

2011/2012

CASA for Kids

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Dear Friends,

CASA can make a real difference, not just for next year, but for a lifetime. It is our fervent hope that the Hensley family and this letter will enlighten your mind, spark your heart and ignite more **FRIENDS** for CASA, enabling CASA to **BEFRIEND** more neglected children in Sullivan and Hawkins Counties. CASA for Kids, Inc. befriends children by assisting in the administration of justice for children by:

- ✦ **Accepting Juvenile Court Referrals; Assigning Trained CASA volunteers to Children's Cases**
- ✦ **Conducting Investigations; Providing Fact-based Objective Reports to the Judge**
- ✦ **Facilitating Needed Services; Monitoring Progress and Reporting to Court**
- ✦ **Expediting Safe, Permanent Homes; Ensuring the Children are Healthy & Thriving**

Lorna and Ronnie Hensley were well aware their 2 nieces and nephew were being neglected. They tried to involve the social service system. Lorna explains they had called and reported the worrisome situation since their first niece, Elizabeth, was born. Following, Lorna Hensley tells how CASA worked successfully to help expedite a safe, permanent home for Elizabeth, Becca and Carlton.

"We had pretty much given up hope. Then in March of 2010, an angel stepped in – our CASA volunteer. She had found out about the kids from the court and she made sure they were safe. She told me a little of what had happened, but mainly she let me know the children were safe, clean, fed and warm – 4 simple things they had never had. CASA came to our house the very next day – I was very impressed.....At the court hearing, CASA was right there....."

"Our CASA volunteer was great – coming to the house and seeing the kids many times. She was even there when we had to take the kids for visitation with their Mom. When we realized Elizabeth's abuse was even worse than we had thought, she was right there and got us in contact with CAC (Children's Advocacy Center), so Elizabeth could receive the therapy she needed."



Pictured are all six of the Hensley children – Lorna and Ronnie's three older biological children with Becca, Colton and Elizabeth enjoying a family outing to Bays Mountain Park. Further current updates from Lorna on Elizabeth, Becca & Colton will reveal the successful outcomes CASA helped achieve – From Hurt to Health, Instability to Stability.

"Elizabeth is in preschool. She is so smart, loves to sing and dance and just be a normal 4-year-old. She does not talk about her life before coming to live here, but her therapist says that is normal. She now calls me Mom and my husband Daddy. Becca is our firecracker. When we got Becca, she did not talk, just stared into space. Having experienced many developmental delays, she is now in a special school getting lots of speech therapy. She now clearly says Mommy and Daddy, smiles all the time and loves to run & jump."



Sister shares 8th grade graduation joy with Becca & Elizabeth

**CASA for Kids
CASA Volunteers
Currently Serving**

Sue Adams, Claire Addlestone, Terry Allerton, Laurie Avacanti, Mike Barnes, Larry Bays, Marcella Blaney, Jeannie Bourne, Amanda Brown, Lou Buckley, Emily & George Cafilisch, Lorian Calcott, Nita Carnes, Chris Carver, June Carter, Stephanie Castle, Betsy Cooper, Jessica Cope, Claudio Corradino, Kayla Davis, Debbie Denton, Sis Dickenson, Dawn Duncan, Lisa Durlock, Terri English, Anna Marie Eury, Terry Farmer, Cathy Ferguson, Becky Ferrell, Bill Ford, Michelle Franklin, Darlene Fugate, Carol Garland, Beth Gibson, Glenna Gilliam, Twannia Green, Jenny Hankins, Ellen Hartung, Brandi Hollifield, Quesinberry, Charles Howerton, Pat Hughes, Katrina Hunley, Steve Jones, Jerry Johnson, Linda & Sam Johnson, Valerie Johnson, Vicki Johnston, Keltie Kerney, Cindy King, Pam Kyukendall, Juanelle Lambert, Teresa Lietzke, Theresa Lockhart, Nancy Lukach, Jean Lusardi, Dwight Marlow, Rita San Martin, Deborah Masters, Kathy Matney, Sue McCloud, Colleen McConnell, Karen McSharry, Ladell McWhirter, Robin Minga, Judy Mooney, Heather Moore, Brenda Morton, Jan Musick, Glenda New, Terry Oldfield, Ginger Osborne, Terry Lee Owens, John Pierce, Kelly Ragan, Kathe Rainwater, Aaron Ramsey, Jerel Ramsey, Rachel Roberson, Donna Rollins, Warren Searby, Arlene Sebastian, Marcia Shaver, Judy Shepherd, Tabitha Solinsky, Sandra Sovago-Royal, Mary Lynn Sproles, Kay Stout, Beki Stirman, Mary Beth Strickler, Lynne Testerman, Anne Terrill, Quenton Tubb, Bob Vaisey, John Villar, Emily Wallace, Susan Whitlow, Amy B. Williams, Sharon Winstead, Kristie Woods, Liz & Tom Yount

Baby Colton is doing great, too. When we got Colton, he was 3 months old, only weighed 9 lbs. and was starving. Dr. said his little stomach was shrunk because he had never been given proper nutritional food and Colton had a rash all over his body, never having been bathed. Colton is now 15 months old and weighs 22 lbs. He walks, runs and loves to play with toy cars and trucks."



Colton with his Daddy!

Reading Lorna's updates, is there any doubt these 3 children are now well cared for, that they will have every opportunity to become productive adults and good parents themselves? Many other victimized children are still waiting for CASA and therefore we await help from our **FRIENDS**.

In 2011, with much hard work and the support of our **FRIENDS**, CASA for Kids, Inc. was able to train 25 more wonderful volunteers, opened another satellite office, and added one more staff in 2011. That enabled us to serve 567 children last fiscal year – but another 500 children were not so lucky.

Our astute judges hate it when we must turn down case referrals because of a lack of resources. We hate it, too! Yet, we sincerely believe our community is too caring to continue settling for CASA to only be able to serve and help 50% – children who are waiting for CASA need your help now!

According to Lorna herself, here are the likely consequences if **CASA** had not been involved: ***"I thank God for what CASA stands for and for what you do. I believe if CASA had not helped get the kids out when they did that Carlton would not have survived. And Becca, she probably would have endured the same abuse Elizabeth did."*** Costly tragedies which CASA helped avoid.

Elizabeth, Becca and Carlton were fortunate as they had CASA standing up and speaking out for them before they were damaged for life. Financially supporting CASA can make such a positive difference for children and our community. See the chart below for the ever increasing costly consequences of neglect and abuse - stats courtesy of CASA for Kids, Inc. and The US Department of Justice:

CASA OR NO CASA?

Support CASA To Help Expedite Healthy Productive Environments, Giving Neglected Children a Better Chance to Thrive and Grow up to be Productive Adults OR Have Drug Addictions, Domestic Violence, Dependency & Irresponsibility Continue Escalating in Families, Putting Children At Further Risk of Harm and Then End Up Paying Much More For Expensive Juvenile Delinquency and Incarceration Costs Later.

- ***Of the cases CASA was assigned in 2011***, 94% of the children CASA served were from a single parent household, the average income 'declared' was only \$14,664 and 95% of CASA's cases involved drugs & alcohol abuse
- ***US Justice Department*** says 53% of neglected children with no intervention become juvenile delinquents and 38% of them become adults committing violent crimes
- ***Current costs*** - \$75,000 a year for one juvenile delinquent in state custody, \$25,000 annually for incarceration of one violent adult criminal. CASA's cost per child for effective intervention = \$737 in 2011.
- ***US Justice Department*** recognizes CASA as a delinquency prevention program & figures the time spent in the system is cut in half if CASA is on a case, so they have determined CASA has a 40 times return on investment.

Most recent update from Lorna: ***"On May 23, 2011, the adoption was finalized.....CASA is a soldier for kids. Without CASA, many children in need will never be found."*** Lorna is correct – many children may not 'be found 'if **CASA** is not assigned to neglect cases in our juvenile courts.

CASA for Kids anticipates serving over 600 children in 2012, trusting that **FRIENDS** will want to support us in providing more **Court Appointed Special Advocates**. All of us with CASA thank you in advance for returning the enclosed envelope with your donation. You will be amongst our cherished **FRIENDS OF CASA BEFRIENDING CHILDREN --- Lifting Up Children's Voices, Lifting Up Children's Lives and 'Our Community' For a Lifetime.**

Sincerely,

Connie C. Steere
Executive Director

John Sanders
CASA Board President