



# The Case for CASA

## October 2007

*This update is provided to keep our friends informed of our progress and to say thank you for your support.*

CASA OF THE PIKES PEAK REGION • 701 S. CASCADE AVENUE • COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80903 • 719-447-9898 • FAX: 667-1818 • WWW.CASAPPR.ORG

### The Value of Your Investment

CASA is highly efficient in its work on behalf of abused and neglected children. A recent audit documented our low administrative costs, noting that 83% of expenditures fund activities directly supporting CASA programs for children.

### Studies Document Results of CASA Volunteer Advocacy

Below is a summary of the results from several national CASA studies that demonstrate the value of CASA advocacy:

- CASA volunteers spend significantly more time in contact with a child than a paid guardian ad litem.
- CASA volunteers are far more likely than paid attorneys to file written reports.
- CASA volunteers are highly effective in getting their recommendations accepted in court. In four out of five cases, all or almost all CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted.
- When a CASA volunteer is assigned, a higher number of services are ordered for children and families.
- A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to be adopted.
- A child with a CASA volunteer is as likely to be reunified with his or her birth parent as a child without a CASA volunteer.
- A child with a CASA volunteer is less likely to reenter the child welfare system. The proportion of reentries is consistently reduced by half.

## Supporter Finds CASA a Wise Investment

Jessie Latham is a proud grandmother and an involved citizen. She volunteers in Memorial Hospital's maternity ward and is a dedicated blood donor, giving more than 11 gallons over 15 years. She enjoys golfing, hiking, and sewing for her four granddaughters. She also sews Christmas stockings and organizes donations of stocking stuffers for local kids who are less fortunate.

Jessie is passionate about helping children in need. She first learned about CASA 15 years ago from a friend who was a volunteer advocate. She was impressed with the idea of community volunteers providing a voice for kids in the court system. "There is such a need for CASA's services in our area," Jessie said. "Especially for the kids with lower profile cases that might otherwise fall through the cracks."

Jessie's busy schedule prevents her from volunteering with CASA so she has opted to contribute to the organization as a monthly



donor. She believes CASA programs make a significant difference in the lives of abused kids, and sending a check each month is one way she can help.

Jessie likes the fact that her contributions remain local, helping to provide support for children in the Pikes Peak Region.

CASA extends our deepest gratitude to Jessie and our many other generous donors for your support in the fight against child abuse and neglect.

### Well Said...

“As an attorney and former juvenile court magistrate, I have seen the power of a CASA's work in a courtroom. I can tell you of the dedication and hard work of these volunteers and what an incredible resource CASA is to those who make the decisions about the future of these children.”

~Dave Johnson, Colorado Springs Attorney

► To learn about making a gift to CASA through your will or other planned gifts, call Jill Wright at 447-9898, x1002.

# A Case Story, Part III

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In the last issue of *The Case for CASA*, we shared part two of a case story involving three children who were removed from their home due to domestic violence. The story is continued below...

**Summary of Parts I & II:** (Note: Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of the children.) CASA Lisa was appointed to a case involving 15-month-old Alyssa, 11-year-old Brianna and 12-year-old Ben, because of domestic violence and an unsafe environment in the house. Carol was the 29-year-old Mother, and Alyssa's father, Matt, was 27. Ben and Brianna's father is in prison. The children were removed from the home and placed in foster homes separated by significant distances. Lisa began working closely with Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Barbara, acting as her eyes and ears.

**Part III:** After three months on the case, Lisa had submitted three written reports to CASA. From these reports, her case supervisor learned of her activity on the case and her recommendations for the children. The supervisor reviewed and edited the reports with Lisa, and sent a copy to the guardian ad litem (GAL), who paid particular attention to the following information:

After meeting with the GAL, Lisa made an appointment to read the DHS case file and organized visits with the children. She also arranged a supervised visit between the kids and their mother. The case file revealed Matt's conviction for possession of methamphetamine and Carol's three previous DUI violations and the loss of her driver's license, which she had not disclosed.

The first supervised visit, held at DHS, was successful and allowed Lisa to observe their interactions. After bringing the children together again in April, Lisa recognized the importance of recommending Ben be moved from a group home to a home placement.

Lisa called both of the older children's schools to talk with their teachers. DHS had made arrangements for the children to finish the year without changing schools. Lisa learned that before the children were removed from the home, they were often tardy and absent, and when they did come to school, they were dirty and hungry. Both children were behind their grade level in reading and math. The teachers assured Lisa that since being in foster care, they were clean and well fed, with appropriate attendance. Lisa recommended tutoring to help them arrive at grade level.

In May Lisa attended a court hearing for the parents. Matt was still incarcerated and was brought to the courtroom in handcuffs. Carol was also present. The parents received their treatment plans which provided Carol with parenting classes, a life skills caseworker to help her learn how to keep her home reasonably clean and safe, and assistance with finding a job. It also ordered both to have psychiatric evaluations and substance abuse evaluations. Because of past alcohol abuse, random breathalyzers were ordered.

During the first three months of the case, Lisa concentrated on visitations between the three children, recognizing they are a source of strength for one another. She supervised one visit a month between Carol and the children, which were in a public place away from DHS. She reported to her case supervisor that the visits were going well and that Carol was complying with her treatment plan. She found employment at a discount store and moved to a new apartment. All of her breathalyzer tests were negative for alcohol. Soon the DHS case worker transitioned the family visits to Carol's home, feeling it was a better way to find out if Carol was ready to parent her children once again.

To be continued in the next issue of **The Case for CASA**.



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