



CASA News and Views Cochise County Newsletter

September 2015 Features

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- Coordinator's Comments 2**
- September Calendar 3**
- Volunteer of the Month 6**
- BrainyQuotes 8**
- Celebrating Anniversaries 9**
- CCCC Flyer 10**
- Kudos 11**
- August Statistics for Cochise County 14**
- Summer Fun at CASA BBQ 15**
- CASA Recognition Dinner flyer 16**
- From the Manual 17**
 The MAP Standard

Articles

- Support Group Meeting 4**
 by Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Support Group Attendees' Comments 5**
 by Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Some Thoughts for This Month 7**
Old Ways/New Ways
Being Myself
Unexpected Development
 by Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Getting Set for School 9**
 by Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Two Shirts 10**
 by Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Phoning the Hotline 11**
 by Mary Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Dear Abby 12**
 submitted by Ned Letto, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- 7 Reasons Not to Mess with Children 13**
 submitted by Ned Letto, Cochise County CASA Volunteer
- Around the World in 94 Days: Pt 3 19**
 by LuRue Troyer, Cochise County CASA Volunteer



Abby Dodge

I was going through records yesterday, and it reminded me of how many extremely experienced CASAs we have in this program. The following 7 CASA advocates have been involved with CASA of Cochise County in some capacity for at least 10 years: Mary Blanchard, Bud and Jan Dragoo, Patti Hager, Susan Struck, and LuRue Troyer. That kind of dedication is amazing! By acknowledging this, I am not trying to discount the amount of time that anyone else has been involved with the program. Each of you has made a difference in at least one child's life, which is very commendable.

Coordinator's Comments

What I want to encourage each of you to do, is to get to know the other CASA advocates and share some of your experiences with each other. Each of you comes from a different background with different life experiences, and you have advocated for different age groups and case issues. We should all be learning from each other whenever possible.

I would like to encourage you to attend a support group meeting, if possible. We currently meet on the second Tuesday of every month from 10:00 to 12:00, but if that does not work for you, please let me know. We are always open to changing the day/time if necessary. In addition, if you have any suggestions of how to strengthen the camaraderie within CASA of Cochise County, please let me know. I hope that those of you that attended the CASA BBQ in August were able to connect with an advocate that you may not have known well prior to that event. Lisette and I plan to continue promoting these types of activities in order to bring our group closer together.

As CASA of Cochise County continues to gain new advocates, I am also looking for more people who are willing to serve as mentors for those coming into the program. I have a small group of people that are always

willing to take on a new advocate, but I fear that I am going to overwork them if I keep assigning them new people. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, let me know and I will send you information about what being a mentor would entail.

I am encouraging you all to support each other whenever possible for two main reasons. First, it allows you to get different perspectives and find out what has worked for others in the past. The second is a more selfish, personal reason. My husband and I are excited to announce that we are expecting a baby girl at the end of January. While I intend to return to work after maternity leave, there will be several weeks where I will not be fully available to the program. Although you can always call me at home if there is a problem, I hope that you will all pull together as you have in the past and support each other and Lisette through my absence.

As always, thank you for everything that you do! I hope to see all of you at the recognition dinner on September 24!

SEPTEMBER 2015						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
→ 2015 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION! COME AND JOIN US! REFER TO ABBY'S E-MAIL FOR ALL THE INFORMATION!		1	2	3	4 Newspaper Carrier Day	5 Cheese Pizza Day
6 Read a Book Day	7 Labor Day OBESERVED	8 PLEASE SEE BELOW ↓	9	10	11	12 Chocolate Milk Shake Day
13 Positive Thinking Day	14 <u>Susan</u> : Court Report for Y case	15 <u>Manny</u> : Court Report due for G case	16 Step Family Day	17	18	19 Kathy S. 
20	21	22	23	24 <u>Mary B</u> : Court Report due for CM PLEASE SEE ABOVE ↑	25	26 Mary J. 
27	28	29	30	→ 9/8/15 <u>Dragoo's</u> : Court Report due for SB. <u>Tracy</u> : Court Report due for H case. <u>Ned</u> : Court Report due for NB.		

Created by Lissete Borbon, CASA Support

Support Group

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Our support group meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month from 10-12. Two training hours are given for attending.

At our last support group meeting, a concern was voiced about a situation where one of the siblings might be placed out-of-state with a relative. Mom is unlikely to regain custody of either child. Moving out-of-state would mean the boy would no longer be able to visit his mother or his sister. Is this in the best interest of the child? Are there any other possible options? What should the recommendation of the CASA be in a situation like this? The child involved is still in elementary school.

Everyone agreed that the CASA needs to advocate for the best interest of the child after looking at the options that are possible. Return to parent is the first priority. Placement with a relative comes next. If no relative is available, adoption by a non-relative is a possibility but does not always happen. Guardianship is another possibility. After sifting through the possibilities, what is left are the immediate options. If there is a choice to be made, the choice must be the placement that is best for the child. If there is

only one placement to choose from, then every effort needs to be made to ensure it is successful.

If the child moves out of state, it is unlikely that the CASA will see the child again. All that effort, all that nurturing, everything comes to an end, and what remains is a sense of loss, mingled with joy that the child has a forever home. It is wonderful in those cases where connections do endure and that the CASA is still in the picture, but that is usually not the case. When one of my cases ends, I experience all these feelings, and the best I can do is to be available if and when I am needed.

Other topics of discussion:

Abby mentioned that all the CASAs are making a real effort to get contact logs in on time. We all patted ourselves on the back.

A suggestion was made that it would be a beneficial to have an informal get-together with Judge Bannon. That way she would know us better, and we would get to know her better. In the past, this has been done with other judges, and everyone enjoyed the honor and the opportunity to chat with our

judge.

Everyone at the meeting expressed a desire to continue to have our support group. It is a joy to share successes, and it is very productive to brainstorm with enthusiastic, supportive CASAs who are eager to listen and encourage. More senior CASAs absorb the enthusiasm of the newer CASAs, and senior CASAs are delighted to share their knowledge and expertise. Everyone offers encouragement when blips do occur. This support makes it easier to get back in action after a "fall."

Please consider joining us. If the 2nd Tuesday from 10-12 doesn't work for you, let Abby know when will work. We might be able to make other arrangements.

September 8 Meeting:

Home of Lynn Vanderdasson

5776 E. Perry Lane
Hereford, AZ 85615

Come join us!

Support Group Comments

August 11 CASA Support Group Meeting

At the last support group meeting, Chris told us that one of her CASA kids might be placed in California. She has grown very close to this child, and the thought of him being placed so far away from his mother, grandmother, and sister was devastating. She shared her feelings, and the group listened and gave support.

This month, Chris reported that she has come to terms with the possible placement in California. She said she feels relaxed about whatever decision is made. She has decided that all things considered, the out-of-state placement is the best placement. She says she feels comfortable, and she will be fine if this happens, and if something else happens, she will deal with it.

This is tremendous personal growth when a CASA is able to reach this point. Consider if you found out that your child was going to be placed where you would not be able to see him/her. I am devastated when this happens to me, and it takes me quite a while to be able to support this, even though I know it is best for the child. Chris is now able to support what is best for her child and to actively advocate for investigating this possibility.

Lynn added her comments:

I think each one that attends the CASA Support Group Meetings reaps a bountiful blessing out of it. For me, just the sharing of ideas, suggestions and wisdom is sustaining to me; just to know that I have people here who care and have the same passion as I do, offer so much to each gathering. They each share a part in helping me to advocate for children who need a voice in and out of the courtroom and help me be the very best CASA I can be. ***And the icing on the cake? You get 2 training hours just for showing up!***

Mary's comments:

I shared with the group how much I was tempted to ask to be removed from my case when it moved to Casa Grande. I had only exchanged one e-mail with the girl, hadn't even met her, and she disrupted and was placed 2½ hours away. I had checked very carefully and only took the case because it was in Sierra Vista. But I ended up not quitting because I had told her in our one email contact that I would be with her until the case was dismissed. My final decision was that I would not quit this case because it is my core belief that a CASA stays with a case until it is dismissed.

Ned's comments:

There are two reasons I attend the CASA Support Group meetings. The first reason is what it can do for me. I appreciate having the opportunity to discuss the issues involved on my cases with people who understand what I am going through. I can benefit from their talent and knowledge.

The second reason is what I can do for others. The meetings provide an opportunity for me to share my knowledge and experience with others.

There is something I was told in relation to attending church that also applies here. Going to church is not only what you get out of it but there may be someone else who needs to see you there.

Abby's comments:

Sometimes being a CASA can feel very overwhelming. It may seem like there simply aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done. You may feel like you aren't able to be as effective as you once were because life is getting in the way.

I get it. I was able to share with the small group of CASA advocates who regularly attend our monthly support group meetings

~Continued on next page

Support Group

Comments (Continued)

that I was there myself last year, right before taking this job. I felt like I wasn't doing a good job of balancing my family, my job, and my CASA activities. I worried that I was no longer effective, or that I was hurting my family by stretching myself too thin. I almost resigned as a CASA advocate due to feeling overwhelmed.

Fortunately, the opportunity arose to become the CASA Coordinator, and I decided to try for it. I saw it as a way to still be involved with the program, but to have one less thing to juggle. I don't regret my decision at all, and I've never been happier! However, it felt great to actually admit the way that I had been feeling to other CASAs. The overwhelming support that I received from the group was amazing.

I highly encourage each of you to consider attending a support group meeting, especially if you are feeling even a little overwhelmed or frustrated! We meet the second Tuesday of the month from 10:00 to 12:00. I hope to see more of you there next month!

Chris Charles-Hall

The CASA of the Month for July 2015 is Chris Charles-Hall. Chris received her first case in December of 2014 and has developed a very strong relationship with the young man on her case. It has been wonderful watching Chris grow as a CASA over the last several months, July in particular. Chris is truly invested in these children and their best interests, and it shows.

Along with her strong advocacy for her children, Chris has been very proactive in completing the required 12 hours of training for 2015 – she completed all her hours before the end of February! She has since continued attending training to enhance her knowledge and skills. Chris is also a strong member of our CASA Support Group and always shares her struggles and successes with the group to allow others to learn from what she has gone through (even if she doesn't always seem too excited about sharing!).

If you haven't had a chance to meet Chris, I highly recommend doing so! Anyway, congratulations, Chris, and thank you for everything that you do for the children that you represent!

Volunteer of the Month!

July 2015



Some Thoughts for This Month

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Old Ways/New Ways

I needed directions to a group home and to two stores in Tucson. First I used Google and Map Quest to find the locations. It took me several hours and 14 pages of directions before I completed my Internet research. Then I scotch-taped up the holes in my Tucson map and bought a new map at Hastings. I was now ready to take the sister of one of my young men for a sibling visit.

When we got in the car, I handed the new map to the young lady and told her to use it to trace our route. She told me she had never used a map before, so she spent about 15 minutes familiarizing herself with the features. I was very happy until I noticed that she had her phone out. I didn't say anything, but I was deeply disappointed that she would play on her phone rather than follow along on the map. Barely concealing my impatience, I glanced over to see who she was texting. Much to my surprise, she had accessed the map app on her phone and was using both the phone and the map.

Fortunately, I had not said anything, and I praised her for her ingenuity in using her

phone. She smiled and we both moved on. We got to the spot that the phone said was the group home and there was no group home. We continued on, and she finally told me we were getting farther and farther away. We turned around and this time we spotted the sign for the group home. There was no sign for the traffic going in our direction, but when we turned around there was a very fine sign going the other way. Mission accomplished.

I praised her for being willing to learn to use the map, but I assured her that her phone saved us. It let us know when we had passed our destination, but the map did not give us a single clue. The phone was the hero, and we completely drained the battery by the time we located the two stores.



Being Myself

There were a few extra spots at the orientation for new CASAs, so I signed up. It was a wonderful training. I felt proud that I know as much as I do, and I was eager to learn all the new information. But there were a few things that I do my own special way.

One of the things I do is to take notes when I am talking to one of my kids about critical issues. This was not recommended in the training. I did speak up and mention that I do take notes, and that I tell all my kids taking notes helps me keep things straight. They are all teenagers, and somehow they are tolerant enough to accept this. Still I have wondered if I really should do this. But it is what I do, so I do it.

Several weeks ago, I got out my notebook to take notes on some critical matters. I was searching for my pen and couldn't find it. I was going to listen and do my best, but my CASA kid solved my problem. He handed me a pen and told me I could use it for my notes. Bless that young man, he saw my notes as part of me, and he felt it was appropriate for me to have my facts straight.

I do agree that taking notes when visiting younger kids might not be the best idea, and

~Continued on next page

Some Thoughts for This Month (Continued)

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

taking notes in a social situation is not appropriate, but for me, having an accurate record is important. I also make notes for my kids, and they make use of the information. I have decided that my notes work for me, and my kids seem okay with the idea, so I will continue to do this unless my child tells me that it is a problem.



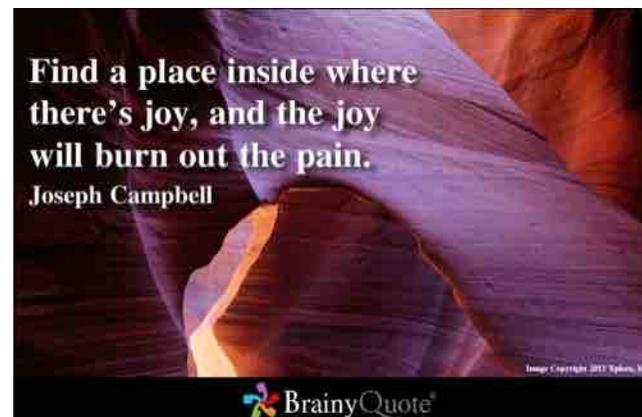
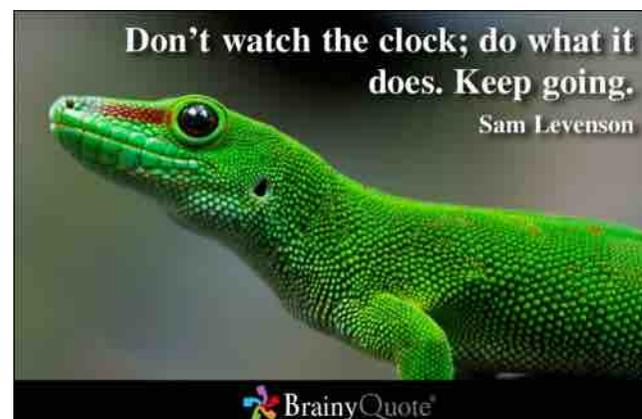
Unexpected Developments

When I was ready to take a new case, I checked very carefully to be sure the case was going to stay in Sierra Vista since I do not take cases that are located outside of Sierra Vista. The case was stable, and it was indeed in Sierra Vista, so I took it. The case files arrived and I read them and reread them (I guess we all do this while we are waiting). My court orders arrived pretty quickly, and I made my appointment and met with the DCS case manager. When I got home, I emailed my girl, introduced myself and said I was looking forward to meeting her and would arrange for us to meet as soon as possible. I

told her I would be with her until the case was dismissed.

The next afternoon, I got an email from the DCS case manager saying that the case had disrupted. The next day I received word that the placement would be in Casa Grande. This is 2 and 1/2 hours away. I was plunged into gloom. It did not cheer me up one bit to know that Ned Letto has cases all over the state. I wanted to call Abby and throw in the towel. ***But I had already contacted my girl. I had told her I would be with her until the case was dismissed. What a dilemma!*** I do not travel. Everyone knows this, including my children and friends. ***But I had definitely told my girl I would be there for her.*** I even had my email and her response.

Yes, I am staying on the case. It is going to be a tough drive for me, and my girl and I have agreed to do most of our visiting by phone or email. So far it is working. I must say she is very helpful and lets me know what is going on and what she needs. I am not leaving, and it will work. My girl and I will make it work. She knows I don't take out-of-town cases, but she knows I am taking her case and that I will not be leaving her.



Getting Set for School

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

When it was time to complete the registration process for high school, I took my 18-year-old boy and his girlfriend to get their student ID cards, etc. The girl's mother is in a wheelchair, so it would be difficult for her to go to school.

My boy had his schedule, the girl did not, but she was able to get one at school. The lines were short, and there were numerous helpful people to guide us along.

When we got in the line where parents were filling out paperwork and signing it, I realized that the girlfriend did not have the paperwork with the parent signature. I pictured going back to the house to pick up Mom (and loading her wheelchair in my very small trunk) and just knew there must be a better way.

One man in an orange shirt was directing traffic, so I went up to him and explained that I was a friend of the family who was helping out the mom because she is in a wheelchair. He smiled and asked me to introduce the girl. Ordinarily this would be a reasonable request, but I only knew the girl's first name. I suspected that a family friend would be

familiar with the last name as well.

I took a deep breath and called the girl over. When she arrived, I smiled brightly and said, "Hannah, introduce yourself, so this gentleman can help you." Hannah introduced herself, and the man took care of everything.

I found out further down the line that the gentleman who had solved our problem was the right man to ask. We had been talking to the principal.

Volunteering is not a choice, it's a responsibility.

- Ashley E. Hyder

Celebrating Anniversaries!

Beginning this month, we will be recognizing CASA volunteers for their years of service based upon the date of their first Order of Appointment.



Mary Blanchard
9/13/2000 (15 years)

Mary Jacobs
9/30/2013 (2 years)

Two Shirts

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

When one of my CASA kids has a need, I try to find a way to get it for them. Our own CASA Council is by far the most generous benefactor our kids have. I have been making requests for 15 years, and they have always supported my CASA children.

The clothing allowance that our children get has greatly diminished over the years, even though they never stop growing. I do not hesitate to ask for clothing, especially for school or for sports.

Yesterday one of my young men bought a pair of athletic shoes and two shirts, courtesy of the fashion palace—Walmart. The shoes were black and red...size 12. They were electric! I insisted the young man try them on, and I checked and made sure size 12 would work. It did.

After selecting shoes, we turned our attention to shirts. We wanted 2 shirts. This was a super Walmart in Tucson, so the shirt selection was mega huge. My young man looked at every shirt in every stack that showed promise. He told me he needed to check for slight differences in the quality of each logo and verify the accuracy because not every size large was the same. I could

not see this, but I supported the scrupulous examination of every inch of every shirt he might possibly select. As he was about to tear into each stack of possible choices, I insisted that each stack had to survive his inspection.

The candidates were slowly eliminated, and finally two shirts made the cut. The purchase of shoes and shirts was completed. As we were leaving, he told me that he really felt good about being able to choose his own clothes. He was proud of the shoes, and he was proud of the shirts. He told me that he was going to keep the shirts in his backpack to make certain no one could steal them. He was not worried about the shoes because he would be wearing them.

We don't always realize that a child feels his clothes are special when he gets to choose them. The CASA Council allowed him to do this. I will definitely recognize both the shoes and the shirts when I see him wearing them because my young man shared every detail of the experience with me.

CCCC



Cochise County Council for CASA

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 that 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

Phoning the Hotline

by Mary C. Blanchard, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

When children become wards of the state, they are taken away from home and most of the familiar things in their life. In dealing with teenagers, I find that they are almost always delighted when the time comes and they can leave the system. This is normal and natural. They did not ask to become wards of the state, and they may feel a great deal of hostility and resentment in having to live under state-mandated rules.

Recently one of my aged-out young men needed help for his brothers. He realized that he did not have the resources to take care of them, but he also realized that he was the only person who could take action to help them. I don't know what thoughts went through his mind, or what avenues he turned to for assistance, but he finally realized that he had to call the hotline and get DCS involved. He made the call. I know for a fact that he was glad to leave the system, but it also clear that he recognized that this system supports and protects children who cannot provide for

themselves. He recognized that the system gave him a chance to have the opportunity to be cared for and to go to school and find a better life; he wanted his brothers to have that same chance.

Our greatest glory is not in never failing, but in rising up every time we fail.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Kudos



Chris Charles-Hall

FCRB 7/8/15

The Board acknowledges the Court Appointed Special Advocate for her time and effort invested in engaging with G and supporting G's best interest.

Dear Abby

Submitted by Ned Letto, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

Woman Feels Void in Her Life Without Children

August 26, 2015

DEAR ABBY: Five years ago I was told by a fertility doctor that I can't have children. Having a husband, children and a home in which we can build memories and traditions were the only things I ever wanted in life.

Since then I have tried to find meaning in life and things to fill the huge void that would have been filled by my dreams. I have not been successful. I have been on antidepressants, gone to counseling, volunteered, held a job, traveled, and confided in loved ones who, frankly, don't want to hear about it any longer (and I don't blame them). But I still feel completely empty.

There isn't anything I look forward to in life. (I'm 45, divorced, most of my family has passed on, and I am an atheist.) I don't know what else to do or where else to turn. Can you help me?

-- BROKEN RECORD



by Abigail Van Buren

DEAR BROKEN: What immediately comes to mind is that feeling as you do about children, you might make a terrific foster parent or adoptive parent to an older child. There are many in the system who need loving, supportive homes.

However, if that doesn't work for you, consider looking into volunteering to become a court-appointed advocate for abused and neglected children through a program called CASA. CASA volunteers make sure these vulnerable children don't get lost in the legal system, and you might find that to be rewarding. You'll find more information about this at casaforchildren.org.

7 Reasons Not to Mess with Children

Submitted by Ned Letto, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

A little girl was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it was physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it was a very large mammal, its throat was very small. The little girl stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that a whale could not swallow a human; it was physically impossible. The little girl said, 'When I get to heaven, I will ask Jonah'. The teacher asked, 'What if Jonah went to hell?' The little girl replied, 'Then you ask him'.



A Kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they were drawing. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's work. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, 'I'm drawing God.' The teacher paused and said, 'But no one knows what God looks like.' Without missing a beat, or looking up from her drawing, the girl replied, 'They will in a minute.'



A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six-year-olds. After explaining the commandment to 'honour' thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, 'Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?' From the back, one little boy (the oldest of a family) answered, 'Thou shall not kill.'



One day a little girl was sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly noticed that her mother had several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looked at her mother and inquisitively asked, 'Why are some of your hairs white, Mum?' Her mother replied, 'Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white.' The little girl thought about this revelation for a while and then said, 'Mummy, how come ALL of grandma's hairs are white?'



The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade

them each to buy a copy of the group picture. 'Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer, she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael, He's a doctor.' A small voice at the back of the room rang out, 'And there's the teacher, she's dead.'

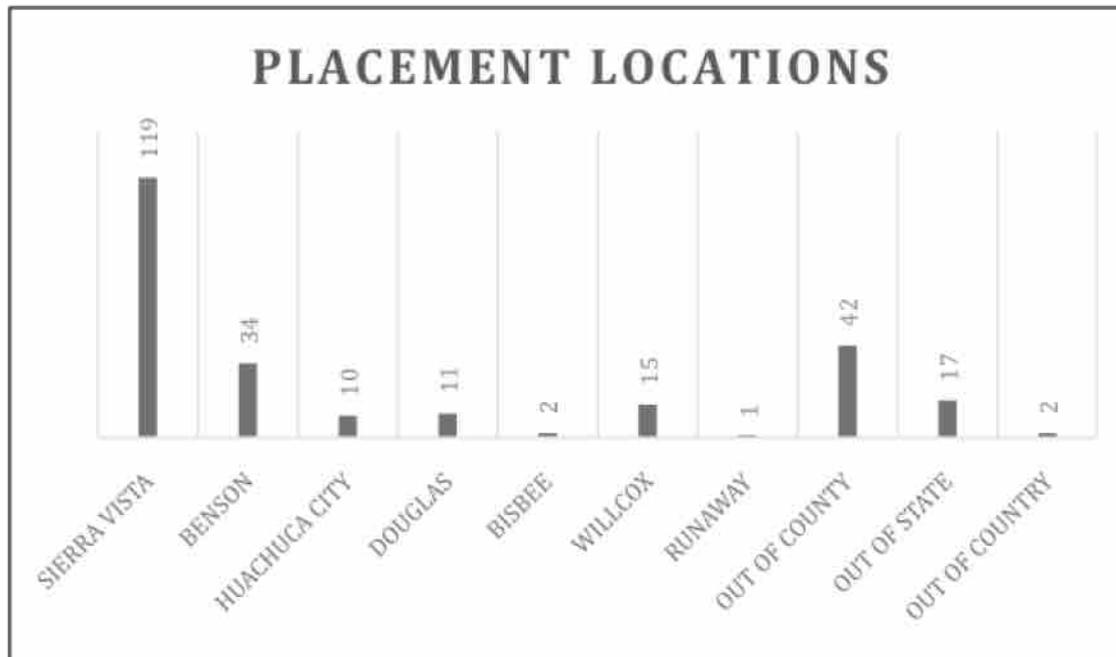
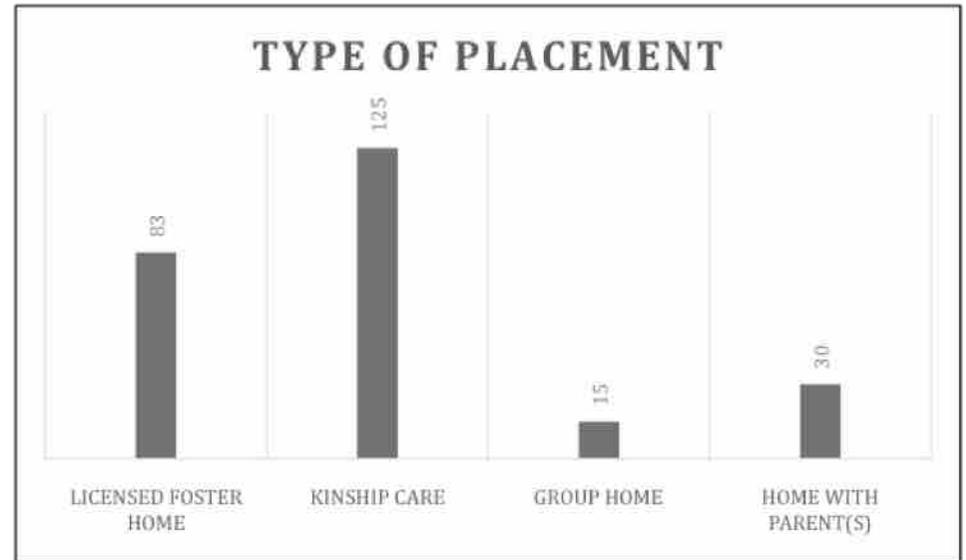
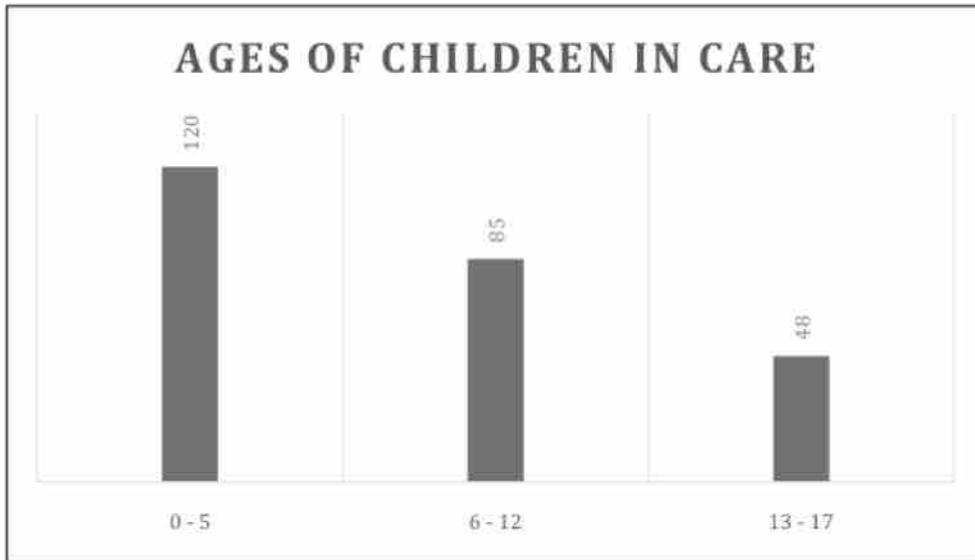


A teacher was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, she said, 'Now, class, if I stood on my head, the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I would turn red in the face.' 'Yes,' the class said. 'Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?' A little fellow shouted, 'Cause your feet ain't empty.'



The children were lined up in the cafeteria of a Catholic elementary school for lunch. At the head of the table was a large pile of apples. The nun made a note, and posted on the apple tray: 'Take only ONE. God is watching.' Moving further along the lunch line, at the other end of the table was a large pile of chocolate chip cookies. A child had written a note, 'Take all you want. God is watching the apples.'

August Statistics for Cochise County (As of 15 August)



Summer Fun at CASA BBQ!

Saturday, August 8, 2015 at
Tompkins Park

Photos courtesy of Lissete Borbon





**Annual CASA Recognition Dinner
9/24/15 from 6:00-8:00 PM**

**Conference Room across from the
Sierra Vista JPO**

**Dinner will be catered from
Chipotle**

RSVP by September 15, 2015

September 24, 2015
**Annual CASA recognition
dinner**

Join us on Thursday, September 24, 2015 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM while we recognize our CASA advocates for their tireless efforts to support the dependent children in Cochise County. Dinner and dessert will be provided. We hope to see you there!

CASA of COCHISE COUNTY

PO Box 4219
Bisbee, AZ 85603

www.CASAofCochiseCounty.org

RSVP to 432-7521 or
adodge@courts.az.gov



From the Manual

THE “MINIMALLY ADEQUATE PARENTING” (MAP) STANDARD

*Also known as minimum sufficient level of care

Removing a child from his/her home because of abuse and/or neglect is a drastic remedy. Because removal is so traumatic for the child, both the law and good practice require that agencies keep the child in the home when it is possible to do so and still keep the child safe. Children should be removed only when parents cannot meet the “minimally adequate parenting” standard. This standard describes what must be in place for the child to remain in his/her home.

The same standard is also used to determine whether parents have made sufficient progress so that a child can be safely returned to the family home. A number of factors, each of which must be looked at specifically in relation to the case at hand, determine minimally adequate parenting. Factors to consider include:

The Child’s Needs

- Is the parent providing for the following needs at a basic level?
- Physical (food, clothing, shelter, medical care, safety, protection)
- Emotional (attachment between parent and child)

- Developmental (education, special help for children with disabilities)

Social Standards

- Is the parent’s behavior within or outside commonly accepted child-rearing practices in our society?
- In terms of discipline, whipping a child with a belt was generally thought to be appropriate during the first half of the twentieth century but is now widely considered abusive. Contemporary families frequently use a short “time out” as a punishment for young children.
- In terms of school attendance, it is a widely held expectation that parents send all children to school (or home school them) until they reach the age limit at which attendance is no longer compulsory.
- Social standards also apply in medical care, where immunizations and regular medical/dental care are the standard.

Community Standards

Does the parent’s behavior fall within reasonable limits, given the specific community in which the family resides?

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From the Manual (Continued)

- The age at which a child can be safely left alone varies significantly from urban to suburban to rural communities.
- The age at which a child is deemed old enough to care for other children is largely determined by cultural and community norms.
- Even something as simple as sending a nine-year-old child to the store might fall within or outside those standards, depending on neighborhood safety, the distance and traffic patterns, the weather, the child's clothing, the time of day or night, the ability of the child, and the necessity of the purchase.

Communities can be geographical or cultural. An example of a non-geographical, cultural community is a Native American tribe in which members live in a variety of locales but still share a common child-rearing standard. According to the Indian Child Welfare Act, the minimally adequate parenting standard must reflect the community standards of the tribe of the Indian child.

WHY THE MAP STANDARD IS USED

- It maintains the child's right to safety and permanence while not ignoring the parents' right to their children.
- It is required by law (as a practical way to interpret the "reasonable efforts" provision of the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act).

- It is possible for parents to reach.
- It provides a reference point for decision makers.
- It protects (to some degree) from individual biases and value judgments.
- It discourages unnecessary removal from the family home.
- It discourages unnecessarily long placements in foster care.
- It keeps decision makers focused on what is the least detrimental alternative for the child.
- It is sensitive across cultures.

KEY PARAMETERS OF THE MAP STANDARD

- The standard relates to a particular child.
- It is a set of minimum conditions, not an ideal situation.
- It is a relative standard, depending on the child's needs, social standards, and community standards. It will not be the same for every family or every child in a particular family.
- It remains the same when considering removal and when considering reunification

Around the World in 94 Days - Part 3

by LuRue Troyer, Cochise County CASA Volunteer

From India to China

The China Global Volunteer service program would not start for two weeks after the India program was finished, so Montana and I took that time to explore some other parts of China. In order to get the travel visa, each and every night had to be accounted for with a confirmed hotel reservation. That resulted in a lot of last-minute Internet research instead of the planned wandering from place to place. The vague ideas had to be pinned down and, as it turned out, were extraordinary choices.

We flew from Chennai to Delhi to Shanghai where the layover was long enough for a night at a hotel. Always good to get rest & sleep on the long hauls!

Final stop was Guilin, in southern China. Our ultimate goal was Yangshuo County, south of Guilin, and after the first night, we were able to easily change our lodging reservations to our delight.



One of the attractions we wanted to see was the “Jiuxian Ancient Village”--turned out our guesthouse was **part of** the Ancient Village. It is a project started by a man from South Africa who bought up

three original buildings with some Chinese partners and is turning it into a boutique hotel. It is dripping with charm!



The office staff was wonderfully helpful in arranging all kinds of activities



and drivers for us, including a tai chi lesson, a Li River cruise, and most spectacularly, an amazing show produced on the Li River by the director of the 2008 Beijing Olympics Opening Ceremony, with the surrounding karst mountains highlighted as a backdrop. There is

a cast of 800 people—all set outdoors. Fortunately, we had good weather.



After six nights there, we flew to Beijing for another eight nights. I was stressing a little, wondering how we would get around to the activities we wanted to see and do. But again, our hotel staff was very accommodating and set us up with reservations and transportation for many things. Montana and I set aside the second day we were there in order to learn how to use the extraordinary mass transit system. Once we learned the subway stops, we either took the subway or walked to almost everything.

In making the reservation based on reviews from TripAdvisor, I

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Around the World in 94 Days - Part 3 (Continued)



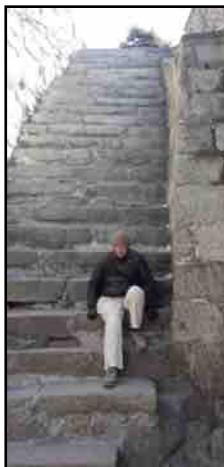
had chosen a lodging in the old section of Beijing, in the hutong district...alleys formed among traditional courtyard residences. Another place dripping with charm! Our room was in the third courtyard of our residence, the section which

had once housed the unmarried girls in the “extended family”. One end of our “hutong” opened out onto a popular market street... walking only, except for vendor deliveries. A subway station was at the end of that street.



During our week in Beijing, we enjoyed all the usual tourist attractions...

Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the various temples and parks. We loved the day we spent at the Bird’s Nest and Water Cube from the 2008 Olympics. We also saw some spectacular evening shows, including the always-curious Peking Opera. And we were able to visit them all on our own, using the subway, an



occasional city bus or a taxi and without a guide hustling us along. We took a day to visit the Great Wall of China—spectacular to walk it and try to imagine the great feat of such a project.

One of the fun things we did was to take a cooking class, which happened to be in a hutong within walking distance from our courtyard hotel. We chopped, sliced, diced, and then tossed the ingredients in a wok. It was a beautifully arranged kitchen geared toward cooking classes, though



Montana and I were the only students that particular afternoon. Eating the results wasn’t too hard to take, either!

Then we were off to Xi’an for our service program. Our accommodations this time were much more up-scale...a hotel with a large lobby, piano bar, dining area, and all the trimmings. Our team was the smallest yet...only a retired engineer from California joined us. Our team leader was an energetic young woman BaoLi who had to travel more than an hour by bus to meet with us every day, sometimes more than

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Around the World in 94 Days - Part 3 (Continued)

once. At times she brought her 4-yr-old son with her. She was very organized and a joy to work with.

The host in China is some Sino-American association of some kind...I was never sure. The schools vary from team to team and BaoLi is not informed which ones will be participating until a week (maybe less) before the team arrives. They can range from primary schools to colleges. We happened to draw a vocational college of 10,000 students.

Most of the students are taking English as a required subject, so there wasn't much motivation for the students to participate. Montana and I had to get very creative to make the classes fun. We considered each day a success if we got them laughing and involved. Besides more grammar-oriented activities, we also had fun with Simon Says and teaching the Hokey Pokey.



Because the schools want maximum exposure to the Western volunteers, we met with each class only once. So twice a morning at 90 minutes each, we faced about 30 new

students. So that meant about 300 new faces each week for three weeks. Upon the advice we received, we learned that Chinese

students are very competitive, so we made the most of team activities, giving the winning team lollipops to sweeten the deal!

Many, if not most, of the students carry smart phones, so there were also many photo sessions during breaks or after class, especially with Montana. The students loved that she was their age. She felt like a rock star with paparazzi snapping photos!

The teachers were excited to have us there as well. We didn't have to worry about free-time activities as they had so many things planned for us, from an evening at a popular park to making dumplings at one's



apartment. They also took us to famous landmarks, such as the Terracotta Warriors, an awe-inspiring site. Montana and I barely



had enough time to prepare school materials, go shopping for lollipops at a nearby supermarket, and to squeeze in some ice cream visits to Baskin Robbins or Dairy Queen.

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Around the World in 94 Days - Part 3 (Continued)

When it was time to leave Tanzania and India, neither of us had felt too badly, and we came to realize that it was because there was a new adventure just over the horizon. Now when it was time to leave China, we realized that our amazing trip was really coming to an end and we weren't ready to go.

With a short stopover in Shanghai, we flew across the Pacific Ocean to Seattle, then back to Tucson. After a week to finish up loose ends of videos, etc., Montana returned to Fairbanks and our long-awaited trip was now tucked into that mental bank we call memories.

The "impossible" journey had really happened and both of us feel so much richer for it, in terms of our personal relationship, of our personal growth, and of the new friends that we made along the way. We are fortunate beyond measure!

The following link is a 3.5-minute video made by Montana of our time in China.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJq5y4gUGsM

Music is "Little Apple".



Ordering from menus...a fun activity



Chinese students teaching Montana the song and dance craze of China...Little Apple