



CASA CHRONICLES

Richland County Court Appointed Special Advocates

December 2006

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED!!!!

It's that time of the year when we can come together and celebrate the holiday season. Please join us in our holiday festivities which include food, fun, and fellowship. Richland County CASA will host a drop-in from 5:30p.m.-8:30p.m. at the South Carolina Bank and Trust located at 520 Gervais St. on December 13, 2006. If you can attend, Please RSVP at 576-1735.



WE HOPE YOU CAN ATTEND!!!!

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR OUR FAMILIES

Just a reminder to all Guardians. Many of our families are struggling through the holiday season financially. Statistics show the emotional and financial pressures of the holidays can place children at even greater risk for abuse and neglect. If you know of families who are having difficulty, please refer them to any of our local resources. There is a program through United Way that ensures low-income residents get needed car repairs. Also, the Cooperative Ministry (799-3853) is a church sponsored organization which counsels individuals and helps to provide them with appropriate assistance. They can provide emergency assistance with food and utilities and offer a clothing and furniture bank.

RESOURCES

Columbia Housing Authority-
(rental and housing assistance)
254-3886

HUD Housing-253-3292

Cayce Housing Authority-
739-0684

Wateree Community Actions-
(electrical & housing authority)
786-4250

WIC 791-3580

Harvest Hope Food Bank-254-
4432



JACK BONNIVILLE RECEIVES STATE'S HIGHEST HONOR

Our dear guardian, Jack Bonnaville was awarded the state's highest civilian honor—the Order of the Palmetto for his lifetime of exceptional, dedicated service to the state. Jack retired from Wilbur Smith Associates where he represented his company on major projects in over 60 countries. He has generously given his time to many civic and community organizations. These organizations include the South Carolina Historical Society, the South

Carolina Archives and History Center, and our own Richland County CASA.

Jack has been a guardian with RCCASA for over two years, and in addition to having cases, has assisted CASA in the program's male recruitment efforts. CASA is blessed to have such a great individual serving the children in our community.



Thank you Jack!!!

HATS OFF TO CHRIS WOODYARD AND ELIZABETH DAVIS

RCCASA is so blessed to have the support of the USC school of law. We have had so many great Guardians who have come to our program to begin their preparation for their journey in becoming excellent attorneys.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”

James Washington, CASA Supervisor, wanted to acknowledge Chris Woodyard and Elizabeth Davis in graduating from USC and passing the July Bar Exam. We know there are many more and there will be many more.



CONGRATULATIONS

National CASA and RCCASA

In October 2006, National CASA asked Richland County CASA to spearhead an article for National CASA's Judges website. CASA and Judge Leslie K. Riddle's article was selected to be posted in the fall edition of the Judges' Page. Also, National CASA has selected RCCASA to present a workshop

at the 2007 Annual National CASA conference. The conference will be held in Orlando, Florida from June 9th-June 12th. We are looking forward to the opportunity to share our knowledge with other CASA agencies throughout the United States.

The Judges article can be viewed at:

<http://www.nationalcasa.org/Judges Page/index.htm>



CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR CASA'S CHILDREN

Hello Guardians!!!!

As we gear up for the holiday season, we have already started planning for this year's "Guardian Angel Gifts." For those of you who have not participated before, our office established this event to provide donated gifts to the children in our cases during the holidays.

Ideally, the children would be able to tell volunteers what they would like and we would ask donors to give specific presents. However, in years past this has been increasingly difficult because children do not receive exactly what they want, have the wrong size, our office receive the presents late or not at all or donors give to one sibling and not the other. **Therefore, this year we are going to ask for donations of all kinds and on December 5th from 11:00AM-2:00PM volunteers are invited to the CASA office to pick out two presents for each child.**

If your employer or company would be interested in sponsoring some of our children for Christmas gifts, please contact our office with a contact name and number. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions at HeidiVaughn@richlandonline.com.

Sincerely,
Heidi Vaughn



In-Service Trainings

RCCASA received an overwhelming response through our survey, regarding the need for on-line trainings. RCCASA has joined with the Center for Child and Family Studies at the University of South Carolina in a collaborative effort to ensure we can meet the needs of our volunteers. CASA is offering 5 Hours on In-Service credit. It is a series of on-line surveys and then once you have completed the series you will get free on-line training. The training teaches the 7 steps to protecting children. It empowers adults to be responsible for children and teaches adults how to talk with children and youth about sexual abuse prevention. The training teaches adults how to recognize the "grooming" behaviors perpetrators use, how to reduce the opportunities for abuse to occur, and how to appropriately handle disclosure of abuse to prevent further emotional harm to victims. In the future, CASA hopes to continue to provide as many on-line trainings as possible. We understand the time constraints our volunteers have and want to assist you anyway we can. **We appreciate the time you give to the abused and neglected children of Richland County.**



CASA PRELIMINARY SURVEY RESULTS

Selected Volunteer Satisfaction Survey Results as of November 1st.

If you would like to participate in this survey please use the link provided in your personalized email from CASA. If you did not receive your email, please contact Cameron Runyan at cameronrunyan@richlandonline.com.

- 94.4% believe you receive enough supervision over your cases
- 100% believe the Court values your recommendations
- 79.6% believe your opinions are respected by DSS
- 38.9% believe DSS keeps you properly informed about your cases
- 81.5% believe the biological parents value your role as a Guardian
- 97% enjoy being a CASA volunteer.
- 249 Years = The collective years of service to abused and neglected children of all respondents to date.
- 9 Hours = The average time survey respondents spend working on their CASA cases each week.

HOUSEKEEPING AT CASA



CORRECTION

In the October issue 2006, the issue stated that training was funded by the SC Bar Association.

Correction-the training was funded by the SC Bar Foundation.

PARKING PERMITS: Remember your parking permits expire at the end of this year. We will send out new permits after Thanksgiving. Please make sure we have your correct address information. Anyone needing special parking permit due to a disability (example knee or leg surgery) Please call Missy. The permits will be offered on a first come first serve basis.

CASA STAY AT HOME MOMS

If you are attending court and cannot find daycare, please call Missy to see if we can assist you during that time. We appreciate your hard work.

GUARDIANS OFFICE: Please feel free to use this for reports, phone calls or anything else that you need.

Guardians please consult your supervisors before buying gifts for the children on your caseload, so your supervisor can verify that they do not violate any court orders.



LEGAL CORNER



Grounds for Termination of Parental Rights

Effective date: June 7, 2005 (A168, S227)

Act 168 amended S.C. Code Ann. §20-7-1572 by providing that the conception of a child as a result of a criminal sexual conduct is a ground for termination of parental rights. This is a ground to terminate the parental rights of a biological parent who is convicted of the offense of criminal sexual conduct. However, a conviction cannot be used as a ground for terminating parental rights if the sentencing court makes a specific finding that the criminal sexual conduct conviction resulted from consensual sexual conduct where both the victim and the actor were at least 14 years of age, but not older than 18 years of age at the time of the offense.

Daniel's Law

Effective date: June 12, 2006 (A362, H4678)

Act 362 amended S.C. Code Ann. §20-7-85 to expand Daniel's Law. When an infant has not otherwise been abused or neglected, Daniel's Law provides immunity from prosecution to a parent or person acting on behalf of a parent, who voluntarily leaves the infant at a hospital or hospital out-patient facility. The amendment expands the locations at which a parent may properly leave an infant. A parent may now leave an infant at 'safe havens.' A 'safe haven' is defined as hospital or hospital out-patient facility, a law enforcement agency, a fire station, an emergency medical service station, or any house of worship during hours when the facility is fully staffed. The infant must be left with an employee or staff member in the safe haven. If the infant is left at a law enforcement agency, fire station, emergency medical station, or house of worship, these facilities must, within six hours, transport the infant to a hospital or hospital out-patient facility.

De Facto Custodian

Effective Date: March 24, 2006 (A249, S137)

The Act amended S.C. Code Ann. § 20-7-420 to give jurisdiction to the family court to grant custody of a minor child to the de facto custodian. The Act also changed S.C. Code Ann. §20-7-1540 to provide de facto custody of a child provisions.

Code Section 20-7-1540 defines de facto custodian to mean a person who has shown by clear and convincing evidence to have been the primary caregiver and financial supporter of a child who: has resided with the person for six months or more if the child is under three; or has resided with the person for a period of one year if the child is three years or older.

Once the court determines that a person is a de facto custodian, that person has standing to seek visitation or custody of a child. The court may award custody or visitation if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the natural parents are unfit or that compelling circumstances exist. No proceeding to establish a person as a de facto custodian may be brought while the child is in the custody of the Department of Social Services. If the court has determined that a person is a de facto custodian, the court must join that person in the action as a necessary party.

**Richland County Court Appointed Special
Advocates**

Richland County CASA
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Columbia, SC 29201
(803) 576-1735
casa@richlandonline.com

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Moving? Don't forget to give us your new address!

CASA Staff List

Paige Jones, Executive Director 576-1723
Cameron Runyan, Development Manager 576-1732
Heidi Vaughn, Volunteer Manager 576-1733
Missy Bowman, Administrative Assistant 576-1720
Lela Allen-Haines, Program Manager 576-1731
Hope Brown, Supervisor 576-1719
Vicki Raven, Court Manager 576-1727
Nicole Metts, Supervisor 576-1591
James Washington, Supervisor 576-1590
Pam Byrd, Supervisor, 576-1729
Sandra Green-Data entry 576-1728
Shawn Harmon, Staff Attorney 576-1726
Please call the main phone at 576-1735 if you are unable to reach the staff.

Tell Us About It

Hey, it's your newsletter! We want to hear about your ideas, court stories, significant life events, etc.

Please email us anytime at
casa@richlandonline.com

Member of the
National Court
Appointed Special
Advocates Association

