



Quarterly Newsletter July 2021

Dear Friend,

Since 2010, the American Bar Association has recognized June as National Reunification Month. Douglas County CASA volunteers and staff have been fortunate to celebrate several reunifications recently and hear about others across the country. We believe that, whenever possible, the best place for children to grow up is with their family of origin. To make this belief a reality, we support our CASA volunteers to provide consistent attention and collaborative support to kids **AND their parents**. When this care and attention results in a reciprocated relationship, it can lead to the kinds of reunification stories we've seen recently.

These successes are only possible when caring and generous supporters like you make investing in best interest advocacy for local children who have experienced abuse and neglect a priority. Your gift to Douglas County CASA means that a teen like the one we describe below can count on someone to listen and speak up about anything that might help them (and their parent) reach permanency.

By supporting CASA, you are helping a child in the foster system experience some stability during an extremely challenging time in their life and see what's possible when they have a caring adult in their corner they can trust.

Thank you so much for sharing your compassion for kids and for your partnership in giving hope to a child in foster care.

Sincerely,


Erick Vaughn
Executive Director

p.s. In addition to volunteer advocates, we are actively recruiting volunteers who care about children in child welfare to serve on our Board of Directors. Your service can help us grow and serve more children in need of best interest advocacy in Douglas County, Kansas. [Learn more here.](#)

Child Advocacy Updates

From Chaos and a Group Home to Fishing, Trust and Permanency: Frequency and Quality of CASA Volunteer's Visits Led to Teen Reintegrating with His Mother



A teenage boy was removed from his home and placed in the child welfare system in the middle of the pandemic after a chaotic situation in his father's household made it impossible for him to remain there (his mother was not in a position to care for him at the time). Thanks to your support, after nearly a year spent living in a remote group home, this teen was finally matched with a CASA volunteer who began to get to know him and advocate for him with the goal of eventually finding him a safe, permanent home.

Fortunately, a few months later, it became possible for the teen to be placed with his mother. This

new location (coupled with the flexibility of visiting a private home) made it possible for our CASA volunteer to dramatically increase the frequency of his in-person visits with the teen. Their relationship became stronger; they settled into a routine where our CASA volunteer would spend regular time talking with the teen and learning about his interests. Our CASA volunteer was able to share meaningful experiences hunting and fishing with the teen and even include the mother's boyfriend in their activities.

Our CASA volunteer was a positive male influence in the life of a teen whose relationship with his father had been challenging. This led to a positive relationship between our CASA volunteer and the teen's mother, who trusted him enough to share how things were progressing in her efforts to regain permanent custody of her son. She discussed various challenges with him and he was able to connect her with community resources and other supports.

After a transition period during which the teen's mother demonstrated consistent efforts to maintain safe and stable housing for her family, steady employment, attention to her son's school enrollment and attendance, and responsibility for meeting his medical and mental health needs, the case was closed. This teen now has a safe, permanent home and a far more stable life.

More Reunification Cases Reported in 2022

CASA staff have reported multiple reunifications so far this year (with more expected this summer) where the parents have demonstrated that they met all the court ordered requirements and their children were allowed to move back in with them permanently. A common theme in all the reunification cases CASA sees is the heavy involvement of our CASA volunteers and their steady support of parents in addition to their assigned children.

A trusting relationship between parents and CASA volunteers coupled with your steady support allows CASA to learn about family and parent needs and advocate for them in court. As a result, their chances of reunifying with their children increase dramatically. CASA volunteers can encourage parents to access and participate in services and report those successes to the court. They can also advocate for visits between parents and children to help them begin to rebuild their family.

Volunteer Recruitment, Training & Appreciation



We had a lovely time recently celebrating our amazing CASA volunteers and sharing our gratitude for everything they do each day for CASA kids. A group of volunteers and staff gathered for a reception at the Lawrence Rotary Arboretum and it was joy to let them know how much we love them.

Learn
more or
apply to
be a
Volunteer

CASA currently supports 73 active volunteers (who have served a total of 106 children so far this year) and we recently started training 13 new volunteers, our largest in-person cohort in 3 years! We're so fortunate to be working with this inspiring group and look forward to adding more to their ranks.

We have capacity to support 15 more CASA volunteers, and are eager to reach more children on our waiting list with your help. We support a wide demographic of volunteers; from college students and young professionals to couples and parents who have some extra time to serve. If you or someone you know has interest in volunteering we'd love to talk to them: give us a call (785-832-5172), email us at kwinfrey-gorzek@dccasaks.org, or stop by and say hello!

We look forward to seeing more community members soon at the Lawrence Farmer's Market and other events later this summer and in the Fall.



The CASA Collective



The CASA Collective Has Reached 35 Recurring Donors and Held its First Gathering

Members of The CASA Collective, our society of recurring donors, gathered recently at a private North Lawrence home to visit with each other, tour a distinctive collection of African artifacts and antiques, and celebrate all that the group is accomplishing for CASA kids.

Since its establishment in January 2021 with a founding group of 6 recurring donors, the society has grown to 35 members - with an additional 20 Truist Credit Union employees participating during 2022 - coming together to contribute over \$15,000 to support best interest advocacy for CASA kids.

That means they're responsible for funding the recruitment, screening, training & supervision of 6 CASA volunteers to work with 6 children or sibling groups for an entire year. We are so grateful for the steadfast support of this compassionate group and look forward to planning more celebrations with you all!

[Details here](#)

Upcoming CASA Events

Arantowicz

BO'S HOG WILD

BREWFEST AND BBQ

AUGUST 27, 2022

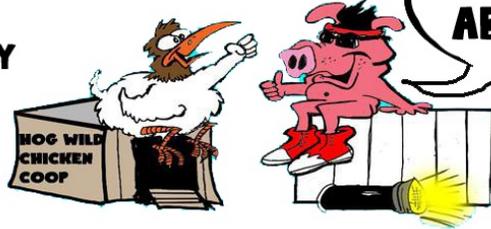
SCHEDULE

KIDS PARTY

4:00-5:30

FAMILY PARTY

5:30-9:00



**WE'RE WILD
ABOUT KIDS!**



393 E. 1400 ROAD, BALDWIN CITY, KANSAS



The party is fast approaching! Make sure you have August 27th on your calendar & plan to join us for the 35th Annual Bo's Hog Wild Brewfest & BBQ. This year it begins with games and activities for kids at 4:00pm followed by dinner, live music and dancing for the whole family starting at 5:30pm.

Nearly 700 kids and adults gather each year to have fun and give back. All funds raised directly support the children served by CASA as well as three other local charity partners. Please consider

sponsoring or donating to the [Bo's Hog Wild Children's Fund](#) (you can request that your gift be kindly directed to CASA or split among any/all of the charity partners) and then celebrate with us in August.



KU Wind Ensemble benefit concert tickets sold out in 36 hours; thank you for your support!

We were overwhelmed by the enthusiasm around our 2nd annual [Winds Across the Prairie](#) benefit concert. Thank you to everyone who purchased tickets; we can wait to share this experience with you. Please contact shoadley@dccasaks.org about presale tickets and sponsorship information for our 2023 concert.

Many thanks to our generous hosts Steve and Chris Edmonds, our steering committee, event sponsors, Mentor Circle members and, of course, University of Kansas Director of Bands Paul Popiel and the 60 talented & compassionate [KU Wind Ensemble](#) musicians for their kind support.

2022 Steering Committee: David and Julie Dunlap, Jason and Machaela Edmonds, Steve and Chris Edmonds, Mark and Jill LaPoint, Scott and Nancy Thellman & Chuck and Karen Warner

Presenting Sponsor: [Edmonds Duncan Registered Investment Advisors](#)

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Community Partnership

CASA + KU Volleyball

A group of CASA volunteers recently visited student-athletes on the [KU volleyball team](#) to share their experiences working with kids in the child welfare system. Pictured here from left to right, Kristina Chartrand, Sara Obermeier & Katie Grom discussed the range of challenges their CASA kids (who range in age from a 1-year-old baby to an 18-year-old

preparing for independent living) have faced and continue to face and the ways they work to address these challenges, offer stability, and advocate for their best interests.

Kristina, Sara & Katie also answered questions from the players about how they became connected with CASA and what inspired them to volunteer. Stay tuned for more details about an exciting partnership between CASA and this caring, talented team.



CASA is so grateful to partner with these Agency Sponsors. Please support the following businesses and thank them for supporting CASA.



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Thank YOU for supporting kids in the child welfare system.



Help us spread the word

Follow CASA on social media (using the links below) and please share & comment. Or simply have a conversation with your family, friends, or neighbors about what CASA is doing for kids who have experienced abuse and neglect. We'd love to help more people get involved.

Thank you for helping us increase awareness and connect with prospective volunteers!

[Learn more about volunteering](#)



DID YOU KNOW that you can link your [Dillon's Plus](#) and [Amazon Smile](#) accounts to CASA?
You can unlock automatic donations every time you make a purchase.

Douglas County CASA | DCCASAKS.ORG



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