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# ❖ **CASA** matters ❖

Newsletter of CASA of the Tennessee Heartland, Inc.

June 2006

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

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## **Youth Voices: Foster Children Speak Out**

By Cindy Koehler

**T**he panel sits at the front of the packed conference room. The speakers are impeccably groomed and wear dark business suits or dresses. Superficial appearances suggest this is a group of attorneys or accountants. A closer look reveals that the speakers are young. They are introduced and their ages given. The young men and women are 15 to 21, and all are, or formerly were, foster children.

These people are "The Real Word," a group of youth that speaks across the United States about the experience of growing up in foster care. These youth have been impacted by CASA; each child has had one adult who was their advocate. They share their stories:

There is the teen who cries as she talks about her younger siblings who were adopted and moved to Ohio. She was left behind in the foster system in California. Her CASA convinced the court that the teen needed to fly to Ohio to visit her siblings during spring break. The young woman explained, "I needed to see my siblings, to see that they were okay. I had raised them; they were my babies."

A young woman, a college graduate, speaks of her rebellion, her 15 foster

homes and multiple schools. She also talks about her CASA, the advocate who made sure that sibling visits happened and who made sure that education became a priority.

A young man speaks with hope about his future. He was an older teen when he was appointed a CASA. At that time he didn't want someone else in his complicated life but became interested in the volunteer when he learned that she was in real estate, a business that the youth was considering for his career. The advocate became a mentor and the youth's anchor as he learned to become independent. The CASA was the adult the young man turned to when troubled, hurt, when needing career advice, and when celebrating life's successes.

The stories continue and each has in common a dynamic relationship that developed between an abused and neglected child and the CASA that was appointed to be the child's voice. In many instances, when the formal CASA advocacy relationship ended, the volunteer and child remained friends, and the advocate became a mentor and support system. The CASA was the central adult in the young man or woman's life and provided the commitment and guidance that we most often expect parents to provide.

**When foster youth feel small and inconsequential, CASA volunteers stand ready to articulate their feelings and thoughts to people who can help. This act gives a child inner strength, and that can lead to a successful human being. It's a priceless gift to give a child. It's a gift that CASA volunteers are giving to children every day.**

**-Antwone Fisher**

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Cyndy Bailes

**President's Message from Michele Brandenburg**

My new CASA year of 2006 began with Scott County's Penguin Plunge in January. This first time event was an incredible success even attracting Knoxville television coverage. I admit I was a chicken. I bought "insurance" to avoid the chilly water.

In March the Campbell County office produced their most successful fundraiser, the Bluegrass Breakdown at Campbell County High School. I was able to join a packed auditorium that night to enjoy the four great bands.

CASA's signature event, the annual Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash in Oak Ridge was also a positive achievement with a large audience participating in the auction as well as enjoying the music and each other. This agency-wide fundraiser continues to grow in attendance and revenue each year as many area individuals combine good times with a good cause. Mark your calendar now for the next Barbeque and Bluegrass Bash February 24, 2007!

Our annual raffle, "Take a Chance for CASA's Kids", is now underway for the second year. The drawing will take place at noon on July 29, 2006 preceded by music, food, and fun. I'm thrilled that the grand prize will be a 2006 Ford Focus.

Heartland Products, our merchandising effort, has added several new products from local and national sources. All offices have items for sale. I have done my part by purchasing two cute CASA Kids bracelets and a watch so far. Country Fresh Foods is allowing us to be an outlet for their famous fudge with a por-

tion of the profit going to support our agency. Come taste a sample! There are many varieties including sugar free.

Because of great media coverage, you probably already know - Our Executive Director, Cyndy Bailes, was awarded Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year at the National CASA Association 25th Annual Conference in San Diego, in April. It was my pleasure to be part of the nominating process that led to her selection. Congratulations Cyndy!

As we near the close of our program year, I want to thank our hard working staff, volunteer court advocates, community volunteers, board members and donors for their tireless efforts in support of this agency. As Dorothy Height said, "We've got to work to save our children with full respect for the fact that if we do not, no one else is going to do it."

In rereading this article it sounds like I'm involved in a lot of fund raising. Of course it is not about the money we raise but the kids we serve; children who through no fault of their own are victims of their environment. It is for these children CASA was formed and it is for these children we raise funds to support this program. Because of these fun events we do have funds for our program to continue and to expand the program to include all who need a CASA. Please remember CASA in your will, through United Way, at our fund raising events or whenever you make monetary gifts to programs that improve the welfare of children and our community.

***HOW THE CASA NETWORK HELPS***

Last year local volunteers served more than 500 children in five counties. Unfortunately, there are still many children referred to this agency who had to go without a CASA volunteer because of a lack of resources. CASA volunteers make sure that the abuse and neglect that the children suffered at home doesn't continue as abuse and neglect at the hands of the system.

***NATIONALLY***

- At the end of 2004, there were 937 local CASA programs.
- In 2004, CASA's 50,801 volunteers served 188,620 children.
- Volunteers contributed over 4.5 million hours.

## DONORS

*CASA of the Tennessee Heartland* gratefully acknowledges the generosity of those who have contributed to the agency 5/1/05 until 5/1/2006. We also thank everyone who contributes to the agency through United Way, Combined Federal Campaigns, and our various fund-raising events. Your continuing support is vital to the agency. We apologize in advance if we have inadvertently omitted anyone.

### Individuals

#### CASA's Caring Circle (\$1,000 and up)

Sharon and Brian Annis  
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#### In Memoriam

Janie Deering  
Rudy Deering  
First Seventh-Day Adventist  
Church  
Pam Fleming  
Deborah Harper  
Omni Visions  
Elizabeth Patrick  
Andrea Foster  
Christy Harness  
E. L. Martin  
Georgi Bowling  
Josh Walls  
Karen Drake  
Ed and Nadine Underwood  
Walcott Watson  
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Ken Bruce  
The Honorable Pat Hess

#### In Honor

Betty Dosssett  
Margaret Ayers  
Cyndy's 62nd Birthday  
Carl Bretz  
Rosemary Burns  
Don Jared  
Cindy Koehler  
Carol Mason/Dave Aabye  
Russ & Linda Morel  
Marlene Myers  
Karleen Richter

#### Civic Clubs and Organizations

Anderson County Toy Run  
Foreign Language Club—  
Jefferson Middle School  
Kiwanis Club of Oak Ridge  
Kiwanis Club of Oneida  
Scott County Fun Run

#### Churches

First Presbyterian Church  
First Methodist Church—Oneida

Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church  
 West Knoxville Friends Meeting  
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church  
 First Baptist Church—Oak Ridge  
 Trinity United Methodist Men  
 First Methodist Church—Oak Ridge  
 Grace Covenant Church  
 Norris Religious Fellowship  
 St. Clare's Episcopal Church

**Corporate Partners**  
 ORNL Federal Credit Union  
 The Oak Ridger

**Businesses, Corporations, Foundations, & Others**  
 Alcoa Foundation  
 Youth Endowment-East TN Foundation  
 Tennessee Bar Foundation  
 National CASA Association  
 Tennessee CASA Association

Variety Club International of East Tennessee  
 Lucille S. Thompson Family Foundation  
 Fund For Campbell County  
 Tennessee Commission on Children & Youth  
 OCJP—VOCA  
 Wackenhut-Oak Ridge Team  
 Wal-Mart  
 Oneida & LaFollette  
 St. Mary's Health Systems  
 Pyro Shows  
 Reed Advertising  
 Scott County Bar Association  
 Scott County Hospital  
 Scott County Pediatric Care  
 LAMAR  
 Roane County Newspaper  
 First Tennessee Bank  
 Peoples National Bank  
 National Coal Corporation  
 Claiborne Construction Company  
 Operation Pocket Change  
 Fox Toyota  
 Fire Side Restaurant

Evans Mortuary  
 A & S Building Systems  
 American Trust Bank  
 Anderson County Government  
 Ares Real Estate, LLC  
 Y-12 Federal Credit Union  
 Roane County United Way  
 United Way of Anderson County  
 Bob Crapsey Trucking  
 Victoria Bowling, Attorney at Law  
 CAM COM Communications  
 DDT, Inc.  
 Dixie Turf and Tree  
 Home Federal Bank  
 Horizon Publishing  
 J.&S. Holdings  
 Jellico Community Hospital  
 Linda Kilgore/State Farm Insurance  
 Home Federal Bank  
 K-25 Federal Credit Union  
 Peyback Foundation  
 Ronald McDonald House Charities  
 Union Bank of Campbell County  
 First National Bank  
 First Volunteer Bank  
 Profiles Solutions Industries

Ray Burke Construction  
 Rocky Top Trucking  
 Stanley Buiding General Contractors  
 Grand Vista Hotel  
 Sugar Hollow Machine  
 TNBank  
 ORNL Federal Credit Union  
 Tennessee Aggregate Company  
 Tennier Industries  
 Y-12 Federal Credit Union  
 Kappa Alpha Theta  
 Ameriprise

**Media Supporters**  
 The Oak Ridger  
 Anderson County Visions Magazine  
 The Oak Ridge Observer  
 The Courier News  
 LaFollette Press  
 Independent Herald  
 Scott County News  
 Roane County Newspaper  
 Channel 12—BBT Communications  
 WUOT-FM  
 WVLT-TV

**Emergency Packs Project Gets the Green Light**

Many of you may have heard that our "Emergency BackPacks Project" has been funded by Peyback Foundation (Peyton Manning's foundation) and Ronald McDonald House Charities as well as the local Fire Protection Engineers Society. With this monetary support CASA will be able to provide basic necessities to children assisting them to function socially and academically during a time of upheaval and loss until their personal goods can be accessed or new ones procured. Backpacks will be age and sex appropriate and will include such items as toiletries, school supplies and a gift certificate to a 24-hour department store such as Wal-mart for clothing procurement. This will be an agency wide project. Volunteers interested in putting these packs together should call their local office for details.

**Director Recognized**

Agency director, Cyndy Bailes, was awarded the 2006 Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year Award of Excellence in San Diego at the National CASA Conference in early April. The award included a \$4,000 grant to the agency in Bailes' honor.

Cyndy has been director of our agency since 1992 and has been part of its growth from 1/2 a closet in Clinton to where it is today.

**Come to the Secret City Festival  
 See the Ford Focus**

CASA of the Tennessee Heartland will have a booth at the Secret City Festival in Oak Ridge June 16 and 17. This year we want to give folks a reason to stop and linger at our booth for several reasons. We want to provide them with information about CASA so they will volunteer or donate money and we want them to buy a chance or two for our "Take a Chance for CASA's Kids" raffle.

We will have the car that will be raffled—a 2006 Ford Focus—and we plan to have some kid friendly games. CASA supporters will be dressed in period costumes that reflect the theme of the festival "From the 40s to the Present" Will Sonny & Cher be present? Come and find out! We will also be handing out free water courtesy of Food City, Krogers, and Food Lion.

We need helpers, in or out of costume, for an hour or two for both set-up and during the festival. If you are willing to help, please call Liz at 865-425-0888.



**What's been happening in Scott County? By Christy Harness, County Coordinator**

On January 28 2006, the Scott County CASA Program held the first ever Penguin Plunge and it was a huge success! The event brought out lots of participation from the community as well as local television coverage. Sixteen brave penguins entered the chilly waters of the Oneida City Park Lake. Needless to say they all exited rather quickly. Several penguins were dressed in costumes.

The success of the event was due to the hard work of the Scott County Steering Committee, sponsors, participants, and Brittany Newport. Brittany is a 17 year old junior at Oneida High School who designed the Penguin Plunge logo. Save the date for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Penguin Plunge that is scheduled to occur on January 27, 2007. The Penguins will be returning to Scott County!

Samantha Sharpe joined the CASA team on February 4, 2006 as a VISTA (Volunteer in Service To America). Samantha is working on sustainability for the program in the areas of fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and public speaking. We are excited and fortunate to have such a wonderful and hardworking

individual in this capacity.

In April, we developed the first CASA newspaper insert. There were 5,000 copies printed and dispersed in the Independent Herald newspaper. This insert was done in observation of Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month; it informed the community about the mission of CASA and the need for support for the program. Advertisements were sold to cover the cost. The success of this insert was due to the hard work and dedication of the local steering committee and the staff of the Independent Herald as well as those who purchased ads.

We also had a booth at the Dumplin' Festival on May 27, 2006 at the Town of Winfield facilities and sold Heartland Products. If you have not seen our Heartland Products do come by the office to check them out.

We will also be actively promoting the Take A Chance for CASA's Kids raffle. Last year two winners came from Scott County and this year we are crossing our fingers that a Scott County resident wins the grand prize 2006 Ford Focus.

**Campbell County Update**

March was a great month for the Campbell County CASA Program. Five new volunteers completed training. They began advocating for children in our community and several also played an active role in the Bluegrass Breakdown which was celebrating its fifth year.

This was the most successful year for this event! Committee Chair Mike McDonough led a great group of staff, volunteers and supporters. The bands included The Mystery Mountain Boys, Greenbriar, Outta the Blue, and Crimson Cross.

The Steering Committee is now looking for ways to expand with new members and up coming events such as the Take a Chance For Kids Raffle. Former VISTA Volunteer Maggie Incho is now an advocate with our program. Donna Hall has joined the agency as a VISTA member and is placed at the Campbell County office.



**New Volunteers Join Us**

The Honorable Jeffery Wicks presided over the swearing in ceremony of three Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) on April 11, 2006 in the Roane County Juvenile Court. James LaRue, Ron Bailey, and Martha Armstrong have completed 30 hours of training and are now taking their first cases.

On April 27, the Honorable Pat Hess presided in an Anderson County ceremony and hosted a reception for new volunteers. Completing training were Teresa Hooks, Alfreda Cook and Laura Ziock.

We thank these newcomers and all our court advocates who are "speaking up" for abused and neglected children.

Classes form for new volunteer training whenever there are at least eight applicants enrolled. As always, volunteers may attend training in any of our five counties. Call (865) 425-0888 for additional information or your local office.

**Take a Chance  
for CASA's Kids**

Great prizes including a  
**2006 Ford Focus**

Limited number of chances  
to be sold.

You may purchase chances at  
any ORNLFCU branch, Sexton  
Automotive Group dealerships,  
and all of our agency offices, or  
from CASA board members.

\$5 each or 25 for \$100.

Maximum number of chances  
to be sold 10,000.

Drawing: July 29, noon  
221 Rutgers Avenue  
Oak Ridge

Come at 10 and enjoy music,  
food, and fun.

**Where Are We?**

Anderson County CASA Program  
Anderson County Courthouse,  
Room 115 (865) 463-6850  
Campbell County CASA Program  
165 East Street, Jacksboro  
(423) 562-7111  
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  
Central Office  
POB 4426, 161-D Robertsville Road  
Oak Ridge, TN 37831  
(865) 425-0888  
director@casatnh.org

**ADDRESS CHANGES**

CASA MATTERS is now being sent by  
bulk mail. Please help us keep costs down  
by letting us know of address corrections.

**Agency Wish List**

Shredders—Three

Laminators—Two

Scanner—Four

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

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