

# CASA of Cochise County

## News & Views



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## Articles

[www.casaofarizona.com](http://www.casaofarizona.com)

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Lissete Borbon  
Interim Commentator

## Hola voluntarios!

During Abby's leave, I'll try to keep the flame burning until she returns, so I'm submitting my comments until then! I only have 3 things I want to share with you all.

First, we had the Dependency Attorney Training January 20th. The last part of the training, a panel who consisted of Judges, Attorneys and the AAG's office answered questions previously submitted by the audience. When the questions surrounding the CASA program came up, Judge Bannon mentioned that there was information in the

# Coordinator's Comments

court report that she shouldn't be looking at. I asked Judge Bannon for clarification on this because the court report format that we use comes directly from the State. When I submitted the question through Pamela Housh for Judge Bannon, I received a quick response stating that during the presentation by Professor Bennet, he referred to information on the CASA report that was either inflammatory, biased or prejudicial. Judge Bannon stated she cannot recall reading a report that contained any inflammatory, biased or prejudicial information. Judge Bannon reassured in her response that she does read all the CASA reports and that she greatly appreciates their level of detail. Judge Bannon reads the reports for information that is specific to the issues of the dependency action.

The second question for the panel was about what happens with the case file and anything that a volunteer returns when they get rescinded from a case. When a CASA is removed from a case, they will turn in all their materials and we shred everything. We keep anything that you submit to us like contact logs, court reports or monthly reports. Those are kept in your file. When a volunteer exits the program, we keep your personnel file for 5 years. This is

according to the destruction of records schedule.

Last, I wanted to pass along that for the last quarter of 2015, every single contact log was received! That's the second time. **Go us!** All of you contribute so much already, we can't thank you enough for your dedication and hard work! For our newer volunteers, if you need help submitting your logs, please contact me. You have two different formats that you can use. I also wanted to mention that we still have some contact log journals available for you. The ones we have are from previous years but they're new and the log pages are blank. Please let me know if you would like to use this instead of the electronic copy.

**Happy February, Everyone!**



## A Great Beginning for Two Sweet Siblings

By *Susan Struck, Cochise County CASA Volunteer*

Policies and regulations concerning Dependency cases need to be foremost in our planning for the best outcomes with our kids as their advocates. Policies help protect the children, as well as give all parties a map to follow for resolution of dependency issues in favor of our kids...most of the time, that is. But sometimes, thinking outside the policy box is imperative for best results.

When Joan Hansen asked me to take a case as Guardian Ad Litem of a pair of siblings whose attorney absconded to Phoenix for true love two and a half years ago, I happily agreed.

The brother had been in foster care for about a year, when his newborn sister joined him in April 2013. I came on the scene when sister was three months old and brother was one and a half. I participated in two hearings as GAL for the children before parental rights were terminated because of chronic drug use, leaving us free to find an adoptive home for the kids.

Easier said than done, as the brother was exhibiting both behavioral and developmental problems with potential medical problems. His sister had increasing delays as she grew. Blake Foundation went to the home twice a week with little progress. All medical testing was negative.

DCS, CIA and I worked for months trying to find a family that would adopt these two. All visits ended negatively. Potential parents did not want the burden of these two possibly very compromised toddlers. It is policy to keep siblings together in adoption, but it appeared to be a case of them remaining in foster care together because of this.

At the next review hearing, after failing to find a forever home for these two toddlers, I gave the judge facts on the difficulties with

finding a permanent home for these kids, and discussed how their developmental issues would probably increase if they remained in their foster home. I proposed to the judge that we break policy, and try finding separate adoptive homes, and work on a future of continued sibling contact. With no objections from the State's attorney or DCS, the judge agreed to this idea, and we went to work.

Within three months, both toddlers were in the custody of their future families. Both thrived on the love and attention they received. Both adoptive families were perfect for these children. They started catching up on all development areas, and all feared medical issues disappeared, as did emotional issues of the brother.

It was a joyful time for me, as GAL, in November and December, when both kids were formally adopted, with both families supporting each other. It was like a party at the courthouse both days. It proves thinking outside the policy box can be the right thing to do. That is important for us all to remember as we strive to protect the children we advocate for.



# Attending School Meetings for Your CASA Kid

by Bud & Jan Drago, Cochise County CASA Volunteers

CASAs who have not been inside a school since they were students might be fearful of the first meeting they attend when representing their child. Many CASAs have children of their own, and some have been teachers before retiring, but even these veterans might be apprehensive. Here are several tips to put your mind at ease before that first experience.

1. **Wear your CASA badge** and bring your court order, if the school does not already have it on file. The badge may be necessary if you enter a closed campus.
2. **Be prepared**
  - Before the meeting speak with the foster parent/caregiver for up-to-date information on your child's home life. Check in with the DCS and behavioral health case managers for any updates they may have. If the foster parent and/or case managers plan to attend the school meeting, they will provide updates themselves.
  - Get a copy of the student's progress on-line. In the Sierra Vista School District it is **Parent Vue**, while Tucson has **TUSDStats**. Teachers input data virtually daily for parents (and CASAs) to monitor student progress. You will need a password from the school administration.
  - Bring a list of questions. You will want to report to the court about academics, behavior, attendance, and social interactions.
  - Although you are primarily at the school to gather information for the court, you may find it helpful to "teach" the school staff about your child's background, so they are more empathetic and in turn better able to better teach.
  - A conference call may be needed to allow some members of the child's team to participate in the meeting. Your cell phone

with the speakerphone may be an asset to use if the school setting does not have that capability.

### 3. Relax

- Small talk before getting down to business is okay.
- Don't be intimidated by school professionals. In the end, all want what is best for the child.
- Although they deal with large numbers of students during a school day, you can make your child stand out.

### 4. Take detailed notes.

- Ask for explanations of acronyms you don't understand.
- Ask for names, including correct spelling of interested parties.
- Your notes will be essential for reference when writing your court report.



# Hobbies

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

In addition to all the other things that go on in their lives, our CASAs have hobbies. R&R is an important part of everyone's overall sense of well-being, and we are hoping you will share the "hobby" that calls to you. Either write up your hobby or contact Mary Blanchard to help you share your special interest with the other CASAs. LuRue and I first got the idea to spotlight hobbies at our January support group meeting when Deb Scott showed us her quilting studio and some of her work.



Quilting has called to women since before medieval times (when it was a bit different and was called tapestry). Deb shared with us her love of quilting. She learned to sew in the 8th grade and took her first quilting lesson in 1994 at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas. Deb has upgraded



her skills over the years and has won awards. She has taught 300 women to quilt. Only one person failed to complete the first quilting project, and our Deb helped out and finished it for her. She has two special beginning quilt projects. One is designed to display pins and awards on the quilt, and the other is designed as a stand-alone wall hanging.



Stained glass quilting



Deb is a member and president-elect of the Hummingbird Stitchers Quilt Guild in Sierra Vista which has 200 members. Deb has won ribbons in 4 states, including the Arizona Quilters Hall of Fame Award.

Deb is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Arizona Quilters Hall of Fame.

## The Rest of the Story

By **LuRue Troyer**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

As Deb Scott moved from one area to another, showing Mary and me the tools of her quilting trade, the mood suddenly changed. It was clear that the story of one quilt was special.

Deb and fellow Army Wife, Cyndi Ward, volunteered to make the 2009 AZ State Quilt for the National Federation of Republican Women's Quilts of Valor program. That year, all quilts were to be presented to Korean War veterans across the country.

Deb and Cyndi designed and created a remarkable piece, each element with special meaning.



Then, in true Paul Harvey fashion, Deb related "The Rest of the Story". The Korean War Veteran from Arizona who received Deb and Cyndi's quilt turned out to be Deb's father, Michael Joseph Yox, Sr!

His incredible story is written up with historical photos and news clippings, detailing his bravery in helping to rescue the pilot of a plane landing on an aircraft carrier with an unexploded bomb. Airman Joe Yox stood tall while another firefighter scrambled to his shoulders to rescue the pilot. In the meantime, the bomb had rolled off and exploded, killing two, injuring 15, and blowing off the left wing of the plane. This event took place March 5, 1953 when the fighter plane was returning from a mission over North Korea.



## ARIZONA VALOR

The Arizona State Quilt of the  
2009 Quilts for Valor Program

Presented to  
Korean War Veteran

**Michael Joseph Yox, Sr**



Brother John Yox, Joe Yox, Deb Yox Scott, & former AZ State Senator Tim Bee

Mary and I were riveted to Deb's story, feeling chills, while Deb reached for a tissue. That the quilt had completed a circle was true poetry!

On landing, the bomb rolled off and exploded on the wooden elevator deck, killing two crewmen and injuring 15 others. The two firefighters in "hotsuits" are seen running to rescue the pilot.

# Block Blotto Quilt Project

By **Deb Scott**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Blotto is a Block Lottery in quilt guilds. Members are given instructions on a block to make. Every block that is turned in gets a chance to "win" the Blotto.



Here is the planned setting of the 12 blocks I won in a 2014 Valentine Block Blotto.



Here's a completed Storybook Blotto quilt from 1997. I won enough blocks to make 2 baby quilts. This one belongs to our daughter, Sandy, who is expecting our first grandbaby in May.

## Calling the Crisis Hotline

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

It has been several years since I called the Hotline. Back in the good ol' days, I used a trusty land line and was easily connected. On one of my current cases when I received a call telling me that one of my CASA families was involved in a domestic disturbance, I first tried to verify if this information was true, so I called all the cell phone numbers for various members of the family, and no one answered. I called back the informant and received no answer there, so I called the Child Abuse Hotline.

When I was making the call, I was at my ex's house baking pies for the family Thanksgiving dinner. He has a cell phone, and I have a cell phone. My first obstacle was not knowing the Hotline number. My ex finally located a phone book and we found the number. I called it and got the automated system. I was asked to press a number to take me to the person on duty. *Oops!* I did not see any number and had never done this on my cell phone. Finally my ex and I figured out how to bring up the number using the number pad, and I reached the person on duty.

On the positive side, I knew everything about my case, and I told the person everything I knew. She was going to contact the after-hours DCS person and have her call me. I told her I was afraid I would miss the call because I use my cell phone only for emergencies and might not be able to answer it in time.

I called Abby at home (emergencies only) and explained the situation to her. I told her I was very worried and asked if I should call 911. She said it would be appropriate to call if I was concerned and ask the police to make a welfare check (I knew the address).

Before I called the police, I called back the informant. She picked up and said she was at the house and that the issue had been resolved. I also spoke to every member of the household, including my CASA kid, and they all confirmed that there was no longer any problem.

I called the Hotline back and identified myself to the person on duty, told him that I had called earlier, and that the problem had been resolved. I gave all the information that I had given the first worker, and he said he would call the DCS after hours case worker.

I called my CASA family and informant and told them that I had made a second report to the Hotline and that I had told the Hotline everything was okay.

I e-mailed the DCS case manager and gave a detailed report. A later investigation concluded that the issue had been successfully resolved.

The next day I worked for 45 minutes practicing on my phone. I now can use the number pad (really quite useful) to punch in the number for the various services. The Hotline number is written in huge red font and is forever visible in my purse. I can also answer my cell phone, and I carry it where I can easily reach it.

This crisis was minor, and I managed to bumble through it, but I shudder to think that I might not have been able to respond properly in a red flag emergency. I now realize that I responded appropriately in this situation, but I have formulated an action plan for future emergencies.

1. The Hotline is not local, and response time is not immediate. I may need further assistance.

**Continued on next page~**

## Calling the Crisis Hotline (Continued)

2. If I have reason to believe the situation is dangerous, I will call 911 immediately. If I am concerned but do not believe anyone is in danger, I will ask the police to do a welfare check.
3. I will have the names of my child/children and any other names of people living in the house. I will have the address available. I will get all the possible information about what is going on when I get the call that there is an emergency, or if I find out there is a possible emergency.
4. When I have done all the above, I will let Abby know. If I don't know what to do, I will call Abby.
5. I will inform the case manager.
6. I will follow up and make sure everything is resolved. My family was horrified that I called the Hotline, and I told them that I am required to call if there is a reportable issue.

All of us would prefer not to deal with emergency situations, but when an emergency occurs, we need to be prepared. I have told you what my action plan is. If anyone has any other ideas, please share them. Knowledge is indeed power, and thinking ahead and knowing what to do will make it much easier to handle a crisis.

## On Holiday with Bud & Jan Dragoo



The Whole Gang!

We spent the week between Christmas and New Year at the Camp Pendleton San Onofre Beach. We rented three cabins for each of our three kids and their families. Two of the families came from California and the other flew in from Colorado. Jan and I stayed in our RV. We had 19 total people which includes our eleven grandchildren. One of the highlights of the time there was a whiffle-ball game with participants ranging from age 4 to 69. The group photo was taken just before we went our separate ways.

## Some Legal Updates

By **Deb Scott**, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Here are some quick legal updates from CASA training events this week:

**Under ESSA:** (*Every Student Succeeds Act. This is the newest name of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) which was reauthorized in December 2015; it used to be No Child Left Behind*)

1. Foster kids must now be identified by schools and are now a required Disaggregate Group for reporting.

The current 5 groups we must report are:

1. Gender
2. Ethnicity
3. Special Education Status
4. ESL Status(English as a Second Language)
5. Economic Disadvantage Status

- Most Current data systems do not identify or have a field to use to identify foster kids.
- Schools may or may not know who is currently in foster care.
- Capturing the initial count of foster kids will require a coordinated effort between DCS and school districts.

2. Every school district must appoint a Foster Youth contact, who *cannot* be the same person as their McKinney-Vento contact, responsible for the homeless program. This is another unfunded mandate under federal law.

**Under IDEA:** (*Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*)

3. The "parent" signing an IEP *cannot* be the DCS Case Manager. The child's "Educational Rights Holder" specifically cannot be the State if the child is a ward of the State. An IEP signed by a DCS worker is not a legal document.

The legal order of the Educational Rights Holder is:

1. Bio-parent
2. Legal Guardian, but **not** the State, if a ward of the State
3. Foster Parent
4. Surrogate appointed by the Court. For our purposes, the Surrogate could be an Educational Champion for the child, such as a CASA

Link with the laymen's definition of a parent in IDEA:

<http://www.specialeducationadvisor.com/what-is-a-parent-under-idea/>

To learn more about FosterEd, please go to [www.foster-ed.org](http://www.foster-ed.org)

## A Success Story

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

I had lunch today with one of my aged-out CASA kids. He is now 23, and I have been part of his life since he was in 6th grade. He is now living on his own and is very happy. He has a Section 8 apartment. He has furnished it and has a pretty fancy computer and video/TV system. He has a job that pays his bills. His current plan is to get a second job. He is also keeping his eye out for a better job. He has contacts and friends and is close to his family in Arizona.

Today he showed me his latest achievement. He now is the proud owner of a car. Wheels!!!! Every young man's dream!! Before he got the car, he walked everywhere. Now he can drive! We discussed his car and cars in general for quite a while. He knows where to go for tires, who gives the cheapest lube job, how to revive the finish on the paint, and what to do and where to go if something goes wrong.

He has navigated Obamacare and now has medical and vision insurance. He still has to get dental insurance.

He is still connected to some of his teachers and some of his classmates. He told me about Facebook, and he didn't laugh when I told him I have never connected that way.

He gave me some advice about finding out things on the Internet, like if our restaurant serves lunch.

This young man is a true success story. He is making his way in the world, he is happy, he has plans, he is connected to friends and family, and he has learned to deal with many of the issues that required extensive counseling when he was younger. He has resilience, and he is now able to appreciate the lessons he learned in foster care. We had an extensive conversation about the foster mother who had the most influence on him and how she influenced him. We also talked about the influence of his favorite teacher.

Some of my CASA kids have college degrees, and some have gone to trade school, but none of them is happier than this young man. I don't know if he will every want to go back to school or get advanced training, but I do know that in the year since he became completely independent, he has not complained one time. He is proud of who he is and what he is doing. He is a happy young man.



# CASA of the Month!

## January 2016

### Zanetta Boughan

Zanetta has been with our program for 13 years. She was inactive for a couple years due to personal reasons, but she became active again in August of 2015. Since then, she has voluntarily taken on an additional case that had a request for a CASA. These cases had her in Bisbee for court several times throughout December – including twice during the last week of December alone. This is an amazing sacrifice, and I realize she isn't the only one who makes that sacrifice from time to time, so thank you to all of you!

Zanetta has many years of experience and knowledge to contribute to our program, especially dealing with children under the age of 3. I urge you all to get to know her if you don't already. She also has two adorable girls and I'm sure she'd love to tell you all about their story!

Another thing that I wanted to recognize about Zanetta is the encouragement and support that her husband has provided her throughout her CASA experience. The two court hearings I mentioned during the last week of December occurred over winter break for the children. Her husband, Robert, took that time off of work without complaining to stay home with the girls, even though he is self-employed and doesn't receive any

compensation for missed work. Zanetta also serves on the Cochise County Council for CASA board, leaving Robert to get the children to school when she is attending those meetings once a month. According to Zanetta, "Robert is a phenomenal husband, father, and community asset!" So, I wanted to ensure to recognize her husband as well for his support.

Thank you, Zanetta, and Robert for your continued support for the dependent children of Cochise County!



# CASAs of the Month!

## February 2016

### Bud & Jan Dragoo

This month, Mary proposed the nomination and we couldn't agree more! Mary is a CoCASA on Bud and Jan's case. This is the wonderful nomination she submitted to us:

*I am not active on their case since they are in town. But I have observed their wonderful work with SB.*

*Their special contribution to this case is staying on top of what needs to be done. In school, Bud checks grades several times a week. He is in constant communication with the school and the group home. If it weren't for his attention to detail and insistence that things get done, this case would be drifting along. The boy would be failing all his classes. If it*



*weren't for Jan, the boy's IEP meeting would never be scheduled. Counseling would be a shambles. They are vigilant about monitoring medications. This boy's meds need constant adjustment. They make sure his med reviews are with a live, qualified person. They check all the reports and alert the team to any possible medication issues.*

*They never miss a CFT, their court reports are outstanding, and their ability to work well with our team is awesome.*

*Their contact logs are always on time. Their training is up-to-date. They are dedicated, caring, well-trained CASAs.*

As Mary said, they are always on top of their case. Thank you, Bud and Jan, for your hard work and the great dedication and support you both have provided to the young man you advocate for!

# CCCC, Inc

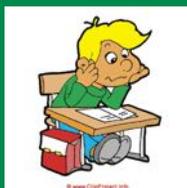
## Cochise County Council for CASA, Inc

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](mailto:Adodge@courts.az.gov)**



## CASAs to the Rescue

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

At the Attorney Dependency Training on January 20<sup>th</sup>, one of the concerns was that lawyers don't attend CFT meetings. I know a few who do, and their input is valuable. That being said, many of the lawyers do not attend CFTs. The CFTs are the planning and information center for the case. This was not always the situation, but CFTs have evolved and improved and are now very, very important and useful meetings. In the good ol' days, I didn't worry if I had to miss a CFT because not a whole lot happened. That is not true anymore, and I will definitely cancel bridge if there is a conflict. If I cancel bridge, that is my gold standard for a meeting that is very important and one that I absolutely need to attend.

I agree it would be very beneficial if all the lawyers attended the CFTs, but there are ways they can know what is going on. The behavioral case manager can send copies of the meeting, and the CASA can take notes and send them to the lawyers. I always do this for the child's lawyer and for anyone who is a member of the team. Once in a while someone will email a correction to my notes which is always useful. My notes are my record of what happened and providing a copy of the notes to the lawyer will ensure that the lawyer is on board as well.

When we get a case, we become members of a team, and the lawyer is a very important member of the team. You can help the lawyer be a fully participating member of that team if you take a moment to share what happened at the CFT.

## Support Group Meeting

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

Our last support group meeting was primarily a problem-solving meeting. We took turns telling about our current problems, and then the group brainstormed possible solutions. There were 8 CASAs present: Mary Kay Holcomb, LuRue Troyer, Lisette Borbon, Ned Letto and I are seasoned veterans. Deb Scott, Chris Hall, and Kathy Shaughnessy are more recent appointees.

It was interesting to note that everyone had a problem or concern to share, and everyone else was experienced enough to contribute suggestions to solve the problem. Those of us who have teenagers had more problems with teenage behavior than did CASAs with other age groups. Because teens must take responsibility for their own negative behavior, sometimes all the group could do would be to listen and show our support.

Everyone was able to contribute when the problem was with the placement and/or dealing with parents and foster parents. We shared the sense of loss when one CASA was facing the prospect of her CASA kid having to move out-of-state. Ned reported a positive outcome when his young man moved to be with relatives in another state.

Overall our group reported success in working as a member of a team. The meeting was supposed to be over at noon. Our last-minute fill-in hostess, Deb Scott, finally had to let us know at 12:15 that she and her husband had to be somewhere else. Sorry, Deb, the time passed so quickly we couldn't believe the meeting was actually supposed to be over!



**Second Thursday of the Month**

**10:00am-12:00 noon**

Home of Lynn Vanderdasson

5776 E. Perry Lane  
Hereford, AZ 85615

Come join  
us on  
February  
11th!

**Evening Support Group being formed**

**First meeting Wed, Feb 3rd, 7:00pm**  
**Home of LuRue Troyer**  
**2300 Iris Drive**  
**Sierra Vista**

# Articles courtesy of Allison Hurtado

CASA Marketing and Community Outreach Specialist

## Best for Babies Educating Stakeholders about Infant and Toddler Development

More than 40 percent of children in out-of-home care in Arizona are five years of age or younger, according to the most recent report released by the Department of Child Safety. That is very concerning for child development experts.

Mary Warren, a CASA and Coordinator with Best for Babies, said research has shown Arizona children under the age of 1 year come into the system more than any other age group, stay in the system longer and often come back more often into the system after being reunified with their parents. That's a lot of disruption for a child to endure while their brains are developing at such a rapid rate. Abuse and neglect during the early years of life can have permanent effects if not addressed effectively.

"Lots of times CASAs say 'What can you do with a baby?'" Warren said. "There is so much that can be done with a baby. Most of it involves developing a relationship with whoever is taking care of this baby. That could be the foster parents, the bio parents, child care providers, and medical folks. Whoever is involved in the caretaking for this child, the CASA has a unique opportunity to develop a relationship with that person to help provide early childhood information, advocate for appropriate services, connect with community resources—all to help this child to get off to a healthy social and emotional start to be successful in school and in life."

Best for Babies is a statewide program that works with stakeholders in all jurisdictions to increase knowledge of the unique needs of young

children exposed to trauma. Best for Babies also provides resources and training for CASA advocates.

The goals of Best for Babies are to increase the shared knowledge within the child welfare system and community resources about the unique needs of maltreated infants and toddlers in order to improve outcomes through coordination and collaboration. Best for Babies has helped to set up court teams in several counties to bring stakeholders together once a month to learn about each other, share resources and brainstorm solutions to concerns.

Best for Babies also hosts a seminar once a year in February. This year's Sally Campbell Memorial Best for Babies Seminar will be held Feb. 26, 2016 at Arizona State University and will feature Fred Wulczyn, Ph.D., Senior Research Fellow at the Chapin Hall Center for Children and Sarah Buel, J.D, of the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law Arizona State University. There are a limited number of scholarships available for CASAs who wish to attend. For more information visit [bit.ly/1VpfqbT](http://bit.ly/1VpfqbT).

## Teaching Kids some Coping Tools

No matter the circumstances, being separated from your parents and everything familiar creates trauma. Trauma leads to anxiety. Anxiety results in more anxiety and the thinking portion of the brain shuts down. The fight, flight or freeze response kicks in, said Skip Pollock, PhD, a clinical psychologist in the Phoenix area. For many kids this can result in screaming, fighting, running, self-harming or self-medicating—because these are the only coping tools they know. There are some simple tricks CASA advocates can share with these children, Pollock said, that may make all the difference when they find

Continued on next page~

## Articles (Continued)

themselves in scary or unknown situations in care.

“The biggest problem with anxiety is it makes everything fall out of your head,” Pollock said. “When you have an anxiety attack, it’s very physical and you don’t know what to do so you sometimes do stupid things like scream and cry and hide... They pretend to be strong, but they’re not. These kids are really struggling.”

Pollock said situations like facing their parents, going to a new placement or new school, or going to court can all be scary moments for a child in care. There are three things she recommends teaching kids to try:

**Breathe.** Breathe in for three seconds, out for three seconds. The breath in gives the body energy, the breath out relaxes. For small children it may be helpful to practice by blowing bubbles. If no bubbles are on hand, the child can still do the exercise using their finger as a pretend bubble wand. It’s a quiet exercise they can do to calm down their mind.

**Do something physical.** “You can’t fight your mind with your mind,” Pollock said. If you’re in a location fit for walking or running, give it a try. Even a slow, calm walk around the room can help. Pollock said she often creates small hand signals with the kids she advocates for so that whenever they are feeling anxious she can see the signal and take them out for a quick walk to calm down. Another trick is to hold your dominant hand in the air in front of you. With your other hand, trace the hand in the air with one finger. Trace each finger and when you get to the other side, go backwards back over the hand. That small exercise takes about 30 to 45 seconds and forces a child to focus on the activity rather than the anxiety their head is filled with. This can even be done as a child is seated in court, in his or her own

lap, where it’s not distracting to others.

**Create a ritual.** “People love magic and secrets,” Pollock said. “Create something ritualistic that’s just for your child to help them focus and relax.” Pollock is a T’ai Chi instructor in her spare time and suggests some simple back and forth hand motions to help a child relax. “Have them feel the energy in their fingers, pushing bad feelings away as they move slowly back and forth and breathe with each push,” she said. Pollock said often when people are feeling anxiety they can’t remember much but they can usually remember numbers. Teaching a child to count or do some motion in a pattern can help them to refocus and calm down.

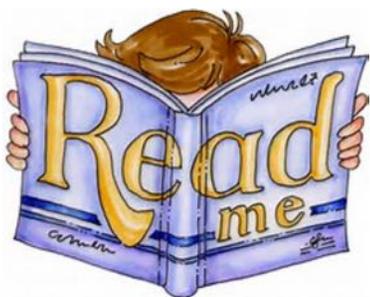
“Teaching kids these tools empowers them,” Pollock said. “They need to feel that small sense of control over their own mind. When something terrible happens instead of just thinking ‘This is terrible!’ I want them to think ‘This is terrible. What do I do when things are terrible?’”

To help prevent some anxiety Pollock recommends acting out a situation before it happens—like a visit to court, and communicating with the child about what will happen.

Skip Pollock is one of the presenters at the in-person training for new Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers in Phoenix. She teaches new advocates the effects of trauma on the brain.

CASA volunteers are required to go through 30 hours of training before they are assigned a case. Once appointed, advocates get to know the children involved in a case and pay attention to what is going on in that child’s life. They are required to write a report that is given to the judge in the case to offer more information as the judge makes life-changing decisions. For more information on the CASA Program visit [casaofarizona.org](http://casaofarizona.org)

February 2016						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Juanita: Court Report due for HB/MB.	3	4 Lin: Court Report due for EA. Morrisa: Court Report due for SM.	5	6
7	8 Kathy: Court Report due for KO.	9 Dragoo's: Court Report due for SB. Cheryl: Court Report due for MF.	10	11 Zanetta: Court Report due for MM.	12 Plum Pudding Day	13
14 	15 President's Day  County Offices Closed	16	17 Mary: Court Report due for HP.	18 D. Scott  	19 National Chocolate Mint Day	20 Cherry Pie Day
21	22 Be Humble Day	23	24 National Tortilla Chip Day	25	26 Tell a Fairy Tale Day	27
28 National Tooth Fairy Day	29 Leap Day					



## From the Beyond the Basics Training Manual

*From CASA of Arizona Program – Getting Started training manual.*

### MENTAL ILLNESS

#### THE FACTS

- Approximately 20% of adults in the United States suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. *Source: SAMHSA, 2011*
- The vast majority of people with a mental illness are not dangerous.
- Mental illness is treatable with various combinations of therapy and drugs.

#### DEFINITION

Definitions of mental illness have changed over time, across cultures, and across national—and even state—boundaries. Mental illness is diagnosed based on the nature and severity of an individual's symptoms. If a person meets the diagnostic criteria as set forth

in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), he/she may be diagnosed with a particular disorder such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, alcohol dependence, and so on. The term “dual diagnosis” indicates that an individual has both a psychiatric disorder and a substance abuse problem.

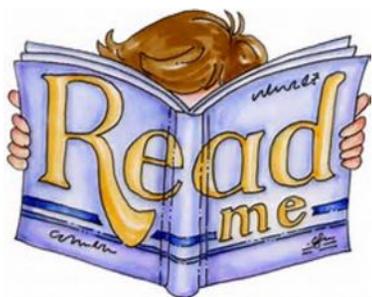
#### CAUSES

No single model or perspective accounts for all instances of mental illness. Some disorders have a predominately biological or neurological basis; others seem to be related to life experiences, trauma, or difficulties in communication. The most helpful stance for you to take in your CASA work is to accept that mental illness affects the whole person—mentally, physically, psychologically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

#### IMPACT ON CHILDREN & FAMILIES

The biggest obstacle facing those suffering from mental illness is the lack of appropriate, effective treatment. This lack may result from misunderstanding the need for treatment or being afraid to seek it due to the stigma associated with mental illness in U.S.

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## From the Beyond the Basics Training Manual (Continued)

FROM THE BASICS

culture. It may also result from a lack of access to treatment. There may not be treatment available in a person's community, or the person may not be able to pay for it.

Untreated mental illness can lead to isolation and despair for individuals and families. Some parents may be so incapacitated by anxiety or depression that they are unable to care for their children. Or some may have hallucinations or delusions, which make them a danger to themselves, or their children. It is critical for you as a CASA volunteer to focus less on a parent's diagnosis and more on his/her ability to provide a safe home for the child. The degree to which a parent's functioning is impaired will vary from mild to severe. It is important to note that with medication and/or therapy most people with mental illness can function normally.

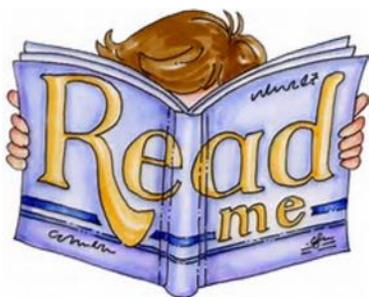
To understand the impact of mental illness in a particular family, it is critical that you also examine the parents' level of functioning. A person's level of functioning can be affected by many factors, and not

all are related to mental illness. It is important to distinguish between mental illness and other kinds of limitations. For example, many adults have limited intellectual abilities or specific learning disabilities. These limitations range in severity. By looking at the parents' level of functioning in addition to mental illness, you can make recommendations that address the likelihood that the parents can remedy the problems that initiated their involvement with the child protective services system.

### *TREATMENT*

Availability of mental health treatment varies, and its effectiveness depends on a variety of factors. A well-designed treatment plan takes individual differences into account. Healers and practices from a person's cultural tradition (e.g., the use of prayer or meditation) can be included with other, more "Western," approaches, which might include specialized inpatient treatment (e.g., for substance abuse), medication, individual and/or group counseling, self-help groups (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous, Overeaters Anonymous, and other 12-step programs), and education or training (e.g., parenting classes or anger management training).

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## From the Beyond the Basics Training Manual (Continued)

FROM THE BASICS

### What A CASA Volunteer Can Do

*It is not your task to diagnose mental illness.*

However, it is important to be aware of warning signs or indicators that may affect the health or safety of the child so that you can alert the child protective services caseworker about your concerns. How will you know mental illness when you see it? Your internal cues are your best initial indicators that something is “off” or “not right” about a person. Following are some indicators that may point to the need for professional assessment:

#### **Social Withdrawal**

Characterized by “sitting and doing nothing”; friendlessness (including abnormal self-centeredness or preoccupation with self); dropping out of activities; decline in academic, vocational, or athletic performance

#### **Depression**

Includes loss of interest in once pleasurable activities; expressions of hopelessness or apathy; excessive fatigue and sleepiness, or inability to sleep; changes in appetite and motivation; pessimism; thinking or talking about suicide; a growing inability to cope with problems and daily activities

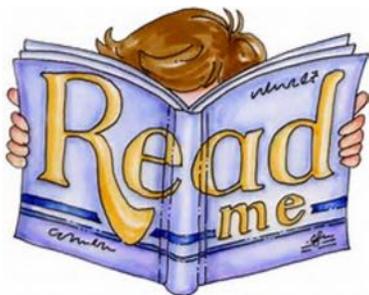
#### **Thought Disorders**

Evidenced by confused thinking; strange or grandiose ideas; an inability to concentrate or cope with minor problems; irrational statements; peculiar use of words; excessive fears or suspicions

#### **Expression of Feelings Disproportionate To Circumstances**

May include indifference even in important situations; inability to cry or excessive crying; inability to express joy; inappropriate laughter; anger and hostility out of proportion to the precipitating event

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## From the Beyond the Basics Training Manual (Continued)

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### **Behavior Changes**

Such as hyperactivity, inactivity, or alternating between the two; deterioration in personal hygiene; noticeable and rapid weight loss; changes in personality; drug or alcohol abuse; forgetfulness and loss of valuable possessions; bizarre behavior (such as skipping, staring, or strange posturing); increased absenteeism from work/school

As part of the assessment, it is important to determine if domestic violence and/or substance abuse are contributing or causal factors. This is a task for professionals.

### ***In your capacity as a CASA volunteer:***

- You can recommend a mental health assessment of a parent or child.

- You may request consultations with a parent's or a child's mental health care providers. Although the parent's mental health providers are ethically and legally required to maintain their client's confidentiality, they may be willing—with their client's permission—to talk with you about their perspective on the situation and any concerns you have. Your county coordinator will be able to answer your questions about gaining access to this confidential information.
- If you encounter someone's resistance to a label, diagnosis, or treatment, you can become aware of ethnic and cultural considerations. The standards for research and definitions of health, illness, and treatment have historically derived from a white, middle-class perspective.



# Caitlin Elizabeth Dodge



Born:  
Jan 13, 2016  
at 12:12pm

7 lbs 2 ozs  
19.5 inches

