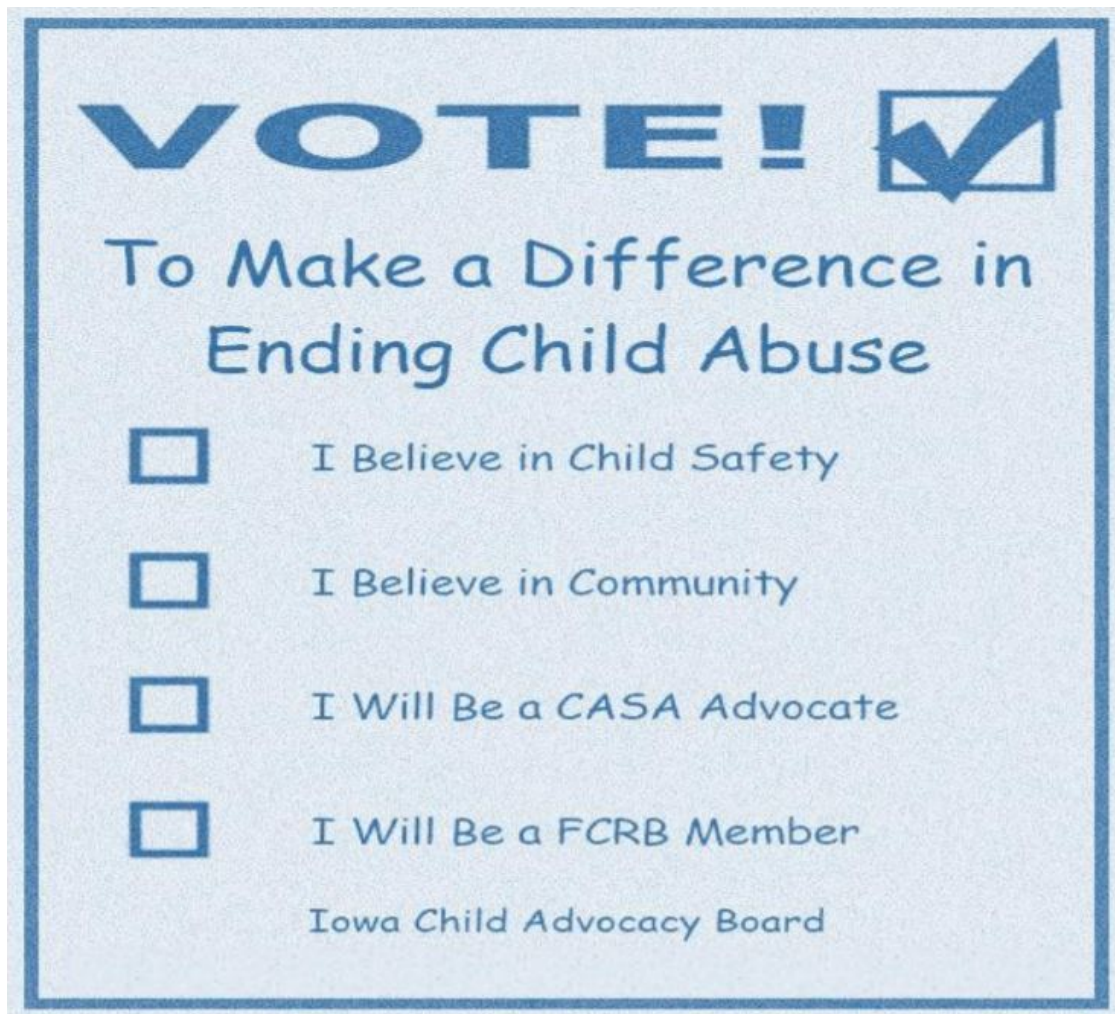


## CAB Connection - October 2020



Dear Voter,

In Iowa, there were over 11,000 abused and/or neglected children in 2019. These vulnerable children live all throughout our communities and in our neighborhoods. Many of them have been placed outside their homes, face the lasting effects of childhood trauma; they need safety and someone to advocate for that safety.

Each child, who is brought into the child welfare and juvenile court system by no fault of their own, needs a voice to speak on their behalf. They need the commitment of one caring, consistent adult to step up and walk beside them as they navigate through the changes that are taking place in their lives. They need someone to act on the belief that no child should be harmed, and do so by volunteering to help. I urge you to join the 700 volunteers in Iowa who 'voted' to end child abuse and who have become CASA Advocates and Foster Care Review Board Members. Your vote truly does matter!

Sincerely,



## Welcome New Volunteers!



Lynn Bouska, CASA, Clay County  
 Erin Eike, CASA, Polk County  
 Jen Gustafson, CASA, Polk County  
 Andrea Heyenga, FCRB, Black Hawk County  
 Anne Horton, CASA, Black Hawk County  
 Arianna Kefgen, CASA, Woodbury County  
 Olivia Krapfl, CASA, Winneshiek County  
 Drew Lattner, CASA, Dubuque County  
 Theresa McBride, CASA, Pottawattamie Co.  
 Beth Myers, CASA, Hancock County  
 Susan Pedrick, CASA, Bremer County  
 Earie Seals, FCRB, Johnson County  
 Arianna Sprague, CASA, Tama County  
 Sophia Walker, CASA, Polk County  
 William Wilkin, CASA, Clinton County  
 Emily Wolf, CASA, Johnson County  
 Daniela Zeledon, CASA, Story County

Elyse Dye, CASA, Polk County  
 Alicia Geiger, CASA, Warren County  
 Susan Hamilton, CASA, Polk County  
 Melissa Hofmann, CASA, Polk County  
 Rumyana Karagogova, CASA, Linn County  
 Jamee Klein, CASA, Johnson County  
 Kristi Larios, CASA, Linn County  
 Rebecca Maurer, CASA, Dickinson County  
 Linda Meloy, FCRB, Johnson County  
 Samone Pabon, CASA, Woodbury County  
 Holly Pickett, CASA, Polk County  
 Kaitlyn Shirk, CASA, Cerro Gordo County  
 Brylie Turner, CASA, Polk County  
 Jade Warner, CASA, Johnson County  
 Joann Wingert, FCRB, Black Hawk County  
 Melanie Yates, CASA, Woodbury County



### **Volunteer Spotlight: Patricia LaBounty**

Patricia LaBounty first heard about the CASA volunteer opportunity during a Rotary Club meeting and became a CASA in 2018.

When asked what experiences she's had that brought her to this work, Patricia reported that she is currently a museum curator, but before that role, was a Montessori 3-6 yr. old teacher as well as a victim advocate for Legal Aid in Utah. Both of those experiences prepared her for this type of role with children and the importance of early childhood experiences in a child's development. Patricia is also a mother; her daughter is grown and post-college.

In fulfilling the CASA role Patricia said, "I love being able to interact with and help children in the community. I also miss the classroom experience. Kids give so much back to you. It is extremely rewarding to be another set of eyes for often overwhelmed social workers. It always feels like worthwhile work."

But that doesn't mean there are not challenges. When asked about those, Patricia said, "The most challenging thing for me is working full time and fitting in all of the things that you want to follow up on for these kids. The other challenging part of this role is the responsibility; what you say in your report can impact a child's life both positively and negatively. Also, so very challenging is witnessing parents struggle with the awesome responsibilities of being parents. Often other factors are at play that make termination (of parental rights) the only option. That is heartbreaking."

For Patricia, fulfilling the CASA role has reminded her of the work that remains to be done in her community to support families, schools and children. She stated it has rededicated her to community action and responsibility.

When asked how CASA can improve the lives of the children we work with, Patricia said, "Put very simply this role is often the only constant that these kids have. DHS, FSRP and foster placements might all change in the course of seeking permanency. The CASA follows the case from the beginning and can serve as a check and balance on an often-overwhelmed social services system. Also, CASA's bring other life experiences and empathy into the equation. Sometimes a new perspective might be very important. And sometimes if the parents or foster parents feel left out of what is happening or are not understanding, the CASA can help bridge that gap."

Anne Christensen, Coordinator for the CASA Program, stated, "Patricia is a valued CASA who can be relied upon to truly advocate in the best interest of children in a manner that is fair, professional, and caring, yet persistent when necessary. She has a wonderful ability to connect and communicate with everyone involved, and as a result, she has been very influential in helping the children on her CASA case achieve permanency in a timely manner. We are very thankful that Patricia has chosen to volunteer her time as a CASA Advocate because we think she is great!" The Iowa Child Advocacy Board shares Anne's sentiments ~ we are very grateful to have Patricia as a CASA Advocate and for the difference she is making in the lives of children!

### **Volunteer Spotlight: Sherri Eddy**

Sherri Eddy has always had a heart for children in need. As a former teacher and foster parent, she knows first hand that so many children are dealing with trauma, abuse, and neglect and need more caring adults in their lives. So when Sherri read about CASA in a local newspaper, the program seemed like a natural fit. That was back in 2000, and she has been advocating for children in the Mason City area as a CASA volunteer ever since. Now after 15 years of service, Sherri is retiring. She plans to enjoy time with her husband and grandchildren and to travel.

Sherri's favorite aspect of being a CASA has been working directly with children and seeing the impact she has had on their lives. She also said that it has expanded her overall outlook on life. "It helps you to be more understanding of a lot of situations. You find that there are a lot of wonderful people out there - parents, kids, social workers, and other



CASAs," she explained. Sherri's advice to new and current advocates is to keep track of their activities and to take detailed notes, because it will help them to write the best reports possible.

The North Iowa CASA program and the Iowa Child Advocacy Board thanks Sherri for her 15 years of dedicated service!

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## Trainer's Corner: Bullying



**October is National Bullying Prevention Month.** We begin to change the culture and stopping this behavior by first understanding it. Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior against a person by another individual or group of individuals that involves real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. For the person who experiences the behavior, it can have serious, lasting problems.

There are four recognizable categories of bullying behavior. Verbal bullying behaviors are generally verbal, and sometime considered written, demeaning and hurtful things said or written about another person, such as name-calling, taunting, threatening to cause harm, or inappropriate sexual comments. Social bullying, or relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or their relationships and includes making disparaging comments to others behind someone's back, spreading falsehoods, embarrassing someone publicly, or leavening someone intentionally out of a conversation or event. Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions and could include behaviors such as spitting, tripping, taking someone's belongings, or making rude gestures.

The final category to be aware of is cyberbullying which takes place over digital devices like cell phones and computers through text messaging, emails, or social media applications. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior. Cyber bullying is rising nationwide and according to the National Center for Education Statistics girls are three times more likely than boys reporting being harassed online or by text messages.

(<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=719> ; <https://nces.ed.gov/datapoints/2019053.asp> )

**Children in the child welfare system are more at risk for bullying, and also more likely to have fewer supports available to them to address this issue.**

NRCPCF Information Packet: Bullying and the Child Welfare System, which cites Dake, Price, and Telljohann (2013) <https://dss.sc.gov/media/1206/bullying.pdf>

As an Advocate or a Board Member who is reviewing a child in care, we are most concerned about children and teens that are the victims of bullying. However, it is also important to note that adults can also be bullied by co-workers or neighbors. We may be interacting with a parent, who were once a victim of bullying as a child, and potentially could still be bullied by other adults in their life, which impacts how the interact with interested parties on their child's case.

### **To Learn More:**

- [Sonoma, California CASA: Bullying](#)
- [CASA For Children: How to recognize Bullying and How to Help](#)

- [NRCPPFC: Bullying and Children in the Child Welfare System](#)
- [Psychology Today: Bullying](#)
- [American Psychological Association: Bullying](#)



Our local CASA and FCRB Offices will soon begin new initiatives designed to encourage each one of you – our current volunteer community, our partners in the child welfare system, our judges, attorneys, providers, and all others receiving this newsletter, to help recruit the additional volunteers needed to serve and meet the increased number of abused and neglected children in Iowa.

The first step is to reach out, then explain who you are, why you do the work you do, and how CASA and FCRB Members help children and families involved with the child welfare system. Please speak to *at least one* person during the next week about becoming an Iowa Child Advocacy Board volunteer and direct them to the website above. Your efforts will impact the life of a child. THANK YOU for your concern for Iowa's vulnerable children!

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Des Moines, IA 50319

[childadvocacy@dia.iowa.gov](mailto:childadvocacy@dia.iowa.gov)