

BECOME A VOICES AMBASSADOR

Announcing a new way to get involved with VFC CASA!

Mission: The VOICES Ambassador Program helps to sustain an effective CASA program by engaging and educating community members and raising awareness of the agency and its services.

What's Involved: VOICES Ambassadors work to share the mission VFC CASA with community members through education and community outreach. Ambassadors serve as a public advocates within Boulder County by volunteering service hours to a VFC CASA committee, event, program, community outreach and/or educational activity.

Short On Time? The VOICES program was made for you! Volunteer as much or as little as you like. Ambassadors provide service that fits in busy work and family lifestyles.

Get Involved: For more information on the new VOICES Ambassador Program and opportunities to help, email nancy@vfccasa.org.

Spirit of Service from page 1

For Children CASA, and 5% to support the sorority's scholarship opportunities through its foundation.

I enjoyed my experience talking to the women of Beta Iota and witnessed their enthusiasm and commitment firsthand. To borrow a quote from Madonna, "If all you can do is live life in your world in a way that shows you are responsible for people around you, that's a course of action. People can be of service in large ways and small." Fortunately for the village of Boulder, Beta Iota is helping in a big way.

For more information about how you can get involved in Theta fundraisers for VFC CASA, please contact Sarah Glasser, President, Kappa Alpha Theta, Beta Iota Chapter, at 217.341.2336 or Sarah.Glasser@Colorado.EDU or visit www.kappaalphatheta.org/chapters/betaiota/ to learn more.

Terry Coble is a VFC CASA and our newsletter editor.



VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Fall 2010

VFC CASA Serving Abused and Neglected Children in Boulder County Since 1985

Beta Iota, The Spirit of Service

by Terry Coble, CASA

If the spirit of "It takes a village to raise a child," lives, then the Beta Iota Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity embodies this effort. Sarah Glasser, President of the Beta Iota Chapter of the Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity, along with her many "Theta" sisters, helped make this challenge a reality for Voices For Children CASA this year. She and members of her local chapter honored Voices For Children CASA by presenting Fred Williams, President of the Board of Directors, a generous check for \$7,000 during the 25th Anniversary Celebration held at the Hotel Boulderado this spring. The funds were raised from two major events held annually by the chapter: The "Buff Bowl," held in the fall, and the "KAT Walk" fashion show, held in the spring.

Every fall the Thetas organize a popular football tournament called the "Buff Bowl" which enlists the support of every fraternity on campus. In addition to social activities associated with this tradition-oriented event, funds are collected in three ways: participants pay a fee to play in the football game, attendees pay a fee to watch the game, and local businesses provide financial sponsorships to advertise the game. This year more than \$5,000 was raised for philanthropy.

In the spring, the Thetas organize a fashion show mimicking the annual New York fashion week, called the "KAT Walk" (i.e., Kappa Alpha Theta). This event is hosted at the Glenn Miller ballroom and features a long runway lined by participant chairs. Members of university student organizations serve as models for the fashions on loan from local clothing stores. Fix Hair Salon donated their time this year for makeovers for this event which raised \$3,500 from over 500 participants.

Background

Beta Iota is one of 125 college-based chapters and 190 alumni chapters of the international Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity. In 2008 these chapters donated more than \$330,000 to CASA programs in their communities. CASA is "woven into the culture" of many Theta chapters. With the social goal "to exercise the widest influence for good," the local Beta Iota Chapter at the University of Colorado has adopted Voices For Children CASA in Boulder County as their philanthropic focus. Members continue to educate themselves about the organization and act as passionate

ambassadors for the CASA mission.

History

Kappa Alpha Theta was founded in 1870 as the first Greek-letter fraternity for women with its headquarters currently located in Indianapolis, Indiana. Theta members promote the concepts of friendship, scholarship, service and leadership by actively engaging in their communities.

In 1989, Kappa Alpha Theta Fraternity adopted National CASA as its national philanthropy. For over 20 years, local student and alumni chapters have been committed to assisting their national philanthropic organization by raising funds for local CASA organizations.

The Beta Iota Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta has been a part of the University of Colorado for over 100 years. The current membership is approximately 166 women, with half of its members living on campus in the original 1906 chapter residence which has been recently renovated. This year, Beta Iota donated 95% of funds raised to Voices

Please see **SPRIT OF SERVICE**, back page.



NEWS ON THE INSIDE

VFC Announces New Board Members	2
VFC Celebrates at Light of Hope Luncheon ...	4
VFC CASA Training February-March 2011	6
Taking A Stand	7
Colorado Gives Day	7

2305 Canyon Blvd., #101
Boulder, CO 80302

VOICES FOR CHILDREN



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VOICES FOR CHILDREN CASA is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of abused and neglected children in

Boulder County.
For further information please call or write to:
Voices For Children CASA
2305 Canyon Blvd., #101
Boulder, CO 80302
Telephone: 303-440-7059
FAX: 303-440-9960
E-Mail: vfccasa@aol.com
Web:
www.vfccasa.org

Editor: Terry Coble
Typesetting & Design: Laurie Goodman
Printed By: Colt Print Services

From the Executive Director

Even after 19 years as the Executive Director of Voices For Children CASA, I am still amazed and gratified at the quality of our CASA volunteers. About 20% have been CASA volunteers for more than 5 years, many much longer. The men and women who undergo a rigorous application process and the 40-hour mandatory training program come from all walks of life, from high school grads to Ph.D.s, from homemakers to hydrologists. The one thing in common is the desire to make a difference in the life of an abused and neglected child. And they do!

The October newsletter issue traditionally begins our CASA recruitment time and carries information about what a CASA does. You may have been reading about this for several years and, this year, you decide to join the CASA ranks. On Tuesday, November 9 from 6PM-7PM we invite you to come to the VFC CASA office to learn more about the program and hear first-hand from CASAs about their experiences.

Sincerely,
Marsha Caplan

VFC CASA Welcomes New Officers

Our heartfelt thanks go to Fred Williams who has served Voices For Children CASA as President.

Moving forward, Celia Krebs who has served VFC as Vice President will be our new President, with Rosalie Smith as Vice-President, and Fannie Ray-Earle as Treasurer. Trina Faatz and Maggie Cox will continue to serve as co-secretaries.

BUSINESS PARTNERS HELP VFC CASA SUCCEED

Boulder business people are very generous. Whether it's providing supplies at cost, sponsoring events, or providing cash, most say "yes" when asked to help.

Here are two examples of Boulder County businesses which said "yes" to Voices For Children CASA:

OptTek Systems, Inc (<http://www.opttek.com>) is a small 15-person company located in downtown Boulder that provides simulation optimization software and services for solving complex business processes. Jim Kelly CEO, Fred Glover CTO and Manuel Laguna founded the company. Diane Glover, Fred's wife, attended a Light of Hope Luncheon and told Fred about Voices For Children CASA. OptTek Systems management and employees chose to sponsor CASA services to an abused child every year for three years.

Grant Hopfenspirger, owner manager of **The Outback Steakhouse in Louisville**, has provided the VFC CASA volunteer recognition luncheon event for several years. He opens the restaurant especially for us, and the servers donate their time. Grant has also provided lunches for the CASA trainees on graduation day. If you've eaten at the Outback in Louisville, you know just what a treat this is for everyone. (And if you haven't yet been there, give it a try.)

If your business would like to become a VFC CASA Business Partner, please contact Tom Smalley (tom@JT-arts.com).

Voices For Children CASA Takes A Stand

The Board of Directors of Voices For Children CASA voted to support this resolution:

Statement of Resolution in support of Coloradans For Responsible Reform

Whereas... Three measures appearing on the November statewide ballot would significantly damage Colorado's state and local governments from funding their most basic level of services related to safety, education and transportation, and;

Whereas... The trio would slash at least \$1 billion annually in state taxes, roll back half of all school property taxes statewide and drastically limit government's ability to construct new buildings, and;

Whereas... One of the many components of Proposition 101 reduces the vehicle registration fee (annual license plate fee) to its level from the year 1919, a provision that alone would devastate Colorado's ability to maintain safe roads and bridges, and;

Whereas... One of the many components of Amendment 60 overturns hundreds of elections approved by local voters in the past eighteen years, creating financial chaos for school districts and local communities, and;

Whereas... One of the many components of Amendment 61 eliminates any practical means for state and regional governments to make future road, highway and bridge improvements, or other capital improvements to their districts, such as DIA, FasTracks, the Anschutz Medical Center, colleges and universities, water conservation districts, or improvements to public schools, cities and counties, and;

Whereas... The cumulative and destructive nature of the three measures ensures that Colorado will surrender its competitive standing to attract large and small employers alike, resulting in little to no economic growth for the state, a steady decline in property values and erosion of the state and local tax base;

Now, Therefore ... The organization known as Voices For Children CASA does hereby oppose the three ballot measures known as Proposition 101, Amendment 60 and Amendment 61 and urge the defeat of these measure at the November 2, 2010 General Election. For more information on the pros and cons of these issues go to lvvcolorado.org/docs/Proponents-Opponents-of-Ballot-Issues.pdf

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW! DECEMBER 8, 2010 COLORADO GIVES DAY

Colorado Gives Day is a state-wide celebration to increase philanthropy in Colorado with the goal of raising \$1 million in one day through online giving. It is taking place over 24 hours starting at 12 AM on Wednesday, December 8, 2010. You may make a tax-deductible donation by credit card or through a bank account at www.GivingFirst.org.

This online giving opportunity is a quick and easy way to support charities in Colorado. You may make a gift to the fund or you may name a charity of your choice. Don't have a particular one (or more!) in mind? The website offers a search feature to help you – by organization name, key word or category. You do not have to open an account to donate. You also have the option to make a recurring gift – an automated online donation on a weekly, quarterly or annual schedule.

The Community First Foundation has partnered with FirstBank to bring this important initiative to Colorado. You may ask why Colorado? Colorado ranks among the lowest of the states in charitable contributions while having some of the highest average incomes. This initiative was designed to increase support for Colorado charities.

Every donation (minimum \$10) received on December 8 will be increased in value by an additional allocation from an Incentive Fund. FirstBank has provided the lead gift of \$250,000 to the Incentive Fund. At the completion of Colorado Gives Day, each charity will receive a proportionate share of the Incentive Fund.

Note that credit card receipts will say *Community First Foundation* instead of the particular charity you donate to because the Community First Foundation manages the GivingFirst.org website. This allows the Foundation to issue you a donation receipt immediately and helps to minimize some of the administrative work of gift processing for the charities.

*VFC CASA thanks you
for your support!*

VOICES FOR CHILDREN Needs You!

Yes, I want to help!

- Yes, I am interested in becoming a CASA.
- No, I am not currently interested in becoming a CASA, but I would like to make a donation of \$_____.
- Yes, I want to do both! \$_____.
- Please put me on your mailing list for the VFC CASA quarterly newsletter.
- Please send me the monthly VFC CASA e-news.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone: Home _____ Work _____ Cell _____

Email _____

Please return to: VOICES FOR CHILDREN CASA, 2305 Canyon Blvd. #101, Boulder, CO 80302

Email: info@vfccasa.org Fax: 303-440-9960

Do You Have What It Takes To Be A CASA?

VOICES FOR CHILDREN CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteers come from varied backgrounds. Their ages span from 21 to over 70 years and their education ranges from high school to Ph.D. degrees. Some work full or part-time and some are students. The following is a composite picture drawn from the profiles of ninety active CASA volunteers.

Chris is 32, married, has a B.S. in chemistry and works as a chemist with a government agency. Wanting to give something back to the community and help children, Chris investigated several agencies before applying to Voices For Children (VFC) CASA to become a CASA.

Early in October, Chris received a multi-part application. Some of the questions pertained to personal life and ambitions, while others dealt with how one would respond in certain situations involving children. The completed application was returned with three forms: one for the Colorado Central Registry, an Authorization to Release Personal Information, and one for the Colorado Department of Motor Vehicles. VFC CASA screens every applicant through several agencies, and if an applicant cannot afford the fees, VFC CASA will pay them.

Attendance at all sessions of the 40-hour training is mandatory for becoming a CASA. Chris noted the training session dates.

The following month, after VFC CASA staff had reviewed the applications, a one-hour interview was scheduled. The interviewer asked many questions to learn more about Chris. The questions included topics such as childhood experiences, attitudes about abuse and neglect and experience in working with children. The interview was pleasant, and Chris departed with the feeling that important areas had been explored. It was understood that, because VFC CASA usually has more applicants than training slots, the interview was not a guarantee of a place in the program.

In early February, Chris was notified of acceptance into the training program. Having passed the written application, screening, and interview process, Chris felt quite proud and ready to accept the challenges of the rigorous training program that is presented only once each year. There would be 29 other trainees.

Chris enjoyed the training program with its mix of lecture and interactive activities, and got to know the others in the class. Several professionals from the community, the VFC CASA staff, CASA volunteers and members of the VFC CASA Board of Directors comprised the faculty. They helped the trainees to better understand child development, the dynamics of abuse and neglect, the legal system, communications skills, and other relevant subjects. The hefty training manual would be a handy review and reference tool when a case was ultimately assigned.

Several months after completing CASA training, Chris accepted a case involving two children, ages 8 and 4. Chris received a packet of information from VFC CASA, including the name of the guardian ad litem (GAL) attorney with whom Chris would be working and the experienced CASA mentor who would be contacting Chris. In the case documents, Chris learned that the boys were in a foster-adopt home after having been physically abused by their father.

Chris met with the GAL, who worked with Chris to develop a case plan and then went with Chris to meet the children at their foster home. After making an appointment to meet with the Department of Housing and Human Services caseworker Chris went to HHS and reviewed the case file.

As a CASA, Chris' primary job was to provide information to the Court as to the children's best interests. This would be done by talking with day care providers, foster parents, the caseworker and any others involved with the life of the boys. It was decided that Chris would also supervise one visit a week between the children and their parents.

Over the next few months, in an effort to get the best possible information to aid the Court in deciding what was best for the children, Chris saw the children regularly. They knew that Chris was there for them, to help guide them through a traumatic time in their lives. Chris also attended one court hearing and one placement review.

Ongoing support was received from the VFC CASA staff. Chris' monthly CASA reports were submitted, reviewed and sent on to the GAL. After working on the case for 90 days, Chris and the VFC CASA Program Manager met to discuss its progress. It seemed to Chris that the parents were complying with everything in their treatment plan and were sincere about wanting to get the children back. The parents were attending parenting classes and family therapy and Dad had a new job. At the weekly visits Chris had observed the children's eagerness to be with their parents and reported that both parents acted appropriately with the children. Chris felt that the parents were ready for unsupervised visits – perhaps even an overnight visit. The caseworker was resistant to this, believing that a few more observations were needed to make sure Dad's behavior was stable. It was decided that Chris should call the GAL and strongly urge to have a date set for unsupervised visits.

At one of the monthly inservice meetings at VFC CASA, Chris learned about some positive discipline techniques. These were suggested to the parents at the next visit Chris supervised, and they took the advice positively. To everyone's satisfaction the children were returned home in ten months. The case was still open with HHS and Chris continued to see the children weekly. Chris explained that because their family was doing so well, their time together would soon end. Shortly after HHS closed the case, the visits with Chris stopped.

VFC Announces 2011 CASA Training

Feb. 24, 26 and March 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, 12

Contact Pam at
303-440-7059 or
pam@vfccasa.org
for details and application.

From the President

"Life is what happens to you while you're making other plans..." and other rambling thoughts of an outgoing President. A series of events over the past few weeks prompts a more open letter than usual.

- Plant your bulbs in the fall, tend to your garden (whatever it is), be patient and trusting in your labors, and enjoy the blossoms in the spring
- Life is precious, and frequently fleeting, as we get older. Savor life and all those who season your feast of life.
- Life is about living, so get out and do it (there is no dress rehearsal)!

In Boulder we are blessed with a community of extraordinary richness. Feast on the range of opportunities outside our door and the educated (albeit eccentric) cast of characters which make Boulder what it is!

For those fortunate enough to have parents (or grandparents) who are alive and accessible tap into their world and rich history. Their world of experience and wisdom will be lost in their passing. Weave their world into yours, and it will make for a stronger and more colorful life fabric.

Make a difference, be it in your family, community or organization. I have met literally hundreds of fine folks who have given of their time, talent and energy to a cause outside of themselves. The givers are enlivened by their outreach and their community, and the world is made a better place because of it.

Wear your helmet, buckle your seat belt and be aware! Recently, one of our family members was thrown over a car which had pulled into a bike lane. The resulting "brain bruise" or TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury) could have been avoided by the use of a helmet and an awareness of surroundings.

And now to the timeless and telling question "How are the children?" I am proud and happy to report the Voices children are wonderfully well served, even given their circumstances.

In answering this question about the children, I am proud to reflect on the evolutions which have occurred during my last decade on the Board, both as Board member and President.

The CASA Training has continued to evolve, staying current with each shade of abuse and neglect that emerges – from meth to economic recessions. Board development and leadership continues to impress us with high caliber Board candidates and a steady quest for improvement.

With the internal workings strong and being made stronger each year, Voices has been able to develop ancillary programs outside of our normal CASA casework which are serving and benefiting families and children of Boulder County.

Growing Your Child, an outreach program for new parents and their children, has expanded from just 1 hospital to 3 hospitals. Colorful materials are sent several times within the first year of birth providing timely and relevant information about developmental milestones, activities to do with the child and parental self care. Over the years, I have watched this program expand from 100 families to 210 families per year!! In addition, all of the materials are available in both English and Spanish.

Another program was developed when we recognized the need to provide some caring connections for when a child turns 18 and "ages out" of the child welfare system. *Lifelong Connection* is a partnership between the Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Service (HHS) and VFC CASA whereby a select group of specially trained CASA's search through the records to find caring adults who will maintain a connection with the youth.

Yes, the organization has aged and matured over the years (gee, haven't we all). Yet, it has not become complacent in its maturity. Rather, I have watched it evolve to address the higher level issues and challenges present in a non-profit advocating on behalf of children subject to abuse and neglect. Over the years I have questioned our mission to *break the cycle* as it seemed unobtainable. However, as I have watched children in the program come back to be CASA's and spokespersons for CASA, I am encouraged that we have at least frayed or interrupted the cycle, so that it is weakening.

Thank you for the opportunity to help, lead and serve VFC CASA for the last little while. It has truly been a delight to be with so many capable, wise and caring people. Yes, the children are doing well.

Please wear your helmet, be aware, give, make a difference, enjoy where you are and the elders in your life – and the flowers in your garden come spring.

*Sincerely,
Fred Williams*

Voices For Children CASA Shines At The 2010 Light Of Hope Luncheon



Our Light of Hope Committee

Co-Chairs:
Trina Faatz, Nancy Birchmeier
 Wendy Ahrendt
 JoAnne Foster
 Alice Korenblat
 Frannie Ray-Earle
 Charlie Skala
 Janet Smalley



Our Table Captains

Wendy Ahrendt
 Maggie Cox
 Bill Eckert
 Trina Faatz
 Anne Gilchrist
 Ardee Imerrman
 Alice Korenblat
 Paul Markov
 Allison Platt
 Sharon Plettner
 Frannie Ray-Earle
 Charlie Skala
 Janet Smalley
 Jan Smith
 Rosalie Smith
 Sharon Smith-Eisler
 Peggy Spiro
 Mary Susan Stults
 Wayne Wright
 Katie Wright



On October 1 over 200 people enjoyed lunch at the St. Julien Hotel while learning more about Voices For Children CASA. Meredith and Tyler Wierl told the story of how their family grew from four to seven. CASA Sherry Zigmond introduced the Wierls, as she was the CASA assigned to the case.



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