



# Boone County CASA

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## From the Director, Sarah J. Ponitz

### Season's Greetings Friends!

I wanted to update all of you about what has been happening with CASA since our last newsletter in the fall.

I am very pleased to announce that we received a grant from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois for \$2,000! All of the funds will be used to start our new Volunteer Interpreter's Program. The grant also allows us to pay for printing expenses, including our brochure, which was recently translated into Spanish.

To become a volunteer interpreter the person will have to be bilingual, pass a background check and language screening, but they will not have to complete the thirty hour advocate training.

I also wanted to send a special thanks to advocates Gladys Ramirez and Dixie St. John-Ewert for all of their help with the document translations.

In addition, we had another swearing in ceremony on October 26. We are pleased to welcome new advocates Brett Strand, Diane Poycker, Sarah Holliday, Alice Kuhlen, Collatta Wells and Terri Ferriter to our program.

Sadly, two of our Board members recently resigned. Laura Guerin-Hunt and Bea Cramer did an excellent job helping us improve our CASA program. We certainly wish both of them all of the best as they pursue their future endeavors.

If you or anyone you know is interested in completing an internship, becoming a volunteer interpreter, advocate or board member, please have them call me at the CASA office.

Happy holidays to all,

*Sarah J. Ponitz*



**Special thanks to the  
Community Foundation of  
Northern Illinois**

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

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## The Artale Wine Tasting Fundraiser Event

Thank you to everyone who attended our wine tasting event and showed their support for our program!

We had an excellent turnout again this year and we hope everyone enjoyed the evening and the delicious hors d' oeuvres provided by Josef's.



Special thanks to Tony and Anthony Artale for sponsoring our event and to the Artale staff who were all very helpful.

Tony and Anthony are strong supporters of local organizations and particularly those which support and help children

**THANKS AGAIN!**



**Boone County  
CASA Advocate  
Diane Kuehl**

*“When that abused child is finally in a safe place and thriving and happy, all of the days in court, all of the time researching, all of the stories heard, it makes it more than worthwhile.”*  
-Diane Kuehl



**Boone County  
CASA Treasurer  
Bill Borth**

## Volunteer Feature: Advocate Diane Kuehl

### **Please provide some general background information on yourself:**

*I am in my third year of retirement from a 30 year career serving students in public education institutions. Most of my work was at Highland Community College and Rock Valley College developing programs that focused on access and retention of students in higher education where all people can develop skills and the knowledge to follow their dreams.*

### **Why did you choose to become a CASA advocate?**

*Having seen child abuse on different levels throughout my life, I know how vulnerable children are in their environment.. CASA is a way of identifying the neediest young people who can benefit from an advocate so that they have a chance to realize their personal potential in a safe home.*

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

*Seeing the selfishness of some adults who do not recognize that a child is a gift and a potential resource for making this world a better place presents a challenge in remaining objective with all family members in a case.*

### **What advice would you give other advocates?**

*Remember that being a CASA is about helping the child who has experienced abuse and has nowhere to turn. Use your valuable resources from the CASA staff; the best answers can be found by working together.*

### **What keeps you motivated?**

*When that abused child is finally in a safe place and thriving and happy, all of the days in court, all of the time researching, all of the stories heard, it makes it more than worthwhile.*

## Board Member Spotlight: Bill Borth, Treasurer

### **Please provide some general background information on yourself:**

*I grew up in Harvard, IL and after graduating from Northern Illinois University with a Business Management degree, my family moved to Candlewick Lake in 2006. I have two boys, Kieran is in 2nd grade and Jackson is in kindergarten at Caledonia Elementary.*

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

*After settling in to my new home, I signed up for the Chamber's Leadership Academy. Along the way I came to learn more about CASA and felt I wanted to become a part of the organization.*

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

*One of the rewards of being a board member is simply watching the program grow. The board has been doing a lot of 'behind the scenes' work to help grow the program to keep up with our increased caseload.*

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

*Making sure there is enough funding to keep the program running smoothly would have to be one of the toughest challenges. Another challenge is fighting complacency. Trying to balance increased caseloads, budget issues, and increasing advocates, all while trying to find better ways to keep the program moving forward is tough.*

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

*I would have to say increasing community awareness is a large goal. I would also like to see continued feedback from our advocates as suggestions from those 'in the trenches' can only help, not hinder, the decisions the board makes.*

## CASA Participates in Hometown Christmas

Every year CASA participates in the Hometown Christmas Event at the Community Building in Belvidere.

This year we have sponsored another family in need.

On December 1, we decorated our tree and then the tree and presents were given to the family. We feel this is a terrific way to give back to the community that has given so much to us.



### Thank You!

Thank you to all of the advocates and board members who made donations of food or gifts for our sponsored family!

Special thanks to Lynn, Ann, Mike, Marg, Shannon, June and Alice for helping with decorating the tree and organizing the gifts.

A great way to help others!



## CASA 20th Anniversary Event

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

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

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



### SAVE THE DATE!

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

**Location TBA**

Join us for our anniversary celebration!



## National CASA Conference

This year the National CASA Conference will be held in Chicago. Annually 1,400 individuals attend.

The conference includes many relevant topics such as older youth, capacity building, fundraising and equity and inclusion.

Over 60 valuable workshops are also being offered. We hope that many of our advocates and staff will be able to attend.



### SAVE THE DATE!

**March 19-22  
2011**

**Hyatt Regency Hotel  
Chicago**

A wonderful way to learn and network with others!





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

### From the Case Manager, Shannon E. Marion

Do you believe in angels? For the abused and neglected children in Boone County their angel is a CASA. CASA angels are the guardians of peace and safety for a child. They keep a child tucked under their wing always making sure their voice is heard. Whenever a child is in need, a CASA angel is there. The CASA angel laughs and cries with the child and accepts them just the way they are. Whenever a child feels lonely, a special CASA angel drops in for a visit. CASA angels are with a child every step of the way and help them find safe and loving permanent homes.

This holiday season we give special thanks to our CASA angels for bringing some peace, joy and hope to the abused and neglected children in Boone County.

**Volunteer hours for the last quarter total 2,064 saving taxpayers \$144,480!**

### CASA Birthdays

Diane P.	October 5
Brett S.	October 8
Jan M.	October 13
Cathy V.	October 31
Dixie E.	November 11
Yesenia T.	November 12
Lynn M.	December 10

### 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 making a difference in a child's life by becoming a dedicated advocate, please contact the CASA office today.

**"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing."**

**-Edmund Burke**

## BOONE COUNTY CASA

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**We're on the Web!**  
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**CASA**  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**