

# COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE

## McDonough County, Illinois

### June 2017 Newsletter

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*Advocacy Network for Children Mission Statement: To protect and uphold the rights of children when wrongs have been committed against them; to help abused or neglected children have safe, permanent homes where they can thrive; to act as a powerful voice in these children's best interest and to educate the public about the plight of unrepresented children within the child welfare system.*

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#### **Adoption or Guardianship?**

Adoptive parents have all the legal rights and responsibilities of a child born to them. Adoption is only possible when the birth parent(s) have voluntarily given up their rights, or the court has taken parental rights away from them. Guardianship is another permanency option for children when it has been determined that return home and adoption have been ruled out. Guardianship does not require relinquishment or termination of parental rights, but names the guardian as the legal guardian rather than DCFS.

The legal differences in adoption and guardianship are highlighted here. The subject is extensive and will be further examined in next month's newsletter.

#### **Adoption**

The adoptive parent(s) is given all the rights and responsibilities that once belonged to the birth parent(s).

Adoption is a permanent, lifelong, legal relationship.

Birth parents' rights are voluntarily relinquished or involuntarily terminated.

An adopted child has all the same rights as birth children when the adoptive parent(s) does not have a Will. Otherwise, inheritance rights are established through a valid Will as they are for birth children. Additionally, adopted children automatically are entitled to survivor's benefits such a pension or Social Security in the event of an adoptive parent's death.

When the adoptive parents are married, both spouses must adopt unless separated for more than a year.

#### **Guardianship**

A guardian is given legal responsibility for the child and assumes the rights of care, custody and supervision of the child.

The court makes all the decisions regarding the transfer of guardianship but the birth parent(s) can request the guardianship be vacated and the child be returned to their care if parental rights have not been terminated.

Birth parent(s)' rights may or may not be relinquished or involuntarily terminated. If the birth parent(s)' parental rights are terminated the guardian may legally adopt the child with DCFS' help.

The child has no rights of inheritance from the guardian unless the child has been included in the guardian's will.

When married either one or both spouses may be named guardian.

Taken from Making the Adoption/Guardianship Decision, IL  
Dept. of Children and Family Services

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## **CASA – Calendar of Upcoming Events** **(continuing education credits for CASA volunteers\*)**

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**June 21 – Interagency Council.\*** 9:00 am to 10:30 am at the McDonough County Health Department. Will Wetzel, Genesis Gardens, will speak on the progress of the homeless shelter for families.

**June 24 – Heritage Day Parade.** Due to a low number of walkers, CASA will not participate in this event.

**July and August – No Brown Bag Lunch** meetings. Summer break.

**July 14 – Medical Aspects of Child Maltreatment.\* (Flyer sent as separate attachment.)** 9:00 am to 4:30 pm. At the Spoon River College Outreach Center in Macomb. Key note speaker: Dr. Channing Petrak, MD, Pediatric Resource Center, University of Illinois College of Medicine – Peoria.

**August 16 – Interagency Council.\*** 9:00 am to 10:30 am at the McDonough County Health Department. Guest speakers, Representative Noreen Hammond and Senator Jill Tracy. This is a popular event, especially in this time of Illinois' budget crisis!

**November 15 – Interagency Council.\*** 9:00 am to 10:30 am at the McDonough County Health Department. Guest speaker is Kate McGruder, Director of Early Beginnings. Kate will present on childhood trauma.

**\*CASA Volunteers: The above events provide not only good learning opportunities; they count towards your annual requirement of 12 hours of continuing education as well. Please request a continuing education form to submit to insure you get credit. All Interagency Council meetings = 1.5 hours of continuing education credit. The July 14 seminar = 6.5 hours credit.**

***Happy June 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday***  
***Diane Banach!***  
***THANK YOU FOR BEING A***  
***CASA VOLUNTEER!***

### ***Lunch is on us!***

Do you know someone interested in learning more about becoming a CASA volunteer? I would love the opportunity to spend some time talking with them about CASA; what we do, who we serve, and just how we accomplish our goals.

So, introduce me to your friend! Give me a call at 309-544-0003 to arrange a time for all of us to meet. Could be breakfast . . . lunch . . . coffee!

***Vicki Duba***