

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE

McDonough County, Illinois

August 2017 Newsletter

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.

CASA of McDonough County Program Update

CASA of McDonough County has begun participating earlier in the life of juvenile abuse and neglect cases. We now attend hearings as early as “*shelter care*.” The “*shelter care hearing*” takes place following the initial DCFS (Department of Children and Family Service) investigation; the investigator determined the child(ren)’s safety is at risk and the child(ren) has been removed from that unsafe situation. At shelter care, after hearing the state’s petition and the testimony of the DCFS investigator, the judge rules whether or not there is immediate and urgent necessity to place the child(ren) in the temporary custody of DCFS to assure their safety. The CASA Volunteer Coordinator attends the hearing, learns details of the case, observes the parents or caregivers, and begins to think about which volunteer will be best suited for the case. It is possible for a volunteer to be involved within a couple weeks of case opening. It has been proven that a CASA assigned to a case results in permanency being achieved more quickly than if no CASA is assigned. Furthermore, statistics show that involving all parties in the case (parents, attorneys, social workers, foster parents and CASA) at case opening, provides a setting for a better working relationship and a good foundation on which to move the case forward. *Please visit <http://www.pcjcc.pima.gov/HTML%20files/Divisions/CFS/Dependency.html> to learn more about “front-loading” the system, a model used in Pima County, Arizona, and how it relates to positive outcomes for abused and neglected children and their families.*

McDonough County Case Outcomes to Date

Cases closed since program inception:	77
Reason for closure:	
Youth in care (cases) returning home:	48
Youth in care adopted:	22
Youth in care who aged out (turned 18 years old)	5
Other (transferred, death)	2

Happy Birthday to You!

Sharon Otey - August 15th



CASA of McDonough County was well represented at the training. Volunteers from left to right: Toni Ainslie, Linda Ward, Brenda Thompson, Jan Greenwood (behind) Diane Banach, Darlos Mummert and Eunice Lutz.

Dr. Channing Petrak, University of Illinois College of Medicine at Peoria, Pediatric Resource Center, presented a day of training on the Medical Aspects of Child Maltreatment. The free training was made possible through funding from Children's Justice Grant of DCFS. The training provided accredited training hours for DCFS employees, MCLE hours for legal professionals and CEUs social workers.

CASA – Calendar of Upcoming Events

August – No Brown Bag Lunch meeting. Summer break.

August 5 – Vicki Duba, Volunteer Coordinator, CASA of McDonough County, hosts an informational table at the **Farmer's Market in Chandler Park, Macomb** from 9:00 – 12:00 noon. Vicki will talk to interested individuals about CASA and the important contributions of the CASA volunteer and the program itself.

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

September 12 – Brown Bag Lunch. 12:00 noon at the First Presbyterian Church in Macomb, second floor. Guest speaker is Brittany Schisler, Sexual Assault Medical/Legal Advocate at WIRC's Victim Services. Brittany will talk about the services that are available to men, women and children in our community.

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.
