



## MONDAY MORNING MEMO

Monday, September 8, 2008 ☞ Volume 3, Issue 6

### *Collaborative Advocacy: Building Instead of Burning Bridges*

CASA volunteers are known for their strong commitment to helping children in need. But how best to make those needs known in a way that can be heard, a way that honors the validity of different points of view and builds collaborative relationships that ultimately will best serve those we are attempting to help?

This dilemma motivated the development of a training for CASA staff and volunteers titled “Collaborative Advocacy: It’s a Plan, Not an Argument.” Developed by Duke Fisher and Linya Bell, the seven-hour training was previewed at the spring CASA Program Directors’ meeting, and piloted August 1<sup>st</sup> in Utica. It will be replicated in Batavia on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

*"I feel that after this training, I can become the best CASA I can be."*

*- CASA Volunteer*

Duke, of Learning Labs and Fisher Training Consultations, has educated thousands on creative conflict resolution and mediation. Linya is Executive Director of the Resolution Center of Jefferson and Lewis Counties, and the former CASA Program Director there. The training combines the experience and perspectives of the two trainers, bringing mediation principles to assist in CASA advocacy.

Duke said he “learned the hard way,” while advocating for his son’s special education needs, that stubbornly pushing for a single position generally evokes resistance. You may feel you are just being strong or are clearly in the right, but in the end, you’ve made no progress for the child you are there to assist. “Advocacy starts with listening,” Linya said. “And then listening again, and even again – we have to get to the story that has to get out. And then it requires more listening, so that we can share the story in the format that can be understood.”



At the training, individuals:

- ✓ Learn to advocate in ways that go beyond opinions.
- ✓ Learn to find answers not arguments.
- ✓ Learn how to make team members not enemies.
- ✓ Learn to see demands, threats and all behavior as expressions of unmet needs.
- ✓ Learn to turn conflict into a problem solving opportunity.
- ✓ Learn communication techniques that lead to collaboration instead of “clobberation.”
- ✓ Learn to go beyond personal ideas of what the kids need to a plan to meet their needs.
- ✓ Learn skills for finding answers that really work for all involved.



## **CASA ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

OFFICE OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION AND COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

At the pilot training in Utica, funded by the NYS Child Welfare Court Improvement Project, pre- and post-tests were conducted to measure skills developed. Participants indicated the training increased their understanding of advocacy and mediation and the difference between the two as applied to CASA services. They also were better able to reframe questions in a neutral voice, accept perspectives from others, and help people feel that they are being heard. Attendees described the training as fun, engaging, and having provided new skills and insights to bring to CASA work in the future.

The Batavia training will be held at the Holiday Inn Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>. For more information about this training, or bringing the training to your county, contact Darlene Ward at [daward@courts.state.ny.us](mailto:daward@courts.state.ny.us).

### *Save the Dates*

#### *Resource Development Seminar Series Continues September 17-18 ~ Albany, NY*

This year's training will focus on "Putting the Special in Special Events" on Day 1 of the training, featuring presenter Burke Keegan. Day 2 will address Putting the "Appeal" in Fundraising Appeal Letters, led by Dan Kos, Management Analyst for NYS UCS. The seminars are for staff and board members of local CASA, Community Dispute Resolution Centers, Children's Centers and Parent Education Programs. For information, email [daward@courts.state.ny.us](mailto:daward@courts.state.ny.us).

#### *CASA Program Directors' Meeting October 6-7 ~ Old Forge, NY*

Co-sponsored by CASA: Advocates for Children of NYS (CASANYs) and the NYS Unified Court System CASA Assistance Program, the fall program directors' meeting is coordinated by CASANYs. For agenda and registration information, contact [robinson@casanys.org](mailto:robinson@casanys.org).

#### *NYS UCS Trainer Skills Development Workshop October 29-30 ~ Latham, NY*

The Office of Alternative Dispute Resolution and Court Improvement Programs (ADRCIP) is presenting a two-day trainer skills development workshop on creating and debriefing interactive activities. The workshop will be held in Latham, NY (Albany area) and will be co-trained by Duke Fisher and Brenda Episcopo.

This workshop is part of ADRCIP's Trainer Development Series, created to help build the capacity of CASAs and CDRCs to provide high quality training for their volunteers and their communities. Workshops are open to all staff, regardless of their positions or level of training experience. Contact Dan Kos ([dkos@courts.state.ny.us](mailto:dkos@courts.state.ny.us)) for more information.



### ***New Administrative Judge Named for Sixth Judicial District***

Supreme Court Justice Michael V. Coccoma of Otsego County has been named administrative judge for the Sixth Judicial District, Chief Administrative Judge Ann Pfau announced. He succeeds Supreme Court Justice Judith O'Shea, who has announced she is stepping down to return to the trial bench.

Justice Coccoma has been a judge since being elected to the multi-bench slot of Otsego County Family Court, County Court and Surrogate's Court in 1995. He has been an acting Supreme Court justice since 2000 and a Supreme Court justice since January. He is also a former Otsego County district attorney. Judge Pfau praised Justice O'Shea as an "exceptional leader, jurist and administrator." The Sixth Judicial District encompasses 10 counties along upstate's Southern Tier.

### ***Governor Signs Bill Extending Domestic Violence Protections***

Governor David A. Paterson has signed a bill into law that authorizes family courts to extend civil orders of protections to individuals who have had an "intimate relationship", but may never have lived with or been sexually intimate with their alleged abusers (Bill number A11707/S8665). The law provides new protections to dating and same-sex couples, and also provides for the NYS Office of the Prevention of Domestic Violence to conduct trainings for judges and judicial staff. Previously, only spouses, family members or the mother or father of a couple that has had a child together, were able to obtain civil orders of protection in family court.

## **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.)*

### ***Online Tutorials Provide Education on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare***

The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare offers online tutorials for specific target audiences, supporting collaboration between the child welfare system, the substance abuse treatment system, and the courts. There is no cost for the tutorials, but you need to register on the Center's website. CEU's also are available for completion of the tutorials. For more information, go to:

[www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/tutorials/index.asp](http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov/tutorials/index.asp)

### ***ICWA Guide Available Online on Native American Rights Fund Website***

An online edition of "A Practical Guide to the Indian Child Welfare Act" provides a comprehensive resource of information on ICWA. The Guide, on the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) website, provides an introduction to the ICWA, answers to Frequently Asked Questions, and an appendix of resources -- primary research documents (federal and state laws, regulations, court cases, legislative materials) and secondary research documents (reports, guides, links, bibliographies).

NARF is a non-profit organization providing legal representation and technical assistance to Indian tribes, organizations and individuals nationwide. For more information and to access the Guide, go to:

<http://narf.org/icwa/>



### *Hispanic or Latino? Terms Have Very Different Meanings*

In working on standardizing data fields, our workgroup discussed the use of the ethnic category of Hispanic or Latino. The terms are not interchangeable. As with all cultural designations, the final arbiter is the individual, however he/she prefers to be identified. The following websites all provide some good information on the origin of the terms and their connotations:

[www.lasculturas.com/aa/aa070501a.htm](http://www.lasculturas.com/aa/aa070501a.htm)

[www.elboricua.com/latino\\_hispanic.html](http://www.elboricua.com/latino_hispanic.html)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic\\_and\\_Latino\\_Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispanic_and_Latino_Americans)

### *Website Identifies Innovative Ways to Achieve Permanency Options for Youth*

Nationally, foster care programs are working to develop strategies to better support effective permanency plans for youth. The Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, awarded nine grants in October of 2005 to explore innovative programs to achieve youth permanency. Read about the accomplishments of the nine grantees as well as some of the products they developed at: [www.nrcadoption.org/youthpermanencycluster/index.html](http://www.nrcadoption.org/youthpermanencycluster/index.html).

### *🌸🌸🌸 CASA Successes 🌸🌸🌸*

**Sullivan County CASA** recently benefitted financially from an area "Girls Night Out." Once a month, a group of community women pick a site for a nice dinner out. Instead, they recently decided to sponsor a "Girls Night In" in order to benefit CASA. They all brought a dish to share and a \$5 donation, and the local CASA program received a \$100 donation.

**Katie Montague of CASA of Oneida and Herkimer Counties** was awarded a "Friend of the Child" award by the Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council this summer. More than 60 individuals were nominated for awards at the event.

### *🌸🌸🌸 Quotable 🌸🌸🌸*

"The most basic of all human needs is the need to understand and be understood. The best way to understand people is to listen to them."

*-Ralph Nichols*

*This is a publication of the*  
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