



MONDAY MORNING MEMO

Monday, December 8, 2008 ☞ Volume 3, Issue 8

Sharing Success VI Stresses Creation of a Culture of Urgency

The sixth annual Sharing Success conference was held November 20-21 in Albany, drawing together representatives of the courts, social and human services providers and CASA programs to discuss the urgent permanency needs of the state's children.

Local CASA Programs from New York City and Steuben, Erie, Herkimer, Monroe, Onondaga, and Westchester counties were all invited to be part of their county's cross-systems teams to attend the event. Jackie Boissonault, who attended from Westchester CASA, described the event as "energizing and exciting."

Participants discussed local initiatives designed to facilitate safety and permanency for children, and heard from panelists from New Hampshire, Tennessee and California about efforts there. One plenary session presented a case time line, and audience members heard from youth in care about their experiences.

A video prepared by the Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children presented stories of children's experiences with the court process, from the child's point of view.

Breakout sessions discussed how to best manage change, and how to move beyond "change fatigue." Teams developed action plans to continue collaborative work when they returned to their communities.

Handouts and PowerPoint presentations from the conference will be available on a CD, and will be shared with the CASA programs at our March Program Directors' meeting in Albany.

"We need to light a spark of innovation for the children and families of New York State. Everyone must act under the banner of urgency." – Hon. Judith S. Kaye, Chief Judge, State of New York

"We need to honor Judge Kaye's service by doubling and tripling our efforts. It's all about looking at life through the eyes of a child." – Hon. Craig Doran, Supervising Family Court Judge, 7th Judicial District

"Whatever role you are in, if you care about children, if you care about families, if you care about community, the one role that is unacceptable is spectator." – Junius Scott, Regional Program Manager, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

"The greatest treatment need a child has is permanency." -- Pat O'Brien, Executive Director, You Gotta Believe!



CASA Training Video on Family Court Basics Being Produced

Production is underway of a New York-specific training video for new CASA volunteers titled “Family Court Basics in Child Welfare Proceedings.” In the video, Christine Sabino Kiesel, Statewide Project Manager for the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, explains permanency procedures, who’s who in family court, the Adoption and Safe Families Act, definitions of abuse and neglect, conditional surrenders, termination procedures, and other elements involved in understanding court proceedings.

The video will serve as the New York customization of the National CASA Training Curriculum’s Chapter 2, and also will augment Chapter 11 of the CASA Program Manual. Filming was conducted December 1-2, and production is expected to take a couple months. The goal is to have copies of the video on DVD’s, with accompanying Power Point handouts, for all local directors at the March Program Directors’ meeting, with appropriate red carpet fanfare. Much thanks to Christine for preparing the content and starring in the video, and to Nicholas Ullo in the UCS Division of Technology for his skill and patience with this project. The video should prove to be a lasting and useful teaching tool for new CASA staff and volunteers, and a good refresher for seasoned CASAs as well.

CASA Volunteers Can Be Effective as “Keepers of the Questions”

Kathy McGowan, Deputy Director of Capital District CASA, recently conducted a training for new volunteers with Cheryl Vallee, CASA Coordinator in Schenectady County. Kathy said she has made significant adjustments to her presentation, based on experiencing the UCS-sponsored “Collaborative Advocacy” Training, conducted by Duke Fisher and Linya Bell. In discussing how CASA works in collaboration with colleagues in child welfare to advocate for children, she has described CASA’s role as “the keeper of the questions.”

“Asking clarifying questions can be more effective than stating an opinion,” Kathy said. “During our recent training, we did some role plays in which after a while I asked if there was a question they could ask that would help the situation. Without exception, everyone was able to come up with a question that could be as effective when they redid the role play. We agreed that this approach felt much more collaborative.” This strategy allows CASA to help keep the focus on the child’s safety and well-being, working as part of the team devoted to moving the case to permanence.

Resources

(Please note: Links to third party sites do not imply any affiliation between the UCS CASA Assistance Program and the site owner, or an endorsement, approval, or verification of any content available on such third party sites.)

Study Remains Classic on Child Maltreatment and Adult Well-Being

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study, conducted in the late 1990s, remains one of the most comprehensive explorations conducted on the connection between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being. The study was a collaborative project between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Kaiser Permanente’s Health Appraisal Clinic in San Diego. There were more than 17,000 participants in the study, which spawned more than 50 articles and 100 presentations.

The ACE Study findings suggest that childhood maltreatment is a major risk factors for adult illness and poor quality of life. For more information, go to: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/ace/index.htm



Newsletter Offers Perspectives on Disproportionate Minority Representation in the Child Welfare System

Another “oldie but goodie” resource is a publication from the National Resource Center for Foster Care and Permanency Planning. Their Winter/Spring 2000 newsletter, “Permanency Planning Today,” features some interesting articles dealing with the issue of disproportionate minority representation in the foster care system, all of which still have merit today. “A Model for Examining Personal Biases” by Pamela J. Walker of the Child Welfare Training Center, California State University, Long Beach, provides a description of ways to incorporate discussions about bias into training and supervision. The publication also contains articles by Juanita Lynne Milon from South Jersey Behavioral Health Resources titled “From Within the System: A Parent’s Point of View,” and “Tribal Perspectives on Over-Representation of Indian Children in Out of Home Care” by Terry Cross, Executive Director of the National Indian Child Welfare Association. That article includes a comprehensive review of the Indian Child Welfare Act and implications for over-representation. There’s also an interesting piece on immigration status and youth in care on page 11, “A Difference Perspective on ‘Disadvantaged’ Populations in Foster Care.”

You’ll also note a familiar article by Sheryl Dicker, then Executive Director of the NYS Permanent Judicial Commission on Justice for Children and Elysa Gordon, then Senior Policy Analyst, on “Connecting Healthy Development and Permanency: A Pivotal Role for Child Welfare Professionals.” This article was distributed at the time to local CASA directors as part of our training on that issue.

To download, go to: www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/newsletter/ppt-spring-2000.pdf

Save the Dates

Presentation on Mental Health and Addiction Slated for December 11

The Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, Family Court Children’s center, and Babies Can’t Wait Advisory Panel will present a training on “Mental Health and Addiction: Why Both Are Important to Child Welfare Families” on December 11th at the Hall of Justice, Room 303, in Rochester. The presenter will be Cheryl Mueller from the Catholic Family Center. The session will take place from 12:30 to 2 p.m., and CLE hours are offered. No registration is required; call 585-428-4068 for more information or email Mary Aufleger at mauflege@courts.state.ny.us. The presentation is part of their 2008-09 training series designed to enhance cross-systems collaboration to meet the multiple needs of children and families in the child welfare system.

“Spring” CASA Program Directors’ Meeting to be Held March 23-24

CASA Program Directors will gather at the Comfort Inn in Glenmont, NY, near Albany, in March for presentations on topics ranging from educational advocacy to answering case questions to legislative updates. The meeting, coordinated by the UCS CASA Assistance Program in collaboration with CASA: Advocates for Children of NYS, will be held Monday, March 23rd, from 2 to 6 p.m. and continue Tuesday, March 24th, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Registration information will be sent in January.



Conference Call
Thursday, January 8, 2009, 3 p.m.

“Staying Afloat in Turbulent Waters”

Local CASA Directors Share Strategies for Non-Profit Resiliency

Email the UCS CASA Assistance Program for Call-In Information:
daward@courts.state.ny.us

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"I think you should take your job seriously, but not yourself – that is the best combination."

- *Judi Dench*

*Wishing you all a
Happy and Healthy
Holiday Season.*



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