



Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA Program Newsletter Spring 2013

*"I always wondered
why somebody doesn't
do something about
that. Then I realized
I was somebody."
- Lily Tomlin*

Happy New Year!

In this first edition of the newsletter to be published by the new Volunteer Coordinator, Tara Buckley, I thought it might be a good time to review what the non-profit organization Friends of CASA – Hawaii is all about. There are a lot of new CASAs who might be wondering who we are and what we do.

There are CASA programs on all of the major islands: Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii Island. In 2008 all of these programs were having difficulty recruiting volunteers. I was asked by the National CASA Association to form a non-profit organization to help them recruit and retain volunteers. It took about a year and a half to complete all of the many IRS requirements for certification as a non-profit organization.

We are an all-volunteer organization and the majority of us are CASAs. We are basically a marketing organization. Our mission is to help recruit volunteers and to increase awareness about the CASA Program in Hawaii.

In the years immediately prior to 2009 there was an average of 20 new volunteers qualified as CASAs each year on all of the Hawaiian Islands. We started our first modest marketing efforts in 2010, which resulted in the addition of 35 new qualified CASAs that year. We increased our efforts in 2011, which netted an additional 41 volunteers. In 2012 we did our first major marketing effort by focusing on additional markets such as social media, libraries, churches, etc. This effort resulted in adding an additional 62 new CASAs in Hawaii. The Oahu program is by far the largest of the four programs and the majority of the increases have been on Oahu.

I am stepping down as the President of Friends of CASA – Hawaii in 2013. We will have a new President, Robin Kennedy, and a new Vice President, Ron Hamic. Robin and Ron are both CASAs.

The additional Officers of the Board of Directors (BOD) have been with the organization since our initial beginning, and include Secretary Sue Matthews, Treasurer Susan Chong, and Marketing Director Terri Hansen.

I will remain as a member of the Board of Directors (BOD) during 2013 to assist in the transition. In addition to me; the other current members of the BOD are Diane Esecson and Amphay Champathong. We are in the process of selecting several new personnel to be nominated for membership on the BOD.

We are a marketing organization and are looking for CASAs who have experience in marketing to join us as members of the BOD to help continue our efforts in recruiting volunteers FOR THE CHILDREN. For more information, please visit our website at www.casahawaii.org.

Aloha,

Ken Bailey
President
Friends of CASA - Hawaii

After over a year of consistently visiting and advocating for her teenager, one of our CASA Volunteers received the following drawing, (right), as a "thank you" and as an acknowledgement of the CASAs efforts to help the child and her family."



Court Report Timeliness Standards

As part of a larger court improvement process, DHS reports for reviews and hearings will be due two weeks prior to the court date, and GAL/CASA reports one week prior. Beginning with the first late report, sanctions will be brought against those who do not meet timeliness required to provide due process to families, including CASA program members. These sanctions differ among DHS, GAL, and CASAs, so please consult with your supervising social worker to see if there are any implications for you. Isn't it good to know that we will be able to see all DHS reports two weeks prior to court?

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Reviewing the Laws

The Educational Stability Act of 2008

- ◇ Each child's case plan must include:
 - ◇ Assurances that the placement of the child in foster care takes into account the current educational setting and proximity to the child's home school.
 - ◇ An assurance that DHS has coordinated with local educational agencies to ensure that the child remains in their home school.
 - ◇ If remaining in the home school is not in the best interests of the child, DHS must provide immediate enrollment and transfer of records to a new school.
 - ◇ DHS must also consider reasonable travel for the child to remain in his or her current school.

What does this mean?

This means that, according to Federal law, DHS must do their best to keep children in their home schools when they place children in foster custody. This includes considering options that would allow the child to stay in that school, despite no longer living in that geographical district. Resource parents may be willing to drop the child off and pick them up at their home school, or, if the child is old enough, they could take the bus from their resource home to their home school.

For more information on this act, please visit the link below:



<http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/FosteringConnectionsSummary.pdf>

After-Hours Hotline

In an effort to make sure that CASAs and our clients receive the best assistance possible, the After-Hours Hotline was created. Should you need support or advice from CASA Program Staff during the hours of 4:30pm-7:45am during the week, or anytime on the weekends, please call 285-4186. An on-call staff member will be available to assist you.

Helpful Hints & Practical Pointers

Establishing Rapport with Children

- ◇ Introduce yourself to the child and let them know what you'd like to be called. "Aunty" and "Uncle" are common in Hawaii.
- ◇ When you sit with them, sit at their height so that they can be eye-to-eye with you. This makes you less intimidating and more a part of their world.
- ◇ Ask if you can join them in whatever game they're playing. Ask questions about the game, including how to play it and who the different characters are. Make the child the expert. Children are used to being told what to do, they relish being "in charge."
- ◇ Be funny. Tell jokes, make silly sounds or read a book to them using different voices for each character. Making the child laugh goes a long way towards helping the child become comfortable with you.

Establishing Rapport with Teenagers

- ◇ Introduce yourself and explain what your role is. Make sure that you point out how having a CASA benefits them. Ask them if they have any questions about who you are, what you do and/or what's been going on.
- ◇ Ask lots of questions about school, their favorite subjects, what they like to do in their free time, etc. In the beginning, expect shorter answers while they size you up and decide whether to trust you. Teenagers, especially those that have been in the system for a long time, may have gone through numerous social worker's and CASAs. Sometimes it takes a while for them to let you in.
- ◇ If the youth says something that shocks you, try not to show it. Often, teenagers are testing you to see how you'll react. If you react calmly and follow up with questions indicating your interest, they'll keep talking and/or learn that they can talk to you, even when something bad happens.
- ◇ Do what you say you're going to do. Unlike children who have short attention spans and even shorter memories, teens will remember if you told them you would do something and you didn't do it. They will call you out about it next time you tell them you're going to do something for them.
- ◇ Don't make promises. Tell them that you'll try your best and explain to them that the judge ALWAYS has the final say.
- ◇ Tell them the truth and don't tell them that everything is going to be okay, or that it's going to get better right away, because we don't know that, and that isn't the case in their experience. Tell them that you want to help and that you're there for them, but be honest about their situation as you see it and answer their questions truthfully. Remember, when you're being honest, you should still be tactful and kind.
- ◇ Encourage teens to come to court! Let them know that they can talk to the judge before the hearing if they have something to say. Make sure you let your CASA Program Social Worker know in advance so that arrangements can be made.

News and Upcoming Events

New Judge, New Courtroom

- Beginning in January 2013, CASA reviews, hearings and trials will be heard in Courtroom 2F, with Judge Christine Kuriyama.

February 2013

- ETO One-on-One Training/Refresher: Scheduled for 2/11/13-2/15/13. Time slots are available from 7:45am-4:00pm. Please contact Michele Shaner to sign up at 954-8122, or on the CASA Program Main Line at 954-8124.
- 2/6/13 or 2/8/13 (you may choose to attend on either date): Improving Emotional and Behavioral Outcomes for LGBT Youth training. This is a free training!
- 2/21/13: Orientation for the Spring CASA Training, 5:30-7:00pm. Meeting place TBD.

March 2013

- Spring CASA Training, March 2nd-March 30th for five consecutive Saturdays. Trainers: Amphay Champathong, Michele Shaner and Tara Buckley.

April 2013

- 4/6/13-4/9/12: CASA Annual Conference in Anaheim, CA. Oahu's CASA Program is planning a session on "Social Capital for Youth Aging Out of the Foster Care System." They will be partnering with EPIC and the Youth Initiative.

Community Resources

Name of the Organization	Services Provided by the Organization	Contact Information	Address
HI H.O.P.E.S.	<p>The HI H.O.P.E.S. Youth Leadership Board is made up of current and former foster youth who provide the “youth voice” for the Hawaii Youth Opportunities Initiative (HYOI).</p> <p>HYOI provides foster youth with financial literacy training. After a youth has completed the training, he/she receives help in opening savings accounts as well as matching funds.</p>	<p>Delia Ulima dulima@epicohana.org Fax: 748-7919 www.Ittakesanohana.org</p>	<p>Delia Ulima c/o Epic Ohana, Inc. 1130 N. Nimitz Hwy. Suite C-210 Honolulu, HI 96817</p>
PARENTS, Inc.	<p>Provides parenting classes for all parents with child abuse and neglect cases on Oahu who have parenting as part of their service plan.</p> <p>Also provides community parenting classes.</p>	<p>Kristen Wild Case Manager kristen@hawaiiparents.org Office: 235-0487 Fax: 247-0447 www.hawaiiparents.org</p>	<p>45-955 Kam. Hwy. Suite 403 Kaneohe, HI 96744</p>
Project Visitation	<p>Provides monthly visits and special events for siblings separated by foster care.</p>	<p>521-9531 Download the Sibling Referral Form at http://familyprogramshawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Sibling-Referral-Form-021610.doc</p>	<p>Oahu and Kailua-Kona, Big Island</p>

Attention CASAs!

This newsletter will be coming out at the beginning of each quarter. If you have questions, comments or suggestions for topics to cover in the next newsletter, please contact Tara Buckley at 225-7887, or by email at tara.anjuli@gmail.com. All feedback is welcomed!