

# Hope for Local Children is a CASA Legacy

The message of hope filled the air at our Celebration of Children Holiday Luncheon in The Tidewater Inn's Gold Room on December 1, 2017. Guests were welcomed to the festive event by Board 1st Vice President Stephanie Nagel, whose tender and thought-provoking comments set the stage for the luncheon's theme by focusing on the fact that hope is more than a wish. Stephanie gently reminded guests that many of the children served by CASA have dealt with serious trauma, making it challenging for them to believe in a better tomorrow.

Executive Director Robin Davenport gave a moving tribute to the work accomplished by her organization's Court Appointed Special Advocates, stating that, "CASA is the voice in children's ears telling them: you matter; you're worthwhile; you're lovely; you can accomplish this; you are smart. Our CASA volunteers give children the message that their lives are worthwhile, which can change everything by keeping hope alive." Robin then introduced Johnny O'Brien, or Johnny O, whose personal and heart-wrenching story highlights the power that each of us has to change the world.

Johnny O was three years old when he and his five-year-old brother arrived at Milton Hershey's legendary school for orphans after a family tragedy left the boys without parents. He spoke candidly about his experiences, sharing personal anecdotes with honesty and humility. Believing that "adversity becomes strength when paired with an advocate," he emphasized how CASA of the Mid-Shore provides hope to children.

A soaring rendition of *You Raise Me Up*, sung by Kent Island High School freshman Madison Riley, fit perfectly with CASA's message of hope. Board President Moorhead Vermilye closed the program and thanked guests for their continued interest, saying, "Your support is an investment in the healthy future of our communities, and, as you've heard today, it helps us deliver hope."

The event was underwritten by the Mary J. and Oliver Travers Foundation; Bartlett, Griffin & Vermilye, Inc.; The Hill Group at Morgan Stanley; TGM Group, LLC; Moorhead and Sally Vermilye; Shore United Bank; Joe and Susan Anthony; Chad and Stephanie Nagel; and the Bryson Goss Memorial Fund.

Guest speaker Johnny O'Brien smiles with soloist Madison Riley and CASA Executive Director Robin Davenport



Photo by Karena Dixon Photography



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SAVE THE DATE!  
*Spring Soiree*

SHIPSHEAD FARM  
SATURDAY, THE NINETEENTH OF MAY  
TWO THOUSAND EIGHTEEN

Strength can result when adversity is paired with advocacy.

WINTER 2018

# The Advocate

Court Appointed Special Advocates of  
Talbot, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, and Kent Counties

## Letter from the Executive Director



"It only takes one moment, one caring adult, and a slight shift in the cosmos to change the course of a lifetime." These words belong to the multi-talented Johnny O'Brien, a long-time champion and friend of ours who penned *Semisweet*, his true story about growing up as an orphan in the Milton Hershey School for Boys. Johnny O, as he prefers to be called, honored us by speaking at our Celebration of Children Holiday Luncheon in December. Eloquent, courageously honest, and natural at the microphone, Johnny O allowed listeners a glimpse of the painful challenges that defined his childhood. Despite a multitude of obstacles, Johnny O not only survived, he was able to thrive. His explanation as to why this was so is both poignant and simple.

"Adversity, when paired with an advocate, becomes a strength," says Johnny O, whose life story offers hope to our children, families, and communities. His message emphasizes the crucial role that advocacy has for a child who is dealing with adversity. Johnny O links his message to CASA's mission, and he is spot-on when he says that Court Appointed Special Advocates can effect positive change for children.

In keeping with this theme, I was fortunate to recently participate in a statewide Master Training Initiative, ACE Interface. This initiative highlights an important public health issue that is explained through results from the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Study. For detailed information about this study, please visit [www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy](http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy). As described by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity. As such, early experiences are an important public health issue. Much of the foundational research in this area has been referred to as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)."

The CDC states that, "Adverse Childhood Experiences have been linked to risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, low life potential, and early death." As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk for these outcomes. Key components from this study found that ACEs: (a) are more common than originally thought, affecting individuals from all socio-economic groups and backgrounds; (b) have a significant impact on public health throughout our nation; (c) can become a bridge for increased communication between people from diverse communities; (d) are affected in a good way by resilience initiatives; and (e) can help us better protect our children by empowering the improved overall health and wellbeing of our communities.

Armed with this information, CASA of the Mid-Shore joins partners throughout Maryland in promoting lifelong health and well-being through assuring safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for all children. "Essentials for Childhood," can have a positive impact on a broad range of health problems and on the development of skills that will help children reach their full potential. Findings from the ACE Study and goals of Essentials for Childhood reinforce the mission that has guided us for almost 28 years. Johnny O sums up our mission eloquently when he reminds us that strength can result when adversity is paired with advocacy.

*Robin Davenport*

Robin Davenport  
Executive Director

To request a presentation about Maryland's ACE Interface Project, please visit [www.familytreemd.org](http://www.familytreemd.org).



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# New Court Appointed Special Advocates Sworn In

CASA of the Mid-Shore welcomed its newest Court Appointed Special Advocates as they took an oath on December 4, 2017 in the Talbot County Circuit Courthouse, where they promised to advocate for the best interest of children under court protection. The new CASA volunteers are Jessica Bartlett, Subhan Campos, Lynnell Collins, Kim Finger, Fay Mauro, Katherine Nevius, and Josefina Patterson\*. The advocates were sworn in by Circuit Court Clerk Mary Ann Shortall, with the Honorable Stephen Kehoe and the Honorable Jamie Adkins presiding.

Judge Kehoe, who refers to CASA volunteers as "the spark of hope for children," welcomed the new Court Appointed Special Advocates to his courtroom, where he stressed the importance of CASA's input in challenging cases. Judge Kehoe and Magistrate Adkins thanked the volunteers for their dedication to some of Talbot County's most vulnerable children, sharing their belief that being a CASA volunteer is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference for children who come through their court due to maltreatment.

Less than two weeks later, the majority of the new Court Appointed Special Advocates were sworn in by Clerk of the Court Amy Craig at a ceremony in Dorchester County Circuit Court that was presided over by the Honorable Brett Wilson and the Honorable Karen Ketterman. Newly sworn CASA volunteers in Dorchester County Circuit Court include: Jessica Bartlett, Subhan Campos, Lynnell Collins, Fay Mauro and Kim Finger.

Ever creative, Judge Wilson called on lyrics from the Pink Floyd song, "On the Turning Away," to describe the role of CASA volunteers. He encouraged the volunteers to "feel the new wind of change," noting that because of their support, "there will be no more turning away/ from the weak and weary/ no more turning away/ from the coldness inside." Judge Wilson and Magistrate Ketterman praised the

## DORCHESTER COUNTY



From left, front row: Fay Mauro, Kim Finger, Lynnell Collins, Subhan Campos

From left, back row: Dorchester County Circuit Court Judge Brett Wilson and Magistrate Karen Ketterman

newest advocates for becoming involved in making change for the better in the lives of children who have been abused and neglected.

Everyone at CASA of the Mid-Shore appreciates the support and validation received from the judges and magistrates throughout her program's service regions. "Our program strives to ensure that all children under court protection due to maltreatment receive needed services and a safe, permanent home," said Robin Davenport, Executive Director of CASA of the Mid-Shore. "We could not accomplish our work without the dedication of our staff and our volunteer advocates, who work passionately to help improve the lives of vulnerable children so that they can grow into their full potential. The judges and magistrates in our region – Judge Kehoe & Magistrate Adkins (Talbot), Judge Wilson & Magistrate Ketterman (Dorchester), Judge Ross & Magistrate Meta (Queen Anne's), and Judge Murphy & retired Judge Bowman (Kent) are to be commended for their commitment to appointing Court Appointed Special Advocates to 100% of the children who need CASA by their sides."

*\*As of print time, scheduling conflicts have prevented swearing-in ceremonies from taking place in Queen Anne's and Kent Counties. Fortunately, there is more than one way to administer an oath! So that CASA appointments to new children's cases in their counties are not delayed, Judge Ross and Judge Murphy have arranged for our new advocates to be privately sworn in by the Queen Anne's and Kent Circuit Court Clerks.*

## TALBOT COUNTY



From left, front row: Josefina Patterson, Katherine Nevius, Fay Mauro, Kim Finger, Lynnell Collins, Subhan Campos and Jessica Bartlett

From left, back row: Talbot County Circuit Court Judge Stephen Kehoe and Magistrate Jamie Adkins



The Honorable Thomas Ross  
of the Queen Anne's Circuit  
Court praises CASA's service to  
Queen Anne's County children:

*"The services provided by  
CASA of the Mid-Shore  
(CASA) are unique and  
valuable, and we see  
many positive outcomes  
for local children when CASA is involved. The  
relationship forged between CASA volunteers  
and the children they serve is extremely  
beneficial."*



The Honorable Harris Murphy,  
Kent County's Circuit Court  
judge, reflects on CASA of the  
Mid-Shore's services:

*"CASA volunteers have a  
unique and profound role.  
They present important  
information that assists the  
court in making decisions,  
and they provide support to some of the most  
vulnerable members of our communities. CASA  
volunteers are a tremendous asset, and I would  
like to thank them for their time, dedication  
and service."*

# Spring Soiree

SET FOR MAY 19TH!

Bidding farewell to the cold and blustery winter weather, everyone at CASA of the Mid-Shore happily invites you to celebrate the warmth and beauty of spring at our Spring Soiree at Shipshead Farm on May 19, 2018. The gorgeous and historic Shipshead Farm will serve as the backdrop for our 2018 fundraiser, featuring festive cocktails, lavish hors d'oeuvres, upscale dinner stations with fresh farm-to-table selections, fun activities, and dancing under the stars.

As Havana Nights did in 2017, the Spring Soiree promises to provide a feast for the senses, including a casually elegant ambiance, fancy libations, fashionable attire, a lively fundraising program, and delicious French cuisine with a southern twist. Entertaining activities are in the works, and Washington DC's incredible Prime Time Band guarantees to entice everyone onto the dance floor. The Spring Soiree is the perfect event to shake off those winter blues.

Shipshead Farm is a hidden gem of the Eastern Shore. With a unique opportunity to enjoy its beautiful gardens and stroll around the grounds, guests will gain a full appreciation of this historic property. Documents dating back to 1664 indicate that the property was originally known as "Sheepshead Point Farm." Re-named Shipshead Farm, it sits on 383 acres outside of Easton, where the manor house was meticulously restored and transformed to accommodate 21st century living. By intention, the farm has become a major mecca for wildlife and waterfowl. The Spring Soiree will begin with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the gardens, followed by gourmet dinner stations, fundraising games, and dancing under an exquisite tent on the gorgeous lawn.

The Spring Soiree will raise funds to support our work with children who are under court protection in Talbot, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, and Kent Counties due to abuse, neglect, abandonment, or their parents' inability to safely care for them. To help cover costs, the committee plans to secure sponsorships from generous supporters and local businesses. The talented and charming Sherry Truhlar, of Red Apple Auctions, will join us to help reach our 2018 fundraising goals at the Soiree.

For more information about event sponsorships and/or to make reservations (\$150/person), visit [www.casamidshore.org](http://www.casamidshore.org) or call Kay Lister at 410.822.2866, ext. 3. There will be plenty of seating for all, and reserved tables are available through \$5,000+ sponsorships. Invitations will be mailed in April, but you'll want to mark your calendars now for May 19th! We look forward to seeing you at the Spring Soiree at Shipshead Farm!

