



Boone County CASA

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From the Director, Sarah J. Ponitz

Greetings CASA Friends! I wanted to update all of you about what has been happening with our program since our last newsletter.

I wanted to send a big thank you to everyone who attended or made a donation for our second annual Celebrity Roast fundraiser on August 26. The CASA Board did a great job preparing for this event and thanks to your support, it was a real success.

Special thanks to all of the Roasters and to Curt Tobin for agreeing to participate.

I also want to recognize and thank all of our sponsors for this event:

**Alpine Bank
Edward Jones
Harvard Crane &
Construction
Ralph J. Baudhuin
Foundation
State Farm Insurance**

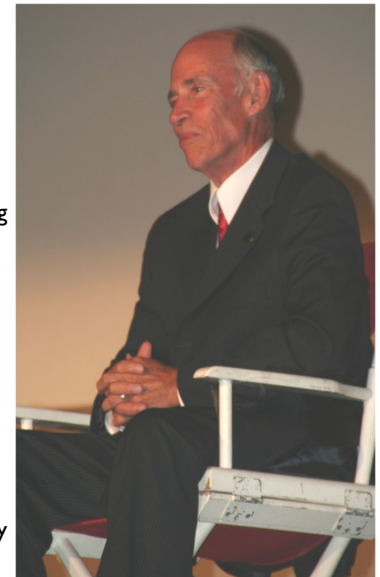
We have also been fortunate that along with the 40% caseload increase, we have also seen an increase in the number of volunteer advocates.

We have started our fall training and we have seven potential advocates who are looking forward to helping their first child.

Amanda Maloney has also started her internship with our program. She will be completing ninety hours of work for course credit.

CASA offers internships in many disciplines including human resources, paralegal and business management. Please call me at the CASA office if you would like more information.

Best regards,
Sarah J. Ponitz



Thanks for your support Curt! All proceeds benefited the CASA Program

To learn more about the CASA Program, please call (815) 547-6599 or visit our website: www.boonecountycasa.org

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The "Celebrity Roast" Fundraiser of Curt Tobin





**Boone County
CASA Advocate
Ruth Todt**

**“There is
nothing more
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to feel you have
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in helping a
child believe
they can have a
better future.”
-Ruth Todt**

Volunteer Feature: Advocate Ruth Todt

Please provide some general background information on yourself:

I currently work part-time as a school counselor. I began my career as a high school math teacher and when I retired from the public schools, I was the principal of Belvidere High School. I have a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a master's degree in school psychology.

Why did you choose to become a CASA advocate?

In my years as an educator, I had worked with a lot of children with family issues. When I learned about the work of CASA advocates, I thought it would be a great way to help children who had been abused or neglected have a safer and happier future.

What has been the most difficult part about being a CASA advocate?

From the time a child's case enters the courts until it is concluded can take several years. The process is often very slow and that is frustrating for me when I can see firsthand that is having a harmful effect on the children.

What advice would you give other advocates?

If you are struggling emotionally, reach out to CASA staff or to other advocates. It is important to keep a positive attitude and to be resilient so you will be able to continue to advocate for your CASA children.

What keeps you motivated?

I have worked professionally with children for over forty years. During that time I have witnessed many children who were able to overcome diversity because of caring adults who worked hard to help them succeed. There is nothing more gratifying than to feel you have had some part in helping a child believe they can have a better future.

Board Member Spotlight: Ann Bown, Vice-President

Please provide some general background information on yourself:

I was born and raised in Belvidere and moved back to the community six years ago. I'm married with three adult children and work in the administrative offices of Rosecrance Health Network. I have a degree in Business Management from Cardinal Stritch University with a minor in Graphic Design.

Why did you choose to become involved with the CASA Program?

A friend and fellow Board member convinced me I needed to give back to the community when I returned to Belvidere..

What are some of the rewards of being a CASA Board member?

Serving as a CASA Board member is rewarding on multiple levels. This organization has solidified its business practices, expanded its advocate base and is working diligently to create a stable funding situation. Knowing that CASA is available for children in Boone County is the biggest reward.

What has been your most difficult challenge as a CASA Board member?

I will love the day when I don't have to explain the mission of the organization because every Boone County resident knows the name and purpose of CASA.

What are a few of your goals for the Boone County CASA Program?

I would like to continue to strengthen Board membership, maintain an excellent staff, increase community awareness and provide more advocates who can provide more services for the unfortunate children who need CASA.



**Ann Bown and
her husband
Charlie**

CASA “Meet and Greet”

We will be hosting a CASA Meet and Greet on Tuesday, October 19 at the Keen Age Center in Belvidere.

Staff, advocates and Board members will be present and ready to answer any questions you may have about the program and how we serve abused and neglected children.



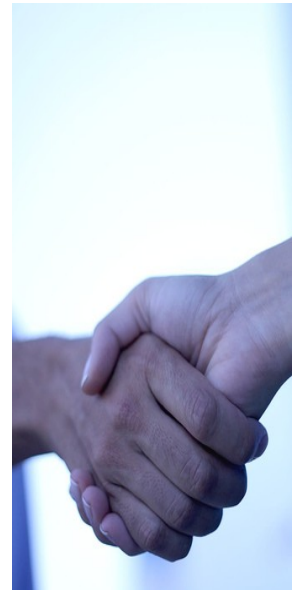
We hope you can join us and we look forward to meeting with all of you.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Tuesday, Oct. 19
7:30 a.m.**

Meet the CASA staff, advocates and Board of Directors at our Meet and Greet.

Complimentary hot breakfast!



Artale Wine Tasting Event

Much like our Celebrity Roast last year, we also had an excellent turnout for our wine tasting event at Artale Wine Company in Rockford.



Owner Tony Artale has been generous enough to allow us to hold another wine tasting event this year. Tony is a strong supporter of local organizations and most importantly, he believes in helping children.



SAVE THE DATE!

**Friday, Nov. 5
5:00-8:00**

Over 50 wine varietals will be featured and hors d' oeuvres will be prepared by Josef of Barbados.

Tickets are only \$15.00!

Join us for a relaxing evening



20th Anniversary Celebration

We are celebrating 20 years of improving the lives of abused and neglected children in Boone County on January 20, 2011.

Since the CASA organization was formed in 1991, hundreds of children have benefitted from our advocacy services.

We will be serving cake and other sweets and we hope to see you there.



SAVE THE DATE!

**Thurs. Jan. 20
4:30-6:00**

**Keen Age Center
Belvidere**

Join us for our anniversary celebration!



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www.boonecountycasa.org

You can also join
us on Facebook!



Become a Powerful Voice in a Child's Life...

From the Case Manager, Shannon E. Marion

As Sarah has mentioned, over the last several years, we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of children served by our program. Unfortunately, we have also seen an increase in the severity of abuse. Many of these new children have suffered severe physical and sexual abuse. The more severe the case, the more work that needs to be done.

I would just like to thank all of the advocates for your hard work and dedication despite how difficult facing these issues and emotional challenges can be. All of you are truly an inspiration!

THANK YOU ADVOCATES!

Volunteer hours for the last quarter total 2,076!

This resulted in a savings to Boone County taxpayers in the amount of \$145,320

CASA Birthdays

Carolyn S.	July 6
Ruth T.	August 19
Bethany N.	September 1
Laura M.	September 13
Susan B.	September 15
Adam K.	September 16

Happy Birthday to all of you!

History of the CASA Program

In 1977, a Seattle judge realized that the children involved in the Juvenile Justice System needed help. He conceived the idea of using trained community volunteers to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children.

Today, the National CASA Program consists of over 900 programs nationwide with over 50,000 volunteers who serve more than 225,000 children annually.

In 1991, Boone County CASA became an active program and our advocates have served as Guardian ad Litem to hundreds of children since that time.

Advocates are appointed by the Court to thoroughly



Boone County
Courthouse

investigate each child's situation by conducting home visits and by speaking to anyone who could have relevant information about the child's situation.

From there, the advocate prepares recommendations to the court in written report form.

However, before an advocate can take a case, he or she must first complete a background check, an application, a personal interview as well as thirty hours of training. Training gives each advocate the tools they will need to speak for the best interests of these vulnerable children.

If you are interested in becoming an advocate, interpreter or a member of the Board, please contact the CASA office today.

"To give a child a CASA is to give them hope and to give them hope is to give them the world."-former foster youth