

Welcome CASA Volunteers

Summer 2017 has brought many new CASA volunteers to the CASA of Coconino County Family. A big CASA of Coconino County welcome to..

Deborah Sheehan

Krista Bush

Marti Martin

John Prosper

Susan Wright

Susan Van Nostrand

Lynn Johnson

Paula Brunswick

These Advocates attended the CASA Training Academy in July. The program is excited to see such growth!

“CASA volunteers are among the most important contributors to the dependency process in Coconino County and we are so grateful for the work of the CASA. You are the eyes and ears of the court and the voice for the child.”

*Judge McCullough
May 15, 2017*



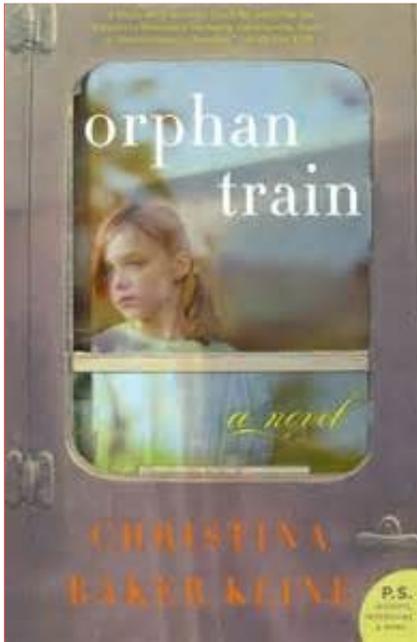
Sylvia retaining CASA information

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July 14-15th CASA Academy



ORPHAN TRAIN, a novel by

Christina Baker:

I recently read Orphan Train by Christina Baker Kline . I found it to be an enjoyable and easy read and was able to complete the entire book on a rainy Saturday. The book tells the story of two children whose families came apart for different reasons and in different eras, yet found their stories to be hauntingly similar.

As someone who grew up in a stable and secure home and who also managed to bring up my own children in the same, I found it to be a good reminder that not all children have the privilege and fortunes can change in an instant.

While the main characters were sympathetic as one would expect, I took note that the author did treat most of the supporting ones as caricatures, and I did find that to be a bit distracting. However, the point was not to tell the story of those seeking to house these children so it was to be expected.

I would certainly recommend this book to anyone interested. The story compelled me through to the end and I did learn a bit about history that I never really paid much attention to before. In the end it was a good reminder that ultimately what these kids need is someone who cares about them and believes in them to make a difference in how their lives turn out.

By: Rhonda Harris, CASA Advocate

If you would like to review a book or other resource for our newsletter, please contact the CASA office.



“Reunification” and “Re-Entry” Rates

Elizabeth Jacobs, Ph.D.

As a researcher, locating descriptive statistics is an important and objective way to answer important questions about foster care. Two statistics are pertinent to our discussion of the success or failure of the foster care system: reunification and re-entry rates.

Reunification, of course, refers to a foster child’s return to the family from which he was removed, usually the biological parents; while *re-entry* describes children who are removed from their families *after* reunification and placed back into the foster care system because the parents, once again, abused or neglected them.

The national reunification rate for foster children has remained fairly stable over the years -- in the 51-53% range, meaning that slightly more than half of children entering foster care are reunified with their families. Of course, the math tells us that leaves approximately 48% ($\pm 1\%$) of foster children who are *not* reunified – a grim statistic that deserves serious attention. (A subject for a later report.)

But, as I write and prepare presentations about attachment problems in foster children, I often wonder how many of “successful” reunifications eventually fail, i.e., how many children were removed from their homes after reunification? That statistic is difficult to find and, unlike reunification rates, no national statistic exists (at least that I can find...)

I did, however, find several studies and statistical reports addressing the issue of re-entry rates and this is what I learned:

States are held accountable, and must report, re-entry rates to the federal government.

The federal standard for re-entering foster care within 12 months of reunification is 9.9%.

Re-entry rates (within 12 months) range from 21% to 38% from state to state.

High re-entry rates could result in federal funding sanctions, increased caseloads, and damage to children who experience repeated abuse/neglect and the resulting need to enter a new, unfamiliar placement.

The top two reasons for re-entry are because the children were reunified too soon (parents not ready) or “Family Reunification” was an inappropriate case plan from the beginning.

Related to the above, the factor most associated with re-entry into foster care is short foster care stays, 3-6 months.

Other correlates with re-entry rates include multiple placements, prior reports, and unmet needs of the biological families.

Two programs that reduce rates of re-entry are: Home Builders (InstituteFamily.org) and Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care for Preschoolers (now known as Treatment Foster Care Oregon – tfcOregon.com).

As we (CASA and FCRB) oversee foster care cases, it is difficult at times to cull through the data to know what works and what doesn’t. Looking to reliable research studies addressing important topics, such as reunification and re-entry rates, helps us to identify what factors are more likely to make reunification a success which we can keep in mind as we advise the court as to the progress the foster care cases we oversee.

Beginning of the School year reveals child abuse, and neglect.

The end of summer and the start of a new school year is an exciting time for most children. But for some, the beginning of school could reveal a dark secret when signs of abuse and neglect these children have suffered over the summer are noticed by teachers, staff and other parents.

“Because children are subject to less adult supervision over the summer, it’s not uncommon for reports of suspected abuse and neglect to spike at the start of the school year,” said Amber Martin, CASA of Coconino County Coordinator.

Many of the children who are confirmed as victims are removed from their homes and placed into foster care—often far from their friends, families and schools. CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) volunteers from CASA of Coconino County are specially screened and trained to speak up for abused and neglected children who, through no fault of their own, end up in the foster care system.

“Being uprooted from their homes and families is scary for these children. We at CASA of Coconino County want to make sure that they do not get lost in the overburdened foster care system,” Martin said. “For that reason, we need more people in our community to speak up and make sure these children’s voices are heard. We want to help ensure that their stay in foster care is as short as possible and that they are placed in safe, loving homes quickly so they can begin to heal.”

There are 206 children in the child protection system in Coconino County and only 45 CASA volunteers to advocate for their best interests. Our 45 volunteers are currently working with 67 children (out of the 206) in 39 of the 118 open cases. The need is great.

“Too many children are forced to go through the chaos of moving through the child protection system alone,” Martin said. “CASA of Coconino County needs more volunteers to step up and be a voice for children who desperately need them.”

Jay Rominger grew up in Arizona and after 25 years with the FBI recently retired and returned to the state. He was looking for a way to give back to the community and became a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for Navajo County. Rominger was paired up with 13-year-old Michael Harrison who has been in the foster care system for five years after suffering years of abuse and neglect. As a CASA volunteer, Rominger provides Michael someone to talk to and is an advocate for him in court proceedings.

Jay Rominger has been a CASA volunteer for nine years. As a CASA volunteer, he advocates for children’s needs in court and in the child welfare system. He helps them through their struggles in foster care. Jay’s number one goal is to help the children find a safe, loving family. Jay and Michael recorded a marketing video which you can enjoy it here - <http://www.abc15.com/news/state/arizona-highways-how-the-arizona-lottery-helps-children-in-foster-care-video>.

“We need more dedicated CASA volunteers like Jay to walk with children every step of the way and ensure that they are placed into safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible,” Martin said.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

August 5—Marti Martin

August 14—Anne Cotton

August 16—Paula Brunswick

August 28—Cindy May



August 2017

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
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SAVE THE DATES

Every CASA volunteer is required to participate in twelve (12) hours of training each calendar year. Here are some August training opportunities. We look forward to seeing you at as many as you can attend. RSVP with session and your name to LPayne@courts.az.gov to reserve your seat.

August 11th: Connecting Legacies: New Rule New Area with ICWA @ 8:00am-5:00pm

August 17th: 3rd Thursday Training @ 11:30-1:00pm

August 26th: Child Care Basics for Youth @ 9:00am-3:00pm

August 27th: Best for Babies Training @ 11:30-1:00pm

September 1st: Jacob's Law @ 11:00-1:00pm

September 18th: Adoption and Title 8 Guardianship Training @ 10:00am-12:00pm

Transitional Independent Living Program Services

FREE Parenting Classes 0-5 Year olds

MORE TRAINING:

There are books and DVDs available in the office for training hours. If your interested, we have some recommended books/DVDs!

REMINDERS:

- Please Turn in your most recent auto insurance cards that are effective through September!
- Contact Logs Due the first of each month

COCONINO CASA FOR KIDS, INC.

Supporting CASAs and abused,
neglected and abandoned
children

www.coconinocasaforkids.org

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Bruce Griffin, Member
Sue Michels, Member
Andrea Merrihew, Member
Jay Rominger, Member
Amber Martin, Ex Officio



WELCOME MARTI

Marti is a senior at Northern Arizona University and will be the intern for the CASA program for the 2017-2018 year. She is pursuing a bachelors degree in Social Work with a minor in Ethnic Studies. She is the president of the Blavin Scholars Association, and a member of

Alpha Phi of Social Work. Her plan after graduation is to pursue a Masters in Social Work. Her goal is to determine where her former foster youth experience can strengthen others and where her heart can be filled the most. Marti is an Arizona Native, artist, extreme coffee lover, and loves children.



Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF COCONINO COUNTY

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