



**Summer
2016**

CASA at the Capitol



The Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument. Conference attendees had the opportunity to take a boat tour down the Potomoc River.

Carol, Maureen, and two of our volunteers, Sherry Tonniges and Jane Jensen, just returned from the National CASA Conference. This year the conference was held in Washington, D.C. For 3 days, these ladies got to attend workshops with experts in working with children and the legal system. They were inspired, encouraged, and influenced. They also had a little time for sight-seeing. Here's what they have to say about the experience.

Maureen Diaz: Volunteer Supervisor

A room full of cheering voices, dynamic speakers, shopping and info booths, educational workshops-I've been to "work" conventions before, but this group, this energy, this weekend of events was different. Being in a room with 1200 hearts serving thousands of children that are abused and neglected, with the goal of learning to do so more effectively inspired and moved me, often to tears, as I participated in the 2016 National CASA Conference just outside our nation's capital (which to me, added an element of importance to the work we do). Through targeted breakout

sessions, we collaborated, shared ideas and learned how to better provide for the children we advocate for, as well as how to truly honor our volunteers; we gained new insight into working effectively with other agencies and parties involved with our cases. We were enriched with information about a variety of technological tools to help us in our day to day program management, and if this were not enough, it all took place in an atmosphere of partnership, encouraging, supporting and building one another up, empowering each of us go back to our communities strengthened and even more prepared to make a difference as we advocate for the children we serve.

Sherry Tonniges: Volunteer Advocate

I am very thankful for the opportunity... to attend the National Conference. Two [of the] sessions I attended complemented one another. "Becoming a Trauma Responsive CASA" and "How to be an Effective Advocate for Foster Youth with IEP's" combined to show me that many youth with IEP's have IEP's because of the trauma (past or present) in their lives. A trauma responsive CASA [volunteer] looks for ways to lessen these traumatic memories, and involvement with an individual education plan can implement change to help with this.

[Editor's Note: IEP stands for Individualized Education Program. This is a document that explains a child's special learning needs as well as outlining goals and setting definitions for progress. It is not uncommon for kids from abusive or neglectful homes to fall behind in their learning and need help to catch-up to their peers.]



Jane, Carol, and Sherry pause for a quick pic with the Potomoc River and Capital Wheel behind them.

"CASA for York County supports and provides volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children, enabling them to thrive in a safe, permanent home."

Jane Jensen: Volunteer Advocate and Board Member

While at the National CASA Conference, in addition to sessions about practical necessities, such as fundraising and marketing, I attended several sessions on issues that foster children might face and ways to advocate for children in those situations. These included sessions dealing with grief, trauma, and dyslexia, difficulties in accessing college education, as well as one in which we heard from former foster youth. The overlying theme that carried across all the sessions was that these children are in extremely difficult circumstances, and their behaviors can be a reflection of that, making them hard to connect to; nevertheless, having someone attempt to make that connection and stick with them through the difficulties can be powerful and life-changing. At its core, a CASA advocate is someone who speaks up in court for a child, advocating for their best interest. This is an important role and can ease the burden on overworked state case managers and the judges who hear their cases. In some situations, the advocate can play additional roles and even become a mentor, a friend, a surrogate parent, a lifeline for the children in care.

Carol Knieriem: Executive Director

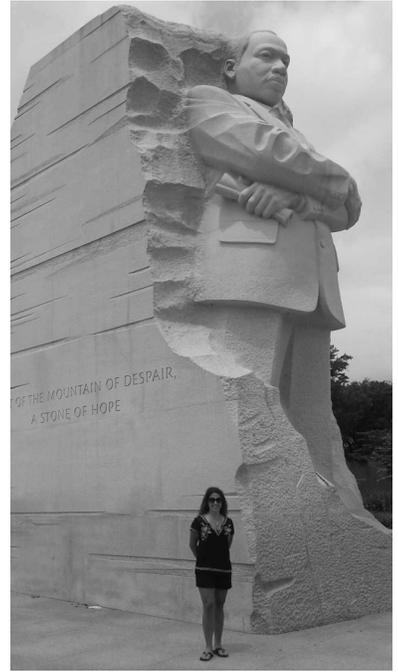
Every year I look forward to getting renewed, connected with peers, and learning how I can better myself and our CASA program to provide advocates for children who have been abused and/or neglected. This year's National CASA Conference again met those goals for me. Our first keynote speaker, John Quiñones, national journalist, [host of *What Would You Do?*,] and advocate himself, told us that he used to get hit at school



Keynote speaker, John Quiñones (pronounced keen-yown-ess), shared a hug with Maureen.

for speaking Spanish and then he ended up getting his dream journalism job because he spoke Spanish. He said that Peter Jennings says to talk to the moved and the shaken, not necessarily the movers and the shakers, giving a voice to those who don't have a voice. Mr. Quiñones urges us to ask our graduates, not where they will be going next, or what they will do next, but "WHO ARE YOU GOING TO ADVOCATE FOR, who needs a voice, who needs YOUR VOICE because they have no voice themselves? This continues to inspire me to do what I can to help give a voice to our children who cannot speak for themselves, who need an advocate. So, I ask you

"Who are YOU advocating for?"



Jane found this quote at the MLK, Jr. Memorial (above) that she wanted to share.

"Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



Great Job! We had 90 participants join us to Run Abuse Out of Town. A big thank you to all of our racers and race day helpers, as well as our sponsors, Absolute Health Chiropractic and Dan Goodwin, CFP.

Left: Alice Coehoorn is excited to participate in the Fun Run.

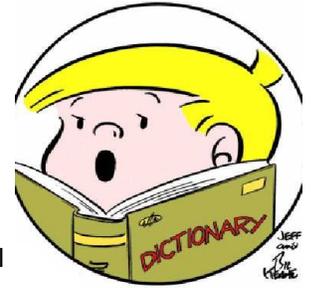


Don't forget. We are always on the look out for artwork from kids to use on our Thank You cards to donors and to hang in our office. If your child likes to color, send us their work. Please write your child's first name and age on the back and make sure that the picture says "Thank You."

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Child Abuse:



Survey says:

“Harming a child under your care with malice and intent - either physical or psychological.”

“Beyond child neglect—actively wounding or traumatizing a child.”

“Any harm or danger that comes to a child through the willful actions of an adult.”

“Inhumane, willful and purposeful neglect and/or harm inflicted upon a child.”

“Any cruel or harsh physical, mental, and/or emotional treatment of a child.”

“Mental or physical mistreatment.”

“Harming a child.”

“Mistreatment of children.”

“Physical, psychological or emotional harm, in excess, inflicted upon a minor.”

“Inflict intention harm on a child.”

“Hurting a child physically, emotionally or engaging them in an inappropriate/serial manner.”

“Where a child is being treated unkindly, through either physical harm, emotional harm or sexual harm.”

“Physical or mental abuse of a minor by an adult. Generally defined by law, but often judged to be so by individuals.”

“Intentionally treating a child in a way that is physically or mentally harmful, causing them pain, making them fearful and unsafe.”

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services says:

Abuse is defined in three ways.

1. Physical abuse exists when a child has a non-accidental injury.
2. Emotional abuse exists when parents always put blame on a child or always reject the child.
3. Sexual abuse exists when an adult uses a child as a part of any type of sexual act

Child Neglect:

Survey says:

“Not providing adequately for a child’s needs—physical, emotional, etc.”

“Not meeting a minor’s basic needs.”

“Any harm or danger that comes to a child through the failure of an adult to act in a reasonable and prudent manner.”

“Putting a child in danger through apathy, carelessness, etc.”

“Can be emotional or physical. Minor is in need of basic necessities that they don’t receive. (I.e: bonding, love, safety, food, clothing, hygiene.”

“Failure to meet a child’s physical, medical or emotional needs. Includes failing to protect a child in a safe manner.”

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services says:

Neglect is defined in two ways.

1. Emotional neglect is when the child suffers from the parent’s not giving them chances for feeling loved, wanted, secure, and worthy.
2. Physical neglect is when a parent does not provide basic needs or a safe place to live. Examples are:
 - not having enough food or clothing;
 - not following doctor’s orders;
 - not providing the supervision needed to keep the child safe;
 - not having heat in the winter.

“Where a child is not being provided what he or she needs, either physically, mentally or emotionally.”

“Failure of a responsible person to provide basic care to a minor child. Examples are failure to provide adequate food, shelter, protection or affection.”

“Irresponsible parents.”

“Failure to provide a child’s needs.”

“Not making sure a child’s needs are met.”

“Not caring for the basic needs of a child.”

“Not providing the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing, education & medical care for a child for which you’re responsible.”

“Not doing the right things for children.”

CASA for York County fact:

84% of the children we work with come from situations of Child Neglect.

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Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

Volunteer Spotlight



Dale Kahla

Dale is a former CASA Volunteer, turned Board Member. Introduced to CASA by his wife, he was a volunteer for about 3 years and during that time he served 3 children. He has been on our Board of Directors for 4 years now and serves as the chair for the Policy and Procedures committee, ensuring that we stay in compliance with National CASA Association member standards.

Dale has two favorite memories from his days as a volunteer advocate. "One when a single parent was able to celebrate their birthday with the child present in a supervised visit. This meant so much to the parent who clearly loved the child but had made some poor choices earlier. The second was when the same parent was able to regain full custody of their child because the parent had made extremely significant changes in their life. I will never forget the interaction between the child, the parent, and the family outside of the court room that day." On why you should be a CASA volunteer, he says "There are always children in need of a CASA volunteer. Most of us have no idea what a difference a CASA volunteer can make in both the life of a child and the life of a parent that often needs a support system to make changes in his/her life. I would like to think that I had an impact on the life of the child and the parent that will last a lifetime for the last family that I worked with."

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

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