



MONDAY MORNING MEMO

Monday, November 27, 2006 ☞ Volume 1, Issue 1

Welcome to the first edition of the **Monday Morning Memo**. This publication, distributed by email bi-weekly, will feature information about issues relevant to CASA program, volunteer and case management as well as updates from the Office of Court Administration and Family Court Improvement Project. We'll be working in the coming year on a new design and on filing issues on our website, but for now, we're going with a simple format.

Some regular features will include:

- **The A-Train:** Information about upcoming trainings and conferences.
- **Success Stories:** A section that will offer a chance to spotlight a successful case outcome (with names and details kept confidential), or to highlight a CASA volunteer, board member of staff who has excelled or implemented an idea that might benefit other CASA programs in the state.
- **Ask Us:** A column that will give CASA staff and volunteers the opportunity to ask questions of the UCS CASA Assistance Program or of Family Court Improvement Project staff. Questions can be about the court system, child welfare, or program or case management.
- **What's New at OCA and Activities of the CASA Assistance Program:** Updates from UCS.
- **Resources:** Information, web links, etc. from state or federal agencies or other child advocacy organizations that CASA folk might find useful.

The intended audience for this publication is local CASA Program Directors, the State Association, and your boards and volunteers, as well as internal staff at OCA. We will only email this to the CASA directors, however, so you have the option of sending along. Without further adieu, here's the first issue!

☞☞☞ ☞☞☞ **The A-Train** ☞☞☞ ☞☞☞

“Janes” Conference Call Dec. 5th

On **Tuesday, December 5th at 2 p.m.**, UCS will host a conference call with “The Janes” -- Jane Thompson and Jane Malpass -- who presented an excellent training in Utica in September on enhancing permanency for children. The call will be an opportunity for you to ask the Janes followup questions to their training, as well as share other questions and issues. It will be interesting to hear how people have put the training into effect; for example, several programs have pursued in-services on grief and loss issues.



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An email with a call-in 800 number will be sent out to programs shortly. Feel free to include volunteers or board members on this call.

~~~~~ **Success Stories** ~~~~~

Liz Caldwell Receives Monroe County Award

On October 19, 2006, Liz Caldwell, the Family Court Resource Advocate for CASA of Rochester/Monroe County, Inc., was awarded the 2006 Human Services Worker of the Year Award for the private sector by the Monroe County Federation of Social Workers. Laurie Holmes, the CASA Director, introduced Liz and said that Liz's compassion, persistence, and ability to be objective have enabled her to make a difference to the 278 children she has been assigned to since she joined the CASA program six years ago. The awards luncheon was held at the Rochester Riverside Convention Center. Approximately 225 people were in attendance, including Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks, New York State Senator Joseph Robach, Commissioner of the Department of Human Services Kelly Reed, and Monroe County District Attorney Michael Green.

Fundraising Can Be Relaxing

Sullivan County CASA was fortunate to have the support of the "What Every Body Needs Wellness Spa," which is donating 50% of November's profits. Two open houses were held at the spa and attended by Executive Director Lily Hendrickson and members of her board of directors.

The spa owner, Lisa Dalessandro, also is going to put up a CASA Angel Christmas tree to collect donations, and has gifted the program with a one-hour aroma therapy massage.

~~~~~ **Resources** ~~~~~

Working with the Courts in Child Protection is a new publication from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families Children's Bureau. Published this year, it is an excellent overview of the court system, relevant legislation such as the Adoption and Safe Families Act, Interstate Compact and Indian Child Welfare Act, and issues impacting family court cases such as mental health, domestic violence, and co-occurring criminal procedures.

The manual is written in clear, lay language and would be an excellent overview for new staff and volunteers. The 78-page publication can be downloaded or ordered from their website,

<http://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanual.cfm>

~~~~~ **What's New at OCA?** ~~~~~

The Office of Court Administration's Family Court Improvement Project recently welcomed two new staff members. **Paul Drezelo** began working with CIP at the end of September. Among many other tasks, Paul Drezelo will help facilitate a datashare between OCA and the NYS Office of Children and Family



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Services and the electronic filing of trial permanency petitions. He will also help augment the Court Improvement Project's website.

Shakesha Coleman began working with the Court Improvement Project in the middle of October. She will work with the CASA Program contract budgets and assist with various projects.

The Family Court Improvement Project (CIP) is a federally funded program designed to support and enhance the important role State courts play in ensuring the safety, permanency and well-being of children who are the subject of child welfare proceedings. There are three grants under the auspices of CIP—a core grant, a training grant and a data analysis grant.

The Court Improvement Project supports the CASA program, liaison staff in the family courts, permanency mediation programs, "cross-disciplinary" training, data analysis, technology support and the development of outcome-based performance measures.

Christine Sabino Kiesel who is the Statewide Program Manager for the Family Court Improvement Project recently received the 2006 Accent on Excellence Award for the Mohawk Valley. Each year the award is given to "accomplished and committed young people in the Mohawk Valley who demonstrate hard work, community involvement and are an inspiration to others." Christine was formerly Court Attorney Referee in the Oneida County Family Court where she presided over a "Best-Practice" part hearing child welfare matters. She served as President of the Board of the Peacemaker Program which administers the CASA program in Oneida and Herkimer Counties, and is a past recipient of the National CASA Board Member of the Year Award in 2001.



Family Court Judge Mark M. Meddaugh of Sullivan County has been sworn in as president of the Association of Family Court Judges of the State of New York. The other officers elected were: Judge David M. Brockway, Chemung County, president-elect; Judge Marilyn L. O'Connor, Monroe County, vice president; Judge John G. Marks, Nassau County, treasurer; and Judge Nilda Morales Horowitz, Westchester County, secretary.

Disproportionate Minority Representation: You'll soon be receiving a link to an online survey on diversity and cultural competence; just trying to gather some statewide data on the subject. Many thanks to all of you interested in working on this issue.

Quote of the week

"If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room."

- Anita Koddick

(Quote appeared this fall in Onondaga County CASA's Third Annual Light of Hope Breakfast Program)



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This is a publication of the
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For further information, contact:

Darlene Ward, Program Manager

98 Niver Street, Cohoes, New York 12047

Phone: (518) 238-4360; Fax: (518) 238-2951

Email: daward@courts.state.ny.us / Website: www.nycourts.gov/ip/casa/