



Volume No. 2
CASA for York County
Fall/Winter 2020

Wonder

By Marcia Schlegelmilch

Life is just full of wonder and wonderful happenings. If we just slow down, tune in and appreciate them; there are so many caterpillar to butterfly moments to relish. Children are naturally full of wonder, and the children CASA serves are no different.

These are the children York County CASA volunteers are there for; representing what's in their best interest to the court while providing support. As a constant in their young lives, a CASA is a priceless gift. They are someone who truly cares, someone who can help change a child's story of abuse and neglect to one of hope and Wonder. At this time of thanksgiving, we would like to let our CASA advocates speak to the why and the wonder. When asked why CASA, York County volunteers were sure of one thing, they want to help children. **Chas** has just accepted a new case, she's been a CASA advocate for a while now and says her experience as a foster parent led her to volunteer, "I still wanted to help children," she says. The reward for her is seeing the smiles on children's faces and hearing the hope in their stories.



Levauna and Jerome are long-time volunteers who see being a CASA as a way to give back to the community. Levauna says, "I have seen the results of my work many times over in the past few years ... so I continue."

CASA volunteer **Sue** was retired and looking to volunteer. Doing something "meaningful and worthwhile" was important to her. "When I learned about CASA I knew it was where I wanted to contribute." Sue states, her reward is when she can identify her contributions to bring a case to a conclusion and, "the child(ren) I advocated for are in a safe placement and happy."

Sherry is another active CASA volunteer. She loves seeing the smiles on the children's faces. Sherry says, "The children really know we care and are there for them. They know they are special." Her reason for volunteering is the reason CASA was formed, "Of all the individuals involved in a case, the CASA is the only one focused on this child. Everyone on the team has many cases; we give our attention to this child."

Volunteer **Jo** chose to become a CASA advocate because, "The Foster Care system is overwhelming, especially for a child. I became a CASA (advocate) so I could be a listening ear, a consistent presence and ongoing support and advocate for a child who can often feel all alone." She says it is rewarding to develop a relationship with a child while working together with a team of people to make sure the child is taken care of in a safe and loving home.

A safe, loving, permanent home for abused and neglected children is the goal.

Hannah adds, "I chose to be a CASA (volunteer) to act as a "bridge" for the child, their family, and their case. For me, the biggest reward is supporting a system that needs all the assistance it can get due to the overwhelming demands from the caseloads."

The children we serve are amazing, joyful and resilient youth who themselves are wonders. CASA advocates in York County volunteer because, where there is wonder, there is bravery and where there is bravery, there is hope.

Nebraska State CASA Conference educated virtually in 2020

The 2020 Nebraska State CASA Conference looked a bit different this year. Despite being held virtually on August 29th, it was well attended and provided excellent educational opportunities for York County CASA volunteers.

Recently, the group gathered in person and via Zoom on September 18th at Captain Red Beard's for coffee and a discussion of topics and take-aways. Trauma, resiliency, self care and the causes of poverty were discussed. The learning continued through shared experiences and conversation facilitated by CASA for York Director Elizabeth Hain and Volunteer Supervisor Dan Scarborough.





Coffee with Elizabeth

Hello and Happy Holidays!

Well, 2020 has proven itself to be quite the unpredictable year. CASA here in York County did not go unaffected by the pandemic; we saw an initial spike in child abuse numbers, continuation of countless court hearings, and we shut down our office for a while. Throughout all of the upheaval, I couldn't help but find myself feeling thankful. I am so thankful to know myself, my staff, and our selfless volunteers are busy protecting children most at risk. I am thankful to live and work in a community that cares so much about its most vulnerable population. I am so thankful for my health, my family, and the impending arrival of our second little girl. Despite the hardships we all have faced, I hope you too can look back on this past year and find things to be thankful for. I also hope that the holidays and New Year bring about a sense of purpose and renewal that will allow us to press forward with new-found determination. Thank you all for sticking with us through tough times for the sake of these children who count on the work we do.

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Corteva and CASA team up

What's cooler than opening a new, never before used, box of crayons or writing your name on colorful notebooks and folders? Not much ... back to school is a special time for kids and supplies play a big part in it. That is exactly why the Corteva – CASA partnership is so special.

Each year, Corteva of York conducts a school supply drive among employees, donating them to CASA for York County. Then, in turn, CASA reaches out and makes donations available to children and families in need.

In a recent article from the York News-Times, penned by Jessica Votipka, CASA for York County Executive Director Elizabeth Hain said, "Over the weeks following the donation, we had dozens of kids and families stop into our office to stock up for the school year. Some took backpacks and filled them to the brim, while others just grabbed a few items missing from their list.

"This is an event that we at the CASA office look forward to every year," Hain said. "It is such a joy to be able to help these families in need, and lighten the burden as they go into the school year.

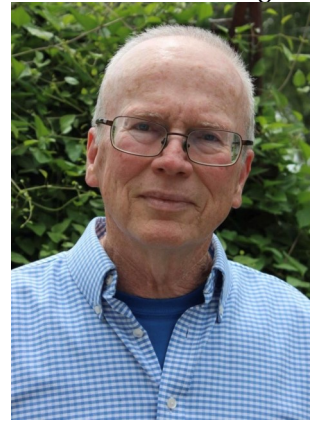
"It is such an honor to be part of a community that cares so deeply for these children."

"This is the second year our station has participated in this event and we cannot express our gratitude for this ongoing contribution," Corteva said in a statement. "It makes a huge impact to our most vulnerable citizens." Spearheading the annual drive at Corteva is Jane Studnicka.



Meet Dan Scarborough, CASA Volunteer Coordinator

On July 1st Dan Scarborough of Geneva began his employment with the York County CASA program as the Volunteer Supervisor. Dan brings valuable experience to the position which includes experience in leadership, relationship building, management and community collaboration. During his 43 years in various roles within state government Dan served on the Nebraska Coalition of Juvenile Justice, was recognized for 40 years of achievement to excellence, was chosen as an employee of the year within adult community corrections and helped develop a competency profile for juvenile facility administrators as part of an Eastern Kentucky University initiative. Dan also served as interim facility administrator at the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) in Kearney for 7 months while continuing in his role as the Geneva YRTC facility administrator. During his tenure as administrator in Geneva the facility received its first ever rating of 100% compliance with national standards.



Dan and his wife Patty have resided in Geneva for over 30 years and have two grown sons- Andrew & Timothy. Dan feels nothing less than blessed and recognizes the importance of family. Dan is extremely excited about working with the CASA program in York. He indicates he has been impressed with both the leadership and office staff. He speaks highly of their strong commitment to the CASA mission.

Dan has been particularly impressed with the CASA program volunteers stating, "Their hard work and concern for the youth they serve is evident," adding, "the support of the CASA Board of Directors and the York Community is equally impressive."

Thank you to our Wonderful Donors, January ~ August 2020

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CASA FOR YORK COUNTY
NEBRASKA

York County Courthouse
510 N Lincoln Ave.
York, NE 68467



It's Time!
Candy Cane Giving Tree
York State Bank - York
Main Bank

You're invited to stop by the Main Bank location to choose a tag from our tree and purchase a gift that will help a CASA child this holiday season.

Candy canes and Christmas trees

are coming together again this year in the lobby of York State Bank's main office. Since 2017, CASA for York County kids have benefited from its Candy Cane Giving Tree.

CASA Advocates have been busy collecting lists which will soon be hanging on the tree.

From November 16th through December 7th the community will be invited to pick a wish-list from the tree and purchase gifts for one of the children CASAs 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."

Thank you to York State Bank for sharing your caring spirit with children in our community.