



**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

# The Advocate's Voice

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE PROGRAM  
OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

SPRING 2010

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## Volunteers

### Making A Difference In Children's Lives

♥ **Melissa Peppe** was the CASA for Lindsey\* and Jessica\* from September 2008 through November 2009. The girls, along with their two sisters, came to the attention of Child Welfare Services (CWS) in 2003. They were removed from their mother's care by CWS after she exposed them to violence and possibly drugs. All four girls were then placed with their father and stepmother. In 2006, the girls' father attacked their stepmother and threatened to harm the girls. He was arrested and sent to prison leaving the girls to live with their stepmother. Melissa met with Lindsey and Jessica weekly and kept in close contact with all of the parties involved in the case including the social worker, therapists, and school personnel. In addition to regular visits, Melissa was instrumental in advocating for Lindsey by ensuring that she was placed in an appropriate school, one that could meet her needs. As a true support to the family, Melissa knew she made a

difference and could not have been prouder. On November 20, 2009, in celebration of National Adoption Day, Lindsey, Jessica, and their two sisters were officially adopted by their stepmother.



♥ **Effie Amoah-Ntim** served as the CASA for 16-year-old Allison\* from May 2009 to December 2009. Allison was living with her maternal grandparents when she entered the child welfare system. Her grandparents were unable to manage her behavior but, with Effie's support, family therapy, and ongoing treatment Allison made incredible progress. She was able to improve her grades to a 3.29 GPA, she obtained a paid internship working with animals, and her relationship with her grandparents significantly improved.

*continued on page 2*

*\*names have been changed*

### CASA Welcomes New Case Supervisors

Shayla Poole-Diarra joined CASA in January as a full-time Case Supervisor. A graduate of Bowie State University, Shayla earned a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work in 2005. Shayla was employed by the Charles County Department of Social Services, working in adult protective services, before becoming a case manager for Family Services, serving families whose children were in foster care. Shayla and her husband live in Gaithersburg with their two young children.

Hilary Bednarz joined CASA as a part-time Case Supervisor in March. After graduating from Catholic University, Columbus School of Law, in 2004, Hilary worked for a D.C. law firm before becoming the staff attorney for the House of Ruth where she advocated for victims of domestic violence. Most recently, Hilary served as the pro-bono coordinator for her alma mater where she developed and managed Catholic University, Columbus School of Law's voluntary pro bono-program. Hilary, her husband and two young children live in Montgomery County.



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Case Supervisor
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Case Supervisor
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## Congratulations To Our Pre-Service Training Class Graduates

Debbie Accame ~ Heather Alder ~ Kerri Allen ~ Jeanette Anders  
 Christina Aveni-Hatcher ~ Teresa Bailey ~ Nana Bannor ~ Ellen Battistelli  
 Leny Bautista ~ Betsy Beebe ~ Mary Blackwood ~ Chelsea Bolinger ~ Lula Bright  
 Tamara Burrowes ~ Debra Casolari ~ Maryam Charmchi ~ Britney Colandreo  
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 Laura Russell ~ Ghassan Salameh ~ Elaine Sands ~ Maureen Santini  
 Cindy Sharpe ~ Margo Smith ~ Barbara Tappis ~ Rachel Tolbert ~ Julia Torres  
 Gina Toussaint ~ Darlene Towson ~ Hoa Tran ~ Easther Walker ~ Jean Walker  
 Linda Williams ~ Terri Williams ~ Jeanette Winton ~ Jacquelynn Wozniak



### Volunteers Making A Difference In Children's Lives

*continued from page 1*

During this time, Allison was also able to maintain a relationship with her biological mother even though her mother was not in a position to care for Allison. Effie continued to be a strong advocate for Allison, developed a positive rapport with Allison's maternal grandmother, and effectively communicated Allison's needs to the social worker and to the Court. In December 2009, Allison's maternal grandmother was granted custody and guardianship of her and the case closed successfully.

### Volunteers Going Above & Beyond

- ♥ Holly Fungler is a volunteer on the road. Recently, her CASA child was placed in residential placement and while Holly can speak with the child weekly, she will drive to Delaware, an hour-and-a-half, every other month to visit her CASA child.
- ♥ Deborah McRae contacted the US Embassy in Guatemala to obtain information on getting the paperwork that was standing in the way of the adoption of her 8 and 10 year-old CASA children.

♥ **Denise Brown** is the CASA for 9-year-old Justin\*, and **Theresa Jerido** is the CASA for his two brothers, 12-year-old Jermaine\* and 6-year-old Jerome\*. In 2005, the three boys entered the child welfare system after they were left unattended in the family's apartment. Subsequently, the family lost their housing and, with no relatives or friends able to care for the children, they were placed in foster care. The boys remained in the same foster home for three years while their mother struggled to improve her situation and regain custody. In 2007, the Court terminated Ms. R.'s parental rights to all three boys when they were expected to be adopted. Ms. R. appealed the decision and won. In 2008, Justin, Jermaine, and Jerome were reunited with their mother and have remained in her custody. Denise and Theresa have advocated effectively in Court for the boys to receive services and for their case to transition toward a successful closure in three months.

*\*names have been changed*

# Donors Making a Difference

Ron Adler  
 Effie Amoah-Ntim  
 Bilal & Deena Ayyub  
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 Laura Keefe  
 Joan Kenealy  
 Robert & Wendy Kenney  
 Linda Keriakou  
 Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell Kraus  
 Christopher & Jane Kubasik  
 Beverly Labourdette  
 Marjorie Lane  
 David Lease  
 Charles & Janet Lee  
 Lois Lerner  
 Philip & Sandra Lewis  
 Lord & Taylor  
 Ken Loren  
 Glenn Lunden & Frank Meola  
 Liane Lunden  
 Stu & Amy Manela

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Marks  
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## Support CASA of Montgomery County

Please visit us online at  
[www.casamontgomery.org](http://www.casamontgomery.org)  
 Click "Donate Now"

Online donations  
 are processed through  
 Local Independent Charities



"While we try to teach our  
 children all about life,  
 our children teach us  
 what life is all about."

~Angela Schwindt

## CASA Volunteer Anniversary\* Celebrations

### Thirteen Years

Paul Sorlie

### Nine Years

Paula Belman  
 Sorell Schwartz

### Eight Years

Jean DeLeon  
 Terrie Smith

### Six Years

Lisa Gillette  
 Dorie Newman  
 Candace Parrott  
 Sandra Vitale

### Four Years

William Butz  
 Dennis Cain  
 Tonya Howe  
 Sherryl Marshall  
 Karen Spinner

### Three Years

Rosemary Diehl  
 Melissa Peppe  
 Briana Walters

### Two Years

Tamara Horne  
 Rhonda Klein  
 George Wedberg  
 Carol Yates  
 Edward Kelly  
 Irene Burns  
 Stefanie Powers  
 Arlene McGarrity  
 Kendall Anthony  
 Deborah E. McRae  
 Kusuma Udagedera

### One Year

Paula Pflapsen  
 Christine Dub  
 Amy Demske  
 David G. Reese  
 Lori Birk  
 Regina Woods  
 Mary Betters  
 Anne P. Jones  
 Jackie Kling  
 Hana Binder  
 Julie Mackey

\*from date first assigned



Volunteer to help promote CASA  
 at the City of Rockville's Annual  
 Hometown Holidays Celebration

~Memorial Day Weekend~  
 May 29-30, 2010

Call the CASA office for information or  
 to volunteer to staff our booth.  
 301-340-7458



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1010 Grandin Avenue  
Room B-3  
Rockville, Maryland 20851  
Phone: 301-340-7458  
Fax: 301-340-7458  
Email: mail@casamontgomery.org  
Website: www.casamontgomery.org

# Become A Powerful Voice In A Child's Life

## Upcoming Pre-Service Training

*CASA is currently accepting applications for  
Spring & Summer 2010 training*

### *SPRING 2010*

Saturday, April 10	9:00 am to 4:00 pm
Monday, April 12	6:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Wednesday, April 14	6:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Friday, April 16	8:15 am to 4:30 pm
Monday, April 19	6:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Wednesday, April 21	6:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Monday, April 26	6:00 pm to 9:30 pm
Wednesday, April 28	6:00 pm to 9:30 pm

### *SUMMER 2010*

Saturday, June 19	8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Monday, June 21	5:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Wednesday, June 23	5:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Friday, June 25	9:30 am to 4:30 pm
Monday, June 28	5:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Wednesday, June 30	5:30 pm to 9:30 pm
Wednesday, July 7	5:30 pm to 9:30 pm

*~dates are tentative and subject to change~*

Contact the CASA office for more information  
301-340-7458 or visit [www.casamontgomery.org](http://www.casamontgomery.org)

## Montgomery County Needs Foster Parents

CASA is partnering with Montgomery County's Children's Action Team, a group comprised of Juvenile Court judges and representatives from agencies that serve court-involved children, to highlight the need for more foster homes in our community. While we at CASA remain focused on recruiting additional CASA volunteers, we are also concerned about the impact of the scarcity of foster homes on the children we serve. There is a high need for bi-lingual foster homes and foster parents willing to accept teenagers and/or children with special needs.

Active CASA volunteers are ineligible to be foster parents in the County, but please consider sharing this information with friends, co-workers, or relatives who might be willing to open their homes to a child or children in foster care.

For more information contact the Department of Health and Human Services, 1301 Piccard Drive, 4th Floor, Rockville, MD 20850 or call (240) 777-1664

