CASA of Washington County Indiana Newsletter

CASA in the Community

born.
A BOUTIQUE FOR THE DREAMER + FREE THINKER

Small Business Saturday was held November 26, 2022. Small Business Saturday promotes shopping at and supporting small businesses after the Thanksgiving Holiday. This year, Born, a boutique on the Salem Square in the former Sisters location, donated a percentage of their profits on Small Business Saturday to CASA of Washington County! Born's owner, Lakin Jones, said she recently discovered CASA of Washington County and was impressed enough with the mission of the organization and the work our amazing volunteers do for youth in Washington County, she decided to give back. CASA of Washington County wants to thank Lakin and her generosity! If you are out and about, stop in to Born and say thank you to Lakin for her support!

In addition to a Code of Ethics, some of which were highlighted in previous newsletters, CASA of Washington County also operates under a set of Best Practices set forth by the State of Indiana GAL/CASA Office. Best Practices are in place to support and strengthen our program, and it is important we all understand them.

This month we are going to take a deeper look at the policy set forth regarding Continuing Contact with Children upon Case Closure.

The role of the CASA volunteer is completed at the time that the court dismisses the CHINS case. Contact with the child/ren after case closure is not expected nor suggested. However, it is allowed if the child or family members initiate contact with the volunteer. In these instances the volunteer needs to be aware of the following:

1. The volunteer should let the program director know of any ongoing contact with a child or family from a former case.
2. If contact is initiated and the volunteer wishes to continue contact, it is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the family that from that point forward they are acting in the role as a **family support and not as a CASA volunteer**.
3. The volunteer should not take the child/ren into their home or integrate their families.
4. If the volunteer suspects any abuse or neglect at any time, they must call and report to the Child Abuse Hotline—1-800-800-5556.
5. The CASA volunteer will no longer have civil immunity from liability as they will not be acting in the role of a CASA volunteer.

If the case does have to be reopened in the future, the CASA volunteer would likely **not** be reassigned to the case because of their involvement with the family outside of the court case because the volunteer would be viewed as a friend of the family and not a disinterested third party. Any ongoing contact between a former volunteer and families will be documented in Optima in the closed case.

Volunteer Spotlight

Rosemary Jones

Rosemary Jones was sworn in as a CASA in June 2018. During her time as a CASA Volunteer Rosemary served as an advocate on one case for two children: Cameron and Marissa. Cameron and Marissa were removed from their home in 2018, shortly after Rosemary became a CASA volunteer and Rosemary was assigned to their case. During their 4 years in the foster care system Cameron and Marissa lived in **five** separate placements, never in the same town, cycled through multiple DCS Family Case Managers, therapists, case workers, and others involved in their case. **The one person who remained constant in Cameron and Marissa's lives was Rosemary.** Rosemary advocated for Cameron and Marissa's best interests for 4 years. Rosemary was there during all the transitions in Cameron and Marissa's lives, throughout a Termination of Parental Rights that was appealed all the way to the Indiana Supreme Court, through adoptive family interviews, and everything that came in between. This is why October 5, 2022 is a day for Rosemary to celebrate. After 4 years of advocating for Cameron and Marissa, Rosemary got to attend their adoption! Rosemary says she couldn't be more thrilled that Cameron and Marissa finally have a home with a wonderful mom and dad who provide for their every need and keep them safe. Thank you so much Rosemary for your time, dedication, and passion. Success stories like this would not be possible without wonderful advocates like you!

Please do not share these photos outside the CASA of WC network—everyone receiving them in this newsletter is bound by confidentiality.

Birthdays and anniversaries

October

10/4—Dustin Howard (Birthday)

10/5—Brenda and Gli Castueras (8 years as CASA volunteers)

10/6—Terry Thixton (7 years of service)

10/13—Justin Elliott (Birthday)

10/18—Brent Minton (Board Member, Birthday)

10/21—Aubrey Dufour (Birthday)

10/22—Justin Elliott (4 years as a CASA volunteer)

November

11/1—Dustin Howard (6 years as a CASA volunteer)

11/7—Heather Padgett (Birthday)

11/13—Gli Castueras (Birthday)

11/17—Amber Colwell (6 years as a CASA volunteer)

11/29—Laurie Carr (Birthday)

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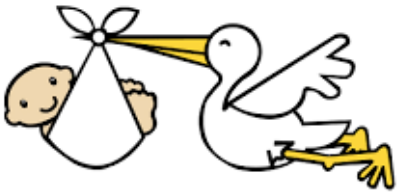
Please enter all training hours in Optima. You must have 12 hours of continuing education per year and it must be documented in Optima. The training catalog on our website, www.casawc.org, has lots of webinars and trainings that will satisfy the requirement. In addition, the State CASA office offers a monthly training academy that Courtney sends to all volunteers. If you need access to these trainings, please let Courtney know. Volunteers sworn in in 2022 can prorate their training hours based on when they were sworn in. If you need to know how many training hours you have completed, and/or still need for 2022, let Courtney know!



Courtney will be on maternity leave beginning (roughly) at the end of February/beginning of March (babies can be unpredictable as we all know!) The Board of Directors has been working on creating a plan for this time and the plans will be passed along to all volunteers when they are finalized!

AND REMEMBER

IF IT ISN'T IN

Optima™

THEN IT DIDN'T HAPPEN!