



## MONDAY MORNING MEMO

Monday, March 30, 2009 ♡ Volume 4, Issue 3



### *CASA Spring Directors' Meeting*

Directors met in Albany this month and heard presentations on collaboration, children in the courtroom, data collection, and “Points of Pride,” success stories from area programs. The meeting, which included interactive learning activities (right), was coordinated by UCS in collaboration with CASANYS. Local directors Kathy McGowan (above left) and Katie Montague (with paper, right) greatly contributed to the planning and facilitation. Speakers included Lee Lounsbury (below left), child welfare consultant; and Karen Carroll, (above center), deputy statewide project manager for the Child Welfare Court Improvement Project.





## ***Two New Chapters of CASA Program Manual Distributed***

At their March meeting, CASA directors received two new chapters of the CASA statewide program manual, *How CASA Works in New York State: Solving the Program Proficiency Puzzle*. Chapter 8, *Technology and Performance Management*, covers the hardware and software needs of local programs, email protocols, and data collection and management. Chapter 9, *Program Development*, reviews the procedures for expanding CASA to new counties. The manual is a joint project of the UCS CASA Assistance Program and CASA: Advocates for Children of NYS (CASANYS). The chapters will be posted with previous chapters on the UCS CASA website, [www.nycourts.gov/ip/casa](http://www.nycourts.gov/ip/casa) and the CASANYS site, [www.casanys.org](http://www.casanys.org).

The manual committee includes local directors Grace Thompson, Ulster County, who drafted the technology chapter, and William Lamb, Ontario County. Work continues on the remaining chapters, and additional committee members are welcome!

## **🌸🌸🌸 CASA Successes 🌸🌸🌸**

### ***CASA Volunteer Assists Youth in Obtaining Dental Services***

The issue of the unmet dental needs of children in care has been raised in many arenas. A CASA volunteer's commitment and creativity in Westchester County recently overcame challenges in this area, and helped a young girl obtain corrective dental work.

The case involved an immigrant child from South America who was sexually abused, became pregnant and delivered a son at the age of 11. She is cognitively delayed, has a number of learning disabilities, and has required extensive treatment. She has come a long way emotionally, and has even begun to socialize as a regular teenager would. However, one issue remained. This young lady had extensive orthodontic needs. She constantly referred to it, and it impacted her self-esteem. No one working on the case had a solution, though, because she was not eligible for services.

The CASA advocate, who is known for thinking outside the box, did an internet search on "pro-bono orthodontia." She found an orthodontist and his wife who had established a foundation for children in need of orthodontia. The CASA volunteer contacted the foundation, explained the general situation and her role as a CASA, and facilitated their discussing the case specifics with the local department of social services. In a very short time, free services were obtained, and the young woman now proudly displays her new braces.

## **🌸🌸🌸 Resources 🌸🌸🌸**

*(Please note: Links to third party sites do not imply any affiliation between the UCS CASA Assistance Program and the site owner, or an endorsement, approval, or verification of any content available on such third party sites.)*

### ***Joint Report Addresses Issues Facing Parents with Mental Illnesses***

The Center for New York City Affairs at The New School and the Center for an Urban Future have issued a joint report documenting the issues facing poor and working class parents with mental illnesses and their children. *Child Welfare Watch*, Vol. 17, "Hard Choices: Caring for the children of mentally ill parents," looks at challenges facing parents with psychiatric problems who come in contact with the city's



child welfare system. While the report is New York City-focused, many of the issues documented occur across the country.

In New York City, as many as one-fifth of parents who come in contact with the foster care system have a diagnosis of mental illness and are much more likely to have children enter foster care than parents without psychiatric disabilities. The report summarizes the challenges courts encounter making decisions on cases involving parents with mental illnesses, and profiles some of these families and their struggles. Programs offering supports to parents with psychiatric disabilities to enable them to safely care for their children are highlighted in the report, as well as what is determined to be a critical lack of services for foster children with severe mental illnesses. The report also contains policy recommendations drafted by the Child Welfare Watch advisory board aimed at helping policymakers address issues of mental illness and parenting. The full report is available at the Center for New York City Affairs Web site, [www.newschool.edu/milano/nycaffairs/cww\\_winter\\_2009.html](http://www.newschool.edu/milano/nycaffairs/cww_winter_2009.html)

### **Save the Dates**

#### ***April 7<sup>th</sup> Teleconference on Child Welfare Agency and Court Collaborations***

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement will present a teleconference on April 7<sup>th</sup> on Improving Agency/Court Collaboration: Strategies for Success. Co-sponsored by the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues, the 90-minute program begins at 2:30 pm. It will explore overcoming barriers to collaboration, and present reports from sites around the country that have developed successful agency/court partnerships.

For more information and to register, go to: <http://tatis.muskie.usm.maine.edu/pubs/TeleReg.asp>

#### ***Prevent Child Abuse New York Conference in Albany April 20-22***

The 14th Annual New York State Child Abuse Prevention Conference, "Transformations," will be held in Albany April 20-22, 2009. Featured speakers include Dr. Martin Maldonado, *The Why and How-to of Infant Mental Health*; Angela Shelton, *Removing the Sword of Trauma*; and Craig Zablocki, *Time Out for Parents*. For more information and to register, go to: [www.preventchildabuseny.org/conf09/index.shtml](http://www.preventchildabuseny.org/conf09/index.shtml)

### **Quotable**

"The true measure of a man is how he treats someone who can do him absolutely no good."

*- Samuel Johnson*

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