



HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY TO ALL WHO  
SERVE CHILDREN IN OUR SYSTEM...



### Meet the Johnson County Foster Care Review Board

The Johnson County Foster Care Review Board was established in 1985. Coordinator Nancy Manion was assigned to oversee the Johnson County FCRB approximately six years ago. Many have served on the Johnson County Board over the years and the current Board members bring a wealth of experience and knowledge.

Janet Holland is the longest serving board member and current Chair of the Johnson County FCRB. Janet majored in Education and Athletic Training and has experience in public speaking. Janet is active in the community and knowledgeable about community resources. Nancy Manion stated “Janet is a true leader and brings cohesion to the board.”

Shirley Barker joined the board while she was employed with Johnson County as a Programmer/Analyst and took vacation time to participate on the board. Shirley has since retired from Johnson County and continues to be an instrumental part of the FCRB.

Mike Ryan originally joined the Foster Care Review Board in Dubuque County. He transferred to Johnson County in 2018. Mike is a retired Journalist and he has mentored young journalists and assisted high school students on their college applications. Mike has a keen sense of observation, listening and asking the right questions.

Kathy Follows has a background as a mental health counselor. Kathy brings an understanding of the struggles and attributes of those with mental health issues. Kathy and her husband are retired and were snowbirds, often spending winters in Arizona.

Mike Ragogna is a music producer/writer and came to Iowa City from the Fairfield area. Mike raised an adopted son as a single parent which is an added perspective for the board.

The two newest board members include Earie Seals and Linda Meloy. Earie served as a CASA for several years before opening up her own business. As a CASA she recognized the toil the system put on the children waiting for permanency in their lives. Linda Meloy also joined the Johnson FCRB this year.

Linda is a retired school psychologist and has her PhD in Special Education. She has experience working with children and families and also taught graduate courses in special education.

Nancy Manion stated, “the pandemic brought certain challenges to the board, but the Johnson County board was able to adjust readily to the changes”. The picture below was taken from a recent FCRB virtual meeting.



Pictured top left to right are Shirley Barker and Mike Ragogna; bottom left to right are Janet Holland and Linda Meloy.

Click [HERE](#) for the 2020 Year in Review Report, Friends of Iowa CASA & ICFCRB

2020 was a year of weirdness and upheaval. COVID-19 wreaked havoc on normalcy and changed how we lived our lives.

While many businesses and agencies closed their doors, Friends remained vigilant in its mission. We navigated the new challenges and adapted to the changing circumstances in order to INCREASE, RAISE, and INSPIRE – increase awareness, raise funding, and inspire to action.

The platform may have been different this year but the message remained the same. We are dedicated to supporting volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children and promoting public awareness of the importance of safe and permanent homes.

Our success is tied to the volunteers who work tirelessly to advocate for children in our state, the guests who attend our events, and the donors and business partners that graciously give to our cause. Our growth and success is dependent upon each and every one of you, and you helped us surpass the fundraising efforts from previous years.

On behalf of the Friends Board, we want to say thank you for supporting Friends. Your devotion and generosity allows us to help serve vulnerable and neglected children across Iowa. As we embrace the changes around us, Friends will continue to fight for abused and neglected children with passion and pride.

Elizabeth and Tim

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## Trainer's Corner: Black History Month



Black History Month first originated as part of an initiative by writer and educator Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who launched [Negro History Week](#) in 1926. Woodson proclaimed that Negro History Week should always occur in the second week of February — between the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

Since 1976, every American president has designated February as [Black History-Month](#), also known as African American History Month. This is an annual celebration of achievements and of the central roles of African Americans in the country, United States and Canada, and more recently [Ireland](#), the [Netherlands](#), and the [United Kingdom](#) have celebrated while endorsing a specific theme. The *Black History Month* theme for 2021 is “The *Black Family*: Representation, Identity and Diversity”. Click here to learn

more: [2021 Theme.pdf](#)

“This year, Black History Month returns to its roots with a new focus on black family ties, exploring the wide-ranging diversity of black family life -- from single to two-parent households to nuclear, extended and, more recently, bi-racial. Throughout black history, factors such as slavery, inequality and poverty have put pressure on maintaining family ties, when a better life meant traveling far from home. This may certainly be the reason why family reunions have always remained popular within the African American community, as meetings of far-flung relations take place each year with a joyful exchange of memories, photos and storytelling.

Paradoxically, economic pressures that may pull black families apart also often unite them. That is, against prejudice and bigotry, many black families may pool resources or find job opportunities, or simply find emotional comfort within their own micro-community. In that respect, “brothers” or “aunties” may be good friends or neighbors who simply qualify for the title. Throughout American history, the black community has always exhibited an unwavering understanding of the value of family -- as an incomparable source of comfort, strength, and even survival.”

Taken from: [http://www.chiff.com/home\\_life/holiday/black-history-month.htm](http://www.chiff.com/home_life/holiday/black-history-month.htm)

**Numerous resources are available to learn more:**

- <https://www.africanamericanhistorymonth.gov/>
- [com - African American Families](#)
- PBS offers more than three dozen films streaming on pbs.org right now. Visit their [video gallery](#) to see the entire listing.
- [Top 10-black-history-documentaries-to-watch](#)
- [Black-history-month-Best-Movies-streaming-now](#)
- [History Channel - Black History Month](#)- Great coverage with the complete TV schedule as well as online biographies, great speeches, video clips, Web exclusives, related resources.
- [10 Iowa Black History Month-Facts-you-should-know](#)
- Virtual tour of the African American Museum of Iowa <https://blackiowa.org/collections-exhibits/virtual-exhibits/>

**For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training:**

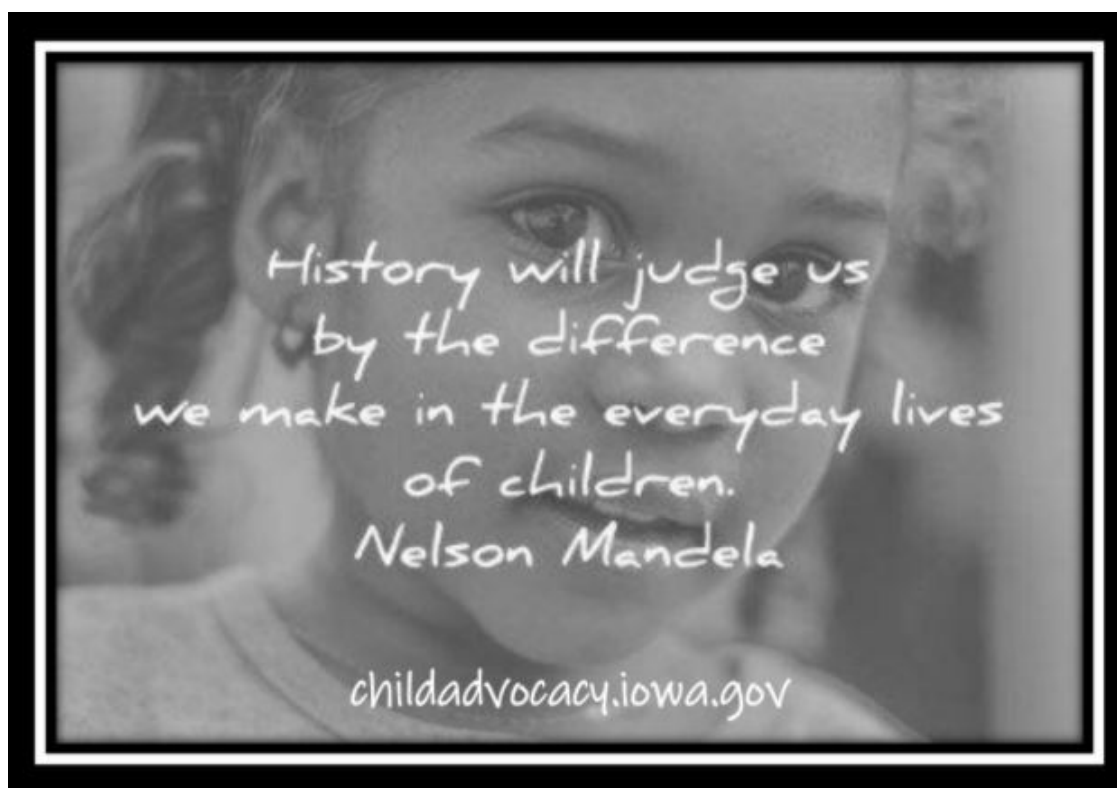


National CASA and the Iowa CASA Program encourage and support lifelong learning by offering in-service trainings on various topics. To increase advocacy awareness and efforts annual training around ***diversity, equity and inclusion*** are required annually.

Classes available to Advocates and Coaches that seeks ongoing knowledge and skill application to their role regarding Diversity can be found here:

[In-Services Available List Jan 2021.pdf](#)

**Please reach out to your Local Program Coordinator to participate in one of these classes and earn credit towards your annual 12 hours of in-service training.**



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