



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA of Talbot and Dorchester
Counties
1 S. Washington St., Suite 2
Easton, MD 21601

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CASA's Fiscal Year 2011
Annual Report
to Donors and Friends

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The Advocate *A Child's Voice!*

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Talbot and Dorchester Counties



Summer 2011



From the Executive Director



The opportunity to consider how perspective provides the capacity to change ordinary situations into extraordinary ones was presented at a recent meeting of Maryland's CASA Executive Directors. A short film narrated by National Geographic photographer Dewitt Jones encourages viewers to figuratively step outside of one's accustomed way of looking at things to make way for

creative problem solving via different perspectives. It occurred to me that the essence of Jones' film, "Everyday Creativity," emphasized core qualities of my maternal grandmother, whose choice of perspective modeled how to view life's glass as half-full rather than half-empty.

A sweet little lady with a warm, charming smile and a bright twinkle in her eyes, my grandmother taught my sister, brother, and me to stay in touch with the sunny side of life. A woman who'd had more than her fair share of pain, she was quietly and gently steadfast in her belief that life was a gift. She loved to laugh and used simple adages such as "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" to encourage us look at people and situations more deeply. She was also a master at taking a ho-hum day and making it magical. From her, we learned to see all kinds of shapes in all kinds of clouds, recite whimsical and silly poems that somehow brightened the day, and to treat flowers as if they were friends. She taught us to sit patiently still - sometimes it takes a while for a cloud to look like an elephant - and that, depending upon how you looked at it, less can often be more.

While my grandmother taught primarily by example, National Geographic's Jones uses his craft to visually explain in his film how a changed perspective can affect the whole. A lovely photograph of a waterfall flashes onto the screen. It's a nice photo, but Jones isn't satisfied. Another photo of the same waterfall on the same day comes onto the screen, and it's dynamic and majestic

in ways the first photo is not. By literally changing his perspective through a change of his camera lens, Jones captures an extraordinary image. Jones suggests that our willingness to reframe a problem can result in new opportunities presenting themselves, and he's right. I see this occur all the time at CASA.

We encourage our volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates to view problems as potential opportunities whenever possible, and they are really good at this. They come up with creative solutions to seemingly insurmountable problems faced by children who are under court protection because of abuse or neglect, resulting in hundreds of positive opportunities for these children. Tackling problems one at a time, our CASAs and staff supervisors look at them from every possible angle, and brainstorm available options. The gift to a child from a CASA's willingness to persevere and examine situations from multiple perspectives is often a result that is positively extraordinary, just as Dewitt

"sometimes it takes a while for a cloud to look like an elephant"

Jones promises.

In my mind's eye I can picture Jones and my grandmother chatting together in a meadow by a waterfall. He'd show her the best way to view the tumbling waters, and she'd find an elephant-shaped cloud for him. Add a CASA volunteer to the scene, and another innovative angle for viewing the situation might be suggested. Together, they'd get the best of all perspectives.

Robin Davenport

Help Wanted!

We are currently accepting applications for CASA volunteers from Talbot and Dorchester Counties. Individuals from minority communities are encouraged to apply. Please contact the CASA office for more details or to request an application packet.
410-822-2866



We are proud to be a member agency of the United Fund of Talbot County, whose 2011 - 2012 campaign kicks off on the first of September.

You can help the United Fund and support CASA's work with abused, neglected, and abandoned children by designating CASA when you make a donation to the United Fund. We thank you for supporting the United Fund and CASA!

**TOGETHER WE CAN
MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

CASA staff and volunteers participated in the Annual Multicultural Festival held on Saturday, May 7, 2011. The purpose of the Festival was to provide opportunities to unite even while celebrating differences, thus helping to promote peace. Featuring diverse entertainment, a variety of ethnic food selections, children's games, and lots of fun activities, the Festival also provided community members with an opportunity to visit and meet area service organizations who focus on families and children.



Outreach Coordinator Jane Crawford and CASA volunteer Felice Scher assist children with art projects at CASA's booth during the Multicultural Festival in Idlewild Park in May, 2011.



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CASA of Talbot and Dorchester Counties

2011 – 2012

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Newsletter Editors

CASA of Talbot and Dorchester Counties

1 S. Washington St., Suite 2
Easton, MD 21601

410.822.2866

FAX: 410.820.6620

info@casaoftalbot.org

www.casaoftalbot.org

ABRACADABRA!



Artist extraordinaire Maggii Sarfaty with her poster of The Great Houdini

Magical and enchanting, CASA's annual fundraiser, *The Magic of CASA*, delivered an extraordinary evening. Thanks to the combined talents of event committee members including Mary Griffin, Mary Lou McAllister, Christina Hoff, Bruce Summer, Buck Duncan, Mary Van Fossan, Stephanie Handy, Bruce Wiltsie, and Carolyn Williams, as well as the generosity of multiple donors, guests found the Tidewater Inn's Gold Room transformed into a magical wonderland, complete with levitating mannequins, fortune tellers, and shows of illusion. Decorating chair Mary Griffin, along with painters extraordinaire Maggii Sarfaty and Terri Griffin, created a joyful ambiance with a hint of mystery, while Magician Tim Hall and the Amazing Stanley set the perfect mood for a delightful evening of fun and wizardry. The silent auction, co-chaired by Mary Lou McAllister and Bruce Wiltsie, was a hit among the partygoers, adding to the overall joie de vivre of the evening.

The Magic of CASA was the brainchild of board member Christian Hoff, who believes that the work accomplished by CASA is often magical. Robin Davenport, CASA of Talbot and Dorchester Counties' Executive Director agrees, stating, "We are delighted that our event was such a success, made possible through the incredible support of our sponsors and the monumental effort of so many who volunteered their time and talents to create this spectacular evening."

Stephanie Handy, CASA Board President at the time, echoed Davenport's thanks to the community stating, "Together with the sponsors, the overwhelming generosity of the wonderful individuals in our community helped to minimize the expenses to produce the event, thus allowing more of our dollars to be spent on our work with vulnerable children in Talbot and Dorchester Counties who need volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates."



Five ladies in charge: Auction Co-chair Mary Lou McAllister, Executive Director Robin Davenport, *The Magic of CASA* Chair Carolyn Williams, Decorations Committee Chair Mary Griffin, and Entertainment Chair Christina Hoff.

Mark your calendars

for CASA's Spring fundraiser on May 19th!

Stay tuned, but please save the date now.



CASA Volunteers Honored



Following a delicious lunch prepared by The Oaks' Paul Milne and a special musical performance by Kate Anthony, luncheon guests gathered for a group photograph.

On May 24, 2010 Senator Richard Colburn, Delegate Addie Eckardt, Delegate Jeannie Haddaway, Judge Broughton Earnest, Judge William S. Horne, Judge Brett Wilson, and Master Jamie Adkins joined CASA at The Oaks County Inn to acknowledge the valuable work accomplished by Talbot and Dorchester County Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers. CASA's Board and Staff thanked all of the volunteers for giving their time, energy and hearts to the children who need CASA volunteers by their side.

Expansion Support

We are grateful for the support of our expansion efforts in Dorchester County from national, state, and local sources. The National CASA Association recently announced an expansion grant award to assist our work during FY 2012, and the Maryland Administrative Office of the Courts' Family Administration Department awarded a multijurisdictional expansion grant in FY 2011 to support our initial groundwork and service to children in Dorchester County.

Locally, quick to respond with assistance was the James M. Bryan, Jr. "Building Dreams for Youth" Foundation, from whom we received a grant to support our expansion. The Mid Shore Community Foundation (MSCF) recently announced the decision to award a George B. Todd Foundation grant to be used across three years to help CASA's expansion efforts, with a primary purpose of providing advocates for Dorchester County children.

CASA Executive Director Robin Davenport stated, "We are thrilled that the critical need for CASA services to children in Dorchester County has been recognized and supported by national, state, and local funders." She continued, "It is heartwarming to see, particularly in light of our current economy, that services for maltreated children are so highly valued by individuals and groups on multiple levels. We look forward to forming new partnerships with individuals in Dorchester County who are interested in becoming involved in some capacity with our work."

Recently CASA's Board of Directors adopted a new trade name, "CASA of Talbot and Dorchester Counties," and Davenport hopes to locate donated office space in Cambridge to establish CASA's physical presence in Dorchester County. She anticipates that staff members will utilize this space to interview prospective CASA volunteers and for CASA volunteers to both meet with their appointed children and receive supervision and training.

Dorchester County Circuit Court Judge Brett Wilson applauds CASA's expansion efforts, stating that this will fill "a previously long standing and unmet need in this poor county. It is vital that we keep CASA as part of a healing resource for abused and neglected children in Dorchester County."

To assist CASA's expansion, prospective volunteers from all walks of life are needed to advocate for Dorchester County children who have been maltreated. Local support will be critical to our ability to meet the needs of these children. If you are interested in receiving an application packet or wish to help in any way, please contact Executive Director Robin Davenport at 410-822-2866 or by e-mail at rd@casaoftalbot.org.



CASA and MSCF Board member Hubert Wright, IV; Todd Fund Committee member James Middleton; CASA Board President William S. Horne; Todd Fund Committee Chairman Charles T. Capute; CASA Executive Director Robin Davenport; and CASA Board member Sharon Baiers gather at the MSCF headquarters.