



CASA OF COCONINO COUNTY

August 2018

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From One of our Teacher-CASAs

I first heard about CASA when I was a college student in Colorado. I knew that "someday" I would love to be involved in that organization. I loved the idea of being able to make a difference in the life of a child, especially being able to advocate and to be the voice of a child who might not otherwise be heard. After becoming a teacher, I quickly realized that my job is about much more than teaching children to read and write. As I formed relationships with my students, I heard stories that made me angry, made me cry, and made me feel helpless as I sent students home for the afternoon, weekend, and for longer school breaks. I wanted to do something, and that's when I

remembered CASA and knew that "someday" had arrived.

My first case was more difficult than I could have imagined. I became attached to the girl with whom I was working, and my heart broke for her. Rather than feeling helpless as I heard her story, I felt empowered as I was able to advocate for her with DCS and with the court. One day I was sitting with her in a staffing, trying to encourage her to engage as she sat with her head down, surrounded by the adults who had stake in her case. When her social worker asked if anyone in the room was helpful or made her feel better, she pointed at me. I knew then that even if the case did not end up as I believed it should, at least this child knew that she was supported. At least she knew that she had an ally.

Now I am a co-CASA on my second case, and I was warned that one of the girls was "difficult and does not want to connect." Every time I see her I am greeted with a smile and a hug. Recently, I was told that she tells her counselor that she "only wants to spend time with her CASAs." By investing our time, she knows that she matters and that someone cares.

When friends and family ask me about CASA, they often ask, "Isn't it hard?" Being a CASA is

challenging, but extremely rewarding. A boy in my class does not have a CASA, but knows that I am familiar with the foster care system and what he is going through with his family. When I was speaking with him about what to expect in court, he asked me how I knew so much about it. I told him that I am a CASA and briefly explained what that means. It broke my heart when he asked, "Why don't I have a CASA to help me?" We need more caring adults who are willing to step up and make a difference for a child like him. If stories from your students have ever made you feel helpless and left you wishing you could do something, I would encourage you to get involved. I'm glad I did. ~**Wendy**

Our teachers are such great resources! Whether they are still in the classroom or retired, they understand the daily struggles children go through and they make great CASAs! We would like to find new CASAs in the Williams, Winslow, and Fredonia areas and increase our number in Page. If you know any teachers in these areas, please share your experiences with them. We need to extend our reach, so that children in foster care don't have to ask, "Why don't I have a CASA to help me?"

Please, refer them to Felicia Bicknell fbicknell@courts.az.gov 928.226.5433 for more info!

This month, we focus on children in foster care and the academic challenges they face, while navigating the difficulties of being in and out of home placement. The following information was pulled directly from the websites of the organizations.

We hope you will take time to learn more about them and the important work they do to support children in foster care succeed in school.

FosterED initiates and facilitates multiple state and regional collective impact campaigns, partnering with deeply invested teams of state and local leaders, students, and families to build will and measured progress toward a shared vision for improving the educational conditions and opportunities for this incredible group of young people. Find out more at <http://foster-ed.org>

Each and every young person is entitled to a quality education. Each and every young person deserves to have champions by their side helping them to realize their potential. For most children, their primary champion is a parent. But, foster youth often do not have anyone in their lives championing their education by monitoring their academic progress and advocating for their educational needs. When children are removed from their homes and placed in foster care, due to abuse or neglect, the state takes responsibility for those children, their safety, health and well-being, and for their success in school. For students involved with the foster care system, the opportunity to learn has been interrupted by home and school moves. When foster youth change schools they rarely receive credit for the coursework they have completed. They are consistently educated in substandard learning environments. They face, every day, countless adults who hold heartbreakingly limiting expectations for their future. The data substantiating these lived experiences is stark, revealing a staggering achievement gap, chronic poor attendance, and alarming school mobility. Leaders across Arizona have united together to invest in educational success for their students in foster care believing that this is a situation that can and must change. We are in the business of system change. We initiate and facilitate multiple state and regional

collective impact campaigns, partnering with deeply invested teams of state and local leaders, students, and families to build will and measured progress toward a shared vision for improving the educational conditions and opportunities for this incredible group of young people. In each of the states in which we operate, we:

- Implement best-in-class demonstration sites.
- Design and execute a bold policy agenda.
- Unleash the power of data, technology, and research.
- Establish structures that promote dynamic communities of learning.

FosterEd also provides state-wide systems supports. They work closely with the Department of Child Safety to develop trainings for both DCS staff and licensed foster parents to make sure they have the knowledge required to be effective educational advocates for children and youth in foster care. FosterEd is also working with the Arizona Department of Education and DCS to improve data systems to better identify for schools who their students in foster care are as well as to enhance the sharing of educational data between the schools, child welfare, behavioral health, and the courts. In addition, FosterEd is working at both the state and local levels to ensure effective implementation of provisions of the Every Student Succeeds Act that are specific to foster youth – including that processes are in place to keep foster youth in their schools of origin when in the student’s best interest, receive transportation to their schools of origin, and to ensure a timely and smooth transfer of schools when a school change occurs. FosterEd is also identifying, creating, and piloting best practices to improve the education outcomes of students in foster care.

These efforts will culminate in an **Arizona Foster Youth Education Toolkit** that will provide practical tools for use by school staff and DCS Specialists in the areas of:

- Enrollment, including best practices for providing transportation to schools of origin
- Special needs of foster youth, including trauma-informed education and special education related needs.
- Needs of high school-age foster youth, including credit transfers, credit recovery and graduation planning.
- School discipline, including understanding the impact of trauma on behavior and alternatives to exclusionary discipline practices.
- Post-secondary planning, including tools for preparing youth for work, college, or career and technical education opportunities.

Education is a major aspect of a foster child’s life. Educational success will serve these children well their entire life. Through the Toolkit, we hope to start an exchange of ideas and best practices among foster care stakeholders throughout Arizona that will result in improved education outcomes for all of the state’s foster youth.

“The FosterEd program has been a huge asset not only to DCS but to the families they serve. Their tireless efforts have tremendously impacted the way we think about education and their advocacy for the students has superseded the expectations of many throughout our region. They are a go-to resource for DCS and for the families we mutually serve!”

~Meghean Francisco, Program Specialist, Department of Child Safety

Every Student Succeeds Act

The National Center for Youth Law co-led the effort to include protections for students in foster care for the first time in a major piece of federal legislation governing education – the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the bill reauthorizing and amending the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

Foster Care Provisions

The new provisions specific to students in foster care are designed to support school districts in their efforts to serve foster youth effectively. We are creating tools and resources that support state and local education agencies across all of the new provisions:

- **School of origin:** State plans must include assurances that foster youth be enrolled or remain in their school of origin, unless there is a determination that it is not in their best interest to do so.
- **Immediate enrollment:** When a foster youth does not remain in the school of origin, the student must immediately be enrolled in a new school, regardless of whether the youth can produce the records typically required for enrollment.
- **Records transfer:** When a foster youth changes schools, the enrolling school must immediately contact the previous school to obtain academic and other records.
- **State-level point of contact:** State education agencies must designate a point of contact for child welfare agencies; this may not be the same person as the state's McKinney-Vento coordinator. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act of 1987 (Pub. L. 100-77, July 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 482, 42 U.S.C. § 11301 et seq.) is a United States federal law that provides federal money for homeless shelter programs.
- **Local-level point of contact:** Local education agencies must collaborate with the state or local child welfare agency to designate a point of contact *if* the child welfare agency has given notice of designating its own point of contact.
- **Transportation:** Local education agencies must collaborate with state or local child welfare agencies to implement clear written procedures as to how prompt, cost-effective transportation allowing youth to remain in their school of origin for the duration of their time in foster care will be provided, arranged, and funded.
- **Data disaggregation:** States must provide disaggregated data on foster youth. Annual state report cards must contain information on student achievement for foster youth. The report cards must also contain information on high school graduation rates for foster youth.
- **Homeless definition:** Students “awaiting foster care placement” are removed from the definition of homeless youth in McKinney-Vento. For states that have statutory laws that define or describe the phrase “awaiting foster care placement,” this change will take effect two years after ESSA’s enactment. For other states, this change took effect one year after ESSA’s enactment.

All young people need champions in their corner to support their educational futures. Decades of research make it clear: supportive adults, such as caregivers, teachers, and mentors, are essential to the educational success of all young people. Parent or caregiver involvement in education in particular can increase the odds that a young person will stay in and graduate from school.

Foster ED Youth Success Story

FosterEd became involved in Savannah's life during her 8th grade year when she was 14 years old. Savannah had been enrolled in online school after a tough year of middle school. Her grades had gone down and behavior at school had become an issue. The team wanted to make sure that Savannah was meeting her potential and was prepared for success in high school. Savannah's biological mother Tessa was part of that team. Tessa was 15 when she had Savannah and had allowed family members to adopt her as a baby. Tessa remained in Savannah's life and planned for that to always be the case. Unfortunately, when Savannah was 14 she was removed from her adoptive family and placed in foster care. Now that Savannah was in the care of the child welfare system, Tessa wanted to make sure Savannah was cared for and that included her education. This made Tessa the perfect Education Champion. Savannah, together with her Education Champion, decided what the best school placement for her was, and Savannah and her team set education goals together. FosterEd made sure that Tessa had access to all of Savannah's educational records and had open communication with her school. Tessa monitored attendance, grades, and behavior. She made sure the team celebrated successes – and there was a lot to celebrate. Savannah graduated 8th grade successfully and started 9th grade after participating in a summer bridge program for incoming freshmen. She participated in clubs and engaged positively in after school activities. Savannah eventually was placed back in her mother's care, and is now a high school senior on track to graduate.

America's College Fund for Foster Youth

In 1981, Joseph Rivers founded **Foster Care to Success** (FC2S) under the name "Orphan Foundation of America". Having spent his entire childhood in a Syracuse, New York orphanage, he knew firsthand how difficult it is to turn 18 and enter the world of adulthood with no caring support system. Over the years, FC2S has shaped public policy, volunteer initiatives, and the programs of other organizations working with older foster youth. Our decades of experience helped shape the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and the design of the Education Training Voucher (ETV) Program. When the Department of Health and Human Services issued guidelines for ETV grant administration, FC2S was listed as the preeminent authority. Our work has been acknowledged by every White House Administration since that of George Bush, Sr. in 1989.

Nationwide, less than 10 percent of foster youth graduate from college. However, that dire statistic does not define the students FC2S has worked with for the last 33 years. With ongoing, consistent support and financial aid, students progress and graduate at rates closer to their non-foster care peers.

"Many of our students and alumni would not be where they are – in colleges and training programs, making careers, and raising families – were it not for the support of a special person or organization. Foster parents, caseworkers, CASAs (Court Appointed Special Advocates), educators, mentors, coaches and more all make a difference in the lives of America's foster youth. We are proud to celebrate these Foster Care Heroes !

Find out more about Foster Care to Success at <http://www.fc2success.org/>

Flagstaff's Alternative High Schools



Summit High School <https://www.fusd1.org/>

Summit is an accredited high school that offers an alternative to the traditional high school model for 9-12 grade students who want to continue their education and experience personal growth. Summit High School recognizes that there can be challenges in a student's personal environment, peer interactions, or academic performance. Therefore, special attention and assistance are given to facilitate growth and understanding of self and others. Students are instructed with techniques that allow them to take control of the areas in which they are experiencing difficulty. By utilizing smaller class sizes, a block schedule, and a

focus on graduation requirements, Summit can help students recover credits, graduate, and prepare for their future.

Students also have the opportunity to learn the soft skills required to obtain and maintain competitive employment in our community. They earn an elective credit by working with a job coach at The Continental County Club

Fit Kids—The Fit Kids program at Summit High School is provided through a partnership with Northern Arizona Healthcare. This program seeks to provide youth with opportunities to become more physically active and fit through exercise and nutrition.

Art Club— The Art Club is an after school activity that provides materials, instruction and support for those students who are seeking a creative outlet in addition to their academic schedule.

Outdoor Service Training Trips combine recreation, outdoor skill building, stewardship and valuable hands-on learning experiences, in addition to good views, good food and good company.

Ponderosa High School <http://www.ccasdaz.org/schools/ponderosa-high-school/>

Ponderosa High School is a fully accredited high school that has been working with diverse student populations since 2005. PHS offers a supportive, non-traditional effective learning environment for students by providing a flexible education that takes into consideration the learning styles and individual needs of our students. Although flexible in our approach, the academic setting and curriculum of PHS addresses all of the Arizona Merit Standards as well as individual high school graduation requirements.

PHS offers small class sizes and highly qualified teachers, as well as individualized services for students and their families. PHS provides a caring and supportive environment where rules and regulations are clearly defined and fairly and consistently enforced.

PHS accepts students throughout Coconino County. Our mission is to prepare and motivate students to pursue entry into the world of work, professional programs, or educational opportunities after high school graduation.

They offer Dual Enrollment at CCC to help students get a head start on their college education.

Student Leadership is encouraged through community activism projects for local non-profits

The Ponderosa High School Greenhouse and Sustainability program is a hands-on learning laboratory providing students the opportunity to engage in land stewardship practices that nurture scientific literacy, civic responsibility, and personal wellness. The self-sustained greenhouse allows students a practical hands-on learning experience, coupled with a gardening area, hoop house for high altitude gardening and aquaculture project – all designed with the help and innovation of students. Selected students participate in the Kane Ranch Ecological Restoration Project.

Letter from our Coordinator

Greetings!

I'm excited to share with you what I have been doing in my new assignment. As the CASA Recruitment and Training Coordinator, I've been focused on spreading the word as to what CASA of Coconino County is and what the CASA volunteers do.

In order to refine my message, I've been focused on learning as much as possible. I've attended numerous training opportunities, attended court proceedings, participated in Child & Family Team (CFT) meetings, and observed Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) sessions.

An element of my job is arranging, scheduling, and facilitating training and educational opportunities. Please, join me at some of the upcoming events you can find on the latest CASA Calendar. I'm looking forward to them!

My other focus is on the recruitment of more CASA volunteers. Being new to the area, as I just moved here in December, I've enjoyed traveling around Flagstaff and Coconino County. Traveling to Williams for a day was very productive. I met many of the various civic agencies and I reached out to the local churches. The Williams newspaper published an article I sent them about CASA. My goal is to visit Williams at least once a month.

My visit to Page was another successful daytrip. I had a productive meeting with the CASA Volunteers. The local civic agencies that I contacted were very supportive of my recruitment activities. I will be traveling to Page up to twice a month, so that I can continue to support the CASA volunteers there and further my recruitment efforts.

The local newspaper in Munds Park, Pinewood News, has also published our article about CASA of Coconino County. Soon, I'll be traveling to Munds Park to engage with that community.

As we move forward, please reach out to me if you have any questions. I'm here to support you with your training needs; your areas of interest. You are welcome to share my contact information with friends; especially if they are interested in knowing more about volunteering as a CASA Advocate.

Thank you for your dedicated service and all that you do for the children here in Coconino County.



Cheers!

Felicia Bicknell
CASA Recruitment and
Training Coordinator



August 2018

Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
			1	2	3	4
					Monthly CASA Contact Logs Due	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
				12:00 – 1:00 PM Best for Babies meeting: Location: Juvenile Court		
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		Victim's Rights Training 1:30-3:00 PM Juvenile Court	Small Group Discussion 3:00–4:30 PM Karen Getto's home		8:00 AM – 5:00 PM CASA ACADEMY Juvenile Court Day 1	8:00 AM – 5:00 PM CASA ACADEMY Juvenile Court Day 2
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		CFT Training 12:00 – 2:00 PM Juvenile Court RSVP to Bethany.Camp @steward.org	Small Group Discussion 11:30–1:00 PM Juvenile Court Victim's Rights Training 5:30- 7:00PM Juvenile Court			
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Coconino County is excited to offer services to fit your busy summer schedule.

Introducing Super Service Saturdays!

2nd Saturday of each month

July 14, August 11, September 8

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

2625 N. King Street, Flagstaff

Services available include:

- ✦ Immunizations ✦ Sexual Health Clinic ✦ WIC Services
- ✦ Financial Empowerment Workshops (registration required)
- ✦ Rental/Utility Bill Assistance (by appt.) ✦ Job Seeker's Resources ✦ Educational Resources ✦ Dog Licensing
- ✦ Food Handler's Certification information ✦ Sports Physicals and MORE!

Regular fees apply.



Students get a **FREE Backpack** when they get a Back-to-School shot or Sports Physical on July 14 and August 11—while supplies last.

More information at
www.coconino.az.gov/
SuperServiceSaturday
or 928-679-7120.



**August 31–
September 3**

coconinocountyfair.com/



**Assistance League- Operation School Bell/
Thrift Shop Vouchers**

The ALF Operation School Bell (OSB)® program has provided new school clothes, shoes, a health kit and a new book to children in the Flagstaff Unified School District since 1997. Personnel at the elementary and middle schools identify children in need and obtain the necessary parental approved forms. More than 1770 children were served last year.

The local Operation School Bell program is part of the National Assistance League program. Last year over 12,150 individuals received complete outfits through our thrift shop voucher program. You can ask for a referral from your school counselor or DCS Case Manager.

Low-cost Sports Physicals

Low-cost sports physicals in compliance with the Arizona Interscholastic Association are available.

- **\$20** payable by cash, check or charge
- Appointments available—call 928-679-7222
- Minors must be accompanied by a guardian

2625 N. King St.,
Flagstaff
928-679-7222

 **PUBLIC HEALTH
SERVICES DISTRICT
COCONINO COUNTY**



Now that kids are back in school it's the perfect time for us as adults to step back into reading too—and just in time for National Book Lover's Day on August 9. *Why not get reading and training done at the same time? Remember, you need twelve training hours annually! And, we have several books in our office! You may be familiar with titles like "Three Little Words" and "I Speak for This Child" (and if you aren't, start there!) but here are some recommendations from our state trainer, Krissa Ericson, that you may not have heard of before:*

Born for Love: Why Empathy is Essential-and Endangered by Bruce Perry and Maia Szalavitz From goodreads.com: "An inside look at the power of empathy: Born for Love is an unprecedented exploration of how and why the brain learns to bond with others—and a stirring call to protect our children from new threats to their capacity to love. In this provocative book, renowned child psychiatrist Bruce D. Perry and award-winning science journalist Maia Szalavitz interweave research and stories from Perry's practice with cutting-edge scientific studies and historical examples to explain how empathy develops, why it is essential for our development into healthy adults, and how it is threatened in the modern world."

To the End of June: The Intimate Life of Amercian Foster Care by Cris Beam

From goodreads.com: "The book mirrors the life cycle of a foster child and so begins with the removal of babies and kids from birth families. Beam then paints an unprecedented portrait of the intricacies of growing up in the system, the back-and-forth with agencies, the shuffling between pre-adoptive homes and group homes, the emotionally charged tug of prospective adoptive parents and the fundamental pull of birth parents. And then what happens as these system-reared kids become adults? Beam closely follows a group of teenagers in New York who are grappling with what aging out will mean for them and meets a woman who has parented eleven kids from the system, almost all over the age of eighteen, and all still in desperate need of a sense of home and belonging..."

"Focusing intensely on a few foster families who are deeply invested in the system's success, "To the End of June" is essential for humanizing and challenging a broken system, while at the same time it is a tribute to resiliency and offers hope for real change."

Another Place at the Table by Kathy Harrison

From goodreads.com: "For more than a decade, Kathy Harrison has sheltered a shifting cast of troubled youngsters—the offspring of prostitutes and addicts; the sons and daughters of abusers; and teenage parents who aren't equipped for parenthood. All this, in addition to raising her three biological sons and two adopted daughters. What would motivate someone to give herself over to constant, largely uncompensated chaos? For Harrison, the answer is easy. "Another Place at the Table" is the story of life at our social services' front lines, centered on three children who, when they come together in Harrison's home, nearly destroy it. It is the frank first-person story of a woman whose compassionate best intentions for a child are sometimes all that stand between violence and redemption."

Invisible Kids: Marcus Fiesel's Legacy by Holly Schlaack

From goodreads.com: "When Marcus Fiesel's story of torture, abandonment, and a slow, agonizing death came to light, it was not exactly news to Holly Schlaack. She was an insider in the foster care system and Marcus's horrible experience was just an extreme example of how she knew the system could fail. Happily, Holly had also seen some success stories that were as inspiring as Marcus's story was appalling. So she set out to create a way for there to be more happy endings. This book is part of the effort. Invisible Kids tells the stories of many children and foster families. It tells them straight and backs them up with statistics and facts that show why the system works, why it doesn't, and where it needs help... It also identifies more than a dozen ways, large and small, anyone can apply to make a difference. Invisible Kids goes in-depth so practical approaches and real solutions can surface."

Training Webinars

How Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Can Help Prevent Bullying

Wednesday, August 8 at 9 a.m. MST – 10 a.m. MST

“latest research on bullying among children and adolescents and explore strategies or using social and emotional learning (SEL) to prevent bullying...”

Space is limited, so please register now. The recording and slides will be posted on our website:

<http://www.childreissafetynetwork.org/webinars>. It may take up to two weeks for the recording to be posted.

ACEs: The Role of Life Experiences in Shaping Brain Development

Thursday, August 9 at 9 a.m. MST

Childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on our lifelong health and opportunity. So, early experiences are an important public health issue. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can put young people at significant risk for substance use disorders and can impact prevention and substance use recovery efforts. It's an insightful approach community and education leaders can implement to increase protective factors and reduce the impact of ACEs for children and adolescents. A certificate of completion will be provided to participants who take the entire webinar training. This is a one hour training. Visit <https://www.tn.gov/tccy/tccy-aces> for additional ACEs resources. Building Strong Brains is supported by an investment of the Tennessee Department of Health and its partners including the School of Social Work, University of Memphis.

Click here to register: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/4233424723102992130>

Anxiety and Depression in Adoptees and Foster Youth

Tuesday, August 14 at 10 a.m. MST

Despite our best efforts, adoptees and foster youth can experience anxiety, depression and ongoing feelings of instability. Join us for a free webinar with Marie Ridgeway MSW, LICSW, RYT,, and Leah Strom, Director of Social Work at CH/LSS, MSW, LISW, to learn about the symptoms of anxiety and depression, common causes for these conditions, and tools for addressing the anxiety and/or depression you or someone you love is facing.

This webinar will cover origins of anxiety and depression for adoptees and foster youth, how to help adoptees and foster youth through symptoms of anxiety and depression, creating a secure base for those affected by anxiety and depression, and the importance of self-care in caregivers. Certificates of Attendance and CEUs will be provided to attendees. This webinar will be recorded. Recordings will be sent out to those who register for the live event.

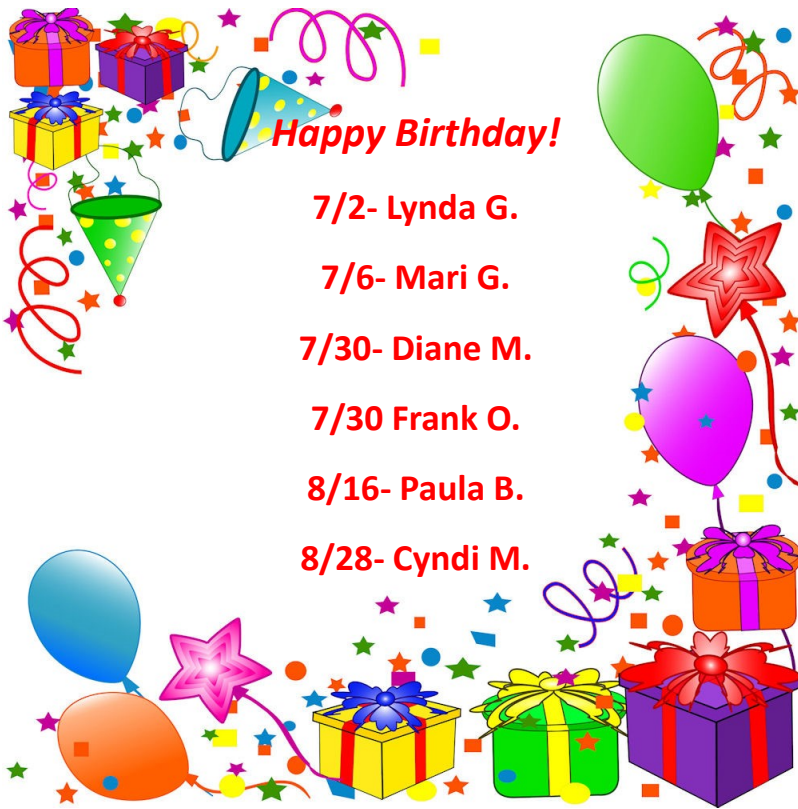
Click here to register: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6090539445366433795>

Child Welfare Cases: Addressing the Unique Needs of American Indian and Alaska Native Families

Thursday, August 23 at 10 a.m. PT / 1 p.m. ET

This webinar will explore both the foundational information of how domestic violence impacts children and how the system treats domestic violence victims while also addressing unique issues that can arise when American Indian and Alaska Native children are involved. Understanding both statutory and cultural considerations will assist everyone to be more helpful to families in these difficult cases while also promoting statutory compliance. Suggestions for solutions will be discussed along with identified resiliency factors specific to American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Participants will learn about statutory requirements of ICWA and how they might impact Domestic Violence cases. Participants will also understand more about American Indian history, trauma, and cultural concerns and gain some ideas of how to most effectively assist families in these situations.

Presented by: Terri Yellowhammer Click here to register: <https://rcdvcpc.org/hhschildwelfare22018>



Happy Birthday!

7/2- Lynda G.

7/6- Mari G.

7/30- Diane M.

7/30 Frank O.

8/16- Paula B.

8/28- Cyndi M.

*"Educating the mind without
educating the heart is no
education at all."*

~Aristotle

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COCONINO CASA FOR KIDS

Supporting the work of CASAs and abused,
neglected and abandoned children

www.coconinocasaforkids.org

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