



## **April Is Child Abuse Prevention Month**



*April is the perfect  
time to encourage  
action!*

*Newport News CASA  
Spring 2018 Newsletter*

### **Ask Angie.....**

Dear Angie,  
Being a new volunteer, I was told in training we  
are now mandated reporters of child abuse. What

## does this mean and what signs should I be looking for to report child abuse?



Dear Advocate,  
You are correct; now that you are officially sworn in by the court as a CASA volunteer, you have become a mandated reporter. What does this mean? A mandated reporter is a person who, because of his or her profession or volunteer status, is legally required to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to relevant authorities. These mandates were put into place to prevent children from being abused and to end any possible abuse or neglect at the earliest stage. You as a CASA volunteer have sworn to

advocate for children who have been abused and neglected, and being able to spot signs of abuse is very helpful.

There are many warning signs of abuse one can use to distinguish if actions need to be taken. Signs of physical abuse may include; frequent injuries or unexplained bruising, welts, or cuts, injuries that appear to have a pattern, such as marks from a hand or belt, a child's behaviors, such as flinching at sudden movements or a fear of a person or fear of going home. Signs of neglect may include; a child wearing ill-fitting clothing or dirty/inappropriate clothing, consistent bad hygiene, such as unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, or noticeable body odor, untreated illnesses or physical injuries, a child who is frequently unsupervised or left alone and allowed to be in unsafe situations, or is frequently late or absent from school. Signs of sexual abuse may include; trouble walking or sitting, knowledge of sexual acts inappropriate to their age, seductive behaviors inappropriate to their age, making strong efforts to avoid specific individuals without giving obvious reasons, unexplained STDs or pregnancy, and frequently running away from home. Being aware of these signs is very important when dealing with the children you serve and the children around you.

If you have a suspicion there is abuse of any kind taking place, do not hesitate to call the appropriate authorities. The old adage, better safe than sorry, suits the basis of mandated reporting; and you should always follow your gut instincts. Any type of child abuse leaves lasting scars. Some scars may be physical; however, there are many scars that are invisible to everyone except that child. The abuse they suffer often has long lasting effects throughout their life and can damage their sense of self, future relationships, and ability to function. If at any time you feel there is a question of abuse; please remember the oath you took when being sworn in and do all that you can to advocate for that child to prevent any more abuse they may suffer.

Sincerely,  
Angie

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

***Upcoming Events***

**New Volunteer Spring Training begins April 10, 2018.**

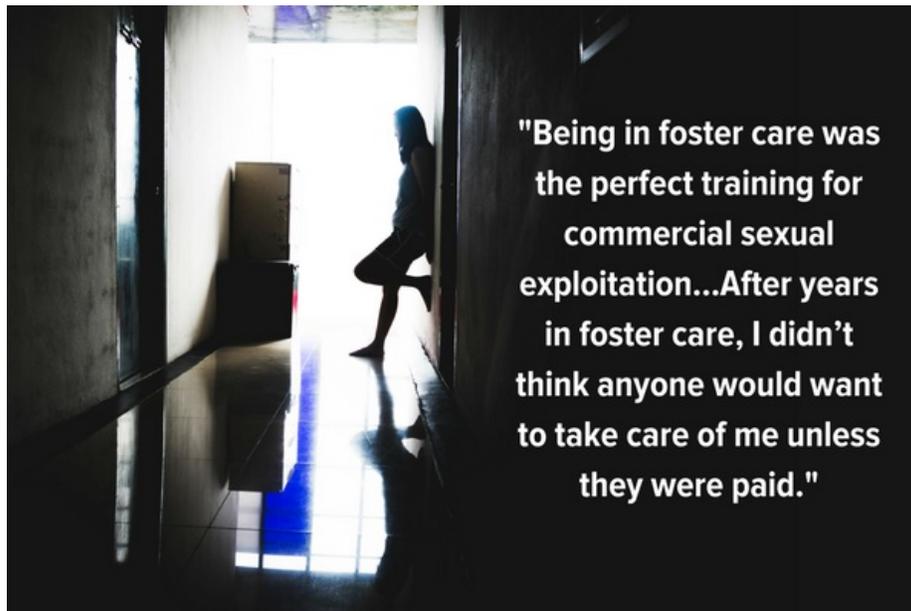


**Volunteer Meeting/Pinwheel Garden Event, April 12, 2018.**

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

**In-Service Training, May 17, 2018.**

*Please Contact Newport News CASA For Additional Information.*



**"Being in foster care was the perfect training for commercial sexual exploitation...After years in foster care, I didn't think anyone would want to take care of me unless they were paid."**

**Dear Volunteers,**

I hope you are well and enjoying spring! Can you believe it is April? April is so important since it is recognized as National Child Abuse Awareness Month. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the very important and hard work you do every month helping to build a brighter future for abused and neglected children. Thank you so much for your dedication and tireless efforts. You are making a difference!!

In recognition of child abuse prevention, Newport News CASA will display a pinwheel garden outside the courthouse. During our volunteer meeting on April 12th, we will take a group photo around the pinwheels and I will be proud to present you with a pin to wear all year encouraging your advocacy efforts.

We all know the road to child advocacy has many twists and turns. In this edition of the newsletter, I would like for CASAs to take a moment and reflect on our role in preventing human trafficking. It really is true that a CASA can prevent sex trafficking and the article below from National CASA discusses how YOU can accomplish this as an advocate. Child prostitution IS child abuse. Starting and keeping the conversation going without shame or judgement can really educate and help those at risk such as our teens aging-out of the foster care system. Sex trafficking has been a topic of discussion lately from our recent jail tour to discussions with folks working with Juvenile Detention. I am so pleased that on May 17th, we will have the Virginia Beach Justice Initiative speak to our advocates about human trafficking in the Hampton Roads area. I hope you will plan to attend.

Looking forward to seeing you in the upcoming months!

Sincerely,  
Debbie

## A Prevention Army for Child Sex Trafficking

National CASA, January 2018 Newsletter

Sex trafficking is modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain some type of commercial sex act. A commercial sex act can be a sex act traded for anything of value, like money, food, or shelter. Under U.S. federal law, any minor under the age of 18 years induced into commercial sex is a victim of sex trafficking-regardless of whether or not the trafficker used force, fraud, or coercion. There is no such thing as a child prostitute, only child victims. While some traffickers are strangers who offer promises of a safe place to stay, a job, or a support system, traffickers are also family members, family friends, boyfriends, and other trusted figures.

National CASA is on high-alert because the children and youth we serve are targeted by traffickers at higher rates than the general population of children and teens. Traffickers target the most vulnerable among us-those who have experienced mental, physical, and especially, sexual abuse, runaways, and those who lack an emotional support network.

According to the U.S. Administration of Children, Youth, and Families, somewhere between 50 and 90 percent of child trafficking victims have been involved in the child welfare system at some point in their lives. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children found that 86 percent of the runaways reported as missing in 2016 who were identified as likely child sex trafficking victims were missing from a foster care or group home placement. Group homes are often used as recruitment hotspots for traffickers. The internet is another vehicle for recruitment and provides an online marketplace for commercial sex with minors.

This heartbreaking quote from a survivor sums up the foster care-trafficking connection:

"Being in foster care was the perfect training for commercial sexual exploitation. I was used to being moved without warning, without any say, not knowing where I was going or whether I was allowed to pack my clothes. After years in foster care, I didn't think anyone would want to take care of me unless they were paid. So, when my pimp expected me to make money to support 'the family', it made sense to me."

And she's right. When children feel monetized, invisible, and devalued, they are especially susceptible. But a one-on-one relationship with a caring, consistent, and highly trained adult can make a difference in cases like this. A CASA or GAL volunteer checks in. They get to know the child. They spend time together. They develop trust. They notice when something is off or when a child is withdrawn. They notice when the child has a bruise. While other adults in the child's life come and go, our volunteers remain.

National CASA can leverage the power of our nationwide network of 87,000 volunteers to help prevent trafficking, identify red flags, and support victims. By virtue of our operating model, we encounter child victims of abuse or neglect after they have been victimized, but trafficking is an area where we can have a serious impact on prevention. We are a prevention army.

That's why it's critical for our programs to educate staff members and volunteers on risk factors, red flags, ways to ensure safety, and strategies to educate the children and youth we serve about trafficking so they can advocate for themselves.

We're also committed to making sure that victims of trafficking are treated as victims and not criminals. We advocate for victims to come before family courts so they can receive needed services to help them heal.

Our programs are already doing incredible work in this area. They are partnering with judges, child welfare agencies, law enforcement, and other nonprofits, as well as serving on coalitions, task forces and commissions with these key stakeholders. They are hosting trainings for volunteer advocates with state and local experts. State and local programs are equipping volunteers with knowledge and resources so they can advocate in court for the best interests of victims, including recommending needed services and new placements when a child's safety is in jeopardy.

# CASA EVENTS



**March In-Service  
with Jane Moreland, M.S.W**



**Sue and Lisa enjoying the night!**



**Please Welcome Our New Volunteers.  
We Are Looking Forward To Watching Them Shine  
This Year!**

### **Winter Class 2018**

**April, Lisa, Patricia, Latasha, Niketa, Natia, and Jayden**



***Break The Ice With Your CASA Child....***

### **Volunteers Did You Know?**

The pinwheel has come to serve as the national symbol of the great childhoods we want for all children. Below are links to color a pinwheel with your CASA child and craft a pinwheel together!



[Pinwheel Coloring Sheet](#)

[Make Your Own Pinwheel](#)

Newport News CASA/[www.nncasa.org](http://www.nncasa.org)/757-926-36342/ 230 25th St. Newport News, VA

STAY CONNECTED:

