

Executive Director's Report

January 2017

Governance and Operations

Program Issues

Volunteers

The entire Fall 2016 class of advocates has transitioned to peer coordinators. We will be scheduling a meeting in early February with all of the PCs to see how the experience is going for them. We plan to transition the spring class of advocates to these PCs as well so that each has at least three cases.

Recruitment efforts are underway for the Spring 2017 class, which is scheduled to begin February 7th. Training will be at the PeopleCare Center this time around with Saturdays being held in Washington. Our goal is to have 15 new advocates complete training.

With an eye on expansion of services, we've recognized that our twice a year training is just keeping ahead of volunteer resignations – we lose about 20 people a year to retirement, burnout, ill health, family issues, etc. Eva and I are going to pilot a condensed summer training – Monday through Saturday, 9 am-3 pm – in early June. We've reserved free space in Clinton for this training so the office is not tied up by it. The plan is to have all staff take a 3-hour turn facilitating different topics. We've never done this before, but the goal is for five new advocates to complete the training and be prepared to take cases in July.

Staff

There have been no changes to staff at this juncture. Leigh and Karen are both settling in and doing a great job in their respective roles. We held a condensed "retraining" for all Hunterdon County advocates to make sure that they and Leigh are on the same page moving forward. We included in that training a few underperforming advocates who we felt could use some strengthening. We've held two of these classes with one more scheduled in early February for the last four who couldn't make the first two dates. It was so successful the first two times that we are thinking of incorporating this as standard class three months after graduation to cement the tangible "how to" of how to be an effective advocate.

Krista has been accepted to the 2017 Leadership Somerset class, which started 1/11. Congratulations to her!

Staff Meeting

Our December staff meeting was lunch at the Mountain View Chalet in Asbury. The staff would like for me to convey their thanks to the board for their kindness in sponsoring this event.

Program Issues

Court Issues

In my December report, I advised the Board that we had to go to court because a resource parent wanted us to remove an advocate from a case and we refused. She refused to adopt the children placed in her home and wanted them removed within 10-days absent the change in advocate. As previously noted, the advocate was working within the scope of his duties and it is our policy to not remove an advocate because of personality conflicts. I testified at the hearing, as did the resource parent. The advocate was out of town for business and could not appear.

In the end, the judge acknowledged that the resource parent was "holding everyone hostage" but bowed to her wishes and ordered the advocate off of the case for the two older children in order to preserve the placement; two younger children who are placed in other homes retained the first advocate. We reassigned another volunteer, Phyllis Meichel, to the case. Phyllis is our longest serving advocate, predating even me with the program. She was in the very first class of volunteers and will do a great job on the children's behalf.

We also received word that one of our advocates, Lisa Mastroianni of Hunterdon County, is being personally sued by a grandparent along with the DCPD worker, her supervisor, the Hunterdon County DCPD Local Office

Manager, the judge, the state Director of Human Services, and the state Director of DCPD. As per AOC protocols, notice of the suit was sent to CASA of New Jersey and to the court, which will provide the advocate with an attorney to defend against the suit as she was working within the scope of her duties as an advocate.

The parameters of the case are this. Mom is an addict and had the children removed from her care in 2014; her parents cared for them. She was reunified with them in 2015 and relapsed in January 2016. The children were again placed with the grandparents, and CASA was appointed to facilitate permanency. The advocate noted some issues of concern with the grandparents' parenting – they are germophobes, conspiracy theorists, had lots of negative things to say about DCPD and the judge [note: the grandfather was investigated by the state police for threatening the judge], and reinforced with the children what a bad person their mother is. The older child in particular was parroting these inappropriate things. The CASA reported her concerns to DCPD as the older child was being negatively impacted and reunification with the mom was being jeopardized by her parents' continued denigration of her. The older child expressed disgust and disdain for his mother.

DCPD reported these concerns to the court; CASA did not advocate for removal from the grandparents but asked for support services for them. The judge decided to remove, placing the older child in a temporary shelter; the other siblings all went home to mom and are doing well there. The older child decompensated, traumatized by the removal from the grandparents. He does not want to go home to his mother but continues to express a desire to live with his grandparents, who have now filed suit over the removal. Lisa still remains the child's advocate. We are waiting to see what happens.

Our Hunterdon County CIC meeting is scheduled for January 23rd.

Holiday Partnerships

Our holiday partnerships were a tremendous success this year. Not only did all of our kids get tons of presents, we were able to provide each of the local area offices with 30-40 gifts as well. We received a copy of thank you notes sent to the Warren County DCPD office from children and families who were the recipients of those gifts. Letters of thanks went out to our usual partners as well as to Roka Scientific (a new partner this year that not only provided gifts but also \$250) and to Centenary College's Alumni Association and Bea McNally's in Hackettstown, which held a toy drive for us. Every child in care in the tri-counties, with and without a CASA, got a gift this holiday. We held our annual holiday "pick up" party and were pleased to see a number of advocates who came out to join us.

Judge Tober of Somerset County attended CASAblanca along with his wife, Kathy, in honor of Judge Dilts last spring. Kathy Tober was moved to learn that children in care often are removed with their belongings in garbage bags, so she connected with her community to collect 60 "first night" bags – totes, toiletries, books, and stuffed animals – for children 2-17. We distributed 20 to each local office for workers to put in the trunks of their cars. I delivered them Christmas Eve, and sadly one was used that day for a child who was removed. In addition to the bags, they also donated gift cards for us to give out to older youth who needed them, which was most welcome.

Our quilters in Bridgewater also came through, providing 80 personalized quilts for our kids. Other quilting groups heard about the work they were doing and also chipped in, with four groups collectively donating to the cause. They are currently working on personalizing laundry bags for our older youth. I had the opportunity to attend their meeting on 1/11 and personally thank them for their kindness as well as share brochures, chip clips, and volunteer packets. Pictures of some of their quilts are on our Facebook page. I also received a text from a grandparent who recently adopted his grandchildren asking me to convey his thanks to the ladies – the quilts are something that his family will cherish for years to come.

The Pajama Program also sent over a number of new pajamas for our kids for the holiday.

Inservice

As a reminder, as part of the Trauma-Informed Care work group that I'm sitting on we're holding a screening of the movie "Paper Tigers," which "chronicles a year in the life of Lincoln High School in the community of Walla Walla, Washington. The kids who come to Lincoln have a history of truancy, behavioral problems and substance abuse. After Lincoln's principal is exposed to research about the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), he decides to radically change the school's approach to discipline. With the aid of diary camera footage, the film follows six students. From getting into fights, grappling with traumatic events in their lives, and on the cusp of dropping out, they find healing, support and academic promise at Lincoln High." (IMDB). It will be held February 2nd at the Hillsborough Library. The library sent out a press release announcing the event and the partnership, which was picked up. We currently have 17 advocates signed up to attend – all board members are of course welcome. The link to register is

<https://www.facebook.com/events/1428676037157079/>

As a follow-up, Melissa Sadin will hold a training on March 21st at the PeopleCare Center on how to concretely help traumatized kids. All board members are welcome to attend.

We are also planning a panel discussion inservice for May with service providers for older youth.

State Issues

State reporting

State funding vouchers have all been submitted. We've also submitted the second quarter Title IV-E report and required statistical reports for the second quarter.

EDs Meeting

The January ED's meeting addressed changing accounting practices for the nonprofit sector, effective 01 July 2018. June Toth, our accountant, participated and will be meeting with SHaW's F&O committee February 10th to go over those changes with us individually. In short, the changes enhance transparency but increase documentation for nonprofit staff.

We also got to meet April Aronson, CASA of NJ's new executive director. She replaces Rita Gulden, who retired December 29th. April gave updates on the state's PR and Marketing plan, which they want to be focused on recruitment and fundraising. I sit on the state's Resource Development committee, and the plan for them is to implement the PR/Marketing plan as a tandem initiative focused on these two items.

An issue of concern for the ED's network as a whole is the lack of full engagement at these meetings – there were eight counties not represented. We have to figure out ways to get everyone around the table again. I sent an email out inviting those not present to come to the March meeting. The feedback I got was that it is too far to go but they would attend if there was a conference call option. I would be glad for that too – the meetings are alternated in Sayreville and Shrewsbury, neither of which is close. On the upside, April has expressed a desire to attend these meetings. You may recall that Rita opted out from going to these meeting.

I also checked again to see if there were any other programs interested in sharing a room at the National Conference in Seattle. No takers yet – most programs are taking two people. Ocean County's executive director is still not sure if she is going or not. If she does, she'll share. Incidentally, she is scheduled to come to our office in Washington on the 18th for assistance with the state's Quality Review initiative – she has some outstanding PIPs and needs some help completing them.

Board Training Tools

You may recall that we have access to Board Source as a tool for boards. The credentials are below:

<https://www.boardsource.org/eWeb/StartPage.aspx?logoff=y&site=bds2012>

username: tracey@casashaw.org

password: Casashaw0716

Problems getting in? You can email for information: my-concierge@boardsource.org

National Issues

There are no national issues to report other than we are submitting the 6-months statistical report by the 23rd.

Public Relations and Marketing

Social Media

We have 527 Facebook followers as of this writing, up from 521 from last count. Our Facebook address is <https://www.facebook.com/CASA-SHaW>. I would appreciate it if you could share posts with your network and share any posts of interest with me.

We currently have 907 Twitter followers, up from 898 last count. Our Twitter address is https://www.twitter.com/CASA_SHaW.

Outreach

I had the opportunity to visit with students at William Annin Middle School in Basking Ridge to talk about what CASA is and does. In addition, I made a short presentation to the Quilting group in Bridgewater about CASA. Eva spoke to the Kiwanis group in Washington in December, and I am scheduled to do a presentation about child abuse and neglect for the BW Nice Group in Washington on the 19th. I am also scheduled to go to the Somerville Civic League twice on the 24th. Eva is also going to Kean University for their NJ Students in Action event later this month to speak about CASA to middle and high school youth.

Community Partnerships

I, along with the EDs from Hudson and Morris/Sussex Counties, attended a holiday party for the Allergan Foundation. It was a nice opportunity to visit with representatives from their foundation and with the other recipients of their largesse – they also work with a “Wounded Warrior” group. In addition to the grant funding, they had also collected gift cards for us to give to our kids for holidays, which we did.

I met with representatives from “A Life in Balance,” a yoga studio in Flemington that wants to do something for CASA throughout the year. They are proposing raising donations from one yoga class and one meditation class a month for us, offering advocates one free yoga class a month, and hosting a fundraiser in April for Child Abuse Prevention Month in order to recruit advocates for the June training. It turns out that we have some overlap with these ladies’ friends and acquaintances who are CASA volunteers or tutors. I think this will be a very nice partnership for 2017.

I attended the rescheduled Astle Alpaugh Foundation gathering and spent about a half an hour chatting with David Oleka and with Molly Harper, the organization’s manager. It was nice to visit with them.

I met with a professor at RVCC about placing interns with CASA. There are some barriers – their interns only serve for a semester, and we can’t share anything with them unless they have been through the training, had background checks, been sworn in, etc., which takes a semester to do. She is considering sending interns for the condensed summer training in preparation for interning in the fall.

I attended the Somerset County Business Partnership annual meeting luncheon and their nonprofit council meeting in December. One of the topics that we agreed would be good to look at for nonprofit training in 2017 is the different ways to give besides checks and PayPal. We’ll be exploring the different donor platforms that exist and see what it would take to upgrade to those for donor convenience.

Dr. Vicky Width, Richard Width’s (founding board member and board president for CASA SHaW) wife, recently wrote a book called “House it Up” about juvenile incarceration. She held a reading and a discussion at

the Clinton Library and asked if we could provide an advocate to speak about CASA's role in prevention and intervention. We did – Dave Giuliani went. I also attended, as did another current as well as a former volunteer. It was nice to see CASA represent!

I got a call recently from a women's group in Somerset County that remembered that I had said at a presentation a few years ago that many children are moved with their belongings in garbage bags. With that, they chose to do a tote drive this year for kids in care as their annual service project. Once received, I'll distribute to the local DCPD offices.

Finance

Budget

Joe and I did a mid-year review of our income and expenses and updated our FY 16/17 budget because of the significant changes that have occurred. The F&O committee has reviewed it and will be recommending it to the board for its approval. A draft copy is attached for your review.

Audit

The audit is complete. Joe and I reviewed the numbers, and we're satisfied with the outcomes. I've invited the auditor to come to our board meeting to answer any questions you may have. A draft copy of the audit is attached for your review.

VOCA

The fourth and final quarter vouchers for VOCA have been submitted. VOCA has again changed its submission requirements, so we'll see if what was submitted is kicked back or if it is sufficient. Many thanks to Roger for meeting me to sign off on them! The three updated applications have also been submitted; I confirmed receipt with our grants manager. We are approved for funding for the same levels in 2017.

For this year's grants, we fully expended Warren County but underspent in Hunterdon and Somerset because of Eva's late start and because we did not pay health insurance premiums for Hunterdon County in October, November, and December with Jen's separation. Leigh is enrolled as of 1/1/17, so we should be able to catch up as the 2017 premiums will be higher than 2016. As an aside, both Krista and Leigh's husbands are also on their insurance policies; those premiums are being paid by each staff member via payroll deductions.

Hunterdon County Grant

The fourth quarter voucher for Hunterdon County has been submitted and the grant fully expended. The new grant year started 1/1/17 and runs through 12/31 for \$17,500. With this funding and VOCA's we are now serving all but one of the children in care in Hunterdon County – 98%. We were short one advocate! As soon as a case closes, however, this child is in the queue for appointment.

CDBG

The contracts for FY 16/17 have been finalized and submitted; the first quarter voucher is scheduled to be submitted on 1/17.

Tyler Foundation

We had applied to the Tyler Foundation for funding for a new server, and they have granted us \$5500 for that purpose.

PC Grant

The PC grant requires more edits, which are scheduled to be submitted to the state next week. It had to wait in the queue until after the financial vouchers were submitted for the quarter.

Children's Hope Initiative

We met our quota for expenditures that qualifies us to draw down on the remaining \$6000 for the Traveling Tutor initiative. I've submitted our report along with the voucher for reimbursement. We are currently serving seven children, and I'm down a few tutors. Two moved, and one is bored with it. I don't have any other advocates currently interested in doing this, but I'll keep checking. The 1099s for last year's tutors are being sent to them by the auditor.

Server

After much research, quotes, and consultations, my recommendation to the F&O committee is to go with a cloud server with our current provider, Jephens Technologies. They are offering us cloud hosting and tech support for \$350/month with a one-time fee of \$1500 to migrate the data. I will double check to make sure this is a fair price before executing the contract.

On a related note, we purchased a Kyocera multi-function copier about 10 years ago. About three years ago we picked up a service contract for the machine as it was aging. The company, AOS of Roselle, has in recent months been charging us for "overages" – any time we've made more than 3500 copies, we're getting hit with a fee. Last month it was \$200 for 9000 copies.

We cannot afford this kind of expense, so I had them do the regular maintenance that was covered by the contract, got new toner and a spare, and cancelled the contract. There are no problems with it at present, but we are nearing the end of its lifespan. Just an FYI.

Fundraising Efforts

NJ Devils

We are partnering again this year with the NJ Devils for a CASA night. They need 160 people to come out from across the state to give the programs \$2000 and show the outreach video to all of the Devil's fans present that night. I have sent it out via Constant Contact, email, and to the Junior Hockey League. Hopefully we'll get some takers between all of the participating counties.

Annual Appeal

The annual appeal was sent and has raised nearly \$30,000 this year between donations, matching gifts, stocks, and gifts in honor of. We did well this year.

CASAblanca

CASAblanca is coming, and I cannot stress enough the need for board members to assist in getting sponsors for this event. We didn't do as well with Comedy Night as we have in years past, and we were down nearly \$10,000 from our projections. This is our biggest fundraising event of the year, and I could use your help in getting sponsors, ad book entries, and attendees. Thank you!!!

Call-in number for meetings:

712/775-7000; 290038#

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 19th, 5:45 pm, PCC, 120 Finderne Avenue, Bridgewater

FY 16.17

ACCEPTED

FUNDER	PURPOSE	COUNTY	AMOUNT	STATUS
NJ Legislature	General Support	Somerset, Hunterdon, Warren	\$122,952 (portion of this pending resolution of state impasse)	Approved, paid monthly upon submission of receipts, 7/1/16-6/30/17
Traveling Tutor grants (Children's Hope, Fin Pro, Dombal Vogel, Anonymous Donor)	Traveling Tutor	Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren	\$21,000	Approved, \$10,000 received, remaining \$10,000 will be received in \$5000 increments, no date restrictions
CDBG	Case Supervision	Somerset	\$23,000	Approved, must submit receipts upon spending down grant award; 10/1/16-9/30/2017
CASA of NJ	Peer Coordinator Model Implementation	Tri-Counties	\$17,850	Approved, payment pending, 7/1/16-6/30/17
VOCA	Case supervision and volunteer training	Tri-Counties	\$153,676	Approved. Reimbursable grant, 1/1/2016-12/31/2016
Hunterdon County	Case Supervision	Hunterdon	\$17,500	Approved. Reimbursable grant, 1/1/2016-12/31/2016
Allergan	Volunteer training	Tri-Counties	\$5000	Approved, received.
Tyler Foundation	Server and monthly monitoring	Tri-Counties	\$5500	Approved, payment pending
VOCA	Case Supervision	Tri-Counties	\$153,676	Approved, reimbursable grant 1/1/2017-12/31/2017
Hunterdon County	Case Supervision	Hunterdon	\$17,500	Approved, Reimbursable grant, 1/1/2017-12/31/2017

PENDING

FUNDER	PURPOSE	COUNTY	AMOUNT	STATUS

DECLINED

FUNDER	PURPOSE	COUNTY	AMOUNT	STATUS

Impact 100	Case supervision in Somerset County	Somerset	\$100,000	Declined
Walmart Foundation	Backpacks	Warren	In-kind	Declined