to improve the future of our community's youth by volunteering, don't be afraid that this is too difficult for you! The CASA team prepares you with the right tools and training to be of real assistance, and they are just a phone call away to answer questions and offer help. It's really about working with all kinds of people to make sure your CASA kids are secure and loved." - **Linda Martn**

"I want people to know that we need more volunteers to become advocates. There are always families that need support. CASA helps families in many ways. CASA advocates look at the whole picture and can help with what's best for the child(ren). If you have always wanted to help others in your community but don't have a lot of time, I suggest that you become a CASA advocate!" - **Maria Graham**

"I became a CASA to help kids and also in hopes that I could start a career working with children. I would like to tell people that CASA is a great place to volunteer, not only do you get to meet amazing children but you get to become a role model for the kids who truly need a strong one." - **Anna Hernandez**

"It is a great opportunity to make things better in folks' lives and I'm seeing lives change. We're here to help each other get through this, whatever 'this' is." - **Steve Buttress**

"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." - **Kathie Merritt**



Summer of 2019 Night Markets

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE
VOLUNTEERS WHO
HELPED TO MAKE
THESE EVENTS
SUCCESSFUL!**



COFFEE WITH CASA



COFFEE WITH CASA



Come join us in
November at
Daylight Donuts



**Thank you Ramona,
Samantha, Kelsi and
Roberta for sharing
your experiences as
CASA volunteers!**



**Thank you to all the
volunteers who
attended the
in-service in August.**

Special Thanks



Thank you **Heather** for your generous donate of a bed.



Thank you
Matt Mueller and Matt Larson
for helping
deliver and set up beds for a
CASA family in need.



Thank you
JOANN LILLY
for the generous
donation. The
funds will be
used to provide
the CASA
children with
a wonderful
Christmas as per
Kent's wishes.

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA would like to thank the following donors for not only donating to our program, but their continued support of our program.

Dobytown Kiwanis

United Way

Kearney County Commissioners

Golden K of Kearney

Julie Krull

Anonymous

Buffalo County Visitor Promotion Committee

Steve and Suzann Christensen

Buffalo County Commissioners

Goodwill Industries

John and Maxine Lillis

Dance Works

NE CASA Association

John & Maxine Lillis

Mr. & Mrs. Christensen

Buffalo County Commissioners

Quarter: May 2019 to September 2019

Children served:	151	<u>Children's Age Range</u>	<u>Case Outcome</u>
Cases Closed:	24	0-5: 55	Adoption: 11
Waitlist:		6-11: 48	Reunification: 8
		12-15: 35	
Male:	74	16-17: 9	
Female:	77	18+: 4	

<u>Our Volunteers time w/ CASA</u>	<u>Ages of Our Volunteers</u>	<u>Type of Cases</u>
< 1 year: 15	21-29: 6	Neglect: 138
1 year: 16	30-39: 12	Physical Abuse: 9
2 years: 8	40-49: 11	Sexual Abuse: 1
3 years: 8	50-59: 11	Other: 1
4 years: 4	60+ : 13	
5 years: 8		

Miles driven by our Advocates: 13,915	SAVINGS: 13918*\$.545 = \$7,583.68 Mileage
Hours our advocates put in: 1325	1325 x \$75 = \$99, 225 Hours
# of New Advocates: 5	
# of Active Advocates: 59	\$106,808.68 TOTAL SAVINGS
# of advocates with more than 1 case: 7	

Upcoming Events

Holiday's

October 14th - Columbus Day
 November 11th—Veteran's Day
 November 28th—Thanksgiving
 December 25th—Christmas



Board of Directors

Jayne Meyer-*President*
Matt Larson -*Vice President*
**Elizabeth Klingelhofer-
*Secretary/Treasurer***
Adam Bruning
Catherine Kingsley
Delvin Schmidt
Ramona Sexson
John Lanning
Emily Thompson

Resource Committee

Emily Thompson -*President*
Adam Bruning-*Vice President*
Jayne Meyer-*Treasurer*
Lynette Eloë
Jessie Johnson
Matt Larson
Janine Podany
Celeste Wells
Tanya Wegner

Meet Our CASA Advocates!!

Lorissa Anderson
Samantha Arehart
Courtney Arram
Corey Atchison
William Aviles
Bryce Ann Bell
Rebekah Bennetts
Julie Bernhardt
Christy Bochart
Connie Broweleit
Denise Bryan
Seleste Bruce
Steve Buttress
Theresa Carey
Tiffany Coufal
Heather Crowley
Gale Dorn
Ron Eckloff
Cheryl Echtenkamp
Donna Ehrenberg
Bill Elliott
Wanda Fedorchik
Julianne Fitch
Ellen Geist
Maria Graham

Brandon Graves
Anna Hernandez
Ramona Hill
Cathryn Hohnholt
Barbara Icenogle
Penny Jeffrey
Sarah Jordan
Jenna Josjor
Atricia Kenagy
Catherine Kingsley
Jean Kolbo
Eva Linn
Bridget Limbach
Roberta Loescher
Emily Lyons
Diana Luscher
Linda Martin
Lona Mason
Vickie Meier
Kathie Merritt
Matthew Mueller
Leslie Muff
Mary Louise Nelson
McKenna Peplinski
Jessie Perez

Emily Perrin
Nicole Peterson
Tim Peterson
Christine Pfeifer
Griselda Ramirez
Mary Rackley
Amir Rizik
Jeri Runions
Sara Schriener
Jere Sue Schroer
Ramona Sexson
Megan Seyler
Caroline Sikes
Jordan Smith
Robin Stevens
Breinn Sullivan
Kurt Tarkington
Christina Teager
Susan Tonniges
Kelsi Trampe
Ashley Whitley
Linda Younes
Robert Zuehlsdorf

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

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



Margot Icenogle-Larsen
Interim Executive Director
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

Jodi Richards
CASA Advocate Supervisor
Ext. 146
jrichards.casa@mnca.net

Kearney/Buffalo County CASA

Follow us:

Website: <http://kearneybuffalocountycasa.com/>

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Twitter: @KBCASA

Instagram: kearneybuffalococasa1

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