



Wrapping up the year!



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CASA for York County
Fall— Winter 2021

As the year 2021 winds down, and the holidays approach, the sense of gratitude here in the CASA office is growing daily. As we wrap up a year which included the continuation of a pandemic and a record number of children being referred for services, a year which has given us pause for so many reasons now affords us a moment to say **thank you**. Thank you to our volunteer advocates and the individuals, organizations, foundations and businesses who continue to support the work we do on behalf of abused and neglected children here in York County. Your caring concern is a true gift. We are grateful.



The greatest gifts are not wrapped in paper, but in Love.



Coffee with Elizabeth

Page 2

I've been done with my Christmas shopping since October. Yep, I'm one of "those people." But hear me out; Christmas and both my kids' birthdays all fall within one month. If I were to wait to shop until the last minute, it would be a very expensive month.

That said, as I looked at the overflowing tote of gifts for my girls this weekend, I couldn't help but wonder what kind of uncertainty faces CASA kids this holiday season. They probably ask themselves, "Will I get any presents? Will I get to see my parents? Does Santa know how to get to my foster parent's house?"

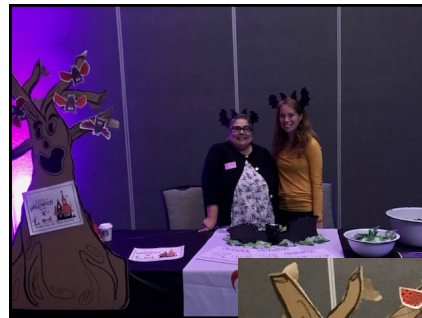
We often associate the holidays with warmth and joy and family. But for CASA children, the holidays often come as a reminder of how different their lives are from other children.

As the holiday season approaches, please think of these children. Consider ways you can make their holidays brighter. Bringing warmth and joy back into their lives may be as simple as the donation of a warm stocking cap and a pair of mittens. As the year 2021 comes to a close let's wrap it up in kindness.



"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving."
— Mother Theresa

The
FUTURE
depends on
what we do
in the
PRESENT.
Mahatma Gandhi



Take a look and see what a busy year it's been for us here at CASA for York County. We've been to the Nebraska State CASA Conference, held several trainings dealing with trauma and children, had a very fun and colorful run, hosted a garden tour, and treated kids at a haunted Holthus Center. Most importantly, we have continued our work advocating for abused and neglected children here in York County.

While preparing myself to facilitate a training session for four new CASA volunteers, I ran across a statement in my materials that referred to CASA volunteers as “ordinary people.” In context, I understood the intended point of the statement. CASA volunteers come from all walks of life and, to perform their duties, only need to have genuine care and concern for others, feel a level of passion toward making a difference in the lives of others, and possess a willingness to learn and apply what they have learned to a worthwhile cause.

I went to my dictionary (the old fashioned way rather than on a cellphone) and found that the word ordinary is defined as: *“one that can be expected to act in the normal order of events; routine or usual; of common quality, rank or ability; common.”*

During my time with CASA for York County, I have found the volunteers to be much more than “ordinary.” Those I have been associated with do come from varying backgrounds, genuinely care about others and are passionate about serving those in need and making a difference. They are much more, however. The CASA volunteers willingly participate in the new volunteer orientation training. They also attend on-going training to stay informed about issues that relate to the youth they serve. When they are assigned a case they advocate for that youth and work as hard as is necessary to ensure that the youth’s needs are being provided and that all partners are acting in that youth’s best interest.

Communicating with courts and preparing reports for the court are essential duties they perform, as well as keeping detailed notes on their assigned case. All of this is done on a volunteer basis and compensation comes only in the form of the satisfaction of knowing they have made a difference, as well as the personal growth which occurs from serving those in need. Recognition comes their way occasionally, however there is always respect and appreciation for what they do. I could go on and on with this. My real point is this: CASA volunteers are ordinary people doing extraordinary things. Their efforts, aimed at offering aid, support and protection give me hope for mankind and for the future.



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Consider becoming a CASA volunteer.

There are children in York County who are in need of an advocate; someone to be in their corner and work in their best interest. Find more information at: www.casaforyork.org or by calling our office at: 402-362-5454.

Give the gift of your time.



It's Candy Cane Giving Tree time! Holiday Helpers Needed!

The very special elves at York State Bank have been busy again, working their holiday magic in the lobby of York State Bank's main office. And they haven't been the only ones; CASA Advocates have been busy collecting lists which will soon be hanging on the tree.

From November 15th through December 10th the community will be invited to pick a wish-list from the tree and purchase gifts for one of the children CASA volunteers advocate for.



Kathy Ortmeier of York State Bank points to the following quote to explain the organization's reason for giving, "He (Santa) may not be the one that puts the presents under the tree, but his spirit works through us each time we give freely without expectation and each time we spread joy, love and light to another person." Since 2017, CASA for York County kids have benefited from the York State Bank Candy Cane Giving Tree.