

The Advocate

Allen County GAL/CASA

From the Director



**Nancy Springer,
CASA Director**

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. How can we, as CASAs, help PREVENT child abuse? One way is to build protective factors in families. Many families are lacking protective factors –knowledge of parenting, knowledge of child development,

parental resilience, social connections, and concrete supports. Research shows that when parents possess protective factors, the risk for neglect and abuse diminishes and optimal outcomes for children, youth, and families are promoted. These protective factors can help interrupt the cycle of abuse and neglect that many families experience. The Children's Bureau offers a great resource for guiding conversations with parents and caregivers about the protective factors and how parents can care for their chil-

dren and themselves to create strong families: [2023/2024 Prevention Resource Guide: Chapter 6 Protective Factors Conversation Guides for Partnering With Families](#) (childwelfare.gov)

As a Court Appointed Special Advocate, you are a positive, caring adult in the lives of children during what is often a time of turmoil. You provide a voice for children by advocating for their best interests and making recommendations to the court to assist both children and parents. You keep a watchful eye to ensure that children are safe and have an opportunity to heal in a positive en-

vironment. You work with others in the case to help families build the strengths they need to be reunified. In the month of April, we are thankful for our CASA Volunteers who, with the myriad of social workers, judges, teachers, principals, day care workers, and countless others, take time to show compassion, care and concern for the most vulnerable among us – our children. Thank you!

Join us **Thursday, April 6, at Noon on the Allen County Courthouse lawn** as the community kicks off Child Abuse Prevention Month in Allen County and plants pinwheels as a physical reminder [that we ALL have a responsibility in making Allen County a better place for children.](#)

Training Opportunities & Volunteer Hours

Monthly you will be receiving a list of upcoming trainings offered to you all at no cost. These are not required events, but rather opportunities for you to gain additional information on topics many of you

have requested and/or we thought might be of interest to some of you. Please feel free to attend any or all events, just know there is no expectation that you attend other than earning your 12 addi-

tional training hours for the year. Please note some events require you to RSVP so please note the date by which you must register. As always, please let me know if you have any questions at all.

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CASA Highlights - Suzanne Lange



Suzanne Lange, CASA
Assistant Director

March 28, 2023 marked a special day for Allen County CASA Assistant Director Suzanne Lange; that date marked Suzanne's 29th year with CASA! Starting with the organization in 1994, Suzanne has seen many changes to CASA, the court system, and the nature of child abuse and neglect in Allen County.

"The cases we deal with have never been easy, but in comparison to 1994, the issues we deal with today - mental health, drug abuse, family violence, and trafficking - have significantly impacted CASA's advocacy in these child abuse and neglect cases. CASA is needed now more than ever," said Suzanne.

But what hasn't changed for Suzanne is her absolute commitment to the best interest of the child. She believes because of the work of our volunteers, she is able to go toe-to-toe with anyone who wants to take a short cut or dismiss concerns; time and time again, she stands for and is the voice of a child in court.

Thank you!
You make a difference.



Spring craft ideas !

Kids Corner - Spring Crafts

Spring is all about starting fresh and new. The sun is shining, the snow is melting and the flowers are starting to bloom. I always take such great inspiration from the growth that is all around us. Here's a great collection from of creative

spring crafts for older kids to make from Kitchen Counter Chronicles. Read the full story at <https://www.kitchencounterchronicle.com/cool-spring-crafts-for-tweens-to-make/>

For the younger crowd, Pinterest has a great board full of "April Showers Bring May Flowers" arts and crafts. Access their board at <https://www.pinterest.com/adriele99/april-showers->

Celebrate April Advocate Anniversaries!

Donna Neff	26 Years of Service
Gayle Newton	15 Years of Service
Peggy Eschenbacher	14 Years of Service
Teresa Pohler	13 Years of Service
Laura Rao	10 Years of Service
Karen Shadle	9 Years of Service
Heather Houser	4 Years of Service
Julie Goodman	4 Years of Service
Donell Housel	4 Years of Service
Marla Housel	4 Years of Service
Michele Myers	4 Years of Service
Elaine Pontillo	4 Years of Service
Julie Wiegerink	4 Years of Service
Cheryl Dunn	3 Years of Service
Michele Fortune	3 Years of Service
Natasha Andrews	1 Years of Service
Teresa Coolman	1 Years of Service
Kathleen Masri	1 Years of Service
Alex Martin	1 Years of Service
Jill Sparks	1 Years of Service
Karen Stahl	1 Years of Service
Sarah Stuckey	1 Years of Service
Kay Youn	1 Years of Service

Congratulations to our April Advocates with Service Anniversaries! Special congratulations to Donna Neff who celebrates her 26th year of service! Gayle Newton, Peggy Eschenbacher, Teresa Pohler, Laura Rao round out our other long time volunteers celebrating this month. Together, this group has a combined service of 128 years of speaking up and being the voice for children in court. Please join me in congratulating and thanking them for their service.

Q & A: Dual Status?

Q: What is Dual Status?

A: Simply stated, Dual Status refers to a youth who has had involvement in both the Family Relations CHINS-Child In Need of Services (JC) Court and the Juvenile Delinquency (JD/JS) Court. There are three different designations:

Dually identified Youth - Youth who are currently involved with the juvenile justice system and have history in the child welfare system but no current involvement (or vice versa)

Dually-Involved Youth - Youth who have concurrent involvement (diversionary, formal, or a combination of the two) with both the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

Dually-Adjudicated Youth - Youth who are concurrently ad-

judicated in both juvenile justice and child welfare systems (i.e. both delinquent and dependent).

As with all things CHINS, nothing is black and white. As a volunteer, if you have a case involving a dual status child, Suzanne Lange, Assistant Director, is our resident expert and can assist you with questions. In addition, when Suzanne is unavailable, Aaron Reidenbach, CASA Supervisor, can also answer questions. Please know, you will not be alone in working these types of cases, it's just some of you will never have a dual status case. We believe it is more prudent to train volunteers on Dual Status when working on a Dual Status case.

If you have questions, feel free to reach out!

Have a question you want answered? Send them to me and maybe you'll be in next month's Q & A column.

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wallpapers from Parkview Health for
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Discover the Power of Mindfulness Meditation via Zoom



Join Dave Johnson, PhD, Parkview Health, on April 26th from 5:00 pm to 5:40 pm for ongoing coaching and group practice in mindfulness. Whether you are experienced or a

beginner, all are welcome!

This program is perfect if you want to:

- Boost your sense of well-being.
- Build resilience.
- Reduce and soothe stress.
- Enjoy more calm.
- Have more compassion.
- Bring joy into your life.
- Find helpful resources.

To register, call
260.266.6500 or toll free at
844.835.0003.

A Zoom link will be sent to
your email once you have
registered. Group meets
monthly on the fourth
Wednesday

Cost: Free