

Save The Date!
Thursday, April 29

Why you ask? VFC is having a PAR-TAY!
 Plan on joining us for



**The Voices For Children CASA
 25th Anniversary Party
 at the
 The Hotel Boulderado**



*Watch for details and
 prepare for an evening of fun!*

2305 Canyon Blvd., #101
 Boulder, CO 80302

VOICES FOR CHILDREN



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VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Serving Abused and Neglected Children in Boulder County

Winter 2010

U.S. Department of Justice Weighs In On CASA Effectiveness

Reprinted from the National CASA Association website

Evidence of Effectiveness: The Office of the Inspector General Report

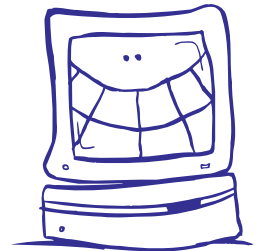
In 2006, the US Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General (OIG) conducted an audit of the National CASA Association, as required by Congress. Following are highlights of the findings:

- Children with a CASA volunteer are substantially less likely to spend time in long-term foster care, defined as more than 3 years in care: 13.3% for CASA cases versus 27.0% of all children in foster care.
- When a CASA volunteer was involved, both children and their parents were ordered by the courts to receive more services. The audit concluded that this was an indication that "CASA is effective in identifying the needs of children and parents."
- Cases involving a CASA volunteer are more likely to be permanently closed than cases where a CASA volunteer is not involved. The statistics vary from only 1.4% of children with a CASA volunteer reentering the CWS to 9% of CASA children reentering the CWS. This is in contrast to 16% for children not served by a volunteer.
- Children with a CASA volunteer are more likely to be adopted and less likely to be reunified with their parents than children not assigned a CASA volunteer. The audit explains this finding as the result of CASA volunteers serving on typically the most serious cases of maltreatment and therefore cases where children are less likely to be reunified with their parents.

Additional Studies Document Results of CASA Volunteer Advocacy

The National CASA Association and its local programs strive for fact-based decision-making. Below is a summary of conclusive results from the Caliber study and other CASA studies selected by researchers with the University of California, San Francisco Fresno Medical Education program for their high methodological quality.

CASA REPORT continued on page 7.



Join Voices For Children As We Welcome 2010... Electronically!

We invite you to sign up to receive Voices For Children CASA E-News.

Learn about and keep up-to-date with events, volunteer opportunities and what you can do to support VFC CASA.

Please subscribe online at
www.vfccasa.org

You may also read the latest
 E-News letter at www.vfc-casa.org/enews.html

With your continued support, we look forward to 2010 and continuing and improving our work towards making a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children in our community.

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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

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Donors Warm Childrens' Hearts

It is always so exciting to see the wonderful gifts donated for our CASA kids by so many people in the community. The CASAs come to the VFC CASA office to pick up those "just right" things for the abused and neglected children and youth with whom they work. There are usually some leftover toys after the holidays that we put in the CASA toy closet to be given out throughout the year. CASAs may use them for birthdays, going home, or just "glad to meet you" presents.

Our heartfelt thanks go to these most generous donors:

- **Bath and Beauty Employees** who donated gifts that teen girls absolutely love
- **Bead Lounge Employees** who made beautiful jewelry for teen girls
- **Boulder Gourmet Club** who fulfilled the wishes of 10 teenagers
- **Case Logic** for the variety of great backpacks
- **Rhonda and Cody Hovendick** who delivered 10 boxes of beautiful books for children of all ages
- **King Soopers at Sunrise Center** who put CASA kid ornaments on their giving tree, and the 70 families who filled the requests
- **St. Vrain Community Council Service Angel Project** for the many gift cards
- **Patients of Brent Lange, DDS**, for a variety of toys



Welcome 2010

With a New Resolution

Use the start of 2010 to make a New Year's resolution with your family and neighbors. Pick an activity to do once a week with your family to focus on being together or to help those around you. Here are some ideas:

Game Night

Plan a weekly or monthly game night with your family.

Check-In

Check in on your neighbors once a week to see if they need anything.

Give Back

Donate your unused household items and clothes to a women's and children's shelter.

Family Dinner

Cook at least one meal a week together as a family. Teach kids safe cooking techniques and easy recipes they can make themselves as they get older.

Meet Up

Have a weekly family meeting so everyone can check in and catch up.

One-On-One Time

Spend some time one-on-one with each child and do what each child chooses to do (coloring, playing with toys, going for a walk, etc.) - away from grown-up distractions or other children in the family.

Crafts

Have one night a week or month devoted to crafts. Write silly stories, dress up in costumes, or make a family collage together.

Outdoor Time

Spend at least one evening a week outside with the family. Go hiking, bird watching, play ball, go to the park or have a porch or backyard picnic.

Sharing!

Once a week before dinner, go around the table and have each family member say what he or she loves best about each other.

Letters

Once a week, as a family write a letter to family members, friends or neighbors to let them know you're thinking about them.

From the National Human Review - A Quarterly Journal for Friends of American Humane

CASA Report, cont. from page 1

Notable conclusive results from these studies include the following :

CASA volunteers spend most of their volunteer time in contact with a child. CASA volunteers spend significantly more time in contact with a child than a paid guardian ad litem. CASA volunteers are far more likely than paid attorneys to file written reports. CASA volunteers are highly effective in getting their recommendations accepted in court. In four out of five cases, all or almost all CASA volunteer recommendations are accepted. When a CASA volunteer is assigned, a higher number of services are ordered for children and families. A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to be adopted. A child with a CASA volunteer is as likely to be reunified with their birth parent as a child without a CASA volunteer. A child with a CASA volunteer is less likely to reenter the child welfare system. The proportion of reentries is consistently reduced by half.



Just a reminder...

**2010 CASA Training
February 18-March 6**

**If you are interested
and want to learn more or
would like an
application,
please contact Pam at
303-440-7059 or
pam@vfccasa.org**

A MODEST INVESTMENT

Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association

Every CASA volunteer and everyone who supports CASA's work knows we're in this because it's right to be. We believe that each abused or neglected child deserves to have someone who is trained to get to know them, speak up for them, and push for the best possible outcome to a terrible situation. The work, and the support, come from the heart.

But these are remarkably uncertain times. People are worried by everything from the cost of gas to economic indicators that once seemed abstract. Businesses are nervous, and the decisions of charitable foundations on where to put their dollars have become harder than ever. I think it's the right time to make a hard-headed economic argument for the value of CASA's mission.

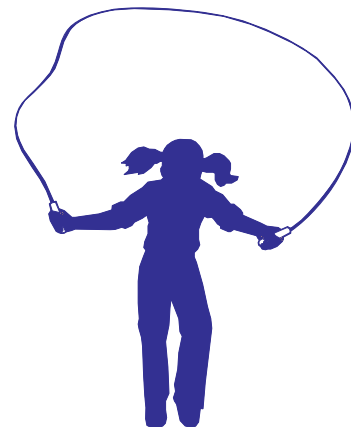
There are roughly 800,000 children in foster care annually, at an estimated cost to taxpayers of \$2,396 per month per child; last year, we served 243,000. Now, as you read on, keep in mind two things: (1) CASA volunteers are generally called in on the most serious cases of maltreatment, meaning they speak for the sort of kids who are much more frequently placed in foster care, remain there longer, and, if they leave the system, are most likely to reenter it. (2) It costs only \$80 per month to provide a CASA volunteer. *(At VFC CASA it costs \$1,275 to provide CASA services to one child for one year.)*

That's a very modest investment compared to the cost of keeping a child in foster care for another month. So let's look at the return on that investment.

We're in an area where the messy details of individual lives dissolve into mass statistics, and I'm not sure it's possible with current data to calculate exactly how much money is saved through CASA's efforts. Still, studies suggest that the savings are significant. Consider these findings from a December 2006 U.S. Department of Justice audit of CASA: 13.3% of all foster children remain in care more than three years, as opposed to 5.5% of children with a CASA volunteer; of the general foster care popula-

tion, 16% end up reentering the system, while the figure for kids served by CASA is below 10%. Even if the children we served last year end up spending an average of *one month less* in foster care than they would have otherwise, that would mean a savings of \$582 million—and I'm comfortable saying that we're talking about a lot more than one month. What's more, the long-run savings are potentially enormous. A study by Prevent Child Abuse America (September 2007) estimates the annual cost of child abuse and neglect is a staggering \$103.8 billion—with about one-third in direct costs (hospitalization, mental health care, child welfare services, law enforcement) and the remainder in indirect costs incurred over the course of shattered lives: special education, juvenile delinquency, mental health and health care, the adult criminal justice system, and lost productivity. I think the figure is conservative, but it would take the rest of this newsletter to go over these and other calculations.

Over the coming year and beyond there's going to be a lot of debate in this country and soul-searching in every household over where to place our resources. Even setting aside—for the moment—all the reasons of the heart, there's a compelling case to be made that investing in these children (and supporting CASA) is the sort of sound economic policy that we should all be able to agree on.



From the Executive Director

As the saying goes, "Time flies when you're having fun." It is always amazing to me when someone asks how long I have been at VFC CASA and I say "19 years." What is even more amazing is that two of our key staff – Pam and Galen - have been here for 9 and 11 years respectively.

So you ask, "How is it 'having fun' when you are working with abused and neglected children.?" It's not exactly fun, but it is very satisfying. We work with 100 fabulous CASA volunteers who make a huge difference in the lives of children. The photos that the CASAs take of their CASA kids make us smile. We laugh as we unpack the new toys generously donated for our CASA kids at holiday time. We have fun every July having lunch together, generously donated by the Outlook Steakhouse in Louisville, celebrating CASA milestones.

It makes us smile when the 16 members of the

VFC CASA Board of Directors help raise the funds and set the policy that allows VFC CASA accomplish its goals. The board committees find joy in planning successful Light of Hope luncheons, finding business partners, managing finances, getting publicity and, this year, planning 25th Anniversary events. And we really do have fun together at the annual Board-Staff party.

Unfortunately child abuse and neglect is not likely to be eradicated any time soon. With your continued support, VFC CASA will be able to provide its excellent services for the maltreated children in our county for the next 25 years.

Sincerely,
Marsha Caplan

From the President

Welcome to 2010 – the year of Voices For Children CASA's 25th Anniversary!! Such milestones conjure up a reflection on the quarter century which just passed.

Boulder County's population was a mere 209,444. Broomfield was not yet a county. CU had a football team, and VFC CASA had its first training class and case. A few years later, a wise Board of 5 hired an Executive Director by the name of Marsha Caplan!

Over the ensuing years, VFC CASA has more than fulfilled its role as a CASA program – i.e. no request for a CASA for a child who needs one has ever gone unfilled. A neglect prevention program called *Growing Your Child* was initiated to provide parenting tips and developmental milestones to parents of newborns. While the ultimate goal of "going out of business" may not grace our doors, we remain committed to breaking the cycle of child abuse and neglect.

While the programs at the prevention level have grown, we also realized a need to do something at the emancipation level. How can we best serve the young adults who "age out" of the child welfare system at age 18? Where is their social safety net, and how can we strengthen it? From these questions and concerns has emerged our next adjunct program - *Lifelong Connection*. This program trains CASAs who work with teens to find relevant and caring adults in their lives, people

who will agree to help provide a longer term caring heart, commitment or touch. We look forward to sharing the evolution and success of this program in the years to come.

Personally, from my "Presidential Perch" I could not be happier or more impressed by the outstanding people I have come to know through my decade with VFC CASA. Collectively, these legions of volunteers – from CASAs to Board members, have demonstrated commitment, vision and the desire to make things better for Boulder County's abused and neglected children.

Just as a farmer cannot objectively see the growth of his cow, so we cannot objectively recognize the evolution and breadth of VFC CASA in a single year. Yet, over 25 combined years VFC CASA has become a very bright spot for the child victims of abuse and neglect in Boulder County.

We thank you for your past support and welcome your increased partnership as we celebrate our 25th Anniversary. We shall look forward to seeing you at one of our several 2010 celebration events throughout the county.

Sincerely,
Fred Williams

VOICES FOR CHILDREN CASA ANNUAL REPORT 2009

From foundation grants, to corporate donations, from new toys for our toy closet to delicious food for training, from bequests to shares of stock, VFC CASA is blessed by generous contributions and support from the community. We thank you sincerely.

2009 Highlights

- Thanks to generous donors, 10 CASAs who are working with older teens were trained for the new Lifelong Connection program
- Three CASA kids participated in the Parascript Children's Art Show in May
- Twenty-seven trainees completed the 40-hour mandatory training program and were sworn in as CASA volunteers
- At the annual VFC CASA Recognition party in July, once again generously donated by the Outback Steakhouse in Louisville, two reached 10-year status, and nine reached five-year status
- The Light of Hope Luncheon in Longmont and Light of Hope Luncheon in Boulder both featured former CASA Stephanie Eichenauer and her former CASA kid, Lauren, who is now a freshman in college in Ohio
- VFC CASA was able to send many CASAs, board members and staff to the National CASA Association Conference in Denver
- VFC CASA continues to send a representative to the Safe Exchange Advisory Committee
- VFC CASA staff regularly attended meetings of the Boulder Interdisciplinary Committee and the Boulder and Longmont Child Protection Review Teams
- The 25th Anniversary Committee began planning for great celebration events in 2010
- Five new members joined the VFC CASA Board of Directors

2009 CASA Volunteer Profile

In 2009 we had a total CASA pool of 129 and we trained 27 new CASAs.

Ages: 21-35/18
36-50/31
51-65/57
65+/23

Gender: Female/116 Male/13

Ethnic Background: Caucasion/121 Latino/3
Asian/2 African American/2
Other/1

Education: High School/4
Some College/26
Degree/53
Masters/31
Doctorate/7
J.D./8

Employment: Full-time/41
Part-time/24
Not Employed/19
Student/7
Retired/38

Residence: Boulder/58
Broomfield/5
Lafayette/11
Longmont/27
Louisville/10
Other/18

Familiarity with second language: 31
(Spanish most predominate)

In 2009, VFC CASAs donated 5, 164 hours, drove over 42,140 miles in service to their clients and spent more than \$10,118 on activities, in addition to the cost of gasoline.

2009 CASA Cases

Total Cases 102 Cases Opened 47/82 children
Total Children Served 184 Cases Closed 46/75 children
Average Case Length: 13 months

Children We Served

Gender	Female/101	Male/84	Location	Cases	Children	Children's Residence*
Age	Birth-5/57	6-11/39	Boulder	16	28	29
	12-17/71	18+/17	Longmont	61	108	65
Ethnicity	Caucasian/118	Latino/49	Louisville	4	6	15
	African American/8	Asian/5	Lafayette	17	33	21
	Native American/1	Other/3	County	4	9	16
			Out of County	0	0	38

Children in out-of-home placement/61% *Not all children in out-of-home placement stay in their own city.

OUTCOMES: Returned to Family/45 Adoption/12 Legal Guardianship/8 Aged Out of System/5 Other/8

2009 Growing Your Child

Children We Served

	Income Level	
Boulder	Less than \$26,500	126
Lafayette	\$26,501 to \$37,450	43
Longmont	Greater than \$37,451	58
Louisville	Declined to state	28
Lyons		6
Nederland		4
Niwot		1
Superior		19
Other		239

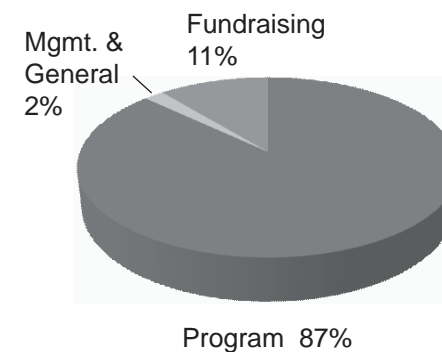
New Families in 2009 524

Families requesting/receiving second year information 66

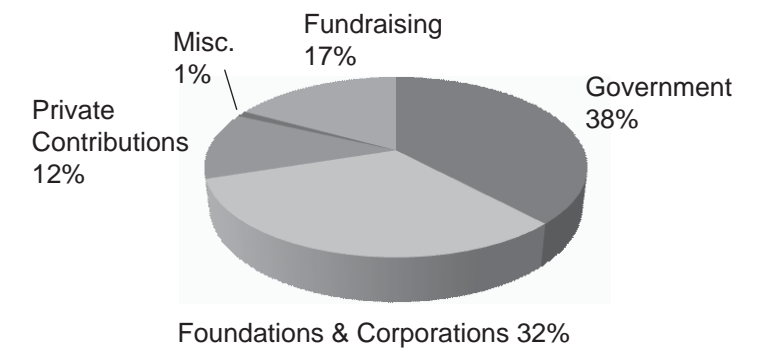
Majority of Responses Received From:

Avista	223
Boulder Community Hospital	196
Warm Welcome	28
Bright Beginnings	44
Other	33

Expenses



Revenue



We at VFC CASA thank you for your generous support.