

CHEERS TO A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR



Newport News CASA Winter 2018 Newsletter

A New Year and A New Start...



Note from the Executive Director

As I said farewell to 2017, I could not help but reflect on all that we accomplished together as a program and a community. I feel so very thankful, appreciative, and indebted. I am honored by, and grateful for the support each of you have given to Newport News CASA. I look back in amazement at your outpouring of kindness, financial generosity, dedication, and hard work to help provide stability and hope for the children in our community. Each of you have played a vital role in the success of our program and have helped change young lives forever.

As I embark on my twelfth year and reflect back on my personal experience with CASA, words simply cannot express how thankful I feel to have been given the opportunity to serve as Newport News CASA's Executive Director. I have learned so much and I am so grateful for each experience. Even though my job often consists of working behind the scenes, I see each of you and the tremendous contribution you make to the children and

the program. The time you devote to children in crisis is a true testimonial to your passion and concern in the best interest of children. I have never seen anything as powerful as our volunteer advocates speaking on behalf of the children they serve. It is truly an honor and a gift to see volunteer advocates spend time with children who really, really need it. I hope each of you realize that helping a child once can create a lifelong legacy for you, and for that child. Thanks again for the awe-inspiring job you continue to do!

I would also like to thank my staff for all of their commitment and never ending hard work. Your passion for helping children is evident in your steadfast efforts to go above and beyond. You not only help keep our program running smoothly but you always do it with a great attitude and an extraordinary amount of compassion and concern. Angie and Debbie you are truly amazing!

To my Board of Directors, thank you for trusting in my ability and thank you for your unwavering dedication and the support you continually give our program. Newport News would not be the success it is without you!

I look forward to a wonderful 2018 and working with each and every one of you. My best to you and your family for a year that brings peace, health, prosperity, and lots of happiness!

Warmest regards,
Patti

Ask Angie.....



Hi Angie,
Recently the permanency goal for my child has changed. The goal is now Permanent Foster Care concurrent with Adoption. I have heard the term Permanent Foster Care before, but don't completely understand what it means. Can you explain it to me?

Dear Advocate,
Yes, we have been seeing an increase of the goal Permanent Foster Care. This is a tool city attorneys use to compensate for a child who is age 16 and over and does not wish to be adopted or have their parents right's terminated. As you know, if a child is age 16 and over, they have a right to choose not to be adopted; therefore making it difficult for the court to work towards absolute permanency. The goal of Permanent Foster Care provides an option for the court that stipulates the child will remain in their current foster care placement until they age out of the system; giving the child a "permanent" solution without going against their wishes regarding adoption. While this goal provides a temporary solution; there are mixed feelings about the use of it. If you are dealing with a case that has this goal, you may hear DHS advocating to change the goal. The reason is Permanent Foster Care may be looked upon as a solution by the court; however, it can easily fall apart and make the situation more complicated. If there is no permanent goal in place, such as adoption, the

foster family can change their mind at any moment, at any time, and the child is back to square one.

While this is a topic that will have to be discussed further between the Court and DHS, you as a CASA volunteer can help. If you have a case with a goal of Permanent Foster Care, one thing you can do is advocate for a more permanent goal. Talk to you child and discuss what their thoughts are and why they are opposed to adoption or any other goal. The child may feel if they agree to adoption, they are being disloyal to the family they love very much. In addition, the child may not understand or fully appreciate the benefits adoption could offer. Keep communication open with DHS and ask what goal they believe is in the best interest of the child. If you agree with their recommendation, you can advocate for that in your Court Report. Our main objective as a CASA volunteer is to advocate for the best interest of the child. Permanency is always in the child's best interest.

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

Upcoming Events

In-Service Training, March 1, 2018.

**Winter Training Swearing In Ceremony,
March 5, 2018.**



CASA Orientation, March 7, 2018 .

New Volunteer Spring Training begins April 10, 2018.

**Newport News Children's Festival of Friends, May 5,
2018,**

In-Service Training, May 17, 2018.

Please Contact Newport News CASA For Additional Information.



For many of us, the new year is a time to focus on our personal and professional goals. Here at the CASA office we are trying to eat less chocolate and focus more on fruits and vegetables. On a serious note; for the teens we serve aging out of the foster care system, their goals may mean basic survival. At this time, Virginia has the highest number of children aging out of the foster care system nationally. As we help advocate for our teens, we want to think about their long term goals as well. We know one size does not fit all. While working as a CASA, we can start the conversation with our youth about building a bright future that can bring joy and hope into their lives. The article below highlights the reality of our youth aging out of the system and the beginning of change for their future.

VIRGINIA CAN AND MUST DO BETTER FOR OUR AGED-OUT FOSTER YOUTH

By Nadine Marsh-Carter and Greta Harris
Children's Home Society For Children Blog

Every year, the Commonwealth of Virginia has more than 5,000 children in its protective custody because they have been abused or neglected by their parents. When we make the difficult, but necessary, decision to place these children in foster care, we have an obligation to prepare them to lead happy, productive lives. Research proves that the best option for these children is to be adopted into a loving family. Sadly, each year hundreds of children in Virginia, and the largest percentage in the country, age out of the foster care system when they turn 18 without being adopted. Our duty to support these young adults must not stop there. The nearly 500 young people who transition out of foster care in Virginia every year are sent into the world without permanent housing. Their educational outcomes are uncertain, their job prospects inadequate. Like most 18-year-olds, they're not prepared to be fully on their own. Their challenges are compounded by histories of abuse, abandonment, and instability.

To better understand the challenge, the Better Housing Coalition and Children's Home Society of Virginia, with support from the Robins and Brookfield foundations and other area funders, commissioned a nationwide survey detailing what states are doing to serve this vulnerable population and taking a closer look at what we are doing in Virginia. While there are some bright spots, such as the Virginia Community College System's Great Expectations program that helps former foster children attend college, the overall outlook is bleak. Nationwide, nearly half of these young people will be homeless or in jail within a year of leaving our care. Even in states where programs are available to youth over the age of 18, many are severely under-used because they represent a check-the-box approach to deal with youth who need more individualized care. Unsurprisingly, housing emerged as a critical, foundation need. In many cases, the lack of reliable and affordable housing means these young people lack the stability that will allow them to become self-sufficient adults. We need to think differently about the way we serve those taken into our care. Parents know that a one-size-fits-all approach to raising kids doesn't work - every child has their own hopes and dreams, obstacles and challenges. Foster youth are no different. We need an approach that is centered on the individual, and we need to recognize the effects of chronic trauma on these young adults. We need to provide them with reliable housing while they gain the skills to chart their own pathways to success. We need to make sure our policies and practices make this approach possible. This is not just the right thing to do; it's economically smart. If young adults who age-out of foster care graduated from high school at the same rate as the general population of young people, those 7,000 additional graduates would, nationally, earn \$1.8 billion more over their working lifetimes, and contribute \$430 million in additional taxes. In 2016 and 2017, funding was included in Virginia's budget to help support this population as a part of the Federal Fostering Futures Act. We must use this money wisely and we must use it in ways that work. Investing up-front in these youth creates huge savings in safety, health, and human services over the long run. In 2015, the Better Housing Coalition and Children's Home Society of Virginia launched The Possibilities Project to give youth the stability and support they need to become successful and productive members of their communities. The Possibilities Project includes both the national and Virginia research outlined above and an evidence-based program serving youth who have aged out of foster care. The cornerstones of the initiative are stable housing and trauma-informed wraparound services, guided by research and developed to be replicable in communities across the commonwealth and the country.

The early results are promising: 100 percent of participants have secure, stable housing; 75 percent are enrolled in post secondary education or completed vocational training, and 88 percent are employed; 100 percent have long-term connections and mentors, as well as access to comprehensive health-care services. In 2016, The Possibilities Project received the commonwealth's award for best housing program or service. We have convened a panel of experts who will analyze the findings of The Possibilities Project's research and lessons learned to make policy and programmatic recommendations for departments that serve aged-out youth. The task force will include mental health professionals, housing experts, youth advocates, and aged-out youth themselves to develop strategies and priorities, which will truly change the paradigm and ensure that we are using Virginians' tax dollars in the most effective way possible.

When kids were brought into the foster care system, we made a promise that we would take care of them. We have an obligation to do all we can to live up to that promise. We can't turn our backs on them just because they have a birthday. We can and must do better.

**Holiday Toy Drive:
Warwick Assembly of God,
Huntington Ingalls,
and The Bar Association.**

We are so grateful for the donations this year and to our volunteers who helped deliver toys this holiday season.

Huntington Ingalls Toy Drive



Tabb Library Recruitment Event





"I Am For The Child" Bag Drive



CASA Bowling Night.



**Newport News DHS
Sibling Reunification
Event**



Fall Training Celebration



In-Service Training with Robert Bradley, LCSW at Angelo's Steakhouse





Please welcome our new volunteers when you meet them at our next CASA event. We are looking forward to watching them shine this year!

Summer Class 2017



Fall Class 2017



Break The Ice With Your CASA Child....

Winter Facts



Hey Kids, Did You Know?

Earth is closest to the sun in winter.

The word winter comes from the Germanic wintar which in turn is derived from the root wed meaning 'wet' or 'water', and so signifying a wet season.

The snowflakes that form wet snow will have fallen through temperatures slightly warmer than 0 °C. As they fall, the snowflakes melt slightly around the edges and stick together to form large, heavy flakes. This sticks together easily and is the best for a snowball fight and making snowmen.

Some reindeer living above the Arctic Circle live in complete darkness for several weeks out of the year.

Facts from AllParenting.com

The Honorable Barry G. Logsdon

*The Guiding Light
No Matter
How Great The Storm.
Your Watch Has Ended but Your Light Will Always Remain.*



Just before the printing of this this Newsletter, Newport News CASA learned of the passing of The Honorable Judge Barry Logsdon. Judge Logsdon, 53, died Sunday, January 28, 2018 after a 7 month battle with cancer. He was sworn in as Newport News Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court judge in 2006. He was a kind and compassionate man and he will be missed terribly by everyone who works in the 7th District Juvenile Court. We are very thankful to have had the opportunity to work with him and will never forget his smiling face and his deep concern and passion for children. Words cannot express how heavy our hearts are and how much of a loss we have suffered. He leaves behind his wife of five years, Kimberly Logsdon, his parents, a step daughter and her husband, one step grandchild, two sisters, one brother, and

many other relatives and friends.



This edition is dedicated to the memory of Laci, Patti's fur child. Laci crossed over the rainbow bridge during the holiday season. As many of you know, Patti's passion has always been CASA, her faith, family, and her sweet fur baby. Laci had a great dog life with Patti; surely no other dog was loved more. Please keep Patti and her husband John in your thoughts and prayers. It is so true when they say love is really a four legged word.

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STAY CONNECTED:

