

CAB Connection - January 2020



Thank you one and all for the opportunity to work for, through and with you. I have enjoyed getting to know many of you and hearing about all of you and the compassionate and thoughtful work you do support the needs of Iowa's abused and neglected children. I will enter retirement with long-lasting memories of your depth of care, concern and commitment.

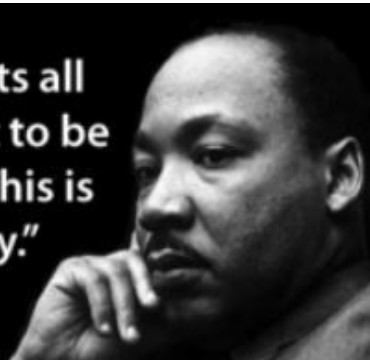
Your untiring efforts convince me that you and the CASA and FCRB programs have fantastic opportunities ahead to help our children prepare for better futures. With Steffani Simbric in place as the new Child Advocacy Board Administrator and an excellent set of Board members, I believe you will see vigorous and passionate leadership toward great accomplishments in the future.

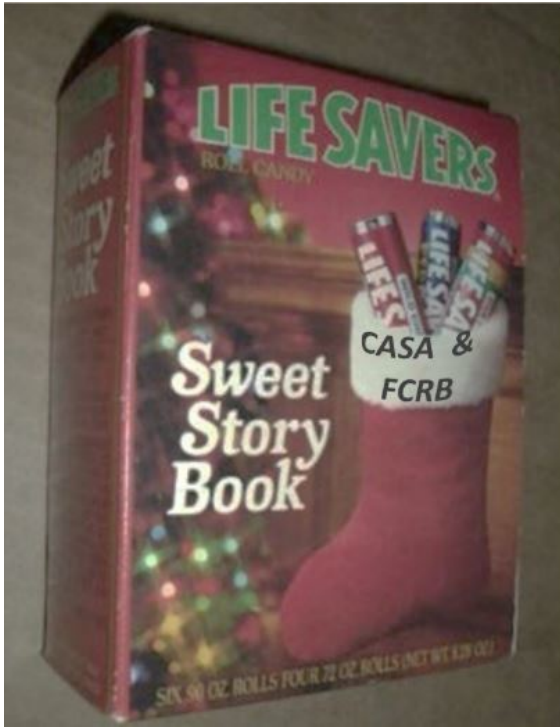
My warmest wishes to all of you for a happy and blessed holiday season.

Jim Hennessey

"Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality."

Martin Luther King, Jr.





As CASA and FCRB volunteers, Judges, DHS Case Managers, County Attorneys and GALs, FSRP providers and Foster Parents ~ you hold in your hand and heart the story of a child.

It is difficult work, but in the end we want you to know that ICAB truly believes that you make a tremendous difference in the lives of children.

A lifesaver...in some aspects...yes, maybe.

But always, there is a sweeter story because you were in a child's life and advocated for everything you knew to be good and right and hopeful!

Thank You
for advocating for
children in need!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

On December 12, 2019, the ICAB staff said farewell to our Administrator Jim Hennessey. There was an after-hours gathering to celebrate his almost seven years with ICAB. We were glad we had a chance to say 'thank you' and present him with tokens of our appreciation. Making a difference in so many lives, for so many years in public service, is something to be admired. We have it on good authority that Jim will be *volunteering* with Friends of Iowa CASA and ICFCRB; this is just another way to show how much he cares about this work. We congratulate Jim and wish him all our best.

At our December meeting we also had the opportunity to meet our new ICAB Administrator Steffani Simbric. She was kind, gracious, and very enthusiastic to begin helping us develop our programs and ensuring our best service to children. We are glad to welcome her into our organization and look forward to working with her in ICAB.

A note from Steffani:

I am incredibly honored and thrilled to serve as the next Administrator of the Iowa Child Advocacy Board.

As an extremely passionate person with a long-standing career serving victims of crime in various capacities, this position appeals to me for a number of reasons. First, ICAB helps provide a voice for some of the most vulnerable people in our society. There is no duty more important than assisting children in times of difficulty. Second, the board and staff are experienced and committed to doing this work. What I have seen in just two short weeks energizes me to serve them. And last, but certainly not least, is the appreciation I have gained for the role of ICAB volunteers. I have yet to meet you, but understand and value the commitment you have made to helping fulfill ICAB's mission. I know without you, our work would be impossible.

This is a journey I am excited to embark upon. I look forward to collaborating both internally and with external partners to advance the important mission of this organization.

With respect,

Steffani Simbric
ICAB Administrator



WELCOME TO OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

Dolores Bristol, Pottawattamie, CASA
 Sandra Buhl, Calhoun, CASA
 Stephanie Filer, Polk, CASA
 Mike Frantz, Buena Vista, FCRB
 Hannah Ginther, Polk, CASA
 Catherine Harvey, Iowa, CASA
 Gina Keck, Polk, CASA
 Fatima Khalil, Polk, CASA
 Sheila Lewis, Pottawattamie, CASA
 Hope Marshall, Polk, CASA
 Lisa Mehle, Polk, CASA

Jim McFadden, Buena Vista, FCRB
 Lori Mitchell, Pottawattamie, CASA
 Teresa Schulenberg, Pottawattamie, CASA
 Scott Shelhan, Mills, CASA
 Macey Snell, Polk, CASA
 Kassie Starkloff-Crane, Pottawattamie, CASA
 Mary Stuhr, Pottawattamie, CASA
 Deborah Tharnish, Polk, CASA
 Joseph Wernau, Polk, CASA
 Donna Williams, Pottawattamie, CASA

“How to Complete Your CASA Court Report in CAMS” TRAINING AVAILABLE

Kerry Brennan, CAMS Specialist, offers a monthly training on “How to Complete Your CASA Court Report in CAMS”. Each session will be held using Google Hangouts. The monthly session is for any CASA advocate, coach or staff who would like to learn more about how to complete the CASA report in CAMS. Kerry will provide “best practice guidelines” to help CAMS users better understand the Court Report process. The monthly sessions will be offered on the second Tuesday at noon.

To **register** for a class, complete the Google form for the date that works best for you by clicking the corresponding link:

- **Tuesday, January 14th @ 12pm noon** [Sign Up Here](#)
- **Tuesday, February 11th @ 12pm noon** [Sign Up Here](#)
- **Tuesday, March 10th @ 12pm noon** [Sign Up Here](#)
- **Tuesday, April 14th @ 12pm noon** [Sign Up Here](#)
- **Tuesday, May 12th @ 12pm noon** [Sign Up Here](#)
- **Tuesday, June 9th @ 12pm noon** [Sign Up Here](#)

Pre-registration is a must so Kerry can send you the Google hangout link and necessary documents. If you do not receive an email from Kerry at least one day prior to the training please email her at kerry.brennan@dia.iowa.gov.



Volunteer Spotlight: Jim Hess

Coordinator Teresa Barnes describes her CASA Advocate/CASA Coach Jim Hess as a very dedicated man with a passion to help children and families. This is a sentiment that rings true in all of his work with ICAB.

Jim shared that he had been a Foster Grandparent at Jane Boyd Community Center. Once that program was eliminated, he needed something to continue his involvement with children. He saw an article in the Gazette Newspaper and on the same day, he saw a story on the news that explained CASA and the need for adults who were committed to helping children. Jim received his first CASA case in March of 2016.

In Jim's professional life he was a Prothetist and had developed and taught a Gait Deviation Lab for the Doctoral Physical Therapist Program at the University of Iowa, conducting lectures to therapy groups all over Eastern Iowa. Jim said, "I had always advocated for my patients, so CASA was another avenue to stand up and protect children."

When asked what was challenging about this advocacy work, Jim said it is "learning what people will do to their children, as if they are throwaway." To counter that, he believes the most rewarding experience of being a CASA is when he comes into a situation where children have been abused or neglected and he works to gain the children's trust. He said, "When I introduce myself to everyone involved in my case, I tell them my only concern is the welfare of the children. I may make mistakes but it will always error on the children's side."

Being a CASA volunteer has allowed Jim to meet some wonderful people who are there to protect children. Although state funding may continue to be cut, they are all trying to keep the children safe, when the parents are unable or unwilling to.

Jim believes the CASA Program can improve the lives of the children we work with. He said, "Just giving the kids a person who will be a constant after they have been traumatized, can develop a link that will have an effect on them the rest of their lives. I still continue to help kids after they have aged out of the system."

Coordinator Barnes expressed her gratitude for Jim's involvement in the CASA Program. She said Jim attends almost every event, goes to DECAT meetings to discuss the CASA Program, and stays involved in the community. Jim has been highly regarded by Judge Liesveld for Jim's work with youth. Jim maintains two of his own cases, in addition to being a CASA Coach to four volunteers. He assists them daily and is always willing to help them with any aspect of their case.

We are thankful that Jim has chosen to be involved with CASA in his various roles and that he has chosen to serve abused and neglected children in Iowa so faithfully.

From the Bench

Q & A with Judge Phillip Tabor, a District Associate Judge in the Seventh Judicial District of Iowa, appointed to the bench in October 2008. Judge Tabor covers Clinton and Jackson counties.

Q. What benefits have you seen when a Court Appointed Special Advocate is assigned to a case?

A. The reports from the CASA allow the Court to be more fully advised of the "day to day" life experiences of the children in out-of-home placement, including life in the foster home, visitation, services, school, and how the children are adapting. This is all great information for the Court. The reports provide an unfiltered view; it is invaluable to the Court to have this unbiased progress report.

Q. In what ways do you think a Citizen Foster Care Review Board process benefits the children in out-of-home placements?

A. It is a time and forum when all parties involved explain their role and their level of participation in the lives of these children. I believe it requires all participants to come to grips with whether or not they are performing their role in a way that furthers the best interests of the child. The Foster Care Review Board is a check, and you can never have too many checks and balances in situations where children are not in their own home and family.

Trainer's Corner:

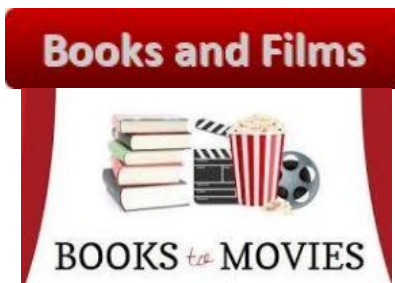
For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training

For a complete list of all available CASA in-service training:



In-Service Training

Click here for a list of books and films that may be of interest to improve your advocacy skills or strengthen your knowledge about specific CASA related topics:



Fostering Futures: Supporting Youth Transitions to Adulthood

Advocates serving on cases of youth 14+ benefit from this specialized in-service training to delve into the unique and complex issues older youth in the foster care system face. Topics include adolescent development, trauma, trust and relationship building, and application to the assigned case around addressing the youth's life domains.

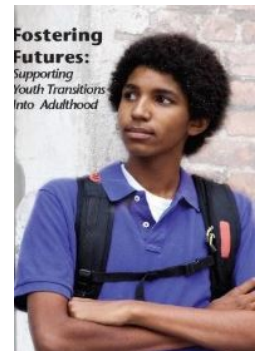
This training is required for Advocates on cases of youth 14+, within 6 months of case assignment, to address the Advocate's needs of building trust and rapport for effective case advocacy efforts.

If you are currently assigned to an older youth case or have a passion for learning more about the needs and advocacy efforts necessary for improved permanency and well-being of older youth, please join us at one of the following sessions:

West Des Moines: March 7

Sioux City: March 7

Cedar Rapids: TBD



Register for your preferred session through your 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 CASA program, or feel excited about creating a team of fellow Advocates, consider learning more about becoming a CASA Coach!



Throughout 2020 we will begin offering our newly revised CASA Coach Pre-Service Training and would love 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 training in your region of the state, please reach out to the State Trainer. Email lesa.christianson@dia.iowa.gov or call 515-986-4790



For CASA Coaches!!! Coach Refresher Trainings

The 2020 Revised Coach Pre-Service Training has been released!

After extensive revisions, we have expanded our Coach Training Program to better equip our Advocates on this unique and critical role! Our Pre-Service Training is based on the framework that our Coaches complete important duties within three pillars of support that increase our advocacy efforts to more children and families across Iowa. The Pillars include Supporting the Program, Supporting the Advocate and Supporting the Child.

If you would like to participate in a session that reviews your role and provides an additional opportunity to practice some of the critical skills and thinking involved as a Coach, please reach out to the State Training Program Manager or your Program Coordinator for more information. Email lesa.christianson@dia.iowa.gov or call 515-986-4790.

MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS FOR 2020



PRACTICE GRATITUDE DAILY

NOTICE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

USE KINDNESS TO HELP LIFT UP A DISCOURAGED HEART

UNDERSTAND THAT NOT ALL STRUGGLES ARE CONSEQUENCE-BASED

BE AN EXAMPLE OF INTEGRITY, COMPASSION, AND SERVICE TO OTHERS

CARE FOR THE INNOCENT AND THOSE WHO CAN'T SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

BECOME A CHILD ADVOCATE AS A CASA OR FCRB VOLUNTEER IN YOUR COMMUNITY

VISIT CHILDADVOCACY.IOWA.GOV TO APPLY





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