

CASA of Cochise County

News & Views



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Abby Dodge

I hope everyone had a great summer! It's hard to believe it's already September. September is an important month for CASA of Cochise County, as September 25 marks our 27th anniversary. I hope you'll all be able to join us for our annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner on Thursday, September 22 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. This year we will be holding the event at the Sierra Vista Police Department. More information will be coming through email at the beginning of September. However, I wanted to make sure that everyone saves the date now!

Coordinator's Comments

I hope that everyone who has completed training on their CASAaz webmail and dashboard is getting used to these new programs. If you have any issues with either system, please let us know. Lissete and I will be glad to help as much as possible. 65% of you have completed your CASAaz training, which is great! If you weren't able to attend training, please contact me so we can set something up for you. I am available to provide one-on-one training in either Bisbee or Sierra Vista, whichever is more convenient for you. Those of you that are already using CASAaz, remember that effective September 1, all contact log/activity log entries will be input in the CASAaz dashboard. This is a major transition for all of us, but eventually we will all be used to the new systems.

I recently learned of a program that I wanted to share with all of you. It isn't a new program, but I wasn't aware of it until very recently. Just Kids, a nonprofit foundation created and maintained by the San Pedro Kiwanis Club, has a program named Gifts from the Heart. Gifts from the Heart provides clothing for children who

desperately need it. Requests for clothing through this program can be made by speaking with the school nurse where the child attends. Gifts from the Heart has dedicated shoppers who purchase clothing for the child in need, and ensure that the child receives the item. Because children sometimes end up in the system with very few personal belongings, this program is definitely something that could help. I will get more information and get it out to you all, once I have it.

Remember, in order to get credit for reading your monthly newsletters from here on, you must enter it yourself into the CASAaz dashboard. If you have any questions, please contact me. As always, thanks for all that you do!

Advocating for CASA in the Community

By **Mary Jacobs**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

So many people don't understand the impact they can make by being a CASA volunteer simply because they are unaware of the program. I have spoken about CASA to colleagues at the City of Sierra Vista, and recently I invited Abby Dodge to make a presentation to the City's management team about the need, the purpose, and the process of becoming a CASA. Abby spoke to over 30 senior city leaders, providing examples of lives changed. I encouraged my colleagues to consider becoming a CASA, or invite Abby to other groups and clubs of which they may be a part.

As a result of her presentation, the City's Economic Development Manager, Simone McFarland, invited Abby to be a guest on her edition of the Friday Report, a morning talk show segment on AM 1420. Abby brought Ned Letto to also provide his perspective on how he has changed the lives of foster children over the years, and how they have changed his.

As CASAs, we should always be on the lookout for groups that may benefit from a similar presentation by Abby, or perhaps even by ourselves, so that we can see the percentage of foster children represented by a CASA increase over time and help make a greater difference. Don't be shy about asking Abby to make a presentation...she is anxious to help spread the word and recruit new CASA volunteers!



Spreading the word about the CASA program on the Friday Focus Morning Show, KTAN 1420 AM, Sierra Vista, AZ

Abby Dodge, CASA Coordinator; Simone McFarland, host of Friday Focus Morning Show; Ned Letto, CASA Volunteer

Being a CASA is a Vocation

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

On August 24th, there was a commentary published in the Sierra Vista Herald by David Brooks. The commentary is about 'Why America's Leadership Fails.'

There is a portion of this commentary that I find appropriate for those of us who choose to be a CASA. The excerpt follows:

Let's start with a refresher on the difference between a vocation and a career. A career is something you choose; a vocation is something you are called to.

A person choosing a career asks, How can I get the best job or win the most elections? A person summoned by a vocation asks, How can my existing abilities be put in service of the greatest common good.

A career is a job you do as long as the benefits outweigh the costs; a vocation involves falling in love with something, having a conviction about it and making it part of your personal identity.

A vocation involves promises to some ideal, it reveals itself in a sense of enjoyment as you undertake its tasks and it can't be easily quit when setbacks and humiliations occur. As others have noted, it involves a double negative - you can't not do this thing.



Anniversaries

Mary Blanchard

9/13/2000 – 16 years

Mary Jacobs

9/11/2013 – 3 years

**...and a Warm Welcome
to a new CASA Volunteer**



Whitney Simplice

First assigned on 8/8/2016

Case Dismissal Brings Joy to Mother

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

Sometimes it is good to know that our efforts are appreciated. I had a case that took 38 months to close. It was a long haul that involved an ICPC and many players. But, in the end, the young man was successfully reunited with his mother. This is something he really wanted and I was very happy to have had some part in making it happen. This is what it is all about.

When I notified the mother that the case had been dismissed, this is what she posted on Facebook.



IT'S OFFICIAL! We got word today that our case was dismissed.

We are finished with social workers, lawyers, court and waiting! Nicolas is 100% in my FULL custody! I am ecstatic beyond words. Thanks to all who had our backs and helped us through the most difficult time of our lives. A special shout out to a few people: the Morgan family, I love you guys, you've gone above and beyond for "our" boys and for me. To Ned, you've been a huge blessing to my family and have been one of my biggest

advocates, not to mention all you've done for my kiddos. To the social workers who have done their best in helping us along the way. To all of the attorneys involved, To our awesome judges, To both Cochise and Umpqua counties for giving us so many continuances to make this happen. To Alena Sullivan for giving me a job to get the process started. And of course to my family who all stood together with me on this providing emotional support and financial help. And to Travis Wager for being here for us and being so supportive about it. He's such a great stepdad and Nic absolutely loves the guy lol. Thank you all for the prayers and encouragement. We did it!



A note from **Kathy Shaughnessy**
Cochise County CASA Volunteer

My little girl (17 months old) was adopted on Friday by her foster parents. Her Adoption Party was held Sunday, August 28th. A joyous occasion!

Visit to the Arizona Sonora Desert Museum

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

I took two of my girls to visit the Desert Museum. It was a fantastic outing. The girls both want to come back the next time we go somewhere.

When we arrived, the youngest (age 8) wanted to ride in a stroller. My jaw dropped, but I kept my cool and explained that no child older than 3 could ride in a stroller. The child persisted that she was too tired to walk. I told her that she would feel better after lunch, but if she was still too tired, we would go home. She said she would still need a stroller because it was too hot. I countered that only children younger than 3 could use a stroller. We ate lunch and nothing more was said until the girl confided in her sister about an hour later that she really hadn't needed a stroller because they were only for little kids. I was thrilled because she had internalized and accepted that "No Means No!"

The first exciting experience was the snakes. Both girls were fascinated by the rattlesnakes. We counted rattles and made note of markings and looked at every single snake, even the ones that were hidden.

Next came the simulated cave. Both girls were too scared to go in. Finally, I held each girl's hand, and we were able to walk in. It was a bit awkward to move, but we made it to the end. There were beautiful man-made stalactites and stalagmites. There was also a staircase to another small opening. Both girls refused to even try to do it, so I said I was going up. It was dark, and I am 78, but I was determined to climb to the top to encourage the girls to at least consider trying. I climbed up to the top and then inched my way back down, and then the 8-year-old and I climbed up. She loved it, and the older sister was

at least willing to lean into the opening.

A black bear was playing in the water and splashing and throwing her toy around. Strawberry is a three-year-old female, a rescue bear, and a ham who loves to attract a crowd.

The map of directions to the exhibits was a hit because it is blank on the back and divided into sections. Each child is told to find a station with a stamp of a footprint. These stations are located in front of the cage of the animal/bird whose footprints are on the stamp. The child uses the stamp to make a footprint on one of the blanks.

The mineral section was a surprising hit. The girls were especially fascinated by the meteor fragment. Even more surprising was the high interest in all the exhibits.

Their favorite was the stingray exhibit. It was basically a petting zoo, and the girls actually fed stingrays. They also could touch them. The older girl was a star at this exhibit. She was a natural at feeding and touching.

When we left, the girls were exhausted and happy. As usual, I got us lost on the way back. I read the direction signs when we left, and I read "Tucson" instead of "Old Tucson." I turned the wrong way and drove about 10 miles before I realized I should have turned left instead of right. I was amazed to see a sign informing me that we were heading back to the freeway. I had done a 180-degree loop from the freeway to the freeway. When we made it home, we did several high fives and told each other what a good time we had had. And we did. It was a great day!

CASAaz – A Challenge and A Joy

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

It was no surprise to me when I had to take the training on **CASAaz** twice to be able to begin to use it. After all, I was the guinea pig for the Secure Upload, and when I learned how to do that program (more or less...sometimes), the higher-ups decided anyone could make it work. I am now confident that our new program will work, and I am prepared to learn the basics plus a few bells and whistles.

I have already sent 20 e-mails, I have done most of my contact logs, and I have started my court report. Progress on that stopped immediately when I realized it was not due until October. And I was greatly relieved that I am allowed 7,000+ characters for each section. I tend to write detailed reports, and they tend to be lengthy. I want the judge to have all the information that drives the case, and I know that the judge can read my opinions and recommendations and skip the sections where she does not have the need for detailed information.

I am making a list of things I am still unsure of. Bud Dragoo volunteered to help me. I discovered I cannot set up folders, and I haven't a clue how to print the entire contact log. I am very shaky on attachments. Actually, I can't do them yet, but I am basically up and going.

Lisette and Abby spent countless hours mastering the intricate details of the new program and even more hours teaching us how to learn to use the program. I want you both to know that all of us are grateful for all you have done to help us get started. And it is very comforting to know that you are only an e-mail/phone call away when we get stuck and need to ask questions.

Bless you both. **Go, CASAs, Go!**

Volunteer Dashboard

The screenshot shows the Volunteer Dashboard interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Help', 'My Dashboard', and 'Logout'. Below that is a banner with the CASA logo and three photos of children. The main content area is titled 'Volunteer Dashboard' and includes a 'Welcome' message, a 'Message Center' with '0 New Alerts' and '0 New Messages', and a 'Cases' section stating 'You do not have any assigned cases.' There are three main data tables: 'Events' (empty), 'Training Log' (with one entry for 08/23/16 CASA Az for 2.00 hours and a yearly total of 2.00), and 'Court Reports' (empty). The footer contains the text: 'CASA of Arizona is a program of the Dependent Children's Services Division of the Arizona Superior Court Administrative Office of the Courts.'

Webmail

The screenshot shows the Roundcube Webmail interface. The top bar includes the Roundcube logo, a search bar, and user information like '@CASAZ.GOV' and 'LOGOUT'. A sidebar on the left lists folders: 'Inbox', 'Drafts', 'Sent', 'Junk', 'Trash', 'CASA Volunteers', and 'Spam'. The main pane shows an email header with 'Subject', 'From', and 'Date' fields. The email body is empty. At the bottom, there are controls for 'Select', 'Threads', and 'Mailbox is empty'.

Dedication

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

I was walking in the mall when I happened to notice a group of special needs people who were having an outing. What caught my attention was a young man and a female staff member. The young man had stopped to look at the poster of Adam Levine where he is sponsoring an ad. The staff member stopped and waited. When the young man continued to be fascinated by the poster, she introduced him to Adam. I doubt if the young man is a fan of The Voice, but he was delighted to be introduced. It took him several tries to get the name right, but the staff person kept prompting him until he could say it. He was thrilled.

Adam, you have a new fan.

Seeing this made my day. But there was more. About 15 minutes later, the whole group was seated in the large seating area near Jo-Ann's. A male staff person was leading a storytelling session. As I walked by, he was gesturing dramatically and using a theatrical voice. One fellow who had been asleep the whole time, woke up and paid attention. Soon the story became a comedy, and every single person in the group was laughing. Several other staff people chimed in. They focused on pure comedy, and everyone laughed and laughed. The original storyteller took over and brought the session to a conclusion.

I had been hanging out during all this, and I resumed my walk with that special feeling I get when life is good and people are wonderful. Bless the staff of Horizon Human Services. They made the trip to the mall a memorable adventure for the people entrusted to their care.

CCCC, Inc

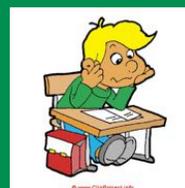
Cochise County Council for CASA, Inc

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



When a Runaway Comes Back

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

I came home from an all-day bridge game to discover an urgent message on my phone. I called to find out what was going on, and I found out that my runaway had returned. I called Abby immediately, left a message and headed out.

I arrived and was delighted to find my young lady none-the-worse for wear. She and her sister (a former CASA kid) had been calling everyone they could think of to report that the girl had returned. I decided that it couldn't hurt if I also called everyone connected with the case (the DCA case manager, the DCS supervisor, and the Hotline at 1-888-767-2445). I left messages that my girl had come back and had turned herself in.

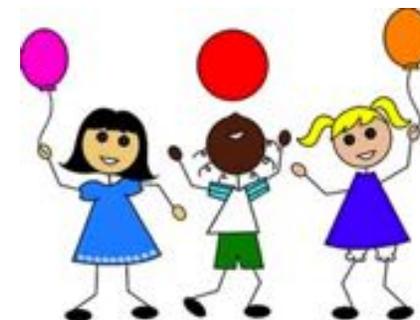
I finally called for advice from the sister's former lawyer. She talked to all of us, and we did exactly what she told us to do.

1. We had already left messages with everyone stating the girl had voluntarily come home and was with her sister. The lawyer confirmed that leaving messages for DCS and attempting to call the hotline and informing the CASA were appropriate actions.
2. The girl was to stay in the apartment. She should not be out on the street since there was a pick up order for her.
3. The police were not to be called. There was no crime in progress, and if the police came, they would have to take her to the detention center.
4. It was clear that the girl was not in need of any medical attention, etc.

5. The sister was advised to call DCS as soon as possible the next day. She did this.

I talked to Abby when I returned home, and nothing more needed to be done until DCS was contacted. The girl is now placed with her sister, has a job and is going to school. A happy ending to four months of worry!!!

Kudos



Ned Letto, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

FCRB, 7/13/2016

The Board recognizes the Court Appointed Special Advocate for his time and effort invested in working with M. and supporting his best interest.

Morrisa Berkley, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

MEO, 8/11/2016, Post Severence Review Hearing

The court thanked the paternal grandmother and the CASA representation for their dedication.

CASA of the Month!

Ned Letto

It is my pleasure to announce that the CASA of the Month for August 2016 is Ned Letto!

Ned has been with our program for 9 years and has been extremely active during his tenure. He has been such a help to the children he is assigned as well as to the CASA Program. I know that if I ever need help with a project, I can count on Ned. On top of balancing his assigned cases, Ned has also served as a mentor for new volunteers and he serves on the Cochise County Council for CASA board. Several months ago, when Ned found out one of his mentees was moving out-of-state, he even volunteered to take on that case so the child could continue to have a CASA.

Although Ned is always busy with his cases and his other volunteer activities, he still finds the time to help out the CASA program if we need it. Just this morning, Ned appeared with me on the Friday Focus Morning Show on 1420 AM-KTAN radio, where he did a wonderful job describing our program, why he does what he does, and what he has gotten from the program.

Thanks, Ned, for everything that you do!

August 2016



Family First Prevention Services Act

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

A bill that would allow states more flexibility to provide preventative services to families in need recently cleared its first legislative hurdle but the bill's fate is still unknown until Congress returns to Washington in September.

The Family First Prevention Services Act (HR 5456, S 3065) would allow states to use federal funding to pay for services like mental health, substance abuse and parenting programming, whereas those funds can currently only be used to reimburse states for foster care. It also sets model licensing standards for foster homes and incentivizes states that lower the amount of kids in group homes.

The bill, which has been in the works for several years, passed the House in June but was not taken up by the Senate before the summer recess. The senate will only have a few days to review the bill when they return in September.

The law has been supported by child welfare groups who say the funding for preventative services is much needed. The services outlined in the bill would go to families in imminent risk and supporters are hopeful it would help to reduce the overall number of kids in care. The bill would

also allow states to provide assistance to children who are transitioning out of the foster care system up to the age of 23 and education vouchers and Medicaid coverage up to age 26.

Those against the measure say it doesn't adequately address the need and takes funds away from group homes to pay for the services. Some groups have voiced concerns that though the goal is to decrease the amount of kids in group home settings, it may result in many needed and highly-qualified group homes being forced to close.

To follow the bill's progress visit <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5456>.

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.

~ James Baldwin

DCS Continues Building Resilient Families Program

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

The number of children in state custody has increased dramatically since 2010, but the Department of Child Safety is working on building programs that will keep more families together and keep more children out of the foster care system. Arizona's Building Resilient Families (BRF) Program is one example and is celebrating its one-year anniversary in October.

The program is voluntary for families where the children were determined to be safe by DCS and the family presents low levels of risk, and where further DCS intervention was not needed. The goal of the program is that families will gain the support and skills they need to keep their children safe and avoid receiving future reports to DCS. The family may receive this support for up to four months.

A BRF-contracted provider contacts the family within two business days of receiving the referral and completes a needs assessment with them individually in their home to identify the family's strengths as well as their needs and corresponding resources that can help. Possible services available include food and clothing, financial resources, educational skills or training, housing and shelter resources, legal assistance, transportation, help handling family stress,

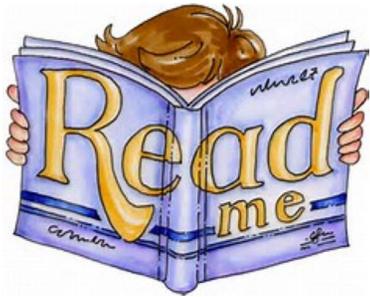
and parenting skills training. Families receive one-on-one sessions to address the needs in the home and build on their strengths.

"For the past five years, services in urban areas were reserved for only those with the most intensive needs, leaving less serious situations to fester and escalate without any intervention," said DCS Director Greg McKay when the program was first launched. "This had a direct impact on the increase of children removed from their homes. Now we are counting on our providers to deliver expedient, appropriate service to keep children in their own homes with their own families."

*The oak fought the wind and was broken,
the willow bent when it must and survived.*

~ Robert Jordan

September 2016						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2 International Bacon Day	3
4 Newspaper Carrier Day	5 Labor Day County Offices Closed	6 Read a Book Day	7 National Salami Day	8 Kathy: Court Report due for BG.	9	10
11	12	13 Fortune Cookie Day	14	15 Make a Hat Day	16 Dia de la Independencia (Mexico)	17
18	19 Kathy S. 	20	21 National Punch Day	22 Annual CASA Recognition! Please check your e-mail for more info and to RSVP!	23 Native American Day	24
25	26 Mary J. 	27	28 National Good Neighbor Day	29	30	



Poly-victimization Among Children Requiring Therapy: Treating the Whole Child

By **Krista Ochs**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer, Guest Contributor

FROM THE ARCHIVES

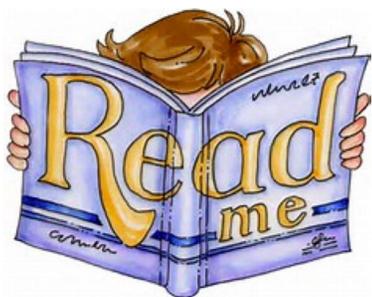
As some of you may know, my CASA child was abducted one year ago this week by a pedophile who worked at one of our services providers. Although the child was located by law enforcement and recovered the next day, the impact of the abduction greatly impacted not only the life and progress of the child, who was already in a therapeutic foster home, but it also reverberated across all stakeholders in the team and resonates even now within his case plan. It made the team “hyper-vigilant” in addressing his recovery from this event, to the exclusion of some of the behaviors and treatments we had in place which had caused him to go into therapeutic foster care. This is the impact of poly-victimization, meaning that the child had had more than one situation in which they were victimized by physical or sexual abuse. Poly-victimization strategies are often not realized by advocates, therapists, caregivers or services providers. Instead, we tend to focus on the most recent trauma and this “tunnel vision” can be detrimental to the care of the child.

The Crimes Against Children Research Center of the University of New Hampshire has undertaken significant

research (via a grant from the National Advocacy Center and Department of Justice) into the challenges of advocacy for children in this situation. Here are some facts regarding poly-victimization:

- More than 60% of children in the United States have experienced numerous, different types of victimization such as sexual abuse, physical abuse, bullying, witnessing family violence and exposure to community violence. Identification of these children, known as poly-victims, is a significant challenge.
- Large numbers of children (30%) have had contact with some form of therapist or counselor in the past year regarding a mental health problem or adversity, including school counselors, psychologists, social workers, pastoral counselors, and health care professionals. A starting point for developing therapy plans that are synergistic would be to increase awareness and recognition of poly-victimization with professionals having contact with children in a therapeutic or counseling setting.

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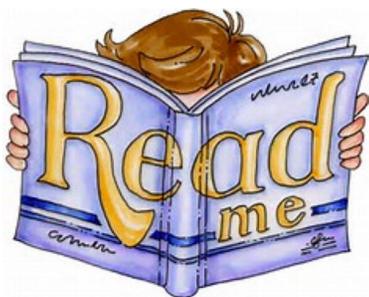
Poly-victimization Among Children Requiring Therapy (Continued)

FROM THE ARCHIVES

- Fully 1 in 4 children (26%) in therapy are poly-victims with more than 13 different types of victimization experienced over their lifetime.
- Poly-victimization is 3 times more common in children in therapy than children not in therapy.
- Therapists typically know only about one (or none) incidents though 89% of children who have seen a therapist have experienced two or more forms of victimization.
- A majority of children who have seen a therapist have experienced five or more types of victimizations.
- Children in therapy are more likely to have experienced serious violence with their rates of victimization involving a weapon or injury twice as high as for youth with no therapist contact.
- Children in therapy are twice as likely to have experienced sexual violence (22% vs. 9%).

In my current case, the child was placed into therapeutic foster care to help manage behaviors resulting from PTSD/ADHD and other issues – occurring because of a series of previous abuses – both physical and likely sexual – which took place in multiple locations and from different adults, to include family members. He had been in this placement approximately six months when the pedophile, who was part of our team and therefore had access to information on the child, began “grooming” him for exploitation. Once the abduction occurred, the entire treatment plan was turned on its head and the emphasis of the case plan focused for several months on dealing with the trauma of the abduction and other subsequent events, to include the cessation of plans to adopt him by his then foster-parents. Even as experienced as our team is, we fell into exactly what this research is trying to illuminate: although the child needed therapy to deal with the abduction last summer, he still ALSO needed treatment for the other abuses he had experienced prior to this series of events that were not in this same category of victimization. His therapy needed a more

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Poly-victimization Among Children Requiring Therapy (Continued)

FROM THE MORNINGS

holistic approach to address all of his needs. By focusing on the one event, we forfeited progress in other areas.

According to the UNH research, the majority of children (9 out of 10) who have seen a therapist in the past year have experienced two or more forms of victimization and more than half have sustained more than 5 types. Just as happened in my case, very often advocates, service providers and therapists focus on only one type of victimization, such as sexual abuse, without attention to other types of violence. The failure to identify the contexts of events and victimization may place children at greater risks. As a CASA, I now understand the concept of poly-victimization better and have integrated addressing it within the team supporting the child, so that he receives services and treatment that can help him deal with several forms of victimization, not just the most recent or most public one.

I sincerely hope that this short article is compelling for our CASA family. For further information, you can view the research and some webinar presentations on it at The

National Children's Advocacy Center at <http://calio.org/resources/poly-victimization>.

In conclusion, I just want to share that although it took a long time, the child has demonstrated that beautiful resiliency that we all know in children when they amaze us by bouncing back – often more than once. We transitioned him from therapeutic foster care in May and he is now with a new foster home and doing very well. We have hopes for permanency and are working hard to make that happen. The perpetrator of last year's crime was indicted and took a plea bargain; he will be sentenced soon and will serve 17 years in prison, registration as a sex offender, and probation for the rest of his life upon release.

Grammy Deb Scott Introduces Nolan to a Wide World of Experiences and Color

