



# The Gist

## Volunteer Newsletter



March 2015

CASA of the Pikes Peak Region  
A Member of the National CASA Association

Volume 11, Number 3

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### CASA Welcomes its Newest Advocates!

We extend our appreciation and congratulations to the newest class of Court Appointed Special Advocates. After completing training, the volunteers were sworn in as officers of the court on March 5th by the Honorable Judge Gilbert Martinez.

These dedicated folks will soon begin the important work of advocating for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom and the community.



Front Row (L-R): Amy Brown, Chris Carlson, Stacy Cirasunda, Tyler Duncan, Timothy Geitner, Jaime Hayward.

Middle Row (L-R): Rebecca Wallace, Molly Sepulvado, Susan Kistler, Ellen Legant, Michael Maestas, Camilla Mitchell, Bonnie Sepelak, Mary Moffit, Sarah Wendt, Debbie Bernardo.

Back Row (L-R): Brenda Holmes-Starciu, Kori Swalls, Kevin Williams, Randy Mummert, Dion Carlock, Judge Gilbert Martinez, Dave Johnson (CASA Board of Directors). Not pictured: Doug Anderson.

On behalf of abused and neglected children in the Pikes Peak Region, thank you!

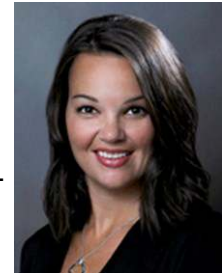
## CASA Welcomes Two New Staff Members

Please join us in welcoming Jessica Courtney and Sarah Wendt to the CASA team!



Jessica joined CASA as the Administrative Assistant to Operations and the CFIT (Children & Families in Transition) program. She comes to us with a great deal of experience in administrative and management work and a passion for being of service. Jessica wanted to work with an organization that makes a difference in her community, so CASA is a great fit for her!

Sarah joined the Life Long Links team as a LLL Case Supervisor. She is delightful to be around, brings great experience working with families and youth, and has jumped right in helping our clients. We're very excited to have her help in connecting kids to their life long supports.



## CASA Leadership Transition Update

It was recently announced that longtime CASA Executive Director, Trudy Strewler Hodges, will be leaving CASA on March 31st to become the CEO of the Pikes Peak Community Foundation (PPCF). This is a great opportunity for Trudy and we wish her well. We are all appreciative of the work Trudy has done and recognize that she has built a strong organization which is well-positioned to move forward to meet our goal of serving all children in need of a CASA by the year 2020.

Trudy begins full time at the PPCF at the end of March. The BOD Search Committee has been working hard to find the best candidate as the next Executive Director. The committee has already reviewed 40+ resumes, completed 16 phone interviews and nine in-person interviews. From these, they will select three to five top candidates to interview with the full board and meet with volunteer and staff representatives in early April.

Trudy and Mitte Pedraza will each be working halftime and sharing the ED role throughout the month of March. Mittie will then continue as Interim Executive Director until the new ED is on board.

If you have any questions or feedback, please leave a message for Michele Strub-Heer (Volunteer Liaison to the Board) with Lena at [lenar@casappr.org](mailto:lenar@casappr.org).

Thank you!





## Volunteer Birthdays

### March

02-Susan H.  
03-Dianne M.  
05-Renee O.  
05-Nicole B.  
06-Bill P.  
07-Daniel S.  
07-Mary M.  
08-Debbie B.  
09-Karen D.  
13-Sylvia S.  
14-Emily W.  
17-Jessica G.  
18-Cayth B.  
20-Antoinette H.  
23-Richard L.  
25-Janaina T.  
25-Mary S.  
25-Stacy V.  
26-Jena H.  
28-Melissa N.  
28-Laura P.  
31-Martha G.

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Light of Hope Fundraiser April 30, 2015 Antlers Hilton Hotel

CASA is holding its 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Light of Hope Fundraiser on Thursday, April 30, 2015 at the Antlers Hilton Hotel in downtown Colorado Springs. This is our premier fundraising event of the year with over 1,400 attendees at our breakfast and luncheon event combined. This event raises awareness about child abuse and general operating funds, which allows CASA to continue operating its four programs specifically designed to help children of abuse and neglect.

We are currently in need of table captains. The goal of a table captain is to fill a table of 10, including you, at either the breakfast or luncheon event with guests who want to learn more about CASA and are willing to consider making a contribution to support CASA's work in the Pikes Peak Region.

If you would like to be a table captain or know of someone who would like to be, please contact Karri Baker, Resource Development Coordinator, at 719-447-9898, ext. 1006 for more details.

### Meet Jesse Murillo: CASA and Peer Coordinator



CASA would like to give a round of applause to volunteer Jesse Murillo. In addition to being a great Court Appointed Special Advocate himself, Jesse has volunteered to take on an additional level of leadership as a Peer Coordinator (PC). As a PC, Jesse provides mentorship, coaching, and support to new volunteers as they come out of training. PC's have been hand-selected and specially trained to support other CASA volunteers throughout their cases.

In his role as PC, Jesse supports seven volunteers and continues to carry his own CASA case. In total, Jesse and his group of advocates are serving 15 children.

Jesse says he jumped at the chance to become a PC. *"In this position, I felt I would be able to serve more children at one time as well as well as supporting an organization I believe in,"* he said. *"I wanted to share my experiences, skills and love of what I do with others who were pursuing the same passion to help the children that deserve a voice and someone to stand by them in the court system. I have a great group of advocates that I work with; each and every one of them has my respect and gratitude."*

For more on Jesse's story, please go to the CASA website at:  
<http://www.casappr.org/news/jesse/>

## **CASA Staff Contacts:**

**Ext. Name**

**1031-Adam Biddle**  
**1042-Amanda Lunday**  
**1018-Angela Komar**  
**1015-Angela Rose**  
**719-338-8741 Berkeley Davis**  
**1051-CFIT**  
**1014-Catherine Sidor**  
**1030-Crystal Karr**  
**1011-D&N Emergency Line**  
**1009-Deb Cline**  
**1020-Emily Rome**  
**1012-Gina James**  
**1037-Janet Stoddard**  
**1023-Jennifer McKee**  
**1025- Jessica Courtney**  
**1032-Jill McCormick**  
**1053-Jillian Wiker**  
**1027-Karen Hughes**  
**1006-Karri Baker**  
**1016-Kate Clark**  
**1033-Kelly Peterschmidt**  
**1028-Kristeen O'Donnell**  
**1026-Laura Speer**  
**1000-Lena Ruiz**  
**1024-Lois Gracz**  
**1017-Marah Armijo**  
**1035-Maegan Brundage**  
**1008-RoseMary Jaramillo**  
**1003-Roz Beall**  
**1040-Sarah Wendt**  
**719-314-5008:**  
**SEPT Cancellations**  
**1007-Terry Dickman**  
**1005-Tracy Sellars**  
**1002-Trish St. John**  
**1004-Trudy Strewler Hodges**  
**1013-Yvette Griego**

## **Laura Pelletier Bikes Across the Country for CASA**

CASA volunteer Laura Pelletier knows very well the challenges faced by foster kids in the Pikes Peak Region. Laura has a particular passion for helping teenagers; she has witnessed the plight of older youth who have spent much of their lives in foster care and face the frightening reality of emancipation without the support they need to succeed. Nearly 600 Colorado foster youth emancipated last year, 59 of them in El Paso County.

In addition to her role as Court Appointed Special Advocate working to ensure safe, permanent homes for abused kids, Laura volunteers her time at The Hanger as the chair of the Foster Teen Activities Committee. The volunteer committee works with community partners to provide life skills workshops and other opportunities for personal and professional growth for teens. Laura has been instrumental in helping teens transition from foster care to becoming independent, self-sufficient and productive adults in the community.

This March, Laura will take a hiatus from her volunteer work with kids in Colorado Springs to embark on a coast-to-coast bike ride. The 3,064 mile ride is a way to test her own levels of endurance, but also to raise awareness about the physical and emotional challenges faced by kids in foster care. As Laura pedals her way from California to Florida, she will be urging people along the route to learn about foster children in their own communities and to get involved with their local CASA program.

Laura's journey begins on March 6th in San Diego and concludes on April 30th in St. Augustine, Florida. She will be blogging from the road at the attached link so friends can follow her progress across the country:

<http://trackmytour.com/2bGP1>

If you'd like to show your support for Laura's efforts on behalf of foster youth, you may make a donation at [casappr.org](http://casappr.org) (indicate your support of Laura by typing in "bike ride"). And, if you see Laura on the road in her blue and red CASA bike jersey, give her a friendly wave and honk of encouragement!





**Recently closed cases:**

Lynne Anderson  
Georganne Barnes  
Regina English  
Kathryn Gayle  
Barbara Nakasone  
Heather Nelson  
Joan Stephens  
Amelia Tillman  
Danielle Tuttle  
Kim Whisenhunt  
Joan White  
Jillian Wiker  
Erin Wilcox



**Recently assigned cases:**

Leslea Develbiss  
Diane Hart  
Joanie Huggins  
Patricia Moore  
Beverly Santarelli

## Lutheran Family Services' KPC Respite Center

The Lutheran Family Services KPC Respite Center is open again. If you are working with a family who may be in need of short-term, temporary, crisis or planned childcare for infants and young children, they can contact the KPC Center. Please note that the family must have at least one child that is aged six or younger. There is no cost for the parents or guardians.

KPC Respite Center is available to give parents a break when they need it the most!

For more information go to [www.kpcrespitecenter.org](http://www.kpcrespitecenter.org) or call their 24-hour line at 719-634-5439 for either planned or crisis child care.

## Become a Teen Program Volunteer

The MFCF has a program that offers foster teens in our community an opportunity, twice per month, to help them improve their life skills. We need volunteers who would be willing to coordinate one or more of these events per year. This volunteer should be detail oriented, and can take a project and run with it from start to finish.

Please contact Laura Speer at [lauras@casappr.org](mailto:lauras@casappr.org) or 447-9898, ext. 1026 if you or someone you know is interested.

## Wanted: CFIT Volunteers!

What is CFIT you ask? It is the Children and Families in Transition class that CASA facilitates at the courthouse three times a month for divorcing parents who have children. We need volunteers to help with the check-in process. It only requires about 1 ½ hours each time you help.

You do not have to be a current CASA volunteer to assist with this program.

Please contact Angela Rose at [angelar@casappr.org](mailto:angelar@casappr.org) or 447-9898, ext. 1015 if you, or someone you know, is interested.

Thank you so much for your consideration!

## Court Report Tutoring

CASA is providing staff tutors to assist advocates in writing and editing their court reports. This in-service will address frequently asked questions and reinforce the effectiveness of court reports. Gina James will facilitate this interactive and valuable class.

### Court Report Tutoring Session

When: Tuesday, March 17th, 9:00 am -12:00 pm

Location: CASA Office (Refreshments will be provided)

Reserve a seat today by contacting Kelly at [kellyp@casappr.org](mailto:kellyp@casappr.org) or by calling 447-9898, ext. 1033.

Space is limited to the first 18 participants. Laptops are available upon request.



## CASA Support Group

Over the past three years we have held a support group for our advocates and facilitators. Turnout for these groups has been varied, but the conversation has always been stimulating and helpful. The groups are held on different days and times to accommodate everyone's schedules, but evening groups have been least attended.

No matter that the group is referred to as a support group, it is always beneficial for gaining information, suggestions, support and affirmation. Please invest some time to see what this group is about in 2015. It is likely to enhance skills and understanding, and the networking and friendly conversation will make it worth your while.

We hope to see you at the following meetings:

Wednesday, March 26th, 10:00 – 11:30 am

Tuesday, April 21st, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

Please RSVP to [kellyp@casappr.org](mailto:kellyp@casappr.org) or by calling 447-9898, ext. 1033. In case of inclement weather CASA will notify you of cancellations via email.

## SEPT Contacts

The following is the list for emergencies during the visit and exchange time:

### Weekday call:

Monday –  
Marah x1017 or  
314-5008 (cell)

Tuesday –  
Crystal x1030 or  
314-5008 (cell)

Wednesday-  
Yvette x1013 or  
314-5008 (cell)

Thursday-  
Lesley 314-5008 (cell)

Friday-  
Kristeen x1028 or  
314-5008 (cell)

### Weekend call:

Sunday-  
Yvette/Leslie  
314-5008 (cell)

## TLC: Teaching about differences, Learning how to respect them, and Changing the way we look at the world

The TLC committee invites volunteers, staff and the Board of Directors to the “Marijuana Joint Training” presented by Krystal Grint, MSW Child Protection Intake Manager and Cara Nord, Esq., Assistant County Attorney.

Topic: Marijuana “Joint” Training

When: April 16th, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Where: DHS, 1675 Garden of the Gods Rd., 3rd floor, Nautilus Room

Are parents allowed to smoke marijuana on an open case? When do I need to alert DHS of marijuana use by parents? Are parents allowed to use as long as their children are not in their care?

These are just a few of the questions faced by CASAs every day. This training will cover the dangers of marijuana growers and the potential impact on children, as well as the safety and risk factors associated with marijuana as it pertains to children.

Come get the answers to all your questions regarding “joint” cases with DHS and CASA. Hope to see you there!



Space is limited and refreshments will be provided. Please RSVP to Kelly at [kellyp@casappr.org](mailto:kellyp@casappr.org) or 719-447-9898, ext. 1033 before Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>.

## **CASA Now Using Electronic Documents**

With an interest in improving delivery times and concern for the volume of paper generated, the Office of the County Attorney (OCA) has made a shift in practice to better serve its collaborative partner agencies. The OCA has now begun to scan all documents generated from the caseworkers and court, and will be emailing those scanned documents to the CASA D&N program assistant, Catherine Sidor. Catherine will in turn email those documents directly to you. You may determine for yourselves if you want to print the documents or maintain the scanned copy on your secured computer with your other electronic case files.

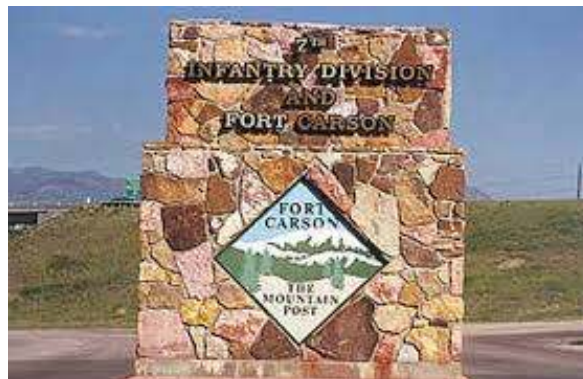
If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact Gina at [GinaJ@casappr.org](mailto:GinaJ@casappr.org) or by calling 447-9898, ext. 1012.

## **New Entry Regulations for Fort Carson Visitors**

If your CASA family/children reside on Fort Carson, you will want to pay attention to this!

Installation access changes- Non-DOD / Federal ID card holders will have a grace period until May 1st to obtain access passes. This grace period between March 1st and May 1st will allow visitors time to present the proper paperwork and allow Fort Carson officials to streamline procedures. People who enter through Gates 1 or 3 can still use their driver's license until May 1st. Individuals who have a current Fort Carson Form 1606 (green and white pass) can still access the installation as normal until the pass expires or by May 1st, whichever comes first. Those who access the installation using Rapid Gate access will be allowed entry until the expiration of the Rapid Gate pass.

If you have any questions please contact Gina at [GinaJ@casappr.org](mailto:GinaJ@casappr.org) or by calling 447-9898, ext. 1012.





# MILTON FOSTER CHILDREN'S FUND

**Our Purpose:** To enrich the lives of children in foster care throughout the Pikes Peak Region.

**We Have Money...**



**Please Submit Your**

**MFCF Applications**

The Milton Foster Children's Fund (MFCF) provides opportunities that build resiliency, caring and support that are not funded by existing agencies or programs to enrich the lives of children in foster care/out of home placement in El Paso and Teller Counties.

MFCF can provide opportunities such as:

- Music/Sports Lessons or Camps
- Educational Opportunities/Tutoring

**(We just received more money for tutoring)**

- Sports/Special Equipment

The foster parent, case worker or CASA must complete an application. The Allocations Committee meets once per month to review requests.



120 E Boulder Street  
Colorado Springs CO  
719-339-1062

**Open Saturdays 1:00-4:00 pm**

The Hanger is a clothes store for teens in foster care (ages 12-21) living in El Paso or Teller Counties. Teens can choose clothing and accessories free of charge. Teens can also volunteer to work in the store, as well as participate in exclusive parties, field trips and workshops.

## UPCOMING TEEN EVENTS:

### March Events:

- Mar. 13<sup>th</sup> - Open Mic Night (YLAC Event)  
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 pm  
Location: Community Prep School (332 E. Willamette Ave.)  
Contact Anjuli @ (719) 684-9551 for questions.
- Mar. 29<sup>th</sup> – EASTER Teen Dinner / Training  
Topic: PPWF Youth Job Fair Preparation  
Time: 5:00 - 7:30 pm  
Location: CTU (4435 North Chestnut Street)

### April Events:

- Apr. 11<sup>th</sup> – Easy / Inexpensive Cooking  
Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm  
Location: TBD

### May Events:

- May 3<sup>rd</sup> – Teen Dinner / Training  
Topic: Shopping on a Budget / Money Saving Tips  
Time: 5:30 - 7:30 pm  
Location: Broadmoor Community Church (315 Lake Ave.)
- May 15<sup>th</sup> – Formal Etiquette Dinner for H.S. Seniors  
Time: 5:30 – 8:00 pm  
Location: Broadmoor Community Church (315 Lake Ave)

### June Events:

- June 7<sup>th</sup> – North Pole Festival  
Come join us for a fun day of entertainment & lunch at the North Pole Amusement Park  
Time: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Location: Santa's Workshop (5050 Pikes Peak Hwy)  
(Registration Required)

**Learn more at:**

<http://www.casappr.org/news/hanger/>  
Email [mfcf@casappr.org](mailto:mfcf@casappr.org)  
Call 719-447-9898, ext. 1026



# 2015 Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Conference

## Featured Speakers



**Dr. Rob Anda**  
MD, MS

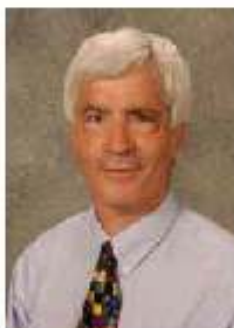
Dr. Anda is the Co-Founder of ACE Interface, LLC as well as the Co-Founder and Co-Principal investigator of the ACE Study.

**Presenting:** The Progressive Nature of Childhood Experiences: Building Self-Healing Communities

### Dr. Desmond Runyan

Dr. Runyan is a Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Colorado and Executive Director of the Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect.

**Presenting:** Child Discipline in Colorado and How to Advance the Prevention of Abuse



### Mark Wynn

Mr. Wynn is a National and International expert in the field of Domestic and Sexual Violence, including the effects on children in these situations. He offers unique insight as a survivor of an abusive home, along with twenty-one years of experience from the Nashville Metropolitan Police Department, he was a Lieutenant to the Domestic Violence Division and member of the Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team for fifteen years.

## Join us April 30, 2015

Hotel Elegante Conference & Events Center  
2886 S. Circle Drive  
Colorado Springs CO 80906  
7:45AM - 5:00PM

## Registration

Early bird registration begins February 20, 2015  
Cost: \$95

Registration after March 30, 2015  
Cost: \$125

Registration includes buffet lunch and free parking. Please note that all registrations are non-refundable. Register online at [www.peacefulhouseholds.org](http://www.peacefulhouseholds.org)

## Event Sponsors

EL PASO COUNTY  
Department of Human Services



Penrose-St. Francis Health Services  
Centura Health

