



## Foster Care Review Board Spotlights

### Wapello County

9:00 AM shows on the clock and on a normal day the FCRB Facilitator Linda Yates would be finishing preparing for the board members to arrive at the conference room. The board members would arrive around 9:15 AM and catch up from the last few weeks. At 9:30 AM, the members would start discussing and preparing for the meetings ahead which would end around 3:00 PM. However, Covid-19 has put a stop to this monthly routine.

While Covid-19 has caused FCRB meetings to go virtual for now, it has not stopped the Wapello County and Poweshiek County FCRB Members from advocating for children in care.



Currently, the Wapello Board is made up of four board members pictured from top left: Lisa Guest (Sieda); Toby Mitchell (Truant Officer and Homeless Liaison for OCSD); Sarah Sels (retired teacher and administrator); and bottom left: Linda Yates (facilitator) and Marta Shafer (retired school counselor).

Mitchell is Wapello County's longest serving FCRB member. Mitchell shared "I was invited to join in 2004. I joined to give children in alternative placements a voice, to speak to the importance of bonds the children form and to help make a difference in the efficiency of the foster care system of Iowa."

Shafer is the board's newest member. She shared, "My favorite part (of being on the board) is seeing success in cases. The parents make changes and their child is returned or the child is successfully adopted."

The organizations in the Ottumwa Community have been supporters of the FCRB. There are current members whose employers allow them to participate on the board and see the board as a way for their employees to give back. The community sees the value of the board and the value of our board members.

When asked how she would like to see the board grow, Mitchell shared "We need more participants on our board," and followed by saying "I cannot make a difference in the world until I am willing to step outside of myself and into the life of another, and another and another..."

The final case is reviewed. It's been a full day of reviews, everyone is drained and ready to go home. They have worked hard and asked the tough questions knowing they may have been difficult but in the end the children were and will always be put first. While it was a hard day, this board will be back in a month to do it all over again.

## **Poweshiek County**

The Poweshiek County Board has a diverse background of members. The current members include Doug Cameron (Retired Teacher and School Administrator), Bill Ludden (Retired Pharmacist), Betty Ludden (Retired Mental Health Provider), Phyllis Phillips (Retired Nurse), Francesca Cuning (Physical Therapist), and Sally Smith (Education). The diverse background of the members leads to in-depth questions and conversations which leads to well-rounded recommendations.



Due to the ongoing work and service of the Poweshiek County Board they were awarded the Governor's Service Award in 2019. (Pictured left to right) Governor Reynolds, Doug Cameron, Francesca Cunningham, Betty Ludden, Bill Ludden and Lt. Governor Gregg at the Governor's Volunteer Awards ceremony.

The Poweshiek County Board has defined themselves as a unique board. They are active members not only on the board but they are instrumental in recruitment of their own board members. Cameron and Cunningham recently wrote and were awarded a grant for new chairs for their board members. These five members ask for more education and learning opportunities to help increase their knowledge and background to ensure they are making the best and most well informed recommendations. One cannot sit in their meeting and not leave encouraged to do better by the children.



# WELCOME TO OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Kimberly Ardueser, CASA, Wapello County  
Jane Goeken, CASA, Clay County

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## Muddling through CASA Programming Amid a Global Pandemic

CASA Program staff and volunteers continue to earn their medal by showing their creativity and resourcefulness during the Coronavirus pandemic. Pictured below, Judge Andrew Smith (upper middle), juvenile judge in Clay county, conducts a virtual swearing in ceremony for five new CASA Advocates in Northwest Iowa. Jane Goeken and Caroline Nelson of Clay county, along with Chasidy Alger, Lisa Titus and Caley Holman of Dickinson county became CASA Advocates on May 15th during the unorthodox swearing in ceremony. Congratulations to these new advocates!



Across the state CASA Staff, Advocates and Coaches are using technology to remain in touch with one another and Iowa's children. From a CASA advocate taking a child on a virtual scavenger hunt around the child's home, to a CASA coordinator hosting virtual coffee with coaches or scheduling a "face-to-face" visit with advocates to catch up on their normal volunteer management duties, it's no secret our that computers, tablets and phones have been busy since mid-March.

Thanks for all your continued advocacy efforts during this time. In May and June CASA Coordinators will be contacting all CASA volunteers to gather information that will help state office staff gauge readiness for returning to in-person advocacy efforts. More information will be available in the coming weeks.

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## Trainer's Corner:

### Family Reunification and Changing the Face of Foster Care:



Listen to a new 38 minute episode of a podcast from the Child Welfare Information Gateway featuring a Q&A with Children's Bureau Associate Commissioner Dr. Jerry Milner on the efforts to make foster care a support for the family instead of a substitute for parents.

This podcast is available on [Apple Podcasts](#), [GooglePlay](#), [Spotify](#), [Stitcher](#), and [SoundCloud](#) or go to this link: <https://www.childwelfare.gov/episode-48>.

"The job of radically changing how children and families experience the child welfare system cannot reside within any one federal agency or any one national organization. We have to have a common vision, we have to have a common commitment across those federal national entities that affect the lives of kids every day and an agreement that we want to serve them in a certain way with a certain defined set of outcomes."

—Dr. Jerry Milner, associate commissioner, Children's Bureau



According to Dr. Milner, federal partners, child welfare agencies, and community organizations can shift foster care to be a support for families by working to change the misconceptions regarding the children, youth, and families who are impacted by it. He also discusses how the Children's Bureau is supporting prevention efforts and the important role title IV-E reimbursement plays for legal services for families.

#### Learn more from the following resources:

- [Making Reunification Possible for Older Youth](#) Pokempner, Mikell, & Rodriguez (2018) Juvenile Law Center Provides strategies and tips for encouraging reunification for older youth in foster care, as well information on the need for and importance of ensuring supportive relationships for youth who have experienced trauma.
- [Resource Family Tip Sheet for Supporting Reunification](#) (PDF - 243 KB) American Bar Association (2017) Provides practical tips for child welfare professionals engaging families in key processes related to reunification.
- [Reunification](#) Casey Family Programs Provides resources and publications on supporting family reunification, including topics such as fostering birth and foster parent relationships and strategies to reunite families with substance use disorders.
- [Org](#) Provides an overview of the Family First Prevention Services Act, resources on topics related to the legislation, communication tools for promoting the website, and a calendar with upcoming related webinars and conference calls.

#### Additional Links:

- [Engaging parents in reunification](#)
- [Assessing readiness for reunification](#)
- [Reunification with parents with substance use issues](#)
- [Reunification with parents affected by behavioral or physical health issues](#)
- [Reunification with parents who are incarcerated](#)
- [Reunification in families affected by domestic violence](#)
- [Preventing placement re-entry](#)

### For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training



To receive in-service training credit for your independent self-directed training time spent exploring this topic, please utilize the "Submit Training Approval Request" through your CAMS Dashboard with the information required for submission. If you need assistance with this process, reach out to your Local Coordinator for support on using CAMS to track this type of training.

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## Grants and Fundraising

It is with deep gratitude that the Iowa Child Advocacy announces grant awards for the following programs:



- United Way of North Central Iowa has awarded \$23,000 to the North Iowa CASA Program for continued support of a half-time CASA Assistant. Funding allows the North Iowa CASA Program recruit, train and support more CASA Advocates to meet the needs of children in counties served by United Way of North Central Iowa.
- United Way of the Dubuque Tri-State Area has awarded the Dubuque County CASA Program \$34,997 to support the salary of the Dubuque County CASA Coordinator. This is the first time the Dubuque County CASA applied for funding, and we're very pleased to be one of the top three programs that United Way funded. The Dubuque County CASA Coordinator, Dawn Goerd, is very excited for the opportunity to rappel down the side of the Julien Dubuque hotel this September, in proud support of our new partnership with United Way! Stay tuned for more information on how you can support Dawn in this endeavor!

WAYS  
TO  
GIVE



Your generous donation can help the Iowa CASA and ICFCRB programs lift a child's voice. Donations are tax-deductible and can be made online by clicking the button above or by sending a check to:

Friends of Iowa CASA/ICFCRB  
4th Floor Lucas Building  
321 E. 12th St.  
Des Moines, IA 50319



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**Thank you for supporting the Iowa CASA and FCRB programs!**



**JUNE IS  
NATIONAL  
REUNIFICATION MONTH!**

[childadvocacy.iowa.gov](http://childadvocacy.iowa.gov)



The staff at the Iowa Child Advocacy Board want to acknowledge the efforts of all our volunteers who have gone the extra mile, and more, to remain involved with their cases and with the children they serve during this difficult time.

It has not been without needed adjustments, a firm commitment, and courage to maintain your consistent involvement in helping Iowa's abused and neglected children. Your oversight has and will continue to help ensure that the children represented are as safe as possible. **THANK YOU** for all you have been doing to be an encouragement to families and children. Your resolve to serve is incredible!



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