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W.'s life has made a difference to him?

A. We can never be sure. His life is a struggle. Maybe I have created one memory that he will take with him through life to shield himself during a bad time.

Q. How has it made a difference in your life? In the way you parent or view your own children?

A. I believe that both the giver and recipient benefit from simple acts of kindness. We all feel better about ourselves and others when we are engaged in selfless acts of giving. I have gained the most respect and influence with my children in demonstrating that we must all care and become involved in our community.

Q. Do you think CASA is a good community service opportunity for people who want to volunteer?

A. Yes, this is a unique opportunity for people to get involved.

Luncheon Of Champions Big Success

Joan Little, Legal Aid Bureau's top CINA attorney in Baltimore City was awarded CASA Baltimore's Child Advocate of the Year award at the annual Volunteer Recognition Luncheon of Champions at the Hyatt Regency on May 11, 2006. Joan was applauded by over two hundred family members, colleagues, CASA volunteers and supporters. In addition to recognizing Joan for her commitment, integrity, and dedication, the event was an acknowledgement of the critical role CASA volunteers play in the court system and in the lives of "their" children.

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The Starfish

Newsletter for CASA Volunteer Advocates

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Volume 04 Edition 3

Why are there so many African American Children in Foster Care?

No CASA volunteer who has been to Baltimore City Juvenile Court will be surprised that, nationally, African American children account for 60% of the children in foster care but are only 20% of the population. The number of minority children in the child welfare system parallels the disparity in the prison system. These discouraging statistics were presented at the National CASA conference and at the University of Maryland Law School by Northwestern University Law Professor Dorothy Roberts.

The minority overrepresentation problem is most acute in big cities where poverty is more likely to impact whole communities and lead to child neglect findings. According to Dr. Roberts' research the system is not designed to deal with problems of the middle and upper classes. African American and Latino children treated for injuries at hospital emergency rooms are five times more likely to be evaluated for child abuse and three times more likely to be reported to child protective services. Black women are more likely to be tested for drug use and to have newborns removed.

And most of this interesting research really just explains HOW, not WHY; that is a much deeper question.

Next Volunteer Training Starts June 12th

Orientation June 6th.

Call Today; Foster Children in Baltimore City Need You.

I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve. —Schweitzer, Albert

Maryland CASA Training Project
Training programs offered to the
Baltimore-Washington area CASA programs
PRESENTS
"ILLUMINATIONS"

The Illuminations Workshop is a carefully designed interactive process, utilizing the artwork of two sex abuse victims to deepen knowledge and skills of victims, their families and perpetrators.

Presented By Reverend Ray Chase
The Illuminations Program of St. Vincent's Center

Saturday July 15th, 2006
Howard Community College, Columbia MD
10901 Little Patuxent Parkway
Room ELB 100
Free Parking

10:00am- 3:00pm
Lunch Provided

Join CASA volunteers from throughout the region for this extremely interesting and exciting program!

RSVP by July 7, 2006

pgrady@voicesforchildren.org

Include program name

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
--Margaret Mead

Starfish Award Winner

Q. How long have you been a CASA?

A. I can't quote you a date just sitting here, but I can say that during my time as a CASA my child has evolved from a small frightened child to a challenging teenager.

Q. What appealed to you about being a CASA as opposed to some other type of volunteer work?

A. Easy question. The appeal of CASA is the chance to actually be involved in a program versus just giving money. Secondly, there is really no set schedule or amount of time that you must give. You respond when you are needed or when you feel its time to contribute.

Q. Are you a parent?

A. I am a parent of three wonderful children that are the inspiration of my life.

Q. Does your work involve children?

A. Not literally. However, many of my co-workers are extremely needy and constantly compete for attention.

Q. Tell us a little about the child you have been working with and what kinds of situations you and he have been involved with since you have been assigned the case.

A. My child is a challenge to his parents, to the social welfare system, to the courts and to me. His

parents do not believe they can care for him, even though they have two of his brothers at home. He has been in at least three placements, the first two group homes were stark facilities with an occasional welcoming staff member. He was moved when those homes lost their license.

There is no single cause or solution to the multitude of psychological and physical problems that W. faces. I am a small but independent voice in the turbulent life of my CASA child. I do not judge. I listen, learn and ask questions in search of the same answers that my CASA child's parents, attorney, social worker and judge seek. My interaction is as simple as a meal time discussion about the day's events or as emotionally complex as a participant in a family funeral.

Q. How do you think being in

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