

THE *CASA BRIEF*

A Newsletter for Volunteers, Friends and Supporters of Douglas County CASA

**Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children
Volume 20, Number 1 - JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2011**



JEAN SHEPHERD ROOM DEDICATED AT CASA OFFICE

With dozens of friends, colleagues, family members and CASA volunteers and staff on hand, Judge Shepherd performed the official ribbon cutting to dedicate the new *Jean Shepherd Room* at Douglas County CASA on December 15. Pictured above, Judge Shepherd's grandchildren assist with the ribbon cutting ceremony at the CASA office. The room features a sign above the doorway with letters painted by CASA children, volunteers and staff (sign is pictured at right). The *Jean Shepherd Room* is used for children's activities, volunteer meetings and trainings, and other small gatherings. A tribute to Judge Shepherd and her years of service in child welfare and family court law, the *Jean Shepherd Room* provides a meaningful legacy that will be enjoyed by the vulnerable children served by CASA and their CASA volunteers for many years to come. The first female Judge appointed in Douglas County in 1984, Judge Shepherd retired in January. She founded Douglas County CASA in 1991 and the Citizen Review Board in 1986. Her legacy inspires us all.



SHEPHERD SHOE FUND TO ASSIST COMMUNITY'S AT-RISK YOUTH

In honor of Judge Shepherd's retirement, a special shoe fund to help provide footwear for at-risk youth to participate in sports, marching band, dance, and other extracurricular activities has been established. Douglas County CASA will administer this fund. If you would like to contribute to the Shepherd Shoe Fund, tax-deductible contributions may be sent to Douglas County CASA, 1009 New Hampshire, Suite B, Lawrence, KS 66044.





Help Them Get There Be a Mentor

National Mentoring Month (NMM) is the time each year when our nation spotlights the importance of mentors and the need for every child to have a caring adult in his or her life. When you serve as a mentor, you enrich your own life as much as you do the life of a child.

January is National Mentoring Month

- [Become a mentor](#) in your community.
- [Learn more](#) about mentoring.
- [Partner with a mentoring organization.](#)
- Tell 5 friends about National Mentoring Month.
- Make a donation to a [mentoring organization in your community.](#)
- [Go to YouTube](#) on Thank Your Mentor Day™ (January 25) and make the National

Mentoring Month videos the most popular of the day. Visit www.nationalmentoringmonth.org

LOCAL YOUTH MAKE A DIFFERENCE: GIRL SCOUT GOLD AWARD PROJECT PROVIDES PLAYHOUSE FOR FOSTER HOME



Community service is an important tradition in the Girl Scouts organization, and Douglas County CASA was honored to be the recipient of an extraordinary service project completed by Free State High School juniors Melinda Landgraf and Hannah Whipple. For their Girl Scout Gold Award project, Hannah and Melinda designed, constructed, and donated a charming playhouse that was placed in an area foster home. This project required more than 65 hours of volunteer work, which included months of planning and recruiting donated supplies. Due to an assorted mix of donations and resources, Hannah and Melinda had to draw heavily upon their creativity to design and build this special playhouse. Their design was inspired by various birdhouses decorated by CASA children.

The teens have been in Girl Scouts for a combined total of 20 years and both have achieved the Girl Scout Silver Award. For their Gold Award project, they decided to attempt a unique project that required a variety of skills and would make a positive difference for children in foster care. The end result was a charming playhouse that was a dream come true for vulnerable children in the community. Despite cold temperatures, the playhouse received a heart-warming welcome in its new home and the walls are already echoing with the laughter of excited children.

The playhouse is pictured above left; at right are Melinda Landgraf and Hannah Whipple sharing a smile in the CASA office after their project was completed.



Pictured at left are CASA Board Member Eric Hiebert, Director Diana Frederick, Hannah Whipple, Melinda Landgraf, and CASA Board President Brad Kemp. Hannah and Melinda were honored at the Douglas County CASA board meeting at Lawrence Memorial Hospital on January 12. The Girl Scouts were presented with certificates of appreciation acknowledging the impact of their Gold Award project.

***WITH SYMPATHY ...
In Memory Of Emma Hohenstein***

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to CASA staff member **Diane Mosher** and her family following the death of Diane's mother, Emma Hohenstein, in December. In lieu of flowers, Diane requested that donations be made to the Douglas County CASA Children's Clothing Fund. Emma worked in the Minnesota school system for many years and loved children. We are honored that CASA is the beneficiary of this memorial and our gratitude is expressed to Diane and the other individuals who contributed to this important fund.



Make a Difference in the Lives that Follow – Consider a Planned Gift to Douglas County CASA

In Memory Of Howard Grant O'Connor

Douglas County CASA was honored to receive memorial gifts in memory of Howard Grant O'Connor, who died in September. Our sincere sympathy is extended to Mr. O'Connor's family and friends. Mr. O'Connor worked for the Kansas Geological Survey at KU from 1948 until his retirement in 1989. Our gratitude is extended to the various individuals and groups who provided memorial gifts to CASA. These tributes to Howard Grant O'Connor will support Douglas County CASA's services to abused and neglected children.

OUR WISH LIST ...

- ☺ **JAYHAWKS (stuffed animals) – large and small!**
- ☺ **Tickets to KU basketball games (for CASA kids to attend with their volunteer)**
- ☺ **Journals and gel pens, decks of cards**
- ☺ **Kleenex and toilet paper**
- ☺ **Diaper bags**
- ☺ **Monetary donations for the CASA Kids Clothing Fund**
- ☺ **Monetary or in-kind donations (e.g., movie and bowling passes) for the CASA Child/Volunteer Activity Fund. Special thanks to the generous donor who provided seed money for this important need!**
- ☺ **Monetary donations to the Shepherd Shoe Fund**
- ☺ **Gift cards to Walmart, Target, Kohl's, JC Penney, and Best Buy.**



Volunteer Profile: CASA Making a Difference in San Diego



The Cause: Voices for Children

Jenna Price, 45

Hometown: San Diego

Family: Husband, Joseph; daughter, Audrey, 10

Jenna Price and Jacob*, 14, love spending time together, but she isn't Jacob's mom or teacher. She's his Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)—and the reason that Jacob, a former foster child, now has a permanent home.

CASA volunteers are assigned by judges to look after abused and neglected kids in the foster care system. These mentors are often the only constant in a childhood filled with changing homes and faces. Since CASA's 1977 inception, its advocates have served more than 2 million kids.

Jenna, a former attorney and current stay-at-home mom, was at a work event 12 years ago when she heard about CASA's San Diego chapter, Voices for Children, and she signed up

immediately. "There's potential in all of these children," says Jenna, who has since overseen seven foster kids. "They just need someone to pay attention to what's going on in their lives."

In 2005, Jenna met Jacob, then 9. Since entering foster care three years earlier, he had moved six times. Jacob was scared and angry, and he had trouble trusting people. Because of his multiple placements and emotional instability, he had been deemed "unadoptable," meaning he would be in foster care until age 18. But Jenna had hope for Jacob. Rather than concentrating on his past troubles, she focused on what the two of them could do in the present to shape a positive future. Jenna built his trust by spending time with him—they'd go on hikes and visit the zoo together.

She worked tirelessly to find Jacob the right classes and teachers to help him succeed at school, and she went to court to fight for his right to a foster home that could meet his needs. When Jacob was 11, the court saw his progress and reversed the unadoptable decision; soon after, he met the couple who became his adoptive parents.

Jenna's experience with CASA has taught her that by being there for a child you can create enormous and exciting changes in his life. "Kids like Jacob have been through so much," she says. "But there's still this wonderful spirit inside."

Originally published in the February 2011 issue of Family Circle magazine.

**Name has been changed.*



Save the Date: CASA and CRB Anniversary Celebration –

Tuesday, April 26 at Maceli's, 4:30-6:30 pm

Join us to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of Douglas County CASA and the 25th Anniversary of the Citizen Review Board. This is a celebration you won't want to miss!

CASA volunteers are everyday citizens judges appoint to advocate for the safety and well-being of children who have been removed from their homes due to parental abuse and neglect. They stand up for these children and change their lives. CASA volunteers have helped more than two million children find safe, permanent homes.

THANK YOU! YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

A special THANK YOU is extended to all of our wonderful CASA friends who have shared financial and in-kind donations to support Douglas County CASA's services to abused and neglected children. We are grateful for your generous support.



Pictured above left are **Dru Sampson and Karen Warner with P.E.O. Chapter GQ**. Dru and Karen delivered handmade scarves, blankets, jewelry cases, and other items from their P.E.O. group to brighten the holidays for CASA children. In the photo above right, Dru Sampson presents CASA Director Diana Frederick with a check for \$2,500 from P.E.O. Chapter GQ; their chapter held a special fundraiser for CASA in November. This financial donation was presented at the Jean Shepherd Room dedication on December 15.



In the photo above left, **2010 CASA Board President Mary Boatright (left) accepts a check from Kappa Alpha Theta philanthropy chair Libby Johnson (right)** at the November board meeting. At right, **Susan Ralston presents a check to CASA Director Diana Frederick** from proceeds of Trinity Episcopal Church's annual Ploughman's Lunch.

The Advocate

A special section for our Douglas County CASA Volunteers

We extend a warm welcome to new CASA volunteers who joined our program at the end of 2010:

Jessica Edie, Clarissa Howley and Michele Ritchey

Jessica is a former social worker with KVC; Clarissa and Michele previously volunteered as Court Appointed Special Advocates at other CASA programs in Kansas.



CASA Volunteers in Action!

From swear-ins to adoption hearings with in-service workshops between, CASA volunteers fulfill many roles.

Pictured above left is Katie Becker

sharing a smile at an adoption hearing in December. Above right, volunteer Suzanne Wilke (left) repeats her CASA oath as she is sworn in by Judge Shepherd to serve as a CASA for a Child in Need of Care.

Pictured in the lower right photo is volunteer Sue Richardson, who presented a volunteer in-service workshop on *IEPs and Advocating for Your CASA Child in the School System* on November 18.

MARCH 7 IN-SERVICE WORKSHOP: TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

By Elizabeth Day

With information particularly relevant for CASA volunteers, our March in-service focuses on “Trauma-Informed Care” and will be presented by Toni Detherage from the service agency “Seasons.” This in-service will take place at the CASA Office on Monday March 7, 2011 (NO KU Basketball that evening) from 5:30-7:00p.m.

Toni also works with “Success by 6,” but has branched out to provide comprehensive trauma-focused services in a different setting and that is core of her work with “Seasons”.

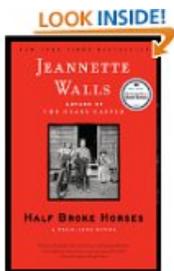
Nearly all of the children with whom CASA Volunteers worked have suffered significant trauma. Volunteers witness this as they come to know and work with these children. And they might also witness the effects of past trauma in the parents of these children. So, understanding the profoundly unsettling effects of trauma is important for our work with these children and their families.

Trauma is defined as a sudden or unexpected event that people understand as dangerous. It involves threats or actual physical harm and can overwhelm a person’s ability to cope. Feelings of helplessness, intense fear and a lack of control also characterize trauma.

Complex trauma includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, severe neglect and witnessing domestic violence. It is important to understand that complex trauma changes the way our brains develop and function; it can interfere with neurobiological development with accompanying negative impacts for emotional health and social functioning.

Toni and “Seasons” are committed to educating service providers like CASA Volunteers about the long-term neurological, developmental and emotional effects of living with trauma. Her in-service will serve as a valuable step in this educational process.

Please let us know if you can attend by calling the CASA Office at 832-5172 or by e-mailing Elizabeth at eday@douglas-county.com.



Half Broke Horses Among Additions to CASA Library

The CASA Office now has two copies of **Half Broke Horses**, by Jeannette Walls, available for check out. This book will be discussed at the April Book Club in-service gathering.

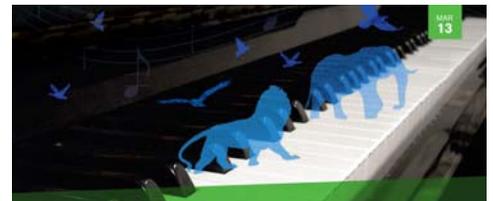
Other books new to the CASA Volunteer Resource Library include **One Child** by Torey L. Hayden, **A Theory of Relativity** by Jacquelyn Mitchard, and **the curious incident of the dog in the night-time** by mark haddon

Dates to Remember:

- 1/17 – CASA office closed for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.
- February – Valentine crafts and treats available for CASA kids in the office.
- 2/21 - CASA office closed on President’s Day.
- 3/7 – 5:30-7:30 pm – In-Service Workshop at CASA: Trauma-Informed Care
- 3/13 – *Carnival of the Animals* at the Lied Center; tickets available for CASA kids

Carnival of the Animals

We have been approved to receive a total of 18 tickets (12 children, 6 adults) for the Sunday, March 13 (2:30 pm) performance of *Carnival of the Animals and Peter & the Wolf* at the Lied Center. Please contact the CASA office (832-5172 or dmosher@douglas-county.com) if you are interested in free tickets to take your CASA children to this wonderful performance.



Douglas County CASA, Inc.

Board of Directors: Mary Boatright (*Past President*), Jenny Brown, Hatem Chahine (*Vice President Pro Tem*), Shelly Goscha, Eric Hiebert, Brad Kemp (*President*), Eve Kemple, David Martin, Karen Oberzan, Ruthi Rapp (*Secretary*), Brian Seymour (*Treasurer*), Helen Seymour, Britny Wood, Jill Nowak (*Kappa Alpha Theta*)

Staff: Diana Frederick, *Executive Director*; Sherry Catt, *Volunteer Supervisor*; Elizabeth Day, *Volunteer Supervisor*; Carolyn Johnson, *Volunteer Supervisor*; Diane Mosher, *Administrative Assistant*

Contact Information: Douglas County CASA, Inc., 1009 New Hampshire, Suite B, Lawrence, KS 66044; Phone: 785-832-5172; Fax: 785-856-1279; E-mail: casa@douglas-county.com; Web site: www.dccasa.org; for newsletter questions or suggestions, please contact Diana Frederick at dfrederick@douglas-county.com.

Our Mission:

We provide comprehensive advocacy for abused and neglected children in need of care and under the protection of the court system. Our trained volunteers investigate, facilitate, monitor and mentor. Through compassion and commitment, they are dedicated to be the child's voice through their journey to a safe, loving permanent home.



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