

# CASA News

Coles County Court Appointed Special Advocates  
PO Box 1074, Charleston, IL 61920  
217-348-0599  
[www.colescountycasa.org](http://www.colescountycasa.org)

Mission: Coles County CASA is a not-for-profit corporation that advocates for the best interests of abused and neglected children brought into the Coles County juvenile court system.

## **Board of Directors**

Susan Bartlett  
Kirsten Bays  
Mary Bower  
Mary Gherardini  
Sarah Greider  
Mary Anne Hanner  
Mike Havey  
Tami Knight  
Steve Ryan  
Todd J. Vilardo  
Al Volk  
Dale Wolf

## **Executive Director**

Susan Bulla

## **Advocate Coordinator**

Kristen Bertrand

## **Officers**

President:  
Todd Vilardo  
President-Elect:  
Mary Anne Hanner  
Past-President:  
Steve Ryan  
Treasurer: Al Volk  
Secretary:  
Susan Bartlett

## **More Than A Number**

Coles County CASA has served 48 children this year. Each of these children has been assigned a case number, but they are so much more than a number to their advocate! CASA advocates have the great privilege of getting to know each child, their wishes, hopes, and dreams for the future. The advocate knows the child's history, their struggles, and their triumphs. They know the child's teachers, their grades, and whether or not they think boys (or girls) have "cooties." Advocates know the child's parents and foster families. The advocates know about the abuse and/or neglect that the child has endured.

CASA advocates report this information to the judge and become the "eyes and ears of the child for the court." They make independent recommendations to the judge about the child. They stay with the case until it ends. They continually advocate for the best interests of the children. CASA advocates give their time and their hearts to work towards a permanent home for the children in the shortest amount of time possible.

## **Four New Advocates Sworn In**

On July 21, 2011, Judge Matthew Sullivan conducted a swearing-in ceremony for 4 new advocates. Each new advocate had completed 30 hours of training. Friends, family members, and current advocates attended the ceremony to encourage these new volunteers as they speak up for a child.



New advocates Gail Lockart, Erika Weaver, Laura Morgan, and Charlotte Cox with Judge Sullivan.



## Casa for CASA 2011



Susie Colgrove, center, is pictured with Adam Whalin, a Mattoon firefighter who helped build the house and deliver it, and Susan Bulla, Executive Director of Coles County CASA.

The new owner of the 2011 Casa for CASA is Susie Colgrove of Mattoon. Her name was drawn on the last night of the Coles County Fair from the hundreds of raffle tickets purchased by area residents for the playhouse.

The 6-foot by 8-foot Victorian playhouse was constructed by members of the Mattoon Fire Department with donations from several local businesses. Business donors include County Office Supply, Ed Carter Construction, Zollman Trailer Sales, Drake Roofing, Fastenal, SS-Rentals, Unique Homes, Kirchner Building Center, McQueen Lumber, R.P. Lumber, and Pagliacci's.

Thanks to everyone who helped make this year's Casa for CASA a success!

### Thank you!

Many thanks to the law firm of Hefner, Eberspacher & Tapella, LLC, for providing an attorney at no cost to Coles County CASA! Thank you to Devin Mills and Bryan Robbins for representing us so well.

United Way of Coles County, Inc.

Coles County CASA is a proud member of the United Way

**Printing and Distribution of *The Home Page* is Compliments of Consolidated Communications,**

Coles County CASA is now the proud owner of a PowerPoint projector and screen! Thank you to the Mattoon Area Charitable Foundation for their generous grant.

Find us on Facebook!  
Friend us at :  
Coles County CASA for Children.

**Special Thanks to.....  
Charleston Carnegie  
Public Library  
Monthly Meeting Room**



## Volunteer Spotlight



**Coles County CASA Advocate  
Carolyn Cloyd**

### **What led to your involvement with CASA?**

Three things really led to my involvement with CASA. First of all, there are so many children who are abused and neglected and I feel strongly that all of us must do what we can to stop it. Second, my mother was abused as a child. Abused children often grow up and abuse their own children but my mother did not. Although we were lucky, she did suffer from the abuse all of her life, and it did adversely affect my family. What a difference it could have made in my mother's life if she had someone to advocate for her and her siblings. I never, ever forget that.

And the third reason is because I believe in CASA. I work for United Way of Coles County and CASA is one of our partner agencies. Mamie Richey came to speak to our board on behalf of CASA and after hearing her talk about the children, how they suffer and how CASA can help, I told her to sign me up.

### **What do you enjoy most about being an advocate?**

I suppose the correct answer would be seeing that we make a difference in the lives of children, and that is the reason we do it. But sometimes being an advocate is hard and the results are not always immediately obvious. There aren't always clear-cut happy endings because even when the results are in the best interest of the child it is often painful for many of the participants, and that is never easy.

What I most enjoy is the interaction with the other advocates and CASA staff because I think that talking to them and hearing their experiences helps put things in perspective.

### **What has surprised you most as you advocate for children?**

I don't know if surprise is the right word, but I continue to wonder at the ways in which people neglect and mistreat their children. Having a child changed everything for me, it changed the way I thought, it changed my focus, it changed the way I conducted myself because I knew I had to live all of those principles I espoused (or at least try to). It amazes me that other people do not seem to see their children as the miracle they are.

### **What is the biggest challenge you face as a CASA advocate?**

The biggest challenge I face is trying to remember not to judge and to remember that other people have a different view of the world than I do. For me, the best CASA training I received was about understanding how people think and how we look at things differently if, say, we are middle class or wealthy or if we live in poverty. What makes sense to me may not to someone I work with through CASA and it is important to remember that so that I can help and encourage, instead of blaming.

### **What keeps you motivated on your case?**

I am so appalled at the number of children who are mistreated or neglected; I feel strongly that we all must do what we can do to change that. I am pleased to be a part of an organization that does, and cares so much for children. And, of course, the children - how can you not be motivated by them?

**Can You Help Coles County CASA Advocate for Children?**

- Friend of CASA**    \$0 - \$99    Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Silver Level**    \$100 - \$249    Address \_\_\_\_\_
- Gold Level**    \$250 - \$499    City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_
- Platinum Level**    \$500 - \$999    Phone # \_\_\_\_\_
- Millennium Level**    \$1000 and up    Email address \_\_\_\_\_
- I am interested in becoming an advocate.**    I prefer newsletter delivery by  **U.S. Mail**     **Email**

This gift is in honor of \_\_\_\_\_ \* Your donation to CASA is

This gift is in memory of \_\_\_\_\_ tax deductible.

Please notify \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make check payable to Coles County CASA, P.O. Box 1074, Charleston, IL 61920*

<http://colescountycasa.org/>



<http://www.nationalcasa.org/>

COLES COUNTY CASA

Cour Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN



Coles County CASA  
P.O. Box 1074  
Charleston, IL 61920