

# CASA VOICE



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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PAMELA PERRILLES

### It's Time to End Child Abuse

#### April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Every April, we take a break from our busy lives to think about children suffering from abuse. We might wear a blue ribbon. Or attend a local event stressing the need to support abused children. But with more than 874 confirmed child abuse and neglect victims in Peoria County alone, we need to do more. We MUST do more.

Abused children who do not get the help they need to heal are more likely to grow up to be abusers themselves. They are also more prone to suffer from mental health issues, drop out of school, end up homeless, have children before they are ready, turn to crime and strain our already fragile social safety net. This downward spiral not only threatens the future of the child, but that of our community. There are far too many children in the overburdened foster care system.



We all have the opportunity to positively impact the future of a child when we get involved with CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates). We challenge you to stand with us and demand an end to child abuse and neglect. If we all come together, maybe one day—and hopefully very soon—we won't need a Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Pamela Perrilles, Executive Director



**I** am for the child™

## Welcome to the January 2017 Volunteer Class



Pictured from left to right:  
Jennifer Englebrecht,  
Connie Haase,  
Andrea Koerber,  
Joan Bannon,  
Jessica Blanton,  
Judge Katherine Gorman,  
Nancy Ream,  
Chuck Behrends Jr.,  
Rachel Marcolini  
and Brett Melton

## CASA Staff Attends National CASA Conference



CASA staff and board members had the honor of attending the 2017 National CASA/GAL Conference in Seattle, Washington from March 11th thru March 14th. In their own words, they talk about the impact the Conference had on them.

### Sherry Dailey, Advocate Supervisor

"The vast wealth of information presented by various agencies around the country inspires me to serve CASA children with passion. I met many different Advocate Supervisors throughout the country, and was able to make great and lasting connections."

### Lisa Norwood, Advocate Supervisor

"Networking with Advocates from other states and gaining insight into their programs was very insightful. The seminars were well run and informative, and I plan to utilize the strategies I learned in my own work. I really enjoyed the fact that Judge Soukup, the founder of CASA, was a speaker at the convention. It was very nice to hear him explain why he felt he needed 'a second set of eyes' on some cases."

### Ryan Lacerna, Advocate Supervisor

"Many of the speakers and panelists were once children in the foster care system themselves. Their discussion about the child welfare system provided a unique perspective into the lesser known world of our nation's most at-risk youth. The breakout sessions covered a wide range of timely topics, such as new drug trends, human trafficking and general advocacy techniques."

### Liz Stufflebean, Advocate Supervisor

"I learned a great deal at the conference that I can't wait to implement with all of my CASA volunteers. It was truly a heartwarming experience to see that so many people from all over the country are so passionate about helping abused and neglected children."

### Paris McConnell, Director of Development

"I am inspired by the general session motivational speakers at National CASA. I enjoyed networking with CASA staff from various CASA agencies and exchanging productive "tools of the trade" to be effective in the human service industry. I appreciate making new contacts and plan to utilize those relationships to be successful!"

### Bob McCullum, Board of Directors Vice President

"I was very fortunate to take part in a seven hour workshop on Board Governance. The information and exchange of ideas will be very valuable in preparing the CASA of Peoria County Board to be in a strong position to make quality decisions concerning strategic planning, staffing and fund raising."

### Nancy Overcash, Board of Directors

"Seattle was rainy, yet the conference rooms seemed sunny and full of excitement about CASA! One topic that inspired me was the goal of bringing a greater number of males into volunteer roles. And spending quality time with our Advocate Supervisors was a breath of fresh air. They are grounded, responsible and passionate individuals. Thank you for an extremely valuable experience."

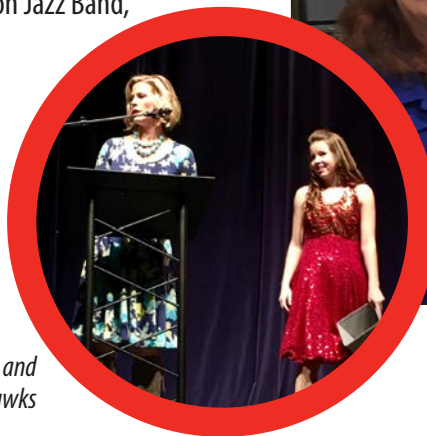


## 2nd Annual CASA Talent Show Raises Money and Awareness

Claire Hawks is at it again! In April 2016, Claire took on the task of creating a talent show to fulfill a seventh-grade Language Arts class assignment. She selected CASA of Peoria County to be the recipient of the talent show proceeds, which totaled \$3,200 in 2016. The funds helped provide additional children with a volunteer advocate, giving them a voice in court.

Claire enjoyed the experience and spreading the mission of CASA so much she decided to do it again! With the goals of sharing CASA's mission and supporting local talent, on April 4, Claire hosted the 2nd Annual CASA Talent Show at the Bertha Frank Theater in Morton, IL. The show was a big hit, featuring Sound Wave, Morton High School Front Ensemble, Center Stage, Advanced Acting Improv Troupe, Olivia Vicary, Morton Jazz Band, Beckett Kenny and Vocal Velocity.

All proceeds from the event, over \$4,400 this year, once again benefitted CASA, ensuring we continue recruiting, training and supporting community volunteers as they advocate for the best interest of abused and neglected children in the Peoria County Court System.



*Emcee Caitlin Knute (left) and Event Coordinator Claire Hawks*

## HUMAN FOOSBALL

Thank you to everyone that came out to CASA Human Foosball on Saturday, April 8. The weather cooperated (thankfully!) and participants had a blast—all while raising money for CASA.



*Congratulations to PEOCO on their win, even with just 5 players!*





## Hands Around the Courthouse Held April 21

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since 2008, CASA of Peoria County, along with Youth Service Network Panel, has drawn attention to the issue of local child abuse and neglect through its Hands Around the Courthouse event.



## CHARITY CHIP-IN GOLF EVENT

Keep your eyes out for more information regarding CASA of Peoria County's involvement with **Charity Chip in 2017 Lincoln Land Charity Championship Web.com Tour** at Panther Creek Country Club Springfield, IL, June 22nd-25th, 2017. The Web.com Tour's mission is to identify and transfer those players ready to compete and win on the PGA TOUR.



## 2017 Tournament Week: June 19-25

To purchase your tickets go to [www.lincolmlandcharitychampionship.com](http://www.lincolmlandcharitychampionship.com). Then select CASA of Peoria County from the drop down charity list. CASA will receive 100% of your ticket purchase as a donation.

## CASA of Peoria County's April 2017 Training Schedule



**April 29 - May 8**  
Advanced Medical Transport  
1718 N Sterling (at Nebraska)  
Peoria, IL 61604

(Note: Meals are provided for all classes.)

**Class Schedule** *Attendance at every class is mandatory.*

Saturday, April 29.....9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Monday, May 1..... 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Tuesday, May 2..... 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Wednesday, May 3 ..... 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Thursday, May 4 ..... 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Saturday, May 6 .....9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Monday, May 8..... 5:30 pm – 8:30 pm

## CASA Time

April 26, 2017 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner  
May 24, 2017 Mandatory Retraining  
June 28, 2017 What happens when a case closes?



## Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event

**You and one guest are cordially invited to attend our Annual Volunteer Appreciation Event!**

Dinner and Awards  
Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 6 p.m. • Par-A-Dice Hotel  
21 Blackjack Blvd. • East Peoria

(Additional guests may join for \$25 per person.)

Sponsored by Walmart. **Walmart** 

RSVP to Liz Stufflebean at 309-669-2939  
or estufflebean@peoriacounty.org

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Cathy Dare

- I live in Peoria, IL
- I have 2 sons and 1 daughter and 7 grandkids
- I retired in December, 2015 after 40 years at Caterpillar Inc. as a Human Resources Manager
- I currently work part time as a paralegal
- I am very active in my church
- I have been a CASA since January, 2013
- I've had 3 cases as a CASA

### Volunteer Advocacy

#### Why did you decide to become an advocate?

I became aware of CASA from my supervisor at Caterpillar. I initially became involved through the Sponsor a Child campaign, contributing a monthly donation to support a child being helped through CASA. As I became more aware of CASA's mission, I wanted to get more deeply involved. I was raised in a big family and knew how lucky I was to have wonderful parents and siblings. Through CASA training, I realized that there were many children in our community (800+) which were living lives of turmoil and despair. They needed someone like me for a friend – someone not to judge or discipline – just care.

#### Do you have any advice for other volunteers?

As a CASA volunteer, never forget the impact that you can have on the lives of your CASA kids. I never realized how much my friendship meant to one of my little guys until I missed a month of visiting and he said to me, "It's been five weeks since you were here." You are a friend. You are someone who they can count on. As their case workers, counselors, doctors, teachers or even their home changes over time, you are the one who remains the same. Never underestimate how important this is!

#### What has been one of your most memorable moments as a CASA Volunteer?

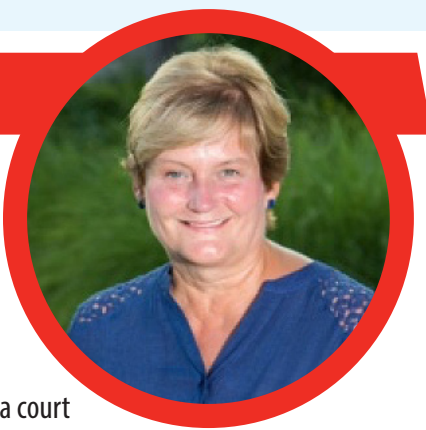
I've definitely had many memorable moments being a CASA volunteer. One that was especially poignant was when a court date was approaching. My little CASA girl was 8 years old. She had told me how excited she was about growing up to become a veterinarian. I asked her what she wanted the Judge to know as I was preparing my reports. She ran to her toy box and pulled out a well-loved stuffed puppy. She handed it to me and said, "Please give this to the Judge so he knows I really want to be a veterinarian." I told her that I would do that. This was the first time I went to Court carrying a stuffed puppy. After the hearing, I approached the Judge with the stuffed puppy and explained why she wanted him to have it. He smiled and reached out and petted the puppy. I returned it to the little girl telling her that the Judge definitely knew about her future plans. And, with a big smile she returned the puppy to the toy box.

#### What are your challenges as a CASA?

I think one of my challenges is the emotions that go along with being a CASA. Upon arriving at the foster home, you feel sheer joy when a child runs to the door to greet you. During the visit, you find out that the children's Mom, who has been working hard to regain custody of her children, has fallen back in her progress and they now realize returning home to her will be delayed once again. It's in times like these I remember how important my role is to the children. And when the visit ends, they bring joy once more giving me a hug and waving as I drive away.

#### Is there anything else you would like to share?

Never miss an opportunity to invite your family members, friends or co-workers to step up and be the Voice for a Child. There is nothing more satisfying or fulfilling.



## LEAVE A LOVING LEGACY



**You can create a legacy of hope for vulnerable children through a planned gift to CASA of Peoria County.**

**Bequests through your will:** A bequest to CASA of Peoria County is a simple, effective way to make a lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable children. All you need to do is specify the amount (or percentage) you wish to give by including language in your will similar to the following: "I, [name], of [city, state, ZIP], give, devise and bequeath to CASA of Peoria County a nonprofit public benefit corporation having its principal office at 324 Main Street, Room 215, Peoria, IL 61602, [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] to be used for the furtherance of its charitable purposes in the discretion and at the direction of its Board of Directors for its unrestricted use and purpose."

If you are considering making a gift by bequest, please meet with your attorney to discuss the ramifications and, if appropriate, to update your will. Additionally, please let us know if you have included CASA of Peoria County in your estate planning.



## DID YOU KNOW?

### The CASA of Peoria County "Impact" Story

CASA of Peoria County is not state funded and relies on individual donations, corporate sponsorships, and grants to implement our direct services. The average cost per child placed outside of the family home costs taxpayers approximately \$5,700 per month. CASA involvement reduces the time children spend in foster care by an average of 8 months. A case with a CASA volunteer provides a potential savings to taxpayers of \$45,591 (8 months of foster care) per closed case.

### Are you for the child? Donate today!

Our 2017 goals include raising \$50,000 by May to recruit, train, and supervise additional volunteers and raise awareness of CASA of Peoria County's mission and purpose. When we meet that goal, we'll be able to serve an additional 41 abused and neglected children in Peoria County.

**Click here to donate today to help us reach our goal.**



## OUR MISSION

The mission of CASA of Peoria County is to advocate for abused and neglected children in Peoria County through the services of specially trained community volunteers.

## CASA of Peoria County Gives Special Thanks To:



Heart of Illinois  
United Way



Violent Crime Victim Assistance Grant



## Click on the Links Below to Stay in Touch!

-  [CASA of Peoria County Website](#)
-  [CASA on Facebook](#)
-  [CASA on Twitter](#)

Yes, I would like to support a CASA Child for one year @ \$100 per month.  
 I would like to make a one-time gift:  
 \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  \$500  \$1,000  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in learning more about CASA  
 I would like to give of my time. Please contact me about being involved:  
 Board Member  
 CASA volunteer  
 Other volunteer  
 Help with special events  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_, IL  
 Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

The best time to reach me is during \_\_\_\_\_ day or \_\_\_\_\_ evening.  
 Method of Payment: Visa \_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_  
 Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Name as it appears on card: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: CASA of Peoria County  
 Return to: 324 Main Street, Room 215, Peoria, Illinois 61602

**THANK YOU.**  
**Make A Difference!**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Save the Dates



**CASA Caballos**  
**August 19, 2017**  
**Gates Open at 12 p.m.,**  
**Polo Match starts at 4:30 p.m.**  
Weaver Farms

Bring your family, friends and jazzed-up picnic baskets for a tailgate party unlike the Peoria area has ever seen! Enjoy family-friendly games and a beautiful afternoon of polo.



**CASA Golf Event - Par 3 Challenge & \$1 Millions Hole-in-One Shootout**  
**October 2017, Shotgun**  
**Start 3:30 p.m.**  
Country Club of Peoria

Enjoy a day of golf—and earn the opportunity to win \$1 million!



**CASABlanca Dancing with the Local Stars**  
**Saturday, November 4, 2017, 6 p.m.**  
Par-A-Dice Hotel and Casino

CASA's primary fundraising event of the year is a fun-filled evening of entertainment. Join us for great food, cocktails, live auction and dancing.

## Thanks to our volunteer training meal sponsors...



## ...and to the excellent classroom facility at Advanced Medical Transport.



**Advanced Medical Transport**  
of Central Illinois

*Save Lives. It's what we do*

## Newsletter design provided by:

