

CASA PROGRAM OF ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, INDIANA

THE CASA MONTHLY

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY 1, 2012

CASAS ARE INTEGRAL IN PREVENTING RE-ABUSE OF CHILDREN

In the state of Indiana in 2011, there were six children who died due to severe abuse or neglect. Ultimately, the perpetrators are the ones to blame for these heinous acts, but there have been several reports on the quality of services offered by the Department of Child Services (DCS).

[A recent article in the Indy Star](#) addressed the unsettling fact that the “rate at which children suffer repeat abuse or neglect within six months of DCS intervention” remains unchanged at 8% since 2004. While DCS has hired more case workers and has taken a “family preservation approach” when assessing challenges and successes, questions have been raised about the

appropriate usage, quality, and application of service for families.

It is worthwhile to note that many DCS case managers try to effectively address the needs and accomplishments of each family in care. However, this Indy Star article discusses the “urgency and tenacity” amongst the case managers, and how each investigation ultimately comes down to the traits of the individual.

That said, the same ideas of “quality,” “urgency,” and “tenacity” can—and should—be applied to each CASA who is assigned to a child who has been abused or neglected. It is the duty and responsibility

of each CASA to work with the DCS Family Case Managers (FCM) to prevent re-abuse of children, wherever they are placed.

Collaboration is key when working on behalf of CHINS children, and CASAs should remain in contact with their FCMs, work together to find a safe and permanent placement, and keep FCMs aware of any new information gathered.

As with all things, teams are only as strong as the weakest link, and our CASA children cannot afford any more weak links in their lives.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

- Sandra C.
- Lisa G.
- Nancy K.
- Elizabeth S.
- Lou-Ann S.
- Joanna W.

Happy Birthday!

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SHARE YOUR NEWS AND IDEAS WITH *THE MONTHLY*

Several CASAs have mentioned that they feel disconnected from their old classmates from training once they were sworn into the Court.

And while being a CASA is a role that is to be done individually, we encourage and invite all CASAs to share any exciting news, worthwhile ideas, or any questions with *The*

Monthly. We intend *The Monthly* to be a brief news source for CASAs, as well as an interactive forum for news and questions amongst CASAs.

Contact *The Monthly* at casa@jjconline.org with news, ideas and questions, and we will try to feature these items in upcoming issues.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

INTERACT WITH *THE MONTHLY*. Share news, ideas and questions.

MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT: GAYLEN W.

The Monthly recognizes Gaylen W. as the CASA of the Month! Gaylen has been a CASA for almost three years, and he is currently assigned to two cases. To call him “diligent” is an understatement.

For one of his cases, he was CASA to six children, and he worked hard with all of the providers to find a safe adoptive home for five of the six children. As for the sixth child, Gaylen has gone above and beyond the expected role of a CASA. Gaylen is almost a

“grandfather figure” to the child, and she relies on him for his advice and his participation in her life. He has been consistent and attentive with her, and he even attends her school plays.

With respect to his other case (that involves four children), Gaylen regularly visits them and submits detailed reports to his supervisor every month. While he is a strong advocate for these children, Gaylen has also worked with the parents to push

them in the right direction to take ownership for their actions, and he encourages them to participate in their services. Gaylen’s wisdom has been a crucial force in his advocacy, and he has realized the necessity to also support the parents to figure things out so the children can (hopefully) return to a normal, safe environment.

CASA Supervisor Erin states that Gaylen “writes and submits fantastic reports,” and his genuine care and thoroughness allows him to be a successful CASA and an influential

advocate for his CASA children.

The Monthly thanks Gaylen for all that he does for the CASA Program and for our CASA children!

CASA ANNIVERSARIES: FEBRUARY 2012

2 YEARS:

STEPHEN W
THOMAS B
BRANDY B

1 YEAR:

JOSEPH A
HETTY C
KELLY G
CHRIS H
JOY K
NANCY K
SUSAN L
SARAH T
BRIAN W

WE APPRECIATE ALL
THE TIME YOU SPEND
WITH THE CHILDREN +
FOR THE CHILDREN!

BOOK CLUB RECOMMENDS *SHOT IN THE HEART*

The author of *Shot in the Heart*, Mikal Gilmore, was the youngest child in a family that suffered from serious dysfunction and violence. Mikal tells a riveting story about his brother, Gary Gilmore, and Gary’s infamous crime: the heinous murder of two Latter Day Saints

workers. Mikal reconnects with Gary before he was sentenced to death, and the author explores his family’s past and delves into the long-lasting effects from years of child abuse. In addition to the abuse, Mikal explains that his father was an alcoholic and scam artist, and the

family was constantly moving.

Eventually, these family problems destroyed the Gilmores, and the lives of the children would be forever changed.

NATIONAL CASA PROVIDES ONLINE RESOURCES

National CASA has updated their web site, www.casaforchildren.org, and it includes an array of useful articles and tools for CASA volunteers. Some of the new highlights include links to stories about CASA in the news, CASA blog entries, podcasts, and other useful information to learn more about the child welfare system at a na-

tional level. Furthermore, www.casaforchildren.org is particularly valuable for volunteers to stay informed about the goings-on with the CASA program at large.

The Monthly encourages all CASA volunteers to check out these new features on the National CASA web site and to sub-

scribe to the [National CASA Blog](#) to remain up-to-date with all things CASA.

FIND CASA OF SJC

WEB SITE: WWW.SJCCASA.ORG

FACEBOOK: [CASA PROGRAM OF ST. JOSEPH COUNTY](#)

TWITTER: [@CASAOFSJC](#)

FEBRUARY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- SUBMIT YOUR MONTHLY HOURS + REPORTS TO YOUR SUPERVISOR
- THE CASA OFFICE IS CLOSED ON THE 20TH
- CASA IN-SERVICE: FEBRUARY 27 AT 5:00 PM
TOPIC: CHANGES AT DCS
RSVP: 574.233.2272