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 **CASA**
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF JACKSON COUNTY, INC.
409 N. Front Street
Medford, Oregon 97501



Please join us
In Celebrating Home

A new home for CASA of Jackson County and the loving home every child deserves.

Friday, May 11, 2018

5:30 p.m.

Inn at the Commons

\$100 per person

Formal Dinner | Live Auction | Silent Auction | Raffles | Dancing

AVAILABLE SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

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For more information, please contact Erin Carpenter
541-734-2272 | ecarpenter@jacksoncountycasa.org

Register Online at: www.JacksonCountyCASA.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

benefiting CASA of Jackson County

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| May 11, 5:30 p.m. | Celebrating Home |
| July 20, 7:45 a.m. | Southern Oregon Classic Golf Tournament |
| July 21, 5:00 p.m. | Southern Oregon Classic The Feast |
| July 28, 5:00 p.m. | J's Bistro on A Street Dinner Fundraiser |

New CASA Advocates

SWORN IN FEBRUARY 9, 2018



Pat Stoddard, Kelly Akin, Elizabeth Perle, John Ferris, Gena Kesler, Susan Delgado, Kim Knoll, Nancy Morgan, Patti Sprinkle, Amy Muñoz, Carolyn Maloney, Cindy Davison, Peggy Bruce, Dan Pelissier, LauraJean Power, Donna Pelissier, the Honorable Pat Crain, Gene Bruce, Wayne Davison, Georganna Happel, Melanie Olsrud, Teresa O'Connor, Nellie Hansen, Laura Erickson, Cynthia Hahn, Leslie Rollem, Michael Tilrico, Robin Reed, Kellie Clark

HAPPY ENDINGS



Siblings Jana (10) and Josh (8) came into the system and were placed in community foster care. Both parents were using heroin and leaving drug paraphernalia around the home within reach of the children. Mom also suffers from untreated depression and was not sending the children to school, failing to meet grade-level standards. Jana, particularly, is very social and missed her friends. Josh gets frustrated because he is confused about when they will be able to go back to mom and dad and he

misses them. Jana is worried about her mom and talks about how she would take care of her mom when she was sad and couldn't get out of bed. The children see their parents once a week for 2 hours and have said they want to see them more. Mom has refused mental health support and feels beaten down by the system and all of her problems. She is on the verge of walking away from her children. Dad is not engaging in treatment and has declined assistance that has been offered to him.

Two weeks after the kids came into care, the CASA program appointed a CASA volunteer to advocate for the children. The CASA immediately went to meet the kids, taking them something special based on what they liked – new art supplies for Jana and a cool book about soccer players for Josh. The kids were quiet but respectful during the first several visits with the CASA. During this time, the CASA was talking to the children's teachers, reviewing their medical files, and was able to meet the parents. Mom seemed overwhelmed and thought the CASA was going to initially tell her all the things she had done wrong with her children to bring her to this place. On the contrary, the CASA was able to share with mom how strong she was and how much the children talked about mom and missed her. The CASA explained her role to mom and let her know that CASAs strongly believe children are best served when able to be reunited with their parents in a safe way. Mom perked up immediately and opened up to the CASA.

Three months later, the children are chatterboxes and look forward to the CASA's visit and news about how their mom is doing. They are on the road to being reunified with mom, who has been very open to treatment. Dad has stepped away from the family and is not pursuing treatment at this time. The CASA was instrumental in helping mom believe in herself, get connected to help, and focusing on the love and the hope that was so present in the situation. The CASA's encouragement, and compassion went a long way to help this family, and our community.

COMMUNITY HOPE



Jennifer Mylenek
Executive Director

CASA is celebrating our new home at 409 N. Front St. in Medford, thanks to a long list of individuals, businesses, and foundations who supported us. We will be celebrating those wonderful supporters at our Celebrating Home Gala on May 11—the invite is further along in this newsletter.

We moved in on November 30th, and we have been grateful every day for our larger space. It's a joy to see CASAs picking out books, pajamas, shoes, and more from our new organized Kid's Closet; plus, we moved in to our new large space and 29 CASA trainees enrolled in CASA University training! That is the largest class we have ever had and our old space would have never accommodated them. The building serves as an important piece of the puzzle for reaching more of the 440+ children on our waiting list; but the volunteers and staff are the key to making it happen.

Recently, a CASA came into our office after a court hearing and shared that the children in his case finally won what was in their best interests—despite the odds set against it. He was exhausted by the journey, but exhilarated at the outcome. He asked for another case. It was clear he had been changed by his CASA experience. You see, CASAs always make a difference in their children's lives; but along the way and rather unexpectedly, the CASA's life is also transformed.

As we continue to celebrate our new home, we also envision safe and permanent homes for all children in our care or waiting. I hope you will join us on May 11th in honor of our supporters and the life changing work being done by our CASAs.

J. Mylenek

Jennifer Mylenek, Executive Director and Child Advocate

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Linda Hyken, *Office Volunteer*
Deborah Quast, *Office Volunteer*

FAMILY FINDING AND CONNECTIONS



If you counted all of your relatives, it would probably add up to 30, 40, or more people. However, children coming into foster care often have few or none identified outside of their parent/s due to isolation or parental substance abuse. That's where CASA's Family Finding team makes a difference. They dig deep into each child's case notes and use a variety of search tools to identify and locate extended family for lifelong supports and to help children develop a sense of belonging. We all know who we look like or perhaps act like in our families, but when a child in foster care meets a cousin or uncle for the first time who looks like them or is an artist like they are, it is their finding home moment. This is a wonderful program made possible by a contractual collaboration between Child Welfare and CASA and is only one of a handful of programs of its kind in Oregon.

REMEMBERING TOM BASGEN



Tom Basgen was someone you would have wanted to know. He was the father that many of the children he advocated for, wish they'd had. He was the man that a younger man or youth could look up to and emulate. He embodied integrity and grit in everything that he did. Those who knew him would say that he always gave his honest answer or opinion, even if it didn't please you to hear it.

Tom was a CASA volunteer for more than 9 years and he served on the Board of Directors of CASA, helping to educate board members about the special role of the CASA. He advocated for 38 children (15 families) remarkably and positively influencing their lives. He somehow averaged 600 hours a year as a CASA (50 hours a month) in addition to running his business, Medford Builders' Exchange. He was incredibly pragmatic, honorable, dedicated, humble, wonderfully stubborn, and kind. He challenged all of us here at CASA in thought provoking ways, making us a better organization. His heart exceeded in compassion the difficulties faced by the children and families on his caseloads, which was clearly felt by all whom he touched. Tom will be deeply missed.

~ Jennifer Mylenek, Executive Director, CASA of Jackson

REMEMBERING ROBERT SOLTZ



CASA Robert Soltz passed away on Thursday, February 22, 2018. Robert became a CASA in May of 2014 and served 10 children during that time. He was on one case for over 3 years leading up to an out of state adoption for the four children. Anyone who knew Robert would remember him as a large presence in life. He was over 6 feet tall with a deep and booming voice and a wonderfully charismatic and hopeful personality. I remember interviewing him and joking that he would have to use his inside voice in court or he would scare the Judge. He was a man of great integrity and humility.

Robert was a phenomenal cook and volunteered his talents at many local organizations such as the Elks Lodge, Kids Unlimited, Table Rock Fellowship, and Access. Robert also had a love for flight and aviation which led him to serve in the Civil Air Patrol for many years, earning the rank of colonel. He was also a volunteer for CASA, helping children be heard with his loud voice that many knew and loved.

Robert's sister and son remarked on how proud Robert was to be a CASA volunteer and to be able to be of service to his community. We were fortunate to know Robert and our world was made a better place for his presence in it. He will be missed!

~ Wenonaa Spivak, M.Ed., Deputy Director, CASA of Jackson County

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION WEEK



APRIL 15-22, 2018

CASA volunteers (Court Appointed Special Advocates) speak up for children who are in the court system due to parental allegations of abuse or neglect. These CASAs are highly-trained and motivated to make a difference in our community, one child at a time. CASAs are experts on the children they are appointed to, as they are the only people dedicated solely to speak up for the child. There are many other individuals involved in the case, and the CASA is the only adult who is solely dedicated to seeking the best interest of the child, a safe and permanent home as quickly as possible. CASAs interact with all aspects of the child's life, educational, psychological, medical, dental, familial, etc. While the CASA interacts in the court system and writes reports that will be entered into the legal record, they are not experts in the law. CASAs do not have to possess any special skill to be a CASA, they have to care about kids, be motivated to speak up when they see something is lacking for that child, and be able to communicate effectively and professionally with a multitude of people. Most importantly, CASAs have to have hope that they can make things even just a little bit better for a child in our community. And that is what our amazing superhero CASA volunteers do every day.



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The Annual Tom Basgen Inspiration Award was presented to CASA Susan Miller.

