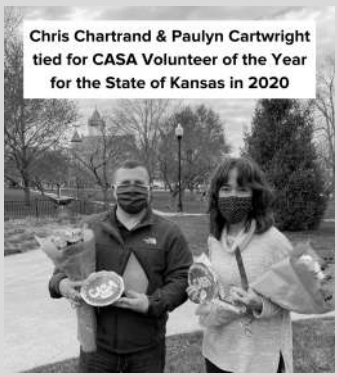
Greetings!

Happy Spring! I hope this newsletter finds you feeling as energized and optimistic as we are about our community beginning to recover from COVID while continuing to speak up for our most vulnerable kids. You and so many other supporters have made it possible for CASA staff and volunteers to stand by these kids while they wait for safe and permanent homes and we are so grateful.

Douglas County CASA recently celebrated its 30th anniversary of child advocacy and we asked some of our volunteers to share their experiences and reflections about speaking up for kids who have experienced abuse and neglect. Click below to hear from Kristina Chartrand:

We also hosted a livestream presentation on our Facebook page on March 30th to mark the occasion and took the opportunity to publicly honor our two volunteers who tied for Kansas CASA Volunteer of the Year. This is the 2nd year in a row that Douglas County CASA volunteers have been recognized statewide for their exemplary work and dedication! Chris Chartrand and Paulyn Cartwright have gone above and beyond for their kids and do us all proud. In case you missed it, you can



view the video HERE.

The Lawrence Journal World ran a great article about this milestone and the work ahead of us as we push ourselves to grow and reach more kids on our waiting list. You can read it HERE.

April marks National Child Abuse Prevention Month as well as National Volunteer Month and I wrote this op-ed that recently ran in the newly-established Lawrence Times. You can read it HERE.

A few recent highlights:

Your support has given our volunteers working with teens the chance to continue to be invaluable supports for their kids; responding to phone calls, texts, and emails from both the teens & their foster parents.

One volunteer took quick action when her CASA teen began talking to her and her foster parent about running and making other concerning statements. This volunteer contacted her Coordinator on staff at CASA, and they worked together to make sure the foster parent and case managers were all on the same page and informed about the teen's mental state at that time. The CASA volunteer expedited the communication process and her teen was able to get some of her questions and concerns addressed in a more timely manner than if the volunteer had not been involved. This volunteer's positive relationship with her teen and knowledge of her case were crucial in this situation.

We were relieved to hear that another volunteer recently helped her teen locate a community resource to assist in obtaining a restraining order against a bully. Yet another volunteer's teen spoke up in court to thank everyone involved in her case, and specifically thanked her CASA volunteer, saying "I love you so much; you're the greatest!" This volunteer had recently driven several hours for a surprise visit with the teen in her new placement. The appreciative hug she received is just one of the reasons that this volunteer enjoys working with teenagers.

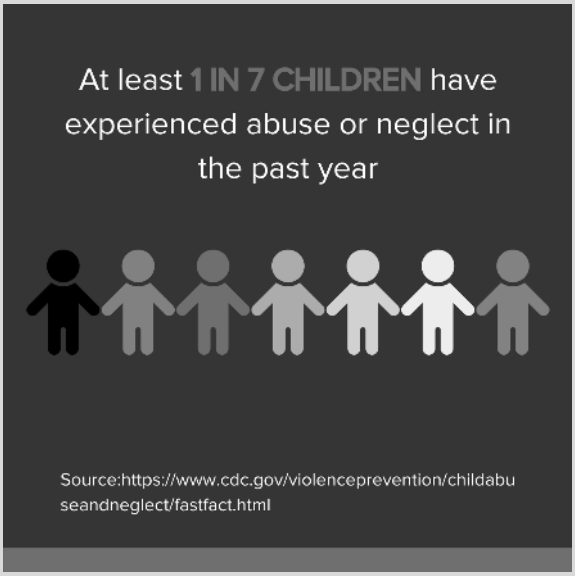
Now that most of our volunteers are fully vaccinated, many are feeling more confident taking their kids on outings. One volunteer recently spent 5 hours with her 10-year-old CASA child. The two went to the Topeka zoo and spent time at Gage park, where he loved climbing on all of the equipment and riding the miniature train. They talked about animals and she was impressed by how he took turns with others who were out on that beautiful spring day.

Your support is making all of these visits and relationship building possible. The trust that exists between CASA volunteers and kids they serve is one of the most important protective factors in child development as these kids strive for more stable lives. Thank you for helping safeguard that trust.

WE NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS!

Do you know anyone who might be willing to take the time and be that safe, caring adult who can stand by one of these kids in the child welfare system, speak up on their behalf & give them some hope?

We are actively recruiting 25 new volunteers to join us immediately & help us reach more kids on our waiting list. Please send people our way. email: sparyzek@dccasaks.org
or call 785.832.5172



Lastly, we are honored to announce that the**KU Wind Ensemble** will be performing an outdoor benefit concert for CASA this fall titled **Winds Across the Prairie**. We are so grateful to be working with them and Presenting Sponsor **Edmonds Duncan Registered Investment Advisors** to raise critical funds for the kids we serve in the child welfare system. The event is also sponsored by **Bartlett & West**, Lynn Piller, Steve & Chris Edmonds, and Helen Seymour. Stay tuned for more information.

Thank you for your support; we need it, and we are grateful for it.

Sincerely,

Erick Vaughn
Executive Director

2021 Stats To Date

60 volunteers served **104 children**
Volunteering over **4,256 hours**

80 Children currently waiting for a **CASA Volunteer**

Making **2,647 SAFE contacts** and **158 visits**

Driving over **4,773 miles**

We are so grateful to partner with these Agency Sponsors. Please support the following businesses/organizations and thank them for supporting CASA.

Bank Midwest (especially Janetlynn Zuk) has been an invaluable support throughout the past challenging year. We are exceedingly grateful for their assistance in helping CASA secure Paycheck Protection Program funds that were made available via the CARES Act and for securing forgiveness on those loans.

CASA is honored to be included among the beneficiaries of The Bo's Hog Wild Brewfest and BBQ and we were humbled by the outpouring of generosity from its community of supporters even in the absence of an person event last year. Everything is crossed that we can reconnect in person this summer for an amazing celebration of great music, food & supporting essential child services here in our community.

Bank Midwest
A division of NBH Bank, Member FDIC
Where common sense lives.

BO'S HOG WILD
BREWFEST AND BBQ

Hero Sponsors - $7500 - $9999

Anonymous Donor

The Ethel & Raymond F. Rice Foundation

Guardian Sponsor - $5000 - $7499

Winter Family Fund of the Douglas County Community Foundation

Advocate Sponsors - $2500 - $4999

GRANDSTAND
GLASSWARE + APPAREL

RANJBAR
ORTHODONTICS

KAPPA ALPHA
THETA

Black Hills Energy
Ready

Mentor Sponsors - $1000 - $2499

***NOTE:** CASA is fortunate to be the Charity of the Quarter for **The Chiropractic Element** through June 30th. Proceeds from first day-new patient visits will be donated to support children who have experienced abuse and neglect. Please encourage your friends and family to reach out to them if they are in need of care.

Friends of CASA Sponsors - $500 - $999

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Business Donors - up to $499

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RE/MAX Excel
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Snap Promotions, LLC
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Thank you to **Kurt Goeser State Farm Insurance** for supporting our spring volunteer appreciation efforts!

Individual Donors in 2021 - thank you for your kindness!

Don Abdallah, Jennifer Adhima, Candace Barnes, Paula Branizor, Ariel Buback, Rosalea Carttar, Jill Champagne, Brigitte Channel, Pamela Clark, Ashley Coles, Katherine Dinsdale, Donna Gatts, Kim Glover, Megan Hill, Sheryl Jacobs, Seana Kimzey, Sarah Kirk, Jill Kleinberg, Liz Lanphear, Jill LaPoint, Shade Little, Linda Lungstrum, Lawrence Maxey, Wayne & Jude McDaniel, Tracey Noll, Jerry Nossaman, Teresa Ohlemeier, Leslie O'Neil, Todd Preheim, Jane Roads, John Robertson & Janet Bouley, Martha Rose, Jim Rumsey, Ginger Scalet, Robert Schehrer, Meredith Schnug, Jim Schwartzburg, Lanie Sedlacek, Helen Seymour, Jean Shepherd, Bob Simpson, Gina Spade, Blake and Monique Spencer, Ted and Linda Upstill, Katherine Ware, Cheryl Wiley, Evan Williams & Diane Zinn.

Thank YOU for supporting CASA and children in the foster care system!

General Support Donation | Learn more about Volunteering | Donate to meet child needs

It costs $2500 to recruit, train & supervise a volunteer to serve one child or sibling group in the foster care system for an entire year.

We currently have 81 children on our waiting list for a CASA volunteer. Your support can help us reach more of them. Thank you!

Follow us on Social Media (using the links below) and please share & comment.

Or simply have a conversation with your family, friends, or neighbors about why you love CASA!

Thank you for helping us spread the word!

Donate to help us provide much needed supplies directly to our kids.

During quarantine we have been able to provide the kids we serve with materials, games & other supplies to keep them engaged & stimulated at their placements.

DID YOU KNOW that you can link your **Dillon's Plus** and **Amazon Smile** accounts to CASA? You can unlock automatic donations every time you make a purchase.