

(Continued from page 3)

had facilitated some day visits by driving her CASA child halfway to the family's home thereby making it more feasible for him to go but even this help did not solve the ultimate problem that he was placed too far away for visiting frequently and for long durations of time.

At each court review hearing, Kaye stressed the need to move him to a less restrictive, family setting, hoping that he could be placed closer to this family who was a resource for a permanent living situation. Kaye has faithfully visited her CASA child on a regularly basis and he feels very connected to Kaye. Recently, because of Kaye's insistence, he was asked to appear in Court and the Master interviewed him in her chambers so she could better understand what he wants and how he speaks and appears after 2 years in an institutional setting. This hearing to evaluate his situation and plan for an appropriate placement has been postponed and/or continued for months and meanwhile he was moved to a less restrictive group home way out in Cumberland Maryland right before the holidays. Kaye was extremely upset about the setting being so far from any one he knows or could visit him, so she has twice driven out to Cumberland to see what the placement is like, meet the people who provide care for him, and to visit with him. Kaye's testimony in the court proceedings will continue in February, 2 months after she began testimony!!

Kaye cares deeply for this CASA child and feels very strongly that he is not very different in his behaviors than other little boys of 7 years old. She knows that her consistent presence in his life has made a huge difference in an otherwise frustrating sequence of events. Kaye feels strongly that the system has not done right by him and is determined to keep trying to do whatever she can to make it right for him. Her dedication to him is amazing! She has over and over again, gone above and beyond!!

COULD YOUR CASA CHILD or FAMILY USE LEGAL ASSISTANCE?

Many of our families have problems beyond their involvement with the child welfare system. MARYLAND VOLUNTEER LAWYERS is available to provide FREE legal assistance to financially limited persons in areas such as public benefits, medical bill problems, school suspensions, and landlord/tenant disputes. To find out about eligibility, call **410-547-6537**, (Monday thru Thursday 9:00 to 2:00.)

The Starfish is a publication of CASA Baltimore a 501C3 non-profit organization registered with the State of Maryland. It is printed six times a year. Any comments or submissions should be sent to our editor: Linda Koban @ lindarosek@aol.com or 410-244-1465. We reserve the right to accept, reject or edit any submissions to our publication. CASA Baltimore PO Box 13004, Baltimore, MD 21203



The Starfish

Newsletter for CASA Volunteer Advocates

January/February 2006

Volume 04 Edition 1



SAVE THE DATE:

Thursday, May 11, 2006; 11:30-1:00
CASA's Sixth Annual
Luncheon of Champions
Honoring You, Our Volunteers and the
Child Advocate of the Year:

JOAN LITTLE, Esquire
Chief of the Legal Aid Bureau's Child Advocacy Unit

REVISITING CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

In November CASA Baltimore sponsored a training session on how brain and behavioral research is revealing the long term effects of childhood abuse and neglect on adjustment during specific stages of childhood. Exposure to danger can actually alter the structural development of a child's brain and the effects depend on what age the harm occurred.

New research for example indicates that infants who are learning to mistrust the world, because they have lost their primary caretaker or have experienced

chronic trauma or neglect may appear listless, unresponsive and experience developmental delays. Toddlers who have experienced the world as unsafe will appear anxious or clingy, may revert to earlier behaviors, e.g. difficulty in being toilet trained, or may become irritable, defiant, and incapable of tolerating even small amounts of frustration.

Effects continue to be seen at all levels of development and can be most dramatic during adolescence with post traumatic acting out such as drug use, delinquent

behavior, and sexual acting out. For a more complete outline on potential developmental and behavioral effects of trauma *please visit the CASA website, www.Casabalt.org.*

**It is not length of life,
but depth of life.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Next Volunteer
Orientation

February 16th

The Volunteer Information Exchange

Featuring Updates on laws, policies, resources and the opportunity to share experiences.

Come to Linda's house for coffee and cake on:

Saturday morning March 4, 2006, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm

Meet informally with CASA staff and catch up with former classmates, share your concerns about the system, brainstorm about your case in a comfortable homey setting. Space is limited, so please R.S.V.P. the office, (410) 244-1465 (directions will be on the website— www.casabalt.org)

Other Ways to Support

Did you know that there are other ways in which you can support CASA Baltimore?

Perhaps you belong to a religious organization, trade association, or work in a company or other organization that likes to support the community.

We would welcome the opportunity to come in and make a presentation about what it is that we do. Maybe there are members of organizations you are connected to who would like to get involved as a volunteer for us. Perhaps the organization is willing to post a flyer in their facility. We would so greatly appreciate any ways in which we can connect with more people.

If this is something you can arrange, please contact Iris Sauber, our Director of Marketing or Susan Burger, our Executive Director to let us know who to contact. Call 410-244-1465. As always, your support is so greatly appreciated.

And in the end it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years.

- Abraham Lincoln

Starfish Award Winner

CASA of Baltimore has had the good fortunate to know Kaye Perry since 2000! Kaye holds a Master's of Legal and Ethical Studies from the University of Baltimore and has held various positions at the Social Security Administration in Woodlawn since 1982.

Each position she has held has been one in which she advocates for others. Kaye is the mother of an adult daughter and a grandmother. Kaye has been a volunteer in one capacity or another in the Baltimore community for many years. She has raised money, recruited sponsors, walked many miles in support of causes she believes in, and



has bought gifts, attended graduations and provided support to numerous children in her life, that needed help. When Kaye came to CASA of Baltimore she wrote in her application, "I have never been a great orator, and do not profess to have an elegant speaking voice, but if afforded the opportunity, I can assure you that I will do my very best to provide a voice and to actively seek justice for the children involved in the juvenile court." Kaye, herself raised by a foster family (the friend of her mother) because her mother was ill, has strong feelings about children needing a family and has been a passionate advocate for a young boy since becoming a CASA volunteer in December of 2000.

Kaye was assigned to a boy who, at the time, was less than 2 years

old. His mother was an adolescent when she had him and he lived with her and his maternal grandmother. He was not taken care of and was placed in a foster home at the age of 2. He remained in that placement for about 3 years. This foster family was whom this youngster thought of as his family but the Dept. of Social Services felt that some of his needs were not being met so he was moved to another foster home at about age 5. The transition to this new home did not go well and he was placed in a residential treatment facility shortly thereafter.

Kaye felt almost from the day he got there that that this facility was too restrictive and did not give this young boy the family he desperately needed. He was medicated for various behavioral problems to the point that Kaye felt his speech was slurred and he was "out of it" all the time. His mother meanwhile, had another baby who was placed with a family that the mother and grandmother knew, who live in St. Mary's County. This family had been visiting with Kaye's CASA child at the residential treatment center and had begun to take steps for overnight visits and to ultimately be a placement for him with plans for possible adoption. When the new baby arrived in their care and the father in the family was deployed to Iraq, it became too difficult for the potential foster mother to visit. Kaye

(Continued on page 4)