

# THE Children's Advocate

Summer/Fall 2008

A Publication of CASA, Inc. of Nashville & Davidson County • 601 Woodland Street • Nashville, Tennessee 37206 • 615-425-2383

## *A Cultural Perspective...*

This case is an example of the unique and often, delicate circumstances involving various cultures. CASA was appointed to a Kurdish family of 6 children ranging in age from six to fifteen years old. CASA volunteer, Anne Slosky, accepted this case. Sadi, the oldest, came into DCS custody due to a severe injury to her arm allegedly inflicted by her mother. At the trial, there were abuse findings against the mother and two neglect/dependent findings against both parents. One of the other teens, Bada, had told Anne she also wanted to go into foster care because she did not want to stay in the abusive home. Anne relayed the request to the Judge who agreed to hear the child's testimony. An order of removal was the result and Bada was brought into State's custody as well. She was placed with the daughter of Sadi's foster mother and the girls were able to visit each other frequently.

The biological parents were angry and uncooperative with both DCS and CASA because in their culture minor females raised in Kurdish homes are not allowed to spend the night away from an adult female relative. The fact that the girls were placed in foster care greatly endangered their chances of eventually finding a suitable husband within their own culture. The parents were also deeply wounded when the girls chose to stop wearing the traditional head covering and to begin attending Christian church services with their foster parents. The parents stated that they resented the state government for taking their children when they felt they had the right to discipline them as they wished. They were slow to respond to any assistance, uncooperative and hesitantly worked the permanency plan they were assigned that might allow them to get the girls back. Sadi and Bada declared they did not want to return to their parents' home where they maintained they had been subjected to domestic violence and lying from their parents their entire lives. Even in court, with an interpreter present, the parents blasted angry, hurtful things to Sadi and Bada.

There was obviously a conflict between the parents wanting to raise the children in their own customs and the children wanting to become Americanized. Does the system have the right to interfere with that? Should the girls have been allowed to shun their family religion and customs? Do the parents have the right to discipline so harshly it is considered abuse in America just because it may be accepted in their culture? These were just some of the questions raised in this case.

Another issue with all of the children was education. The biological parents did not value education so as a result, the children didn't either. Anne encouraged the children to apply themselves to their schoolwork and coached them on the importance of education for realizing one's full potential. She developed relationships with the teachers and school counselors monitoring how the children were doing scholastically, emotionally and behaviorally.

During their 16 months in foster care, Anne saw Sadi and Bada become emotionally stronger and develop self respect. Anne's observations were that the girls had made great strides and were both thriving and happy and doing well in school. In court, she recommended Permanent Guardianship with the foster parents and finally the biological parents agreed.

Both girls remain in close contact with each other and are relieved that they will never have to go back into a home where they were consistently physically and verbally abused not only by their parents but also their brothers.

As for the other four children; they remain in the biological home and have reported to Anne that life there has improved and that punishment is no longer physical in nature. They hope to re-establish a relationship with Sadi and Bada at some point in the future.

Anne was a strong voice for Sadi and Bada, weighing their needs and wishes with the cultural aspects of the situation. Anne observed that the girls were now experiencing the safety, respect and joy, to which all children are entitled, and they did not want to give that up - nor should they have to. Sadi and Bada were very open with Anne about their feelings and what they had been through and she strongly advocated for

them. They trusted her to always be truthful and they grew to know she was always there to support them. As she exited this case, Anne was able to provide the foster parents with contact information for state funding for further educational/vocational opportunities. Both girls expressed their desire and determination to follow this course toward successful independence.



### **CASA Mission Statement:**

*Provide trained community volunteers to advocate for the best interests of children who come to the attention of the court primarily as a result of abuse or neglect.*

Last year 235 volunteer special advocates helped find safe, permanent homes for 466 abused, neglected children.



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Executive Director

2008-2009

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*a message from...*

## THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The longer I live, the better I understand the power of collective energy. This past fiscal year 2007-08 at CASA, Inc. we have experienced increased momentum and incremental growth due to the collective efforts of many people. I witnessed teamwork from the CASA, Inc. staff this year that went above any I've seen anywhere before and I want to applaud them for their dedication and hard work. Additionally, we had the benefit of an AmeriCorp VISTA member working full-time to help us recruit new volunteers and increase community awareness of CASA in Davidson County. Jenny Magill has proven her worth in that role to the extent that we recruited and trained 61 new volunteer Special Advocates. I am pleased to announce that we were awarded a National CASA expansion grant to bring her on as a full-time paid staff member beginning September 1, 2008.

The Board of Directors, under the leadership of Andy Williams, worked hard to raise money and to spread the word about the great work of our volunteers. I can't say enough about how much it means to have an active and dedicated board supporting our efforts.

Of course, without our donors, we could not exist. I am humbled by the number of individual, corporate and foundation financial supporters who understand the life changing work our volunteers do. Please know we work hard to maximize every dollar so we can intervene in the lives of more child victims and help stop the cycle of abuse.

I am in awe of the people who voluntarily serve as Court Appointed Special Advocates for our agency. This 2007-08 fiscal year, 235 trained community volunteers advocated on behalf of 466 abused and neglected children in Davidson County. The results of their work cannot adequately be measured statistically. Nor will we ever know all the long-term positive effects they have on individual children's lives. However, CASA volunteers continue to do this work because THEY know the value of their hard work. They see it in the eyes of the children. They feel it in the hugs they get from the children. They hear it when the judge adopts their recommendations for the safety of the children. That's when they know their work was well worth it and then they ask for another case!

So for the collective energy of the staff, our board, our loyal donors and our extraordinary volunteer Special Advocates, I offer my heartfelt appreciation. I look forward to another year of growth for CASA, Inc. during 2008-09.

### When One Door Closes...

Since our inception in 1984, CASA, Inc. has been very fortunate to have the support of foundations, corporations and individuals, allowing us to grow and serve more child victims of abuse year after year.

Two types of United Way contributions have also played a vital role in our success – workplace designated gifts and United Way's Outcome Based Investment grant, or OBI. The workplace designated gifts come directly from companies that make it possible for employees to participate in the United Way campaign every year.

The Outcome Based Investment grant is a three-year funding cycle made available by United Way. It is based on a changing criterion of community needs, as determined by a panel of community volunteers.

However, as of July 1, 2008, due to new, very narrow criteria set by United Way, CASA Inc. no longer qualifies for this grant. The OBI grant has represented 11% of CASA's annual budget in previous years, and our agency is working diligently to make up this significant shortfall. Our staff and board of directors are researching new funding opportunities by building relationships with new foundations and corporations. Additionally, we'll need the support of individual donors now more than ever.

When it comes time to make your workplace designated gift through United Way, please think of CASA. Our United Way agency number is 7017.

You can also choose to make your tax-deductible contribution directly to CASA using the attached envelope or through our web site, [www.casa-nashville.org](http://www.casa-nashville.org). If you have any questions about this issue, please contact the development office at (615) 425-2383. CASA appreciates your support!



*It is well documented that children with a CASA spend an average of 10 fewer months in foster care.*





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February 1, 2008 – June 30, 2008

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We apologize if we have omitted your name or listed you incorrectly. Please notify us of our error by calling Jeri at 425-2383.

Donating to CASA is easy at our website— [www.casa-nashville.org](http://www.casa-nashville.org)

## Congratulations CASA Graduates!



### February 2008 Graduating Class:

Back Row – L to R: Mick McClendon, CASA Board President Andy Williams, Andrew Graeve, Mark Scritchfield, Skip Ewing, Larry Shaw, Lindsay Dillingham, Chris Rainey, Sandy Cooper, James McLendon, Kate Chronic, Aaron Corley  
Middle Row – L to R: Roslyn Curry, Mara Giovanni, Leslie Daniels, Gay Dement, Rachel Perkins, Susan Creavin, Carolyn Jun-Roberts, CASA Executive Director Jane Andrews,  
Seated: Nancy Yelton, Carolyn Martin and Joe Woolley



### May 2008 Graduating Class

Left to Right: Shonta' Sawyers, Benjamin Smith, Rebecca Hollis, Meaghan Neill, Kate Brown, Judge Betty Adams Green, Laura Miller, Valda Barksdale, Kevin Eckerman, Elizabeth Ingle, Cindy Brooks

### June 2008 Graduating Class

Left to Right: Kim Sanders, CASA Executive Director Jane Andrews, Nell Rachide



# 9th Annual Light of Hope Red Shoe Party



Randy Moore & the Fabulous Suedes



Red Shoe Conga Line



Barbara and Mike Schwartz



Girls Night Out!

Gary and Diane Brand



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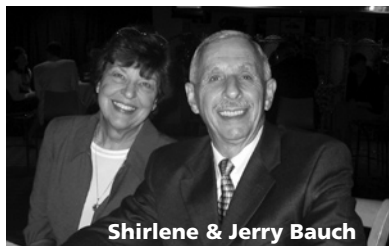
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Our signature annual fundraiser generated over \$82,000 net proceeds. We appreciate all who support CASA, Inc. through this event.



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

601 Woodland Street  
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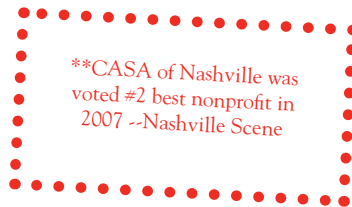
## Save the Dates:

**CASA College - 2008**

August 18 – September 25

October 13 – November 20

Go to our website – [www.casa-nashville.org](http://www.casa-nashville.org) for 2009 training dates!



### **SHELBY BOTTOMS BOOGIE - 15k/5k race**

**Saturday, September 27th** at Shelby Bottoms Park in East Nashville. Hundreds of runners and walkers will enjoy a flat, fast race course along the Cumberland River while raising money for a great cause -- CASA! We are excited to announce that ALL proceeds from the event will benefit CASA's volunteer program!

We are currently forming a small race committee to coordinate planning and sponsorships for the event. If you are interested in this or helping in ANY way contact Jenny Magill at [jmagill@casa-nashville.org](mailto:jmagill@casa-nashville.org) or 425-2383.

### **EDGEFIELD UNCORKED!**

A weekend of charity events to celebrate the Historic Edgefield community

Proceeds benefit CASA, East Nashville Hope Exchange and Warner Public School

Saturday, Sept. 27 from 5:30-7pm – Wine tasting, local foods and live music at St. Ann's Episcopal Church

Sunday, Sept. 28 from 1 – 5pm – Nashville's Original Home Tour

For ticket information go to [www.edgefielduncorked.org](http://www.edgefielduncorked.org)

### **Annual ACC vs. SEC Golf Tournament presented by AT&T**

**October 13, 2008** Benefiting CASA at the Hermitage Golf Club

Visit [www.accsec-golf4casa.org](http://www.accsec-golf4casa.org) to learn more

### **"Christmas for CASA"**

**Thursday, December 11th** at *The Limelight* on Woodland Street

A benefit concert to honor our volunteers featuring fabulous artists including Jonell Mosser, Skip Ewing, Cerrito and more....



**When foster children are  
bounced around, they can  
end up feeling homeless.  
Please help now**

Donating to CASA is easy at our website  
[www.casa-nashville.org](http://www.casa-nashville.org)

Wish List:  
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Laser Printer  
Paper Shredder

**ELECTRONIC NEWSLETTERS** — In order to be better stewards of our resources CASA will only send one printed newsletter at the beginning of a new fiscal year and quarterly e-newsletters thereafter. In order to receive our e-newsletter, please send your email address to [casa@casa-nashville.org](mailto:casa@casa-nashville.org), write it on your donation envelope or give Jeri a call at 615-425-2383. You can also enter it in our email sign up form on our website – [www.casa-nashville.org](http://www.casa-nashville.org).

This project is partially funded under an agreement with the State of Tennessee