

WHAT CAN A HORSE DO FOR NEWPORT NEWS CASA?

Find out in our summer newsletter.....



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

Ask Angie.....



***Hi Angie,
I have a problem with professionals returning my calls in a timely manner, any tips to help me receive a faster response?***

Dear Advocate,

Your question is one that has come up on numerous occasions.

Almost all volunteers, at some point, have come cross a professional with an overwhelming caseload that seems to prohibit ongoing communication. For you, as an advocate this can become very frustrating. I would say the best thing to keep in mind when dealing with agency professionals is the fact that they have multiple cases with many children and at times, are overwhelmed with multiple case circumstances. This is particularly hard to remember when you are in the thick of your

case and things happen that are extremely important and vital. We as volunteers have one, maybe two cases with 2 to 5 children at a time and can get so wrapped up in advocating for their best interest, we often forget that other professionals may have ten times that number.

From my previous experience as a volunteer, it is good to rely on the one week rule. Email the professional your question/concern/information and wait a week for a response. If you have not received a response within the week, call them and leave a message stating that you are following up on the email you sent a week ago. Wait one week after that call until you call or email again, etc.

This may seem like a lot of time; however remember that this is not a sprint...it's a marathon. Now that being said, of course if it is an emergency type situation and you need an answer or information immediately; call me, because I am here to help. I am always willing to call a professional, gather information from the clerk's office, or just contact individuals on your behalf.

Another option to consider is there are multiple professionals on the case that may be able to help you as well. If you cannot get information from one person, try another (GAL, therapist, Family Services Specialist) and see if they are willing to assist with information. The important thing is to NEVER STOP ASKING QUESTIONS! No matter how frustrating it may seem, always try to keep the line of communication open as your child is depending on it.

Angela Glaspell is our Program Manager and former CASA Volunteer. Submit your questions to ddelosreyes@nnva.gov to have your anonymous question featured in our seasonal newsletter.

NNCASA.org

[Upcoming Events](#)

Summer training for new volunteers begins July 11, 2017

Coffee With CASA - August 2, 2017, Main Street Library, 10am - 2pm.

**"I AM FOR THE CHILD" Bag Drive for The United Way Day of Caring-
September 6, 2017**

**CASA 2 CASA Event - September 21, 2017, email will be sent with more
details.**

Fall - New Volunteer Training begins September 26, 2017

[Link to Additional Resource](#)

Equine Therapy by Debbie Delosreyes



Recently, I was asked to write a short bio for our CASA website and I included the statement "and relax with my son's horse." Relax? You might ask, and I would say absolutely! We know animals play a special part in our lives, just ask Patti about her sweet dog-child Laci. Some may ask what special role can a horse provide to people? When you are interacting with a horse, your focus

must be on the horse for the purpose of training and safety. You will become self aware and also pay close attention to your breathing and your emotions since horses can sense and match your emotional state including fear and anxiety. A person's body language sends off many signals to horses since they are mainly non-verbal animals. From our posture, eye movements, and breathing, we send a message to the horse. This trust building in a non-judgement setting with or without verbal communication, provides a feeling of being in control for humans. To bond with a horse there needs to be a level of trust and leadership established. Horses don't care about hugs, (although I love to give them), they care about security. The horse to human bond is a wonderful relationship that has evolved into a working relationship helping humans outside of a clinical setting by providing emotional support all from a barn or farm. When we think of the at risk youths we serve; trust, support, self-confidence and security are important terms that when working with a horse, those needs can be established and addressed. The trauma a CASA child has experienced can manifest in depression, anxiety, behavioral issues, mistrust, fear, grief, PTSD, poor impulse control, difficulty taking direction and insecurity to name a few. There have been many books written discussing therapy with the use of horses and applying that assistance in everyday life, called Equine Therapy. Equine Therapy has also helped with physical therapy and Autism to name a few.

According to Everyday Health, "When combined with traditional psychotherapy, activities involving horses can help people suffering from a range of mental conditions, including depression and ADHD". According to the article, How Horses Help with Mental Health Issues by Everyday Health, Alexa Smith-Osborne, an associate professor of social work at the University of Texas at Arlington, who studied equine-assisted therapy states "For one thing, horses are prey animals, because of this, horses are more highly attuned to environmental activity and sensitive to people's emotional states than dogs and other animals typically used in assisted therapies. "They're capable of reading or becoming aware of how [a patient's] feeling before I'm aware of it or the even the client is," Sheade says. "The horse will then give feedback to the client, such as by moving towards the client or away. "Additionally, horses are large and powerful and have the potential of allowing people to overcome fear and develop confidence that can be translated into real-life situations. They can also help put people at ease because they're unbiased and non-judgmental, responding only to people's intent and behavior. What's more, they're social animals with their own personalities, and are most willing to interact when people are engaged and work to build a relationship with them." Benefits include improved: self esteem, communication skills, self awareness, relaxation, empowerment, interpersonal relationships, self control, focus and concentration, and happiness.

Newport News CASA is fortunate to have a program right in our back yard called Mill Swamp Indian Horses located just 10 minutes "outside of town" in Smithfield. Mill Swamp also known as Gwaltney Frontier Farms, a non-profit, helps to preserve Corolla horses while providing programs to ALL ages including natural horsemanship programs for youths, homeschool children during the week, war veterans suffering from PTSD, and adults of all ages. The farm is home to approximately fifty horses including Corollas, Marsh Tackys, and Choctaws; also, chickens, hogs, goats, beagles, a donkey and a friendly turkey. Their website, www.millswampindianhorse.com, states...

"At Mill Swamp Indian Horses, we really believe that young people are the future. Raising a generation of young people who care about the preservation of endangered animals and the planet itself is part of our mission. Youth programs feature trail riding, natural horsemanship, Native American and Colonial homesteading skills, along with roots, folk, and Americana music. We offer a Friday program for home schooled youth that covers natural horsemanship and aspects of earth science, biology, history and physical education.

Our Saturday programs for youth and teens cover natural horsemanship as well as developing physical skills, communication skills, self-awareness, and self-confidence. All youth programs include trail riding membership to proficiency level and even an opportunity for parents to ride with the children if they so desire." Mill Swamp also offers scholarships to children with physical disabilities, children who are in foster care, and children with financial needs. The owner of Mill Swamp, Steve Edwards, is a prosecutor in Smithfield and has adopted two children out of the foster care system. He has also written a book titled, " *And a Little Child Shall Lead Them-Learning from Wild Horses and Small Children*". Mr. Edwards was raised in a loving family in Smithfield that included many foster children in the home. If you speak to his father, Nelson, who is a regular at the farm, you realize that training with horses and giving to others was instilled in him from a very young age.

So how can a horse help CASA? If your CASA child is experiencing mood disturbances, anxiety or depression. If he or she needs an activity to break the computer habit and exercise, if your CASA child has an interest in horses or animals in general then Mill Swamp's youth program might benefit your CASA Child. Also, consider if the caregiver is willing to transport the CASA child to Mill Swamp? Newport News CASA is willing to assist Volunteers in reaching out to DHS to discuss the Mill Swamp opportunity and what the program can bring to youths at risk. If you ask Mr. Edwards about the relationship between children and horses, he can offer you many stories

how horses have helped vulnerable kids.

It is the child who at 13 would only play video games until a beautiful horse taught him increased self- esteem and confidence. At first, the boy didn't want to go but after the first day he could not wait to return. He came home proudly conversing with his mother all of what he had learned and how after a few days " he knew everything about horses". When his father died a year later of a drug overdose, the boy immediately wanted to see his horse. As the sun set on the boy's face, the tear stains almost dry, he hugged his horse and his horse knew what to do.

www.millswampindianhorses.com

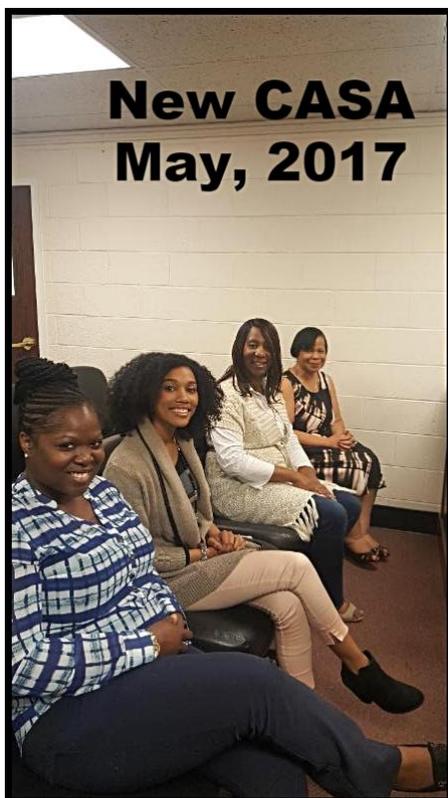
Newport News Children's Festival of Friends



Thank you Kyle and Sabina for your help! We were able to educate the community about CASA entertain the children, and recruit potential volunteers.



April-May-June CASA Events: Swearing In Ceremony, Red Nose Day, Children's Festival of Friends, Denbigh Kiwanis Pancake Palooza, CASA Bowling Night of Fun



Please welcome our new volunteers when you see them at our next CASA 2 CASA. This group has had a lot of previous volunteer experience working with children and advocating for those in need. We are looking forward to watching them shine this year!



Did You Know:

Sharks lay the biggest eggs in the world.

Horses can run shortly after birth.

Grasshoppers are commonly eaten in African, Central and South American countries, the insect is a very good source of protein.

A group of owls is called a parliament.

Facts from Science facts website, visit <http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/animals.html>. for more fun facts.

Lastly but really first and foremost thank you Special Advocates for the work you do, the voice you provide and the lasting change you make for the children in need. When we think about who impacted us in our lives as children it may be a few words or moments that made a lasting difference ... Thank you.

Appreciation for the special efforts made by Kyle and Sabina for their assistance at the Children's Festival; Sue, J, and Roy for their testimonies because of our new and improved website; Volunteers who attended the Domestic Violence Conference in Norfolk and the Denbigh Kiwanis for allowing us to speak on behalf of the children we serve.

Have a wonderful summer!

Debbie



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STAY CONNECTED:

