

# ❖ **CASA** matters ❖

**CASA of the Tennessee Heartland, Inc.**

**December 2006**

Court Appointed Special Advocates for Abused and Neglected Children  
Serving Anderson, Morgan, Roane, and Scott Counties

## **The Face of CASA**

by Liz Goodlaxson

The public never sees the court reports. Even seasoned caseworkers are sobered anew with what they contain. The public hears “abuse and neglect,” but what that really means is both horrific and tragic. Often one or both biological parents are missing or in prison. Children are living in squalid conditions with no electricity. Parents are repeatedly arrested for domestic assault, animal abuse, child abuse, DUI, making meth, smoking crack, or soliciting for prostitution.

Because of confidentiality, the public hears

“abuse and neglect” but what it means to CASA is that a child is waiting.

So many of CASA’s cases involve substance abuse, and children become the tragic victims of these addictions. Addicted parents often end up not caring about their own children’s welfare and safety.

The following poem is about severe addiction to Meth, but can apply to any addiction that supplants the provision of responsible love and basic needs that all children require to thrive.



### ***THE FACE OF METH***

***I destroy homes. I tear families apart.***  
***I take your children and that is just a start.***



I am more valued than diamonds, more precious than gold.

The sorrow I bring is a sight to behold.

If you need me, remember I am easily found.

I live all around you in schools and town.

I live with the rich and with the poor.

I live down the street and maybe next door.

I have a job, but not like you think.

I can even be made under your kitchen sink,

in your child’s closet and even in the woods.

If this scares you to death, then it certainly should.

I have many names, but one you know best.

My name is Crystal Meth.

My power is awesome, try me and see.

But if you do, you may not break free.

Just try me once, I might let you go.

But, if you try me twice then I am your soul.

When I possess you, you will steal and you will lie.

You will do what you must just to get high.

The crimes you will commit for my narcotic charms,

will be worth the pleasure you feel in my arms.

You will lie to your mother and steal from your dad.

When you see the tears, you must feel sad.

Just forget your morals and how you were raised,

I’ll be your conscience, I will teach you my ways.

***I take kids from parents, I take parents from kids.***

I take people from God. I separate friends.

I will be your master and you will be my slave.

I’ll even help take you straight to your grave.

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## CASA Thoughts

By Michelle Brandenburg, President

As I drove home with my husband from Thanksgiving dinner with relatives, I couldn't help but notice the Christmas decorations going up. Everywhere I looked I was vividly reminded of how thankful I am for all of you that support CASA of the Tennessee Heartland. Because of the tireless work of the board, committees, volunteers and staff our vision of a safe home for children everyday of the year is a valid one.

The merchandise we sell in the Heartland Products Shop and our unique and joyful fundraising events we plan and participate in mean one thing-awareness and support for the work of this organization. Each and everyone of you are ambassadors for CASA. Don't let this holiday season pass without remembering those who have no voice. Abused and neglected children are counting on us.



## Eventide

A book review by Cindy Koehler

Kent Haruf's novel Eventide is a beautifully written story that takes place in the High Plains community of Holt, Colorado. With compassion and humor, Haruf masterfully intertwines details about the lives of local residents to create a mosaic of community life.

Of particular interest to CASA supporters will be the lives of Joy Rae and Richie, the children of disabled parents who are abused by a violent relative. Haruf vividly creates a portrait of a family that exists on the outskirts of society and that is doomed by the physical and mental limitations of the caregivers. While many readers will wish the fictional Rose Tyler, the concerned and kindly social services worker, to be real and assigned to their CASA kids, unembellished details of physical abuse, juvenile court proceedings and supervised visitation make this novel less fiction and more true-life.

Eventide resonates because of the strength of its characters. Haruf brings together people such as the elderly McPheron brothers and the single mother and her daughter who become a part of their family, an isolated boy who lives alone with his grandfather, and two young girls in a single parent family. These characters are respectfully and lovingly treated by the author and the result is a story of people who leave their world a better place for their having been a part of it.

Eventide is wonderful and highly recommended. Check your library for availability. The book was published in 2004 by Alfred A. Knopf.

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## News from Heartland Counties

### ROANE COUNTY

The year 2006 was a year of growth for the Roane County CASA program. The support and commitment afforded the program by the Honorable Jeff Wicks and the Roane County Juvenile Court Clerk's office, has helped us improve our ability to effectively advocate for the abused and neglected children of Roane County. Without our dedicated CASA volunteers, many of whom carry multiple case loads, the program would not exist. It is only through the conscientious efforts of these CASA advocates that

our abused and neglected children have a voice in Roane County.

We are pleased to announce the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual 5K Leprechaun Run for the benefit of the CASA Roane County Program, which will be held St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 2006 on the campus of Roane State Community College in Harriman. Start training and stay tuned for what will certainly become a yearly event in Roane county. For more information, please contact Lou Devillon at 865-882-6111.

### SCOTT COUNTY

Since the last issue of CASA Matters, the Scott County CASA program has been hopping! In September, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Fun Run benefited the local program again. Our Great Pumpkin No Go Gala was a wonderful success due to our gracious supporters. The first ATV Extravaganza was held on October 14<sup>th</sup> and all proceeds went to our Scott County Program. It was a blast of fun for the entire family. We are looking forward to reaping the benefits of this event year after year.

Currently, the Scott County Steering Committee and staff's fundraising minds are "waddling!" We have officially kicked off our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual CASA's Penguin Plunge and it will be here before you know it. See Page 4 for more details. These fundraisers benefit

the heart of our existence, the children! The Scott County Program is currently serving 36 children through our 10 active CASA volunteers. Regrettably, there are nine children who are on a waiting list because there are no available CASA volunteers to provide these children with advocacy. One remedy to this unfortunate situation is to offer training. The Scott County Program Office is currently recruiting potential CASA volunteers and will be providing a training course in late February 2007.

If you or anyone you know is interested in becoming a CASA volunteer or would like additional information on the Penguin Plunge or the CASA program in general, please feel free to contact the Scott County CASA Office at 423-663-8943.

### ANDERSON COUNTY

Since June 2006, the Anderson County program has received 37 new referrals which involve 54 children. Thirty-eight volunteers are currently providing advocacy services to 66 CASA children, but many more advocates are needed. New volunteer training is scheduled to start early in 2007. Call 865-463-6850 if you are interested in joining this class.

In September Anderson County said good-bye to longtime Juvenile Court Judge Pat Hess and welcomed the Honorable April Meldrum to the bench with a Board hosted reception. New advocacy strate-

gies are being developed so that CASA can most effectively serve the new court and CASA children.

Staff held several well attended in-services. The movie White Oleander was screened and discussion followed. Queried one volunteer, "Has this movie ever been analyzed to the extent that we have done so tonight?" CASAs are not reticent! Additionally, Cyndy Bailes led a group discussion at a lunch/in-service for Anderson County CASAs. Volunteers were provided with pizza and the opportunity to discuss case progress and concerns.

### MORGAN COUNTY

Morgan County has two new CASA volunteers. Amy Keith and Tanya Beene were sworn in by the Honorable Mike Davis, General Sessions judge in Morgan county. Both Ms. Keith and Ms. Beene are experienced CASA volunteers and will be advocating for Morgan County children. Lou Devillon, the Roane County Program Coordinator is the interim coordina-

tor in Morgan County. We are looking for free or low cost office space in Wartburg as well as community support for the Morgan County CASA program. We need volunteers, not only as child advocates, but also to provide support for CASA events and activities during the year. For more information contact Mr. Devillon at 865-882-6111.



## Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash Coming Soon

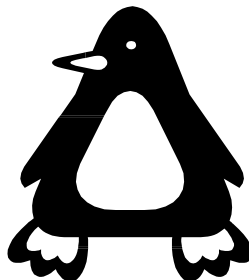
It's a hoedown complete with a live banjo pickin', fiddle playing bluegrass band! It's a barbeque! It's an auction! It's a darn good time and it's happening Saturday, February 24 at 6 PM. The 4th Annual Bluegrass and Barbeque Bash takes place at the Elks Lodge, 684 Emory Valley Road in Oak Ridge. Co-chairs Loretta Friend and Janie Esposito have put together a dedicated team devoted to providing a fun-filled, action-packed evening of fun that will transform the Elks Lodge into a party barn. Tickets for this CASA signature event are \$35.00 and go on sale in January. There is still time for businesses or individuals to sponsor this event at various levels. For sponsorship information or to purchase tickets call (865) 425-0888.

Attendees will be able to enjoy a cash bar and a delicious barbeque buffet, created by well-known Elks Lodge chef Gene Gibson. As in previous years the buffet will include fried chicken, pulled pork barbeque and corn pudding. Also on the evening's agenda will be a silent auction followed by the always popular Bear Stephenson auctioning off an incredible array of merchandise. All proceeds from the Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash will support CASA of the Tennessee Heartland.

## Penguin Plunge

Don't miss your opportunity to brave Scott County's chilly waters and support a great cause. Last year 16 Penguins took the plunge to raise awareness and financial support for CASA of the Tennessee Heartland's Scott County Program. Penguins solicit donations from family, friends and local businesses to "take the plunge." Incentive prizes for different levels of money raised and awards will be given for creativity. Penguins can plunge alone or as a group. So gather up your friends, family and co-workers from schools, businesses, church groups, police and fire departments—anyone who is tough enough to brave the chilly water! However, one must raise at least \$25.00 to participate. Spectators are welcome to cheer our chilly friends on. Freeze your tail feathers off for a truly worthy cause and have a lot of fun while doing it!!

You can even nominate someone to plunge on your behalf for the nominal fee of \$100.00! If that "special person" would rather not plunge either, they have the option of purchasing Plungers Insurance for \$125.00 and become a member of the ever popular Chicken Coop. Last year we had 19 nominations and 8 individuals who choose to be members of the Chicken Coop. We are extremely excited about this year's event and hope to see you there!!



## CASA of the Tennessee Heartland 2007 Calendar of Events

**January 27 - Penguin Plunge**

**February 24 - Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash**

**March 17 - Leprechaun Run**

**April 21 - Applebee's Pancake Breakfast**



## GoodSearch

Now you can raise money for CASA of the Tennessee Heartland just by searching the Internet at [www.GoodSearch.com](http://www.GoodSearch.com).

You use GoodSearch.com just like any other search engine-the site is powered by Yahoo!-but each time you do, money is generated for us. Here's how it works:

1. Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com).
2. Type CASA of the Tennessee Heartland into the "I support" box and click on "verify."
3. Search the Internet just like you would with any search engine.
4. Since GoodSearch shares its advertising revenue with charities and schools, every time you search the Internet at GoodSearch, you'll be earning money for our agency.

GoodSearch also has a toolbar you can download from the homepage so you can search right from the top of your browser.

You can keep track of our estimated earnings by clicking on "amount raised" once you designate us as your organization of choice. At a penny a search, 500 folks making 4 searches a day would make \$7,300 annually for CASA.

*You can't wish for a perfect world, but through your involvement with CASA of the Tennessee Heartland you can ensure a better one.*



*Happy Holidays  
To One and All!*

**Training Classes  
will be starting  
soon. Call your  
local office for an  
application  
package.**

**Where Are We?**

Anderson County CASA Program  
Anderson County Courthouse,  
Room 115 (865) 463-6850  
Morgan County CASA Program  
(866) 777-0020

Roane County CASA Program  
Farnham Building, Harriman  
(865) 882-6111

Scott County CASA Program  
Scott County Courthouse, Huntsville  
(423) 663-8943

Administrative Office  
POB 4426, 161-D Robertsville Road  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831  
(865) 425-0888  
director@casatnh.org  
www.casatnh.org

**AGENCY WISH LIST**

**A safe, permanent  
home for all our  
CASA children.**

For more information about the  
CASA program call:  
**865-425-0888**  
**director@casatnh.org**  
Cyndy Bailes,  
Executive Director

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P.O. Box 4426  
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