

CASA of Cochise County

News & Views



Abby Dodge – CASA Coordinator ~ Lissete Borbon – Support Staff ~ Phone: 432-7521 Fax: 432-7247

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www.casaofarizona.com

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Abby Dodge

It's hard to believe that I have already been back at work for a month. The month of April was a giant blur. Everything that could be due was due in April. I apologize if I have not reconnected with any of you personally since I returned; it was not intentional!

Thank you to all who provided us with documents we needed prior to the start of our Operational Review. The Operational Review occurred the week of April 18, and we will get the results of the review in a few months. I think we fared pretty well, thanks to all of you turning in your contact logs and other documentation in a timely manner.

Coordinator's Comments

I hope that many of you have signed up and are planning to attend the Knowing Who You Are (KWYA) training at the Sierra Vista Police Department on Thursday, May 5. CASA of Arizona wants to see as many CASA advocates as possible trained statewide in this area. If you haven't signed up, there's still time! I realize the flyer said to sign up by April 8, but there are still slots available and we can still get you signed up. If you need assistance, please let me know.

I will be working to provide more training opportunities for the rest of the year. I sent out emails to each of you in April to update you on how many hours of training you have completed. If you still have a ways to go, don't worry. There are plenty of great opportunities coming up. We have the KWYA training in May, training from Brad Thayer on trauma informed advocacy in June, and I plan to offer a court report writing class in July (the date is still TBD). In addition, Lissete and I plan to hold another BBQ over the summer, probably in August. Last year we had such a great turnout and I think everyone enjoyed it, so we want to make this an annual event.

Remember, you do receive training credit for reading the newsletter. With that in mind,

please provide me some feedback on our newsletter. After reading this month's edition, please send me an email and let me know either your favorite article/section of this month's newsletter or a suggestion for information you would like to see in an upcoming newsletter. Or, if you think the newsletter is fine the way it is, simply send me an email saying so. Your comments will help us continue to improve the newsletter.

Thank you!

A Wonderful New Life!

By Juanita Adamson, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Silence and propriety were not the order of the day in the Superior Court of Arizona for Cochise County on April 15, 2016. Instead, there were noisy giggles from an excited child and enormous smiles on the faces of all who were present for the finalization of adoption of one of my CASA kids. After a lifetime of insecurity and chaos, her life's prospect was finally being transformed into a hopeful future complete with a wonderful family—a mom and grandparents, who have grown to love her as much as she loves them.

At the age of 5, I doubt the little girl fully understood the total significance of the event—the judge signing a document changing her first and last name and giving her adoptive mom the legal and moral responsibility of not only raising her but protecting and caring for her with love and affection. She will no longer be known by her old name and her former life is a thing of the past. For this little girl, the end of her foster care experience has a happy ending, a chance at love, promising opportunities and unlimited possibilities she so much deserves.

For me as her CASA, the finality of the adoption not only brought closure of her case but much more—the satisfaction of having been a friend/an advocate to a little girl, who was caught amidst the irrational tangle of family conflict and imprudent decisions. Now, she has the opportunity of a future filled with love, laughter and all the good things that stability can bring. She is free, perhaps for the first time, to be a child and to be happy. And, that makes me happy.

Good News

from Kathy Shaughnessy, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

I've got good news. DCS won the case against the parents of my CASA girl! Their rights were severed at the severance trial held on April 19th. A long day of testimony, but it was well worth it!



The CASA Cactus

By **Ned Letto**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Let me take you back to the CASA appreciation event held in 2009. This was held at the JPO Conference Room in Sierra Vista. Each CASA was given a small potted cactus as a memento of that evening. I had selected a small cactus that was about 3 inches tall. Many CASAs said they've never had any luck raising cactus.

At the time, I thought this was a rather unusual memento to give but over time I realized how appropriate it was. A cactus is very much like a CASA case. On the one hand, a cactus can be very delicate, while at the same time it can really bite you. Too much water and it dies, not enough water and it dries up. If you forget and touch it wrong, it gives you a strong reminder to keep hands off. Try to change it from one pot (placement) to another and you really learn how careful you need to be.

Another aspect of growing a cactus as compared to a CASA case is how much satisfaction you get when you see it grow and thrive. You feel as though you have accomplished something.

My cactus has grown from a small 3-inch plant in 2009 to a 13-inch plant. Some of my CASA kids have grown from 12 years old to having children of their own. Obviously, I get more satisfaction from knowing the children I have worked with are thriving, but, when I look at my CASA cactus, it causes me to think of all of them.



The New GED: An Interview with Tom Lehr

By *Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer*

I interviewed Tom Lehr, who is now working with students at Cochise College and is involved in teaching the GED classes. Tom and I go back twenty years to the time when he was a counselor at Apache Middle School and I was an 8th grade teacher.

The new GED test was put into place January 1, 2014. It became much more difficult, so difficult that very few people could pass it. This problem was nationwide. An article in "Inside Higher ED" dated January 20, 2015 compared the pass rates of the pre-2014 test with the current test. (It is important to remember that these statistics are based on students who attempted all tests. The pass rate would be much lower if students who studied but did not try all tests were included.)

"In 2014, roughly 248,000 people took the test. At least 86,000 successfully earned a GED, according to preliminary data from GED Testing Services. That's far below the previous year's numbers: 800,000 test takers and nearly 560,000 GED recipients in 2013."

The publishers of the GED recently revised scoring on the tests. The test itself remained the same, but the score was dropped 5 points from 150 to 145. It is too early to calculate any statistics, but it does appear that more students are getting passing scores on the individual tests.

The GED consists of four tests – Reasoning through Language Arts, math, science, and social studies. Each test is taken separately. GED.com has information about what to expect. It is

easy to log on, create an account and check it out. Sample questions are provided, and for a fee of \$6.00, a practice test is available. The biggest difference between the old GED test and the new one is there is more reasoning involved and less computation. Ratios, proportions, and graphs are included in the social studies and science tests. The new test requires a candidate to be able to use information, not just repeat it.

Cochise College has GED classes that start every 8 weeks August to May. The new test is indeed more difficult than the old one, and it can take up to 2 years of preparation to pass, depending on a student's skills and effort. The GED is really a high school equivalency. There is a fee for classes on a sliding scale based on income.

Classes begin with a 3- to 4-day orientation. Once that is completed, Cochise College has several options.

1. Students can use the Cochise College distance learning option. This may be appropriate for highly motivated, independent learners with a good deal of self-discipline, focus and organization.

(An online instruction program is also available through the GED.com site.)

2. Classroom sessions are available. The classes are small (5-12 students) on Monday and Wednesday or Tuesday and Thursday. Students are assigned to appropriate subjects and levels according to assessments during the orientation. Morning and evening classes are offered. Students can

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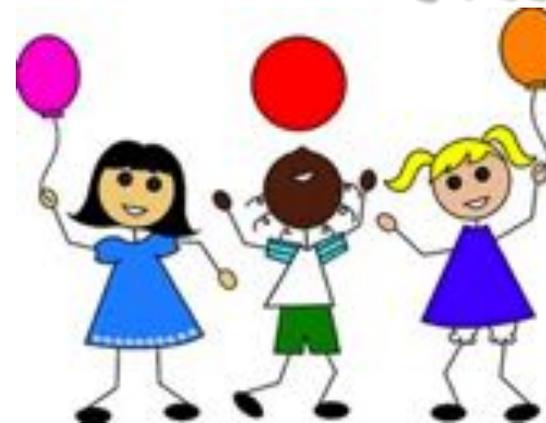
The New GED (Continued)

attend all four if they choose to. Students need to be prepared to study outside of class.

Adult Education has expanded its mission. The emphasis nationally is on “College and Career Readiness.” Obtaining the GED is viewed as a way to prepare to enter directly into a meaningful career or to continue education or training leading to a career. The Cochise College Adult Education Department has adopted the phrase “The Bridge to Better Futures.”

Sometimes, once a student has checked out the GED program, going back to high school becomes the more attractive alternative. Cochise College is there for students who are ready and want to work to prepare for the GED. High school welcomes students who feel a need for the traditional classes. Support services for students with exceptional needs are much more limited in the college setting. Previously, if a student were having difficulty adjusting to school or being successful in classes, people might have said, “Maybe you should ‘just’ drop out and get your GED?” That is no longer helpful advice. Education is a vital ticket for future success. It is up to each student to find the program that will best suit his/her needs.

Kudos



Patti Hager, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
FCRB, March 2, 2016

The Board acknowledges the foster mother, CASA, case manager, and the Child and Family Team for ensuring S’s best interest is paramount and ensuring her needs are appropriately addressed.

Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
FCRB, March 9, 2016

The Board notes the numerous change of placements for the children has been disruptive to their educational progress. Therefore, the Board appreciates the CASA’s active interest in the girls’ education. The Board acknowledges the CASA for her commitment to working with the girls and welcoming all those associated with the children to work with her in supporting the best interests of the children and their well-being.

CASA of the Month!

Morrisa Berkley

April 2016

Morrisa became assigned to her first case in October 2015. Since then, Morrisa has become very involved with her case, and is especially close with the older of the two girls she represents. Recently, Morrisa had the opportunity to take a difficult situation and use it to learn that her child was having issues with some other children at school. Now, Morrisa is working on bringing these issues to light and helping her child work through the issues. It is great to see the trusting relationship that Morrisa has built with the child on her case.

Morrisa has also been coming to the weekday support group meetings when her schedule allows, which is great. I know all too well how hard it can be to get to things during the day when you have a small child, and Morrisa has an adorable little boy who happens to have the best name in the world (but I may be a little biased toward the name).

If you haven't had the chance to meet Morrisa, I encourage you to do so.

Thank you Morrisa, for all of your hard work!



Milestones for Three of My Aged-Out Kids

By **Mary C. Blanchard**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

One of my young ladies has been dating a young man for over a year. They have had their ups and downs but have always gotten back together. I saw her recently and asked how things were going. She showed me her left hand, and there it was—an engagement ring! They are planning a simple wedding at the court house, and she told me I would be invited. I will definitely be there. I totally believe in true love, and I rejoice for them and wish them every happiness.



I was eating lunch at the Philadelphia Baking Company of Arizona with one of my young men. He was very happy about his good news. He has gotten a job at Walmart with good hours and a higher salary than he was making at the gas station. He is making friends and likes what he is doing. He has experience working in a deli, and he really enjoys being responsible for the rotisserie chickens. Cooking the chickens takes several hours, and cleaning the ovens takes lots of elbow grease to get them clean. He has to take them apart and put them back together. He shared every detail and obviously takes pride in his work. His American work ethic is alive and well.



My oldest CASA kid is a young lady in her thirties. She is bringing her nine-year-old daughter to visit Arizona in June, and we are going to spend time together for the first three days of her visit. After that I am off to my twins' graduation. She and I have kept in touch with regular calls and emails. Her daughter calls me "Grandma." Even though we have lived in different states for at least 10 years, this aged-out CASA kid is part of my extended family.



Once a CASA kid ages out, she/she may want to keep in contact with the CASA. It is wonderful when this happens, but it is also wonderful when someone moves on and finds a good life without us. We were there for each and every child on our watch until the case was dismissed, and we did make a difference.

Arrest Records

By **Mary C. Blanchard**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Last week, I needed to know how long ago a parent was last arrested. It has been years since visitations were allowed with my child, and Mom claims she has not been arrested or used drugs for a year. Mom resides in Douglas and she would like to spend time with her child. A clean record would help her be considered for visitations.

Ned Letto is my go-to person for all matters involving the police or sheriff's department. He advised me to check with the Sierra Vista Police Department. I did and was advised that I would have to go to Douglas to get any information. I was all set to drive to Douglas, but I decided to call first. I used the phone and address list that Lisette sent us.

Both departments were extremely helpful. I identified myself and my organization (CASA) and told them my reason for asking. Arrest records are public information, and it saved me a hundred-mile drive when they cheerfully and promptly and politely looked up the records and gave me the information I needed.

I have been a fan of our Sierra Vista police force, and I have now added Douglas to my list. So many people go out of their way to be helpful, and I try to be cooperative in return. I always remind myself that my CASA kids have a team assigned to work with them, and there are other people who are ready and willing to offer assistance as well. When I haven't a clue what to do next, I reach out and connect with someone who may be able to help or who knows someone who can help.

Bisbee Courthouse Accessibility for the Handicapped

By **Mary C. Blanchard**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

At first glance, the Bisbee Courthouse does not seem to be accessible for people who are handicapped. The stairs are daunting to the able-bodied, and the courthouse is built on a steep hill.

Lynn Vanderdasson recently suffered multiple fractures of the ankle and leg. She was scheduled for a court hearing and was still using a wheelchair. She asked me to cover for her, which I did. We both wondered when she asked me if the courthouse was accessible for the handicapped. At her hearing, court ran late and all of us in the court room had to leave by the back exit. **Ah ha!** This is the handicapped entrance. There are two parking places available and more parking close by.

Lynn could not have attended with her injuries, but it is good to know that we can attend court if we are reasonably mobile.



Thursday Morning Support Group Meeting

By **Mary C. Blanchard**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

It is such a nice feeling whenever I head off to one of our two support group meetings. Our morning group met on April 14th, (the second Thursday of the month) from 10:00am to noon at Lynn Vanderdasson's home at 5776 E Terry in Hereford.

Morissa Berkley came for the first time. She is a delightful addition.

Abby reported that there are several new recruits. She also confessed that she is still catching up. Everyone, especially Lissete, is overjoyed that she is back, and we will not complain about any delays.

As each CASA shares his/her experiences, I am blown away by how hard everyone is working and how dedicated each volunteer is to his/her CASA kid. The caring, positive energy, and dedication every single CASA devotes to every single case is inspiring.

We waited our turn to contribute, and I was eager to share what is going on with my cases. I also appreciated support and input from the group. The energy of the group revitalizes me, and being a member of a support group is a priority for me. Actually, being a member of two wonderful support groups is a priority for me.



Attendees at Lynn's Morning Support Group Meeting model Lynn's hat collection. She uses these when greeting her CASA kids, pretending surprise that there is something amiss!



Lynn got a boost from her CASA child, while recovering from broken bones in her foot. Nothing says "Get Well" better than a personal drawing, complete with a cast!

Support Group Meetings

These meetings are proving to be a wonderful opportunity to share, to pick up new ideas, to learn, and to just vent. When we are dealing with issues of confidentiality, there is often little chance to be able to freely say what is on our minds.

During the recent Evening Support Group, there were three possible destinations mentioned to take our CASA kids, if in the Tucson area. Since they all involve costs, don't forget to contact CCCC, Inc. for financial assistance.

You might want to consider one of these three for a possible special treat for your CASA kid(s)...

www.theminitimemachine.org/




The Mini Time Machine
museum of miniatures
 4455 EAST CAMP LOWELL DR, TUCSON, AZ, 85712

www.childrensmuseumtucson.org/



www.breakerswaterpark.com/



Second Thursday of the Month

10:00am-12:00 noon

Home of Lynn Vanderdasson
 5776 E. Perry Lane
 Hereford, AZ 85615

Evening Support Group

**Last Tuesday of the Month,
 7:00-9:00pm
 Home of LuRue Troyer
 2300 Iris Drive**

Children's Rights Addresses Failed Adoptions

By **Allison Hurtado**, CASA Marketing & Community Outreach Specialist,
AZ Supreme Court

Children's Rights (CR) is a national legal advocacy organization whose goal is to improve and protect the lives and rights of abuse and neglected children across the United States. CR identifies problems in each state's foster care system and sets out to address and correct those problems through legal action. Their current focus for Arizona is to improve physical and mental health care for foster children and increase the number of foster homes in our state.

CR also produces a quarterly newsletter highlighting important issues addressing the needs of neglected and abused children. Their Fall 2015, *Notes from the Field* newsletter addresses situations in which adoptive placements are unsuccessful. Those of us involved with CASA and FCRB are familiar with stories of disruptions from foster care but, according to *"When Forever Families Don't Last,"* 10-25 percent of *adoptions* from foster care fail *before* they become final. According to the authors, estimates of how many adoptions fail *after* the adoption is final is unknown. Reasons for these failed adoptions include: lack of follow-up services, unaddressed mental and behavioral health problems, an inability to bond as a family, and aging or sick adoptive parents.

Children whose "forever families" turn out **not** to be "forever," add one more negative experience to their lives as foster children. These children come into care because they are abused and/or neglected by the very people who should love them most—often resulting in emotional and behavioral problems. And, once in care, they experience new and frightening situations—multiple placements and numerous strangers who move in and out of their lives (case managers, psychologist/psychiatrists, therapists, parent aides, etc.). Amazingly, some children manage to overcome these exceptional life events to be matched with an adoptive home, only to be disappointed.

From an attachment theory point of view, the devastating experience of anticipating a permanent, loving home only to have it fail is likely to make the children more cautious (or even resistant) to future adoptive placements and, ultimately, less eager to form an attachment to adoptive parents and siblings for fear of losing yet another family.

"When Forever Families Don't Last" concludes with recommendations to reduce the probability of disrupted adoptions at any point in time, including: improved adoptive-parent education about traumatized children, quality mental health services for the children, and effective methods of matching children to families. Support and guidance during and after the adoption can also reduce failed adoptions.

The article includes reflections from children who experienced a failed adoption. One children summarized his experience of a failed adoption: "To be taken away from my adoptive mother felt like a repeat of losing my biological parents again. I internalized this experience and blamed myself for everything. I was angry."

For more information about Children's Rights visit www.childrensrights.org.

Dr. Elizabeth Jacobs has served on the FCRB since 1999 and conducts trainings in the area of attachment and bonding in foster children for CASAs, Family Court Judges, and Multi-disciplinary groups both in and out of Arizona.

Graduation Incentives are Available for Teens in Out-of-Home Care

By **Allison Hurtado**, CASA Marketing & Community Outreach Specialist,
AZ Supreme Court

Graduation is just around the corner and teens who are graduating without a forever family can seek some extra support from the Department of Child Safety's Young Adult Program.

The program provides a few different supports for teens who've been identified as "likely" to reach the age of maturity while in out-of-home care.

"These youth are unable to return home due to ongoing, unresolved safety issues, and efforts to identify and place the youth with permanent families through adoption or permanent guardianship have not been successful," said Beverlee Kroll of DCS. "These youth often have experienced multiple placements while in out-of-home care, and due to these moves have fallen behind in school (through no fault of their own)."

To encourage teens to stay in school and earn a degree, DCS offers a \$100 incentive paid directly to the youth upon completion of a high school diploma or GED. That \$100 is in addition to the \$220 graduation allowance that is available to help with the cost of a cap and gown, announcements or other graduation costs.

"While this incentive in no way replaces the benefits of a permanent, loving family, it is provided to the youth to recognize their hard work and dedication to their education," Kroll said.

Youth are also encouraged to plan ahead for post-secondary education. Cost for college can be dramatically decreased when teens take advantage of the state Education and Training Voucher

and Arizona Tuition Waiver (available for application at www.statevoucher.org) and through application for federal aid through the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid: www.fafsa.ed.gov).

The Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation also has grants to help with apartment set-up. For more information on resources for kids again out of foster care, visit <https://dcs.az.gov/services/teen-resources>.

Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.

~ Dr. Seuss

CCCC, Inc

Cochise County Council for CASA, Inc

is a nonprofit organization that raises funds to the unmet needs of abused neglected and abandoned children in the CASA of Cochise County Program. The primary focus is to ensure the educational progress of CASA children through tutoring and scholarships. In addition the council provides clothing, toys and personal items.

If your CASA child/youth has an unmet need, consider the Cochise County Council for CASA to help!!

Call your CASA Coordinator at 432-7521 OR

Send an email to Adodge@courts.az.gov



The Tombstone Repertory Company
Proudly Presents



Written By Tori Douglas

Directed By Chris Douglas

A DARK COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

AT HISTORIC SCHIEFFELIN HALL 4TH & FREMONT STREETS



Saturday
Evening
shows,
7pm May 7th
and 21st

Sunday
Matinees,
3pm May 8th,
15th, 22nd, and
29th

\$10 Adults \$5 Kids

FOR MORE
INFORMATION

Chris Douglas
520-678-0991

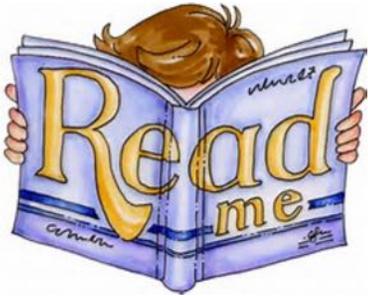
or

Tori Douglas
520-678-1188

From **Kathy Shaughnessy**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer:

This is the flyer of the next play my husband, Michael, and I are in. It's in Tombstone, and it's a silly little spoof on Arsenic and Old Lace, which we both played in a few years ago. This one is entitled "Arsenic and Old Leather". You are invited to come!

MAY 2016						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2 Misty : Court Report due for SN. Brothers & Sisters Day	3 National Teachers Day	4	5 Knowing Who You Are Training (Abby and myself will be attending)	6 Abby & Lissete in training. (most of the day)	7
8 Mother's Day	9	10 Krista : Court Report due for TK.	11 Eat What You Want Day	12 Abby & Lissete in training. (Afternoon)	13	14
15 National Chocolate Chip Day	16	17	18 Lynn V.  Melissa : Court Report due for MC/MC.	19 Sharon B.  Ned : Court Report for D & J.	20 Be a Millionaire Day	21
22 Mary B. 	23 Melissa : Court Report due for HC/RC.	24 Juanita A. 	25	26	27 Sun Screen Day	28
29 Learn About Composting Day	30 Memorial Day <small>(County Offices Closed)</small>	31 World No Tobacco Day				



From the National CASA Facilitator Manual

**National CASA Facilitator Manual
Flex Learning Edition**

Diversity/Disproportionality

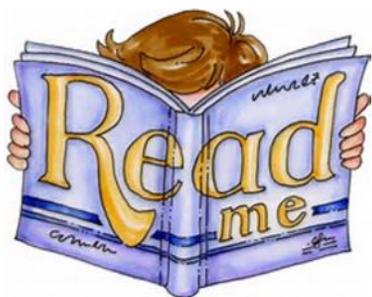
National CASA's Vision

The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association “stands up” for abused and neglected children. Building on our legacy of quality advocacy, we acknowledge that we need to understand, respect, and celebrate diversity including race, gender, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status and the presence of a sensory, mental or physical disability. We also value diversity of viewpoints, life experiences, talents and ideas. A diverse CASA/GAL network helps us to better understand and promote the well-being of the children we serve. Embracing diversity makes us better advocates by providing fresh ideas and perspectives for problem solving in our multicultural world, enabling us to respond to each child's unique needs.

Guiding Principles for Achieving a Diverse CASA/GAL Network

1. Ethnic and cultural background influences an individual's attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors.
2. Each family's characteristics reflect adaptations to its primary culture and the majority culture, the family's unique environment and the composite of the people and needs within it.
3. A child can be best served by a CASA/GAL volunteer who is culturally competent and who has personal experience and work experience in the child's own culture(s).
4. To understand a child, a person should understand cultural differences and the impact they have on family dynamics.
5. No cultural group is homogenous; within every group there is great diversity.
6. Families have similarities yet are all unique.
7. In order to be culturally sensitive to another person or group, it is necessary to evaluate how each person's culture impacts his/her behavior.
8. As a person learns about the characteristic traits of another cultural group, he/she should remember to view each person as an individual.
9. Most people like to feel that they have compassion for others and that there are new things they can learn.

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From the National CASA Facilitator Manual (Continued)

10. Value judgments should not be made about another person's culture.
11. It is in the best interest of children to have volunteers who reflect the characteristics (i.e., ethnicity, national origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability and socioeconomic status) of the population served.

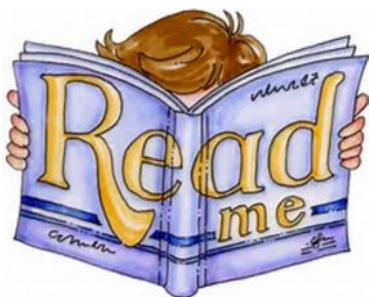
The Cultural Sensitivity Lens

Strengths don't look the same in every family. Family structures, rules, roles, customs, boundaries, communication styles, problem-solving approaches, parenting techniques and values may be based on cultural norms and/or accepted community standards. In the context of the CASA/GAL volunteer role, cultural competence is the ability to work effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds. It entails being aware and respectful of the cultural norms, values, traditions and parenting styles of those with whom you work. Striving to be culturally competent means cultivating an open mind and new skills and meeting people where they are, rather

than making them conform to your standards. Each child and each family is made up of a combination of cultural, familial and personal traits. In working with families, you need to learn about an individual's or family's culture. When in doubt, ask the people you are working with. It might feel awkward at first, but learning how to ask questions respectfully is a vital skill to develop as you grow in cultural competence. Once people understand that you sincerely want to learn and be respectful, they are usually very generous with their help.

It's important to understand that child-rearing practices vary across cultures. For instance, the following mainstream US child-rearing practices may be viewed as harmful to children by people from other countries: isolating children in beds or rooms of their own at night, making children wait for food when they are hungry, requiring children to wear painful braces on their teeth, forcing young children to sit in a classroom all day or allowing infants to "cry it out." Conversely, practices that are culturally acceptable elsewhere may be misunderstood in the United States. One example is the Southeast Asian practice of "coin rubbing," a traditional curing method in which heated metal coins are pressed on a child's body. This practice is believed to reduce fevers, chills and headaches. Because it generally leaves red streaks or bruises, it can easily be misdiagnosed as child abuse by those who don't understand the intention behind this cultural

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From the National CASA Facilitator Manual (Continued)

FROM THE FACILITATOR

practice. Additionally, in the United States the ideal of the nuclear family still dominates. However, in many communities extended family members take on a greater role in child rearing, and family may include members of a faith community or others who are not blood relatives.

People in different cultures and socioeconomic classes may use different skills and resources to deal with stress and problems. Material goods are one kind of resource, but some individuals and cultures prize other resources above material wealth. For example:

- **Mental ability** allows a person to access and use information.
- **Emotional resources** provide support and strength in difficult times.
- **Spiritual resources** give purpose and meaning to people's lives.
- **Good health and physical mobility** allow for self-sufficiency.
- **Cultural heritage** provides context, values and mores for living in the world.
- **Informal support systems** provide a safety net (e.g., money in tight times, care for a sick child, job advice).

- **Healthy relationships** nurture and support.
- **Role models** provide appropriate examples of and practical advice on achieving success.

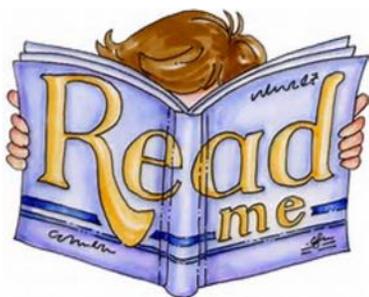
Disproportionality in the Child Welfare System

Disproportionality is the experience of overrepresentation or underrepresentation of various groups in different social, political or economic institutions. For example, women in the United States are overrepresented as single heads of household, and African Americans and Latinos are overrepresented in the US prison population.

- There is no difference between races in the likelihood that a parent will abuse or neglect a child, but there is a great difference between races in the likelihood that a child will be removed from home and placed in foster care. Compared to white children, African American children are four times more likely to be placed in care, American Indian and Native Alaskan children are three times more likely, and Hispanic children are twice as likely.

Casey Family Programs, www.casey.org

Continued on next page~



From the National CASA Facilitator Manual (Continued)

FROM THE
FACE

- Children of color make up almost two-thirds of the 540,000 children in the foster care system, although they constitute just over one-third of the child population in the US.

W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Families for Kids Project,
www.wkkf.org

- The number of white children entering foster care in a given year is greater than the number of African American children. Yet, African American children make up a disproportionate, and increasing, share of those who remain.

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data

- The percentage of Hispanic children in foster care more than doubled from 7% in 1982 to 17% in 2002.

Families for Kids Project and AFCARS data

- Children of color experience a higher number of placements than white children, and they are less likely to be reunified with their birth families.

Casey Family Programs, www.casey.org



***See following page for the PDF Diversity Card.

Continued on next page~

National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association Institutional Bias Checklist for Volunteers

As a CASA or GAL volunteer, ask yourself:

- What assumptions have I made about the cultural identity, genders, and background of this family?
- What is my understanding of this family's unique culture and circumstances?
- How are my recommendations specific to this child and this family?
- What evidence has supported the conclusions I have drawn, and how have I challenged unsupported assumptions?
- Have reasonable efforts (or active efforts in ICWA cases) been made in an individualized way to match the needs of the family?
- Have relatives been fully explored as preferred placement options as long as they can protect the child and support the permanency plan?
- Are there family members and/or other important people who have not been contacted who should be involved in this process?



CASAforChildren.org

- What services are being offered to allow the child to remain at home or reunify the family (as applicable)? Are these services culturally appropriate? How are these services related to the safety threat?
- Are this child and family receiving the same level and tailoring of services as other children and families?

Other things to consider:

- If applicable, has Special Immigration Juvenile Status (SIJS) been filed?
- If applicable, have individualized efforts been made to ensure the needs and safety of LGBTQ youth?
- Have all resources available to the family of the child for whom I am advocating been explored? (Military, federal, tribal, state/local, etc.)
- Are there organizations in the community that might serve as resources for the child for whom I am advocating?
- What active efforts have been made to determine if this child (children) is covered under the Indian Child Welfare Act? Has there been communication with the relevant tribe(s)? If not, has the Bureau of Indian Affairs been notified?

This checklist for volunteers is based on the research and with permission of our partners at the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges
COURTS CATALYZING CHANGE
PRELIMINARY PROTECTIVE HEARING BENCHCARD©
<http://www.ncjfcj.org/our-work/courts-catalyzing-change>

For more information on this resource or for other resources on disproportionality and disparate outcomes please contact staff@CASAforChildren.org



CASA Family Album

Abby's family



Caitlin with big brother Ethan



CASA Volunteers also play Bridge!



Members of Thunder Mountain Bridge Club in Sierra Vista, Mary Blanchard, Margaret Glenn, Jan Dragoo and Mary Aviero won the Prickly Pear Knockout at the Roadrunner Sectional in Chandler, Ariz., this weekend.

