

CASA STAFF:

Executive Director:
Leah Varnell

Volunteer Program
Manager:
Ginny Moore

Training & Recruitment
Coordinator:
Melissa Hellmuth

Volunteer Case
Coordinator:s
Angela Bisel
Adam Berger

Office/Grants Manager:
Cheri Justus



Direct Numbers for CASA Staff:

Leah:
303-271-6536

Melissa:
303-271-6539

Angela:
303-271-6537

Adam:
303-271-6534

Ginny:
303-271-6538

Cheri:
303-271-6535

FAX - 303-279-9494

The Advocate

The Newsletter of CASA—Jefferson & Gilpin Counties

FALL 2008

2008

New Advocates Join the CASA Jeffco/Gilpin Team

On September 23rd, Magistrate Moore will swear-in the newest class of CASA Jeffco/Gilpin volunteers. By then, the volunteers will have completed their 40 hours of pre-service training including child abuse and neglect, the juvenile court system, child advocacy, the special needs of children who have suffered sexual and physical abuse, child development, and appropriate services for the children we serve. They will also have spent several

hours in the courtroom getting a feel for that part of the process.

We would like to thank all the speakers who took time out of their busy schedules to share their expertise with our volunteers. Our speakers included Ann Beauvais, Judge Brian Boatright, Allison Boyd, Barry Finck, Jeanne Judge, Loretta Koehler, Chris McNeal, Kurt Metsger, Magistrate KJ Moore, Magistrate Babette Norton, Carolyn Peloux, Jan Podoll, Jim Porter, Amy

Ray, Patricia Rocha, Ashleigh Sedbrook, Mary Sticka, and Jim Zimmerman. Also a big thank you goes to our veteran volunteers for helping to prepare the trainees for their CASA work. Thank you Nat Tafari, Jennifer Vaccaro and Jane Giglioti.

Our community is so fortunate to have such an outstanding group of individuals working on behalf of our children. You all truly do make a difference and we thank you!



Magical Mile Gala 2008

The Magic comes from within you! We would like you to share that magic on a very special evening, in which all contributions will go to CASA Jeffco/Gilpin Counties. You do not want to miss this spectacular event. Together, let us bring the children home safely. Follow the yellow brick road to the Bel Mar Event Center on Saturday, October 25, 2008, 6:00 p.m. silent auction, hors d'oeuvres and cocktails included. 7:30 sit down dinner, live music, silent and live auction, paddle raiser. Only \$125/person for this magical evening. There is no place like CASA. For more information about the Magical Mile or on becoming a sponsor, call 303-271-6535 or visit us on line, info@casajeffcogilpin.com. We look forward to seeing you in October.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Chair:

Jan Podoll
Oil and Gas Land Consultant

Vice-Chair:

Grant Tonkin
Chief Financial Officer
American Geological Services

Treasure:

Jacqueline Greer
Financial Consultant

Secretary:

Kimberly Planck
Ameristar Casino, Black Hawk

CASA Board:

Mark Arnold
CEO, Royalty Exploration LLC

Lesley Dahlkemper

President, School House Communications

Ric Harshman

President, International Electric, Inc.

Kelley Hasler

Owner, Events Unlimited

Catherine Perea

Attorney

Patricia Liell Patoskie

CTO, Gates Corporation

James D. Zimmerman

Retired District Court Judge
1st Judicial District



A Look at CASA from All Points of View

Jodi Gault has experienced CASA from all points of view, having held various positions in the program since learning about CASA through a friend years ago.

Jodi, a former pediatric oncology nurse, moved to Colorado with her family eight years ago. She learned about CASA at a neighborhood gathering. She trained with our second class of volunteers, was appointed to her first case shortly thereafter and, lucky for us, CASA has been a part of her life ever since!

Before making the move to her current job, Jodi was a valuable member of our staff. She's been a case coordinator, program manager and training coordinator – all while volunteering as a CASA herself. Jodi's own current case as a volunteer will be wrapping up soon - she was appointed to it three years ago.

Jodi explained that whether it's taking kids for an ice cream, to a sporting event or finding ways to help their families get new school supplies – the CASA works to keep the children lives

as normal as possible. "I'm amazed by the resiliency of these children who have been through so much," Jodi said, "and by how much it's really the little things that a CASA does that can really make a difference".

Jodi tells us, "I've met the most amazing people through CASA. They give so much of themselves for these kids. I also feel very fortunate to have had so many opportunities through CASA. I've seen firsthand the difference a CASA can make when it comes to an extra set of eyes helping to make sure these children get the services they need".

What has she learned from being involved with CASA? Jodi says the world is not nearly as black and white as she once assumed and that simply listening and being as open minded as possible is the best thing for these kids.

The common thread running through all of Jodi's roles in our program has been helping children in bad situations get the

services they need and working to bring a sense of normalcy to their lives. It is something Jodi has done with unqualified commitment and extraordinary heart – our hats are off to her.

Jodi currently works as an assistant to a guardian ad litem (GAL) attorney. GALs are appointed to serve as the legal representative of children in protective custody, as required by the Colorado Children's Code. Jodi does intensive research and spends hours one-on-one with the children involved in Dependency and Neglect cases. Her goal is to arm the GAL with the best, most relevant information possible about the children they represent.



Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast 2008

On April 26th we celebrated the people who make our mission a success, our volunteers. Staff, volunteers, board members as well as a few special guests came out to eat breakfast and honor the work that our CASA volunteers do for the children in our community. We were privileged to have former CASA child, Renee Manke, speak about her involvement with the court system as a child and what it meant to her to have a CASA volunteer during this difficult time. Additionally, we were honored to have Judge Brian Boatright come and thank our volunteers for the

work that they do and the valuable information that they provide to the court when making decisions. We would like to thank all of our sponsors, area King Soopers and Safeway

stores, Waterstone Church, American Geological Services, Inc., Jared's Nursery and Mountain Man Nut & Fruit Co. The Appreciation Breakfast was a huge hit!



Volunteers and staff enjoy the volunteer breakfast.

A Letter from the Executive Director

As we make the annual transition from summer to fall, I am struck by the incredible increase in the pace at the CASA office. During the summer months, new case filings decrease (often times because children are not in school and school personnel are not seeing the signs of abuse and neglect), we assign fewer volunteers to cases because folks are busy with their own families and activities and we're not in the middle of training (but we hope to be next summer!). Once school is back in session though, everything changes! It becomes a very busy time for CASA Jeffco/Gilpin.

September 2nd marked the beginning of our 17th CASA Volunteer Training. We are seeing the positive results of hiring a full time recruitment and training coordinator. Melissa Hellmuth has been on staff since April and the number of trainees in the September training class is double that of the previous class. We have several people already waiting for the training in February 2009. Our announcements are in many community publications, as

well as in *YourHub* (an insert in the dailies every week). We have had a significant increase in the number of requests for speaking engagements and media interviews. Once people hear our mission and the work our volunteers do, they feel compelled to get involved.

We are also working hard to get ready for *The Magical Mile*. On October 25th, the Belmar Event Center will be transformed into the magical Land of Oz. The evening will include a silent and live auction, a terrific meal and the opportunity for us to come together and raise the money necessary to increase the number of children we can serve. Please make plans to join us for our annual gala/fundraiser.

On October 1st, we will submit our Quality Assurance Assessment to National CASA. This is a process the National CASA Association instituted five years ago to ensure that its more than 900 member organizations are delivering high-quality advocacy and operating strong programs. Every program across the country is required to complete the assessment every four years. The assessment instrument is very com-

prehensive and necessitates our being in compliance with the *Standards for Local CASA Programs* and the inclusion of nearly 60 *Indicators of Compliance*. The assessment will culminate three months of work by a committee comprised of staff, volunteers and board members. It is a lengthy and arduous process, however it is an opportunity to identify our program's strengths, challenges and needs to promote growth and sustainability. I have every confidence that CASA Jeffco/Gilpin will receive the highest marks possible when National CASA issues their report.

As hectic as things may be, not a day goes by that I don't pause and reflect on how fortunate CASA Jeffco/Gilpin is. Our volunteers are extraordinary people, making an extraordinary contribution on behalf of the children they serve. Our donors are extremely generous. And we continue to have strong support both within the "system" and in the greater community. Thank you all for being a part of CASA Jeffco/Gilpin.

-Leah Varnell

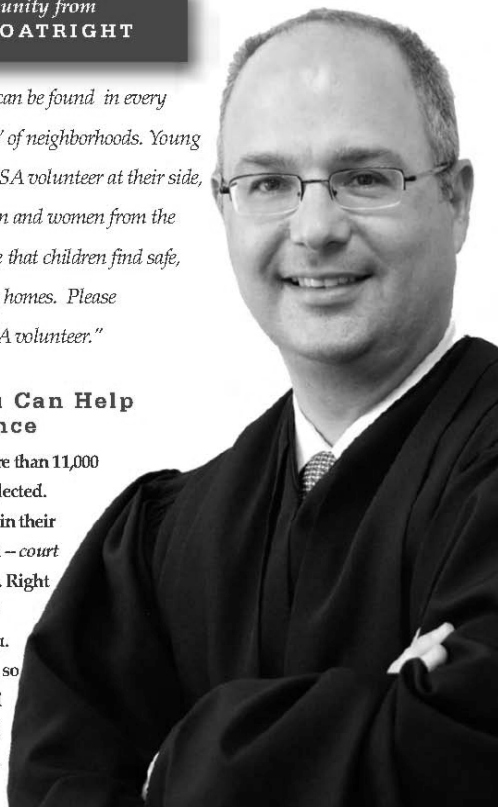
A Message to our community from JUDGE BRIAN BOATRIGHT

"Child abuse and neglect can be found in every community, even the 'best' of neighborhoods. Young victims need to have a CASA volunteer at their side, because these amazing men and women from the community help us ensure that children find safe, permanent and nurturing homes. Please consider becoming a CASA volunteer."

Here's How You Can Help Make a Difference

Each year in Colorado, more than 11,000 children are abused or neglected.

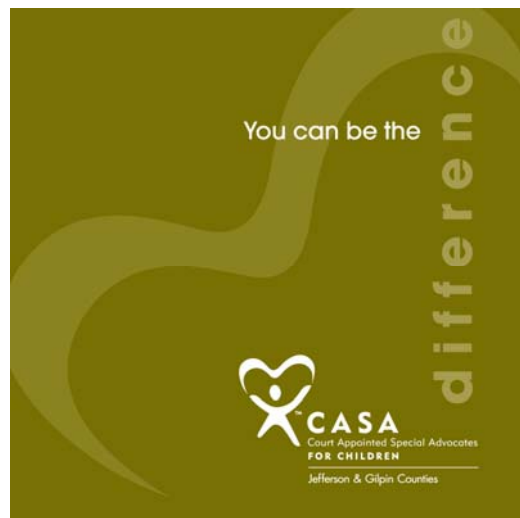
You can make a difference in their lives by becoming a CASA – court appointed special advocate. Right now there's a child in your community who needs you. CASA training starts soon, so call CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties today and find out how you can help.



A big thank you to our juvenile judge, the Honorable Brian Boatright, for participating in our public awareness campaign on behalf of CASA Jeffco/Gilpin. We're getting ads and public service announcements placed and the community response has already been amazing.



CASA OF JEFFERSON AND GILPIN COUNTIES
303.271.6535 • www.casajeffcogilpin.com





Thank you always to our in- kind donors:

- Applebee's—Littleton
- Allison Radcliffe
- Carol Burks
- Jeanne Manigold
- Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners
- Jefferson County Justice Services
- Jefferson County Probation Department
- Kay Michaels
- Marjory Shook
- National CASA Association
- Office Depot Foundation
- Tyrone Babcock



Checking in with our Staff...

We're so fortunate to have a great staff - an energizing mix of experience and new perspectives. It's a team that keeps the wheels turning so our volunteers can do the very best job of making a difference for kids in crisis. Here's a snapshot of our newest staff members.

This September, Case Coordinators Angela Bisel and Adam Berger, will have been with the Program for a year. Both are veterans of AmeriCorps and bring their experience and commitment to community service. Before joining the CASA staff, Angela worked with at-risk inner-city youth and Adam was involved in cleanup of the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

Adam, the lone man on our staff, is our go-to-guy for technology questions and crises - bless him! Raised in New Hampshire, Adam fits right in with Colorado's outdoor life style. He's taught adaptive skiing to adults and children with disabilities. A self-described adrenaline junkie, he's an avid rock climber. Scout, his very intelligent and scrappy dog, accompanies Adam and his fiancé on many of their outdoor adventures.

With Angela, we got the added bonus of a dynamite organizer. Last December, she took charge of keeping our annual holiday gift

gathering project under control - it was a thing of beauty! She did the lion's share of organizing the April Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast and she publishes the weekly Volunteer Updates.

Angela, her husband, their two huskies and the turtle named Floyd, are transplanted Californians learning to appreciate Colorado's climate. Angela and her husband have recently taken up golf. They're also weekend entrepreneurs with their own espresso and coffee catering business. Look for them at balloon and art festivals!

Melissa Hellmuth came on board in April as the Recruitment and Training Coordinator. Given a long list of objectives for community outreach and volunteer recruitment, she's already pro-

duced great results. She's gotten us lots of free print coverage and a great response from people from all backgrounds interested in volunteering. Melissa doesn't know a stranger and is a natural at outreach. She says she's been working since she was 5 years old - in her dad's office as 'Head Copier Gal'.

Melissa grew up in Ohio, and loves all kinds of extreme sports. She was a sub for the Notre Dame women's ski team. Skiing brought her to Colorado where she's been a ski instructor and a rafting guide. She loves all kinds of music - says she'll travel anywhere to hear a good band. She plays the bongo drums. The only thing we hesitate to mention is that she's a Steelers fan.



Current staff from left to right: Adam Berger, Angela Bisel, Melissa Hellmuth, Cheri Justus, Leah Varnell, Ginny Moore

Collecting for a Cause

Last February, attorney and CASA volunteer Laura Locke came to us as she prepared to make a visit to South Korea. She was making the trip as part of a volunteer service group sponsored by the agency through which she adopted her own children.

Laura's goal was to collect 1,000 toothbrushes for children living in orphanages and rehabilitation centers in South Korea. Laura generously donated \$.50 to CASA for each toothbrush collected. CASA was pleased

to see the toothbrushes roll in to help both our CASA children, as well as the children in South Korea.

In July, National CASA and The Office Depot Foundation teamed up to provide backpacks for children in need. CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties received almost 700 hundred backpacks to distribute. With the help of our volunteers, we delivered backpacks to many children involved in the court system. Additionally, we gave 200 backpacks to Jeffco

Action Center and 250 to Packs of Hope. Packs of Hope fills each backpack with one full set of clothes for children who weren't able to take anything with them when they were removed from their homes.

Due to the success of these collection events, we look forward to holding a quarterly drive to continually help our children meet some of their very basic needs.

13th Annual Colorado CASA Training Conference, October 11, 2008

Spotlight on Change: Illuminating the Effects of substance Abuse on Children

This year's conference will feature keynote speaker Carol A. Redding from the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, as well as breakout sessions on the following topics:

- Methamphetamines
- Reunification in situations involving substance abuse
- Talking to children about substance abuse
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders

Location:

The Doubletree Hotel
3203 Quebec St.
Denver, Colorado
8:30AM—4:00PM

Register online at:

www.coloradocasa.org, click on "events" or call 303-623-5380 to have a registration packet mailed to you

Cheers For Children

Cheers for Children, hosted by Meadowlark and RxPro Health, was September 6, 2008. \$20 bought your first drink and a plate of BBQ. It was a great opportunity for people to hear about the work CASA does and the many ways they could support the organization. We even recruited a few volunteers! Renee Manke, former "CASA kid" was on hand to speak about her personal experience in the system and what it meant to her to have a CASA volunteer. Proceeds were donated to the Metro CASA programs.



Renee Manke, Tina Williams-Tebay, and Leah Varnell enjoy the Cheers for Children event.

Dr. Phil and Robin Named Spokespersons for National CASA's Forgotten Children Campaign



In May 2008, Psychologist Dr. Phil McGraw, the host of the very successful syndicated daytime talk show

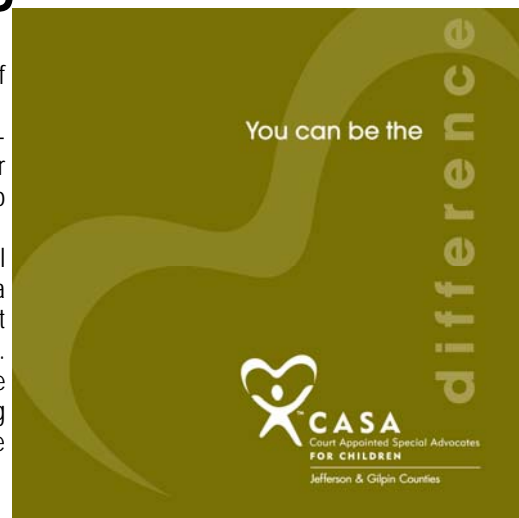
DR. PHIL, and his wife Robin McGraw, bestselling author and frequent contributor to DR. PHIL, were named official spokespersons for the *Forgotten Children* campaign.

The National CASA Association created the campaign to raise awareness of

foster children and to aid in the recruitment of much-needed CASA volunteer advocates.

Dr. Phil and Robin McGraw have a long-standing interest in improving the lives of foster children, and putting family first. They hope to inspire viewers to help too.

"We very much appreciate the wonderful foster parents who give children who need it a soft place to land," Dr. McGraw said. "But not everyone can make that kind of commitment. We want kind and caring people to know there is still a way to help – and that is by becoming trained as a CASA special advocate to be the eyes and ears of the court."





**100 Jefferson County Pkwy., Ste. 2040
Golden, CO 80401**

"CASA of Jefferson and Gilpin Counties mission is to provide trained volunteers to advocate in court for the safety and well-being of abused and neglected children."



CASAs Provide Valuable Information for Child Protection Caseworkers

Asya Muhammad works for Jefferson County Human Services. She had been a caseworker until her recent promotion to placement coordinator. Asya sees first hand the difference having a skilled CASA involved in cases can make.

Human Services investigates allegations of child abuse and neglect. They provide protective services to children and youth who are at-risk and/or are victims of child abuse or neglect. It is their goal to preserve and strengthen the

family so the child can be returned home as soon as possible.

Asya sees CASA volunteers as valuable third parties who keep an eye out for children involved in Dependency and Neglect cases in Jefferson and Gilpin Counties. "CASAs are a good source of information and having a CASA on a case can prove very helpful," she said.

Asya explained that often times CASA volunteers find out information before case workers or guardian ad litem attorneys be-

cause of their relationships and good rapport with the children involved. She also explained that the programs CASA organizes for the children, like school supply giveaways, holiday gift collections, free tickets to ball games, etc., provide these children with items and opportunities they wouldn't otherwise have given their current situations.

"Becoming a CASA gives people a definite opportunity to make a positive impact on a child in the child welfare system," Muhammad said.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter in an electronic form or if you want to be removed from the mailing list, please call 303-271-6535



100 Jefferson County Parkway, Suite 2040
Golden, Colorado 80401

(t) 303.271.6535 (f) 303.279.9494
(e) info@CASAJeffcoGilpin.com
www.CASAJeffcoGilpin.com