

KEARNEY/BUFFALO COUNTY CASA *Winter* NEWSLETTER



SAVE THE DATE

On June 11th, we are hosting our First Annual CASA Superhero GALA.

Tickets are \$60/person or \$600 for a table of 10

To purchase tickets or to be a sponsor, contact Margot at our CASA office at
308-865-5675

or

stop down at our office at 16 West 11th Street. We are located in the Mid Nebraska
Community Action office building.



Meet Our New Volunteers

Class of October 2020

Pictured the right is Chris Overman and Tina Huynh as they are being sworn in by Honorable Judge John Rademacher on October 29th, 2020.



Swearing in is the final step of the new volunteer training process. These volunteers completed a 30 hour in person new volunteer training class. They learned many topics that include, the court system, how cases come in, abuse and neglect, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, and writing a CASA report.

Class of February 2021

Pictures to the left are Kristina Syring, Wendy Peoples, and Linda Boucher as they are sworn in by Honorable Judge Gerald Jorgensen on February 24, 2021



JANUARY VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH:

Jane Foutch



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor Jane Foutch of Kearney for her advocacy for abused and neglected children. CASA Supervisor Jessica Knoell shares, “Jane completed her CASA training in January 2020. She is working on two cases with a total of three children. Jane is a compassionate advocate in her work. She sees the hardships that are on the entire family and works hard to make a difference in their lives. I enjoy working with Jane on her cases. She asks questions so that she may understand better how the process works and to make sure she writes informative reports. Jane is truly dedicated to the CASA children that she serves.”

Jane shares, “When reading the Kearney Hub one evening I remember seeing a church members name in an article for Volunteer of the Month for CASA. After reading the article with a description of what CASA is, I cut it out and put it by my calendar to call the number listed when timing was right for me. After a year or so passed, I continued to feel the description of a CASA volunteer described something I wanted to be trained to help with. Once I learned all children do not have a safe environment growing up in, I thought if ever I could help a child in a tough situation that would be a wonderful reward.”

Since Jane began her volunteer work, she has continued to make a difference in the children’s lives. Jane stated, “Since becoming a volunteer a year ago, I have become more comfortable in my volunteer role and have gained new knowledge in working with children. So probably at this time I would have to say I have benefited more than given. I want to continue to learn and have the opportunity to help, so someday I will feel I have made that huge difference in a child's life. For now, I’m grateful getting to know each of my CASA kids and supporting the wonderful foster families they live with. I truly see how important a safe environment will make a difference for a child and being an advocate for them adds to that safety.”

FEBRUARY VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH:

Roberta Loescher



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA is proud to honor CASA Volunteer Roberta Loescher as Volunteer of the month for her advocacy of abused and neglected children. Margot Icenogle-Larsen, Executive Director states, "It is a true blessing and honor to have Roberta as one of our CASA Volunteers. Roberta began her journey as a CASA Volunteer just over 8 years ago. Since joining CASA, Roberta has served 15 children or 6 families and has served on our Volunteer Recruitment Committee. While working her cases, she has put in 1,279 hours and drove 1,574 miles. Roberta is a very strong advocate for the children she serves and ensures their needs and best interest are at the forefront at all times. She goes above and beyond on all of her cases attending team meetings, court hearings, testifying in court, attending visits between parents and their children, and speaking to everyone on the case to ensure she sees and learns all of the facts of a case. This helps her to identify the needs and best interest of each child she serves. We thank Roberta for all of her hard work and dedication."

Roberta states, "After learning about CASA it was a very simple decision why I wanted to become a CASA volunteer. Children deserve to know they live in a safe, learning environment to be able to thrive. Children deserve a permanent family whether with bio parents or thru adoption. Children do not deserve the trauma that will be carried thru their life time. Children deserve to know daily that they are loved unconditionally. Someone needs to be the voice for these children. I decided nine years ago to be one of those voices for a child. Be a voice for a child and be that someone that does something to change a life. It may also change your life."

CASA ADVOCATE BIRTHDAY'S

JANUARY

Matt Mueller
Robert Zuehlsdorf
Barb Icenogle
Tim Peterson

FEBRUARY

McKenna Peplinski
Vickie Meier
Tina Huynh

MARCH

Sam Brunken
Megan Seyler
Kathie Merritt
Christy Bochart
Ashley Whitley
Corey Atchison
Emily Lyons
Bryce Ann Bell
Catherine Kingsley

Happy
Birthday

APRIL

Marci Shipley
Jane Foutch

*We wish all of our CASA Volunteers
the happiest of birthdays and many
more to come!*

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES AT AMHERST ELEMENTARY



Kearney/Buffalo County CASA was truly blessed this year! Amherst Elementary students, faculty, and families made such a generous donation to our office. Many children who we serve will have a brighter day because of YOU! We want to take this opportunity to give a very special thank you to all who donated. All of you will and have made such an impact in the lives of the children we serve.

CEU: 2020-2021

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. We want to recognize all of the hard work our volunteers put in not only on their cases, but continuing to learn and grow as a CASA Volunteer.

Keep Up the hard work!

Linda Boucher
Jane Foutch
Barb Icenogle
Bethany Janzen
Margot Icenogle-
Larsen
Roberta Loescher
Michael Meyer
Megan Morris

Megan Olsen
Wendy Peoples
Jodi Richards
Angela Scarrow
Elizabeth Seger
Ramona Sexson
Margaret Spencer
Kristina Syring
Ashley Whitley

**Next Training for
CEU's:**

**August 2021
Nebraska CASA
Conference**

Upcoming New Volunteer Trainings:

April 2021

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

"After learning about CASA it was a very simple decision why I wanted to become a CASA volunteer. Children deserve to know they live in a safe, learning environment to be able to thrive. Children deserve a permanent family whether with bio parents or thru adoption. Children do not deserve the trauma that will be carried thru their life time. Children deserve to know daily that they are loved unconditionally. Someone needs to be the voice for these children. I decided nine years ago to be one of those voices for a child. Be a voice for a child and be that someone that does something to change a life. It may also change your life."

-Roberta Loescher

"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 Martin**

"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**

"When reading the Kearney Hub one evening I remember seeing a church members name in an article for Volunteer of the Month for CASA. After reading the article with a description of what CASA is, I cut it out and put it by my calendar to call the number listed when timing was right for me. After a year or so passed, I continued to feel the description of a CASA volunteer described something I wanted to be trained to help with. Once I learned all children do not have a safe environment growing up in, I thought if ever I could help a child in a tough situation that would be a wonderful reward." - **Jane Foutch**

Christmas for CASA 2020



Each Year, Kearney/Buffalo County CASA gives each abused and neglected child who is in the court system a Christmas gift. This year, we were able to provide Christmas gifts to 160 children and make their holiday's a little brighter.

Meet Our New CASA Volunteer Supervisor



Meet our new CASA Volunteer Supervisor, Kristina Syring. Kristina was raised in Kearney and is just finishing her bachelors degree in Family studies at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Kristina was originally going to only be our intern during the Spring semester, however, the position opened up and she applied. She began her journey with CASA on January 28, 2021. She completed her new volunteer training during the February 2021 session and is very excited to be with CASA.

**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.**

July 1, 2020-March 31, 2021

Sayler Screenprinting, LLC
United Way of Greater Cleveland
UMed Spa, A Wellness Collective, LLC
Nebraska CASA Association
Apple Market
Dr. David Kingsley
Rhonda Artrup
World Theatre Foundation
Kearney County
First Presbyterian Church
Network for Good
John and Amy Bettles
John and Maxine Lillis
Bethany Home, Inc.
Amazon Smile
Arch Placement, LLC
Arthur and Julie Roach
Ted Baldwin Foundation
Buffalo County
The Leroy Thom, Jean Thom, and T-L Foundation Inc.
Carol Olsen
Kearney Area Community Foundation
City of Kearney
Give Where You Live
Roberta and Linda Ard
Pamela Bowen
Janice Kennedy
Stuart Johnson
Tanya Wegner
Breinn Sullivan
Dani Peisiger
Elizabeth Klingelhofer

Quarter: January 2020 to December 2020

Children served:	234	<u>Children's Age Range</u>		<u>Case Outcome</u>	
Cases Closed:	89	0-5:	85	Adoption:	18
Waitlist:	5	6-11:	72	Reunification:	48
		12-15:	43	Transfer Out of County:	6
Male:	113	16-17:	24	Independent Living:	1
Female:	118	18+:	7	Guardianship:	13
				Aged Out:	3

<u>Our Volunteers time w/ CASA</u>	<u>Ages of Our Volunteers</u>	<u>Type of Cases</u>
< 1 year: 10	21-29: 12	Neglect: 174
1 year: 20	30-39: 9	Physical Abuse: 54
2 years: 9	40-49: 13	Sexual Abuse: 0
3 years: 9	50-59: 13	Other: 3
4 years: 4	60+ : 15	
5+ years: 10		Counties:
		Buffalo: 221
		Kearney: 10

Miles driven by our Advocates: 23,028 SAVINGS: $23,028 \times \$0.545 = \$12,550.26$ Mileage
 Hours our advocates put in: 4,441 $4,441 \times \$75 = \$333,075$ Hours

of New Advocates: 16
 # of Active Advocates: 62

\$345,625.26 TOTAL SAVINGS

Upcoming Events
SAVE THE DATE
CASA Superhero GALA
June 11, 2021
Younes Conference Center



Holiday's
April 30-Arbor Day
May 31-Memorial Day

Board of Directors

Matt Larson, *President*
Vice President,
Elizabeth Klingelhofer
Dani Peisiger, *Secretary*
Susan Tonniges, *Treasurer*
Delvin Schmidt
Emily Thompson
Breinn Sullivan
Stuart Johnson
Lindsay Davis

Resource Committee

Emily Thompson -*President*
Lynette Eloë
Jessie Johnson
Matt Larson
Celeste Wells
Angie O'Brien
Nicole Berggren
Mark Labouchardiere

Meet Our CASA Advocates!!

Lorissa Anderson
Courtney Arram
Corey Atchison
Bryce Ann Bell
Julie Bernhardt
Kasey Bibler
Christy Bochart
Linda Boucher
Connie Broweleit
Denise Bryan
Seleste Bruce
Samantha Brunken
Theresa Carey
Tiffany Coufal
Gale Dorn
Ron Eckloff
Cheryl Echtenkamp
Donna Ehrenberg
Bill Elliott
Wanda Fedorchik
Julianne Fitch
Jane Foutch
Ellen Geist
Shannon Haussermann
Anna Hernandez
Ramona Hill

Cathryn Hohnholt
Tina Huynh
Barbara Icenogle
Tiffany Jacoby
Bethany Janzen
Penny Jeffrey
Jenna Josjor
Atricia Kenagy
Catherine Kingsley
Jean Kolbo
Bridget Limbach
Roberta Loescher
Emily Lyons
Linda Martin
Vickie Meier
Michael Meyer
Kathie Merritt
Megan Morris
Matthew Mueller
Leslie Muff
Monica Murillo
Megan Olsen
Chris Overman
McKenna Peplinski
Jessie Perez
Emily Perrin

Wendy Peoples
Nicole Peterson
Tim Peterson
Christine Pfeifer
Mary Rackley
Jodi Richards
Amir Rizik
Jeri Runions
Marci Shipley
Angela Scarrow
Sara Schriner
Jere Sue Schroer
Elizabeth Seger
Ramona Sexson
Megan Seyler
Caroline Sikes
Margaret Spencer
Breinn Sullivan
Christina Teager
Susan Tonniges
Kelsi Trampe
Ashley Whitley
Linda Younes
Robert Zuehlsdorf

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Kristina Syring
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Kearney/Buffalo County CASA

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

Facebook: Kearney/Buffalo County CASA

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.

Mission Statement:

To recruit, train and coach community volunteers to assist the court system on behalf of abused and neglected children. We strive to advocate for a safe/stable environment, permanency, and the opportunity to thrive.

Vision Statement:

We envision a well-trained team of advocates to provide a voice for every abused and neglected child in the court system within our community.

Core Values:

Making a difference, compassionate, engaging, reliable, understanding, and educated.

