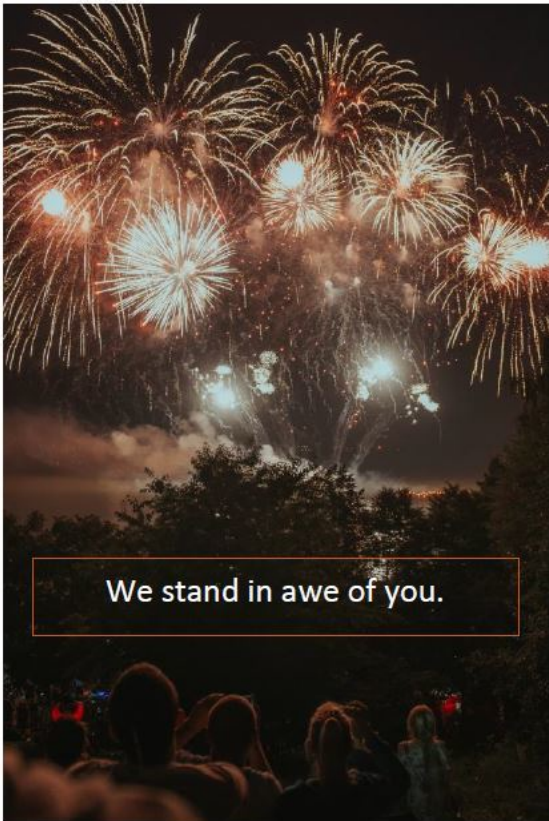


IOWA CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD
advocating for abused and neglected children in Iowa



It is no small thing that just a little spark will start a beautiful display of twinkling stars, bursts of vibrant colors, and amazing light shows.

At times there is a silence in the sky, and then we hear the whistle of a shot into the air, and almost hold our breath awaiting the beauty.

We gather in large groups and anticipate the next shower of falling golden sparkles and applaud the wonder of it all.

CASA Advocates & FCRB Members,
You are the spark and wonder ~ we stand in awe of you.

Happy 4th of July!



Volunteer Spotlight - Cheryl Frazier

CASA Advocate Cheryl Frazier shares one way she believes our program can improve the lives of children we work with: "When I visit a child for the first time, the first thing I tell them is 'I'm here for you.' It may take a while for that to

sink in but it is the most important piece of information for the child...to know someone is in their corner. Our program offers focused support for the child during a troubled time in his/her life.”

Cheryl worked in the insurance industry for 40+ years, being responsible for managing up to as many as 50 staff at a time. She described production work as bringing out the best, as well as the worst, in people. Stress was inherent in the business and her position involved counseling, commiserating, leading, and periodically handing over a box of Kleenex. It required tough decision-making skills at times in dealing with employees. Cheryl uses the experience of her prior position in her advocacy work today.

Cheryl and her husband retired in 2016. After spending so many years in the corporate world, she wanted to use some of her new found free time to help others. After researching volunteer opportunities, Cheryl felt drawn to the CASA program. She began her training in September 2017 and was assigned her first case in November of that year. Since then, she has had the opportunity to work with four families and seven children.

When asked about the biggest challenge in this work, Cheryl said it was trying to understand how or why a parent's personal choices derailed the family to the point the children needed to be removed from the home. Cheryl uses her research skill set to help her dig into a family's background and find a way to connect with both the parents and the children. When facing challenges, Cheryl use pulling weeds as a stress reliever. She states it is a great way to work off frustration...and is also productive! Cheryl believes her CASA work is a great exercise in patience and communication.

The work of CASA gives Cheryl a great deal of satisfaction when a child finds his/her voice and is heard by the adults making life decisions for them. It is rewarding to see a parent make the extra effort to pull his/her life together for the family.

Kerry Brennan, Cheryl's coordinator, states, “Cheryl is always willing to learn. She is always striving to be the best CASA Advocate she can be and now the best CASA Coach she can be. I admire Cheryl's willingness to jump into new things, and even when she's frustrated with something she doesn't just throw in the towel. Cheryl is an amazing child advocate.”

Cheryl shares that her work as a CASA Advocate has made her grateful for her family. We at the Iowa Child Advocacy Board are grateful for Cheryl and her service to children and families in her community. Thank you Cheryl for all you do!



Welcome to Our New Volunteers!

Stacie Buchanan, Black Hawk FCRB
William Carr, Scott CASA
Avery Desy, Woodbury CASA
Melanie Fisher, Buena Vista FCRB
Karen Hewill, Jefferson FCRB
Katelyn Howell, Scott CASA
Rebecca Kamm, Winneshiek CASA

Karie McMillian-Sherwood, Wapello CASA
Morgan Miralles, Union CASA
Ramona Nite, Cherokee FCRB
Brooke Pyle, Poweshiek CASA
Gloria Schmillen, Clay FCRB
Stacie Walther, Polk CASA



As I was thinking about the “summer” theme for this month’s newsletter, this close-to-home story came to mind. During the past year, my wife devoted some of her volunteer time to tutoring a third grade youngster who was woefully behind in his reading skills. Their efforts together paid off as he moved from kindergarten level proficiency to third grade level by the end of the school year. When she offered to continue with him over the summer, he first said no. But after thinking about it for a little while, he said “I think I do want to do this over the summer.” He was extremely proud of his accomplishment, and did not want to fall behind again over the summer.

For young people, summer can be a time for sun, fun and freedom from daily school demands. Unfortunately, it can also be a time for lost learning.

In the summer following third grade, students lose nearly 20 percent of their school-year gains in reading and 27 percent of their school-year gains in math. By the summer after seventh grade, students lose on average 36 percent of their school-year gains in reading and a whopping 50 percent of their school-year gains in math. In other words, summer learning loss increases with age through elementary and middle school – a troubling trend that should be examined further. (Source: <https://www.nwea.org/blog/2018/summer-learning-loss-what-we-know-what-were-learning/>)

As you already know, educational success for the children for you whom you advocate is particularly important to their self-esteem and life success. I found three ideas that might be useful to help keep the young person you work with on track:

- 1. Six books to summer success:** Research shows that reading just six books during the summer may keep a struggling reader from regressing. When choosing the six, be sure that they are just right — not too hard and not too easy. Take advantage of your [local library](#). Ask for help selecting books that match your child's age, interests, and abilities. Libraries often run summer reading programs that motivate kids to read, so find out what's available in your area. Also check our [book lists](#) for recommendations.
- 2. Read something every day:** Encourage your child to take advantage of every [opportunity](#) to read. Find them throughout the day:
 - *Morning:* The newspaper — even if it is just the comics or today's weather.
 - *Daytime:* Schedules, TV guides, magazines, online resources, etc. For example, if your daughter likes the food channel, help her look for a recipe on the network's Web site — then cook it together for more reading practice.
 - *Evening:* End the day by having your child read to you from the book he is currently reading (one of the six books, above). Have him rehearse a paragraph, page, or chapter before reading to you. Rereading will help him be more fluent — able to read at an appropriate speed, correctly, and with nice expression.
- 3. Keep reading aloud:** Reading aloud benefits all children and teens, especially those who struggle. One benefit is that you can read books your child can't, so she will build listening comprehension skills with grade-level and above books. This will increase her knowledge and expand her experience with text, so that she will do better when she reads on her own.

(Source: <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/reading-resources/developing-reading-skills/three-ways-to-prevent-summer-slide.html>)

Happy Summer! Have fun with reading!

Jim Hennessey

In early June, seven Iowans ventured to Atlanta to participate in the National CASA/GAL Annual Conference hosted by the National CASA Association. Those in attendance shown left to right included Amy Carpenter (staff), Cara Galloway (staff), Elaine Main (Advocate) Jo Stumo (Advocate), Kayla Eckerman (Advocate), Jim Hennessey (staff) and Crystal Engstrom (staff).



The theme of this year's conference '*Better Together: Building Stronger Families to Change Children's Lives*' did not disappoint. The conference featured three plenary speakers each day, along with the choice to attend two to three daily workshops all focused on varying roles and responsibilities in the role of child advocacy.



Former FBI Director James Comey and his wife Patricia, foster parents and child advocates, kicked off the conference with a rousing presentation on their work in child welfare. Included in the photo to the left, Patricia Comey, Jo Stumo, James Comey and Tara Perry, National CASA Association CEO. Other speakers included Victoria Rowell, actor, former foster youth and author, Dr. Steve Perry, educator and author, Ron Clark, founder of the Ron Clark Academy and Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative. Many of the plenary speakers spoke about their work with marginalized populations and minorities. Their inspiring stories helped to reaffirm commitment to the children we serve.

The Iowa delegates attended many break-out and networking sessions on topics ranging from child placement, the Families First federal legislation, youth trafficking and urban, suburban and rural programming ideas. Monday evening of the conference, the participants attended the Awards of Excellence Ceremony and reception to hear about innovative, award-winning programming and leadership happening across the CASA network.

Iowa delegate and CASA Advocate Elaine Main shared this about her experience at the conference:

Swimming upstream may turn around the river

As CASA volunteers, we study children's messy histories and start advocacy. It can feel like we're swimming upstream. We make phone calls, arrange visits, meet with the child again—and again. Often we're working with children who have learned not to trust, because the bonds they trusted were broken. Advocating can feel uncomfortable and inconvenient, but we keep at it, creating a consistent atmosphere that envelops the child—the atmosphere of trust. Trust is key. We develop it slowly and sustain that trust so it doesn't erode.

The 2019 National CASA/GAL Association Annual Conference reinforced the importance of trust and encouraged me to study four things—

- *The justice system in my state and district.*
- *The supports that are available to the children and families I serve.*
- *How our brains work and how trauma and addictions change the brain.*
- *How the Families First Act will change advocacy.*

The conference highlighted dedicated people across the country who "turn around rivers." These people say you must get close to disadvantaged people to understand them. They show ways that work to help children and youth gain confidence and hone talents. They urge us to suggest the CASA program to professional people whose skills can boost children to their next level.

They remind us that, although it can feel like we're swimming upstream, we're turning the river around for children.



Trainer's Corner

For FCRB Members & CASA Advocates: Promoting psychological well-being in kids during the summer

Summer, school vacations, and fun times are upon us! Although many of us in Iowa can barely wait for summer to arrive, book bags to be put away, and spending our days with children at home, that is not always the case for all children or families. Some kids and families rely on the school year schedule to help guide the day, provide routine to help manage mental health issues like anxiety and depression and medication, and even provide the continuity for eating breakfast and lunch.

The structure of school holds kids and allows them to feel safe, knowing what to expect throughout the day and the week. It also allows for daily social interaction for children that might not have that access at home. Although it is crucial for children to have unstructured, free time each day, it is important for there to be some routine and structure (however one might define it) to help children manage their emotions. It is helpful for parents and children to sit down and discuss the summer plans and daily or weekly schedules, so kids need to know what to expect.

We might generally think of structured time to include things such as summer camp, but it could also include regularly attending events such as story hour at the library, daily reading time in the afternoon, or regularly scheduled play dates with friends. When children are in foster care, it is especially important that they continue to have experiences typical of other children their age. Everyone involved in the child welfare system should advocate for services or activities that meet the prudent parenting standard. [Iowa Prudent Parenting Standard Training](#)

Symptoms to look out for:

Loneliness. Often, when children lose the structure of school, they can become socially isolated and lonely, which can lead to poor mental health. Stay tuned into whether the child is maintaining regular, healthy social contact with peers.

Social comparison, also known as F.O.M.O., or Fear Of Missing Out. Many children are constantly bombarded with regular images of their peers at various social events, leaving some children feeling excluded and sad. Children can be helped by supportive adults to manage these emotions by understanding their feelings, helping them put the images in context, and responding in a healthy way.

Increased anxiety. Many people (especially children) experience increased anxiety when structure is lost. Look for symptoms of irritability, excessive worry, preoccupation, trouble sleeping, change in appetite (more or less), change in

energy (more or less), trouble concentrating, and physical symptoms (belly aches, headaches, etc.).

Increased depression. Look for irritability, anger, feelings of hopelessness, apathy, sadness, social withdrawal, increased crying, changes in sleep/appetite/energy, and physical symptoms (i.e. somatic complaints).

Increased screen time. Often children turn to the screen (television, computer, or video games) to help manage boredom. Although this moderate screen time is reasonable, excessive screen time can create other psychological and physical issues. See the [American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines](#) for suggestions.

It's Not Too Late! The Friends of Children in Foster Care Program helps children in foster care receive funds in order to participate in extra-curricular activities, such as obtaining music instruments, senior pictures or attending prom, swimming lessons or summer camp. Funding is available only for children currently in Iowa's foster care system. Children placed in pre-adoptive homes or who have been adopted are not eligible for Friends grants. To learn more please visit: <http://www.ifapa.org/resources/Friends-of-Children-in-Foster-Care-Program.asp>

IOWA SUMMER CAMPS

Use the following links to find comprehensive directories of summer camps in Iowa.

https://www.kidscamps.com/summer_camps/iowa-summer-camps.html

<https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/entertainment/2017/02/28/iowa-summer-camps/98533618/>

<https://files.constantcontact.com/bb486eae001/67e2666b-5ac9-4312-a006-ee5b3ee8c29f.pdf>

FCRB and CASA Advocacy in Action

Questions to consider:

- What are the childcare arrangements that will be provided to the child, if necessary?
- How does this child typically respond to structured vs unstructured time? How has the child responded to summer vacations in years past?
- How might the current situation or placement be adding to the child's response?
- What structured activity is planned for the child during the summer months? How many activities will the child be participating in?
- What does the child ask to participate in during the summer?
- What are local resources that the child's caretaker can utilize to help provide structure and assist in child well-being activities?

For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training Credit

To build upon your advocacy knowledge and understanding of the Prudent Parenting Standard within the federal law, we offer *Public Law 113-183: Reasonable and Prudent Parent*. CASA Advocates can request this training from their Local Coordinator.



Calling All CASA Advocates!!

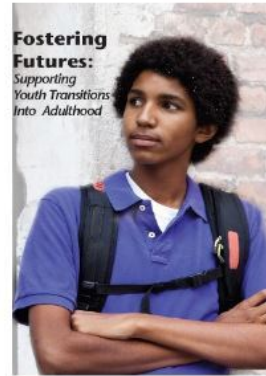
If you have found yourself looking for a new challenge, have a desire to take on a leadership role within the program, or feel excited about creating a team of fellow Advocates, consider learning more about becoming a CASA Coach!



This fall we will begin offering our newly revised CASA Coach Pre-Service Training and would love for you to join us! Contact your Program Coordinator if you are interested in learning more about what it takes to become a Coach. To learn about the revised Coach Curriculum or how to register for the training, please reach out to the State Trainer. Email lesa.christianson@dia.iowa.gov or call 515-986-4790.

CASA Advocates:

Fostering Futures: Supporting Youth Transitions to Adulthood Training is required for Advocates serving on cases of youth 14 or older within 6 months of case assignment or by the time the youth is 14 1/2. You may also attend a training session prior to the youth's 14th birthday as this curriculum addresses the unique need of building rapport and trust with an older child.



Upcoming Sessions:

September West Des Moines
October Cedar Rapids
October Storm Lake



FCRB Facilitation

Many of ICAB's local foster care review boards are facilitated by independent contractors. They are responsible for ensuring the reviews run timely, assisting the board as they conduct the reviews, taking notes and writing the board reports submitted to the Courts and interested parties. Facilitators also deliver continuous learning opportunities to the local board members several times throughout the year. The current contracts are renewable for up to five years from the date of their initial contract. ICAB is pleased to announce that contracts were recently renewed with *Beki Hoyle, Jamie Panning and Bill Sackett* who collectively provide facilitation for 11 of Iowa's 27 boards. Their commitment to FCRB and children in the foster care system is commendable!

ICAB continues to look for independent contract facilitators for the following boards: Mahaska, Poweshiek, Decatur, Union and Dubuque 2 to relieve staff of these duties. Interested individuals can contact Shirley Hoefler at shirley.hoefler@dia.iowa.gov or 563-582-6219.

Rose Festival Parade in State Center



Special shout out and thanks to Connie Herrera, Niki Johnson and Malaina Gerke (left to right), and Ashlyn Johnson and Linsey Kohn (pictured on the float) who organized a parade entry for the Rose Festival in State Center on June 15th. Ken Johnson also assisted by passing out candy and CASA fliers to the parade watchers. These individuals donated their time to help bring community awareness to the CASA program and the need for more advocates to serve as a voice for local children who have been abused and neglected.

Please print off and use to recruit a new volunteer!

EVERY COUNTY
FAIR HOLDS

A STORY WHICH YOU
REMEMBER AND TELL
OVER & OVER
AGAIN...THE
BLUE RIBBON
WON, YOUR
FAVORITE RIDE, AND
THE FUN HOUSE

MIRRORS
THAT MADE YOU AND
YOUR FRIEND
LOOK SO SILLY. GOOD
MEMORIES!



ABUSED AND
NEGLECTED
CHILDREN
HOLD A STORY
ABOUT THE
THINGS THEY HAVE
EXPERIENCED,
THAT THEY
REMEMBER
AND REPEAT
IN THEIR
MINDS OVER &
OVER AGAIN.

VISIT

CASAIOWA.ORG



CASA

AS A CASA
VOLUNTEER
WHO SPEAKS
FOR THE CHILD,
YOU CAN CHANGE
THE CHILD'S
STORY!

Iowa Child Advocacy Board
321 East 12th Street
4th Floor Lucas Building
Des Moines, IA 50319

childadvocacy@dia.iowa.gov