



## **MONDAY MORNING MEMO**

Monday, October 1, 2007 ☞ Volume 2, Issue 14

### ***Dr. Steven Blatt and CASA Director Barbara Benedict Recognized at Light of Hope Breakfast in Syracuse***

“CASA volunteers are people who believe that kids count,” said Darla Chase at the Fourth Annual Light of Hope Breakfast sponsored by Onondaga CASA and the Center for Community Alternatives. Chase, a CASA volunteer herself with the program, served as the event’s coordinator.

This year’s event was titled “Keeping Kids Healthy,” and honored the work of Dr. Steven Blatt and ENHANCE Services for Children in Foster Care. The multi-disciplinary agency is a joint venture of the Department of Pediatrics and the Division of Child Psychiatry at SUNY Upstate Medical University at Syracuse and the Onondaga County Department of Social Services. The agency has seen more than 5,000 children in foster care since Dr. Blatt became its first director in 1991.

“It’s tough out there for children,” Dr. Blatt said. “Kids have a lot of hurdles to face. When we adults learn to work together, those kids have better outcomes.”



*Dr. Steven Blatt, ENHANCE*



*Barbara Benedict, right, and Christine Abate, Center for Community Alternatives*

Dr. Blatt worked extensively with the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children on the development of their booklet, “Ensuring the Healthy Development of Foster Children: A Guide for Judges, Advocates and Child Welfare Professionals.” He has conducted trainings around the state for social services and court personnel.

Dr. Blatt said: “All children, especially those in foster care, should receive the same opportunities we want all of our children to enjoy. ENHANCE is dedicated to that goal, and so is CASA. I look forward to our continuing collaboration.”

The breakfast marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Onondaga CASA, and Barbara Benedict’s 10 years of service as the program coordinator.



Benedict was honored with a surprise presentation noting her energy, creativity, determination and commitment to the success of the program.

Onondaga CASA currently has 34 active volunteers serving 100 children. Onondaga CASA is a program of the Center for Community Alternatives, an agency with a core mission of reducing society's reliance on incarceration.

Copies of the Healthy Development booklet may be downloaded from the NYS UCS website at: [www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/justiceforchildren/PDF/ensuringhealthydevelopment.pdf](http://www.courts.state.ny.us/ip/justiceforchildren/PDF/ensuringhealthydevelopment.pdf) )

### ***Larry Brown Honored at Retirement Reception***

Larry Brown, Executive Deputy Commissioner of the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), was honored last week for his “faithful and conscientious service” to the families of this state. Brown, beginning a consulting practice in his retirement, was noted for moving the state agency from a philosophy of regulations compliance to one of technical assistance and improved practice. His personal integrity, fair and generous spirit, and leadership in adoption were also noted.

Brown formerly chaired the Statewide Permanency Planning Team, the inter-agency workgroup convened as part of the agency's Performance Improvement Plan. The Team, composed of representatives of the Unified Court System, agencies of the Executive Branch of state and local government, and institutions and individuals including CASA who represent children and parents, works to foster the achievement of improved outcomes in safety, permanency and well-being for children.

A donation in Brown's honor was made to the Hamilton Hill Arts Center, in order to continue a staff position there. The Center, located in Schenectady, is an outlet for African and African-American cultural arts, the only arts center of its kind between Syracuse and NYC.

## **🌸 NYS UCS Court Rules and Contract Primer 🌸**

### ***Requirement to Have Resource Development Plan***

Under §117.2 **Program Requirements of the Rules of the Chief Administrator**, in the section on record keeping, it is noted that each CASA program shall have in written form “a resource development plan and, with respect to a CASA program housed within a multi-program not-for-profit corporation, a fund-raising protocol outlining responsibilities.”

Why a plan in writing? Written goals tend to hold everyone more accountable, and can realistically reflect for everyone involved the amount of additional fundraising the program must accomplish in order to meet its goals. A written plan helps to guide mission-fit and policy discussions, and also to clarify board and staff roles in relation to fundraising.



If, for example, there is a need to raise an additional \$50,000 to meet current programmatic goals, and the program is recruiting with an eye to increasing the volunteer pool and number of children served, then where are the additional funds coming from to support the added staff required to supervise more volunteers? Has the board factored in these costs in terms of setting its fundraising goals for the year?

A written plan also provides a mechanism for reporting on the success of various fundraising initiatives, and holding the board accountable for its role in supporting the agency financially. If, as is recommended, 80% of your fundraising goal is to come from individual donations, how is the board extending your database and cultivating current donors?

It is important to note that this Resource Development Plan should be developed and owned by the board. Staff input is critical, but this is the primary function of the agency's board of directors.

Relative to multi-program organizations, there is not one standard model of how the fundraising responsibilities are allocated. Some CASA programs in administering agencies are not permitted to do any of their own fundraising; the agency as a whole raises money for all programs. In other cases, the CASA program may have the bulk of responsibility for generating additional revenue, or be permitted to conduct a few special events per year that are exclusive to CASA.

## Resources

### ***Data Requests from Local CASA Directors***

From time to time, the CASA Assistance Program receives requests from local CASA program directors for non-confidential court or social services data – number of filings, number of children in foster care, etc. We're happy to provide the information you need if it is available, but most likely will need some lead time in order to get it.

Please review your upcoming grant applications or reports and think about what data might be useful. In some cases, the data might be better requested locally, but feel free to contact us with what you need. You will be asked questions about the audience for the information, data elements, format for the report, date range, and geographic area for which data is being requested.

Since we've all had those last minute grant opportunities, please feel free to contact our office even if the turn-around time is short for the data request. It is possible someone else has already requested similar data and that report is available.

### ***Rethinking Birth Parents as Resources to Youth in Foster Care***

The August issue of Connections from Casey Family Services examines ways in which policymakers, child welfare administrators, and practitioners can support youth in foster care to find, connect with, and maintain safe relationships with birth families. For more information, visit [www.caseyfamilyservices.org/enewsletter/august/index\\_august.html](http://www.caseyfamilyservices.org/enewsletter/august/index_august.html)



~~~~~ **The A-Train** ~~~~~

***Save the Date: CASA New Directors' Training Nov. 8-9***

New CASA staff – directors and volunteer coordinators – are invited to attend a two-day training Thursday and Friday, Nov. 8-9. A collaborative effort of the NYS UCS CASA Assistance Program and CASA: Advocates for Children of NYS, the program will be held in Binghamton, NY. Agenda and registration information will be distributed soon.

~~~~~ **Successes** ~~~~~

***Chautauqua CASA Raises Funds for Books for Children in Care***

CASA of Chautauqua County has reached its goal of raising \$2,000 to order 200 copies of *Just for Now: Kids and the People of the Court*. The book, published by the Houston, Texas CASA program, is designed to help children understand the players and procedures of Family Court. The books will be distributed to all CASA children, law guardians, in Family Court waiting rooms, and the Children's Center.

CASA of Chautauqua County Director Jean Ingerson credits the work of CASA volunteer Janet Arnold, and board members Michael Sullivan and Laurie Whitemore in raising the funds. Donations were received from area businesses and individuals.

Individual copies of the book are available directly through the Houston program at [www.childadvocates.org](http://www.childadvocates.org).

~~~~~ **Quote of the Week** ~~~~~

"I always try to believe the best of everybody -- it saves so much trouble."

***- Rudyard Kipling***

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