In previous newsletters, we’ve talked about our efforts to fold trauma-informed care more deeply into Piedmont CASA’s practices and to expand it throughout the network of agencies and systems that interact with our children and their families. You’ve also read about the Poverty Simulation and how this powerful learning experience provides a glimpse into the lives of people who are working very hard to meet their basic needs on a daily basis.

All of CASA’s children and youth have experienced trauma - 100%. That statistic is probably true for their parents and grandparents as well. On top of that, 82% of the young victims we serve come from households surviving at or below the poverty line. How does that intersection of trauma and poverty affect our children? Do the effects of one amplify the other?

POVERTY IMPAIRS PARENTING

When children grow up in low-income families, they face many challenges that youngsters from more advantaged circumstances do not. They are more likely to experience family transitions, move frequently, and change schools often. The schools they attend may be less well-funded, and the areas they live in more disadvantaged. Because their parents have fewer resources, their homes have fewer intellectually-stimulating materials. Another big issue, and one of the most powerful lessons learned in a Poverty Simulation, is that poor parents simply have less time to participate in the education of their children.

Social and economic deprivation during childhood and adolescence can have a lasting effect, making it even more difficult for children who grow up in low-income families to escape poverty when they become adults. Moreover, the chances of being poor in early adulthood increase sharply the longer a child experiences poverty in those early years. The stress of living in poverty and struggling to meet daily needs can also impair parenting. That is certainly the case when mothers and fathers encounter multiple traumas over the years. They aren’t as warm. They have a limited understanding of child development and needs. They are more likely to use corporal or harsh punishment. Because feeling safe and secure is necessary for healthy emotional development, many children growing up in poverty exhibit distress.
CHRONIC POVERTY IS EVEN WORSE

Research shows that the combined effects of intergenerational trauma and poverty are significant. Adults with histories of childhood abuse and exposure to family violence have problems with emotional regulation, aggression, social competence, and interpersonal relationships. These may lead to functional impairments in their work roles and their parenting, which are then inflicted on their children. The families become immersed in chronic conditions of high stress and exposure to multiple traumas. They often experience chaotic, disorganized lifestyles, inconsistent and/or conflicted relationships, and crisis-oriented coping.

In addition to the damaging effects of trauma, the meager resources and crowded conditions of chronic poverty slowly erode parental and family function even further. The turmoil of this constant dysfunctional struggle is extremely stressful for children. Given these problems, it is not surprising that low-income families are over-represented in child protective services.

FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS TO IMPROVE OUTCOMES

A key component of trauma-informed care is building resilience and the **protective factors** that need to be present in order for any family to thrive.

No one can completely eliminate stress from parenting, but the capacity for **resilience** can affect how a parent deals with stress. It is the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family’s life. It means finding ways to solve problems, building and sustaining trusting relationships including relationships with your own child, and knowing how to seek help when necessary.

Friends, family, neighbors and community members are crucial **social connections** for parents. They provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice, and give concrete assistance. These networks also offer opportunities for moms and dads to “give back”. This is an important part of helping parents develop their self-esteem, while benefiting the community. Isolated families may need extra help in reaching out to build these positive relationships.

Meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing and health care is essential for families to thrive. Likewise, when families encounter a crisis such as domestic violence, mental illness or substance abuse, adequate services and supports need to be in place to provide stability, treatment, and help. **Concrete support in times of need** is essential.

**Accurate information about child development** and appropriate expectations for children’s behavior at every age enable parents to promote healthy development. This information can come from a variety of sources: family members, parent education classes, even surfing the Internet. Studies show that information is most effective when it comes at the precise time parents need it to understand their own children. Parents who experienced harsh discipline or other negative childhood experiences may need extra help to change the parenting patterns they learned as children.

The **social and emotional competence** of children and youth allow them to interact positively with others, regulate their behavior, and effectively communicate their feelings. This, in turn, has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

Research shows that the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminish when these five protective factors are well established. Resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, accurate information about child development, and social and emotional competence strengthen the family and create an environment that promotes optimal child and youth development. We - all of us - are the network that can effect this kind of change.
Thank you for supporting our mission with Jimmy Miller’s Bracket Breakfast: 3-13-17

BRACKET BREAKFAST COMMITTEE
Jim Miller, Chair | Jess Achenbach | Josh Arbaugh
Peter Kilburn | Bob Sayler | Marty Sayler

More photos on Pinterest
pinterest.com/pcasa13

On Monday, March 13, John Grisham, Ricky Stokes, Rick Wampler, and Barry Parkhill shared their bracket picks at the 4th Annual Jimmy Miller’s Bracket Breakfast. Joe Harris joined in via satellite. Rachel Ryan and Dave Koehn emceed as local basketball luminaries and generous sponsors raised more than $39,000 for abused and neglected children in our community!

LEFT: Panelist John Grisham explains his bracket choices. TOP RIGHT: a packed house. CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Debbie Ryan; David Koehn interviews Joe Harris of the Brooklyn Nets via satellite link; Young Bracket Breakfast fan and his dad; The Magic Man himself, Jim Miller; Newsplex anchor Rachel Ryan and Associate Head Basketball Coach Ron Sanchez; Guests listening to the panelists. Photos courtesy of Jennifer Byrne Photography.
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

TOP ROW Piedmont CASA President Alicia Lenahan welcomes everyone to the Charlottesville Area Trauma-Informed Community Network (TICN) meeting (11/7/16) □ Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority addresses envelopes for the Spring mailing (3/29/17) □ Jersey Mike’s donates $12,213 to PCASA for their March Month of Giving (4/25/17) □ Program Director Randy Nolt gives the commencement speech to the Discovery School of Virginia graduating class (8/18/16) SECOND ROW First year UVA law students donate time during PILA (Public Interest Law Association) Service Day (8/21/16) □ Friends of CASA member Michelle Burke at the Poverty Simulation, done in partnership with the Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy (4/29/17) □ For the 16th year, the men and women of GE Intelligent Platforms helped ensure that CASA kids had everything they needed for school (8/14/16) □ First year UVA students of ProjectSERVE help prepare our mailings for the year (8/26/17). THIRD ROW UVA School of Medicine staff spruce up the Piedmont CASA office on the United Way Day of Caring (9/21/16) □ Jeanine Harper and Lisa Wright of Richmond SCAN are guest speakers at the TICN meeting (9/26/16) □ Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority addresses envelopes for the Fall mailing (10/6/16) □ Kids and parents visit Piedmont CASA during the Louisa Harvest Festival (10/15/16). BOTTOM ROW Junior League makes sure the Fall Appeal goes out on time and in perfect order (10/24/16) □ The Loop Center’s Kristen Jamison was the guest speaker at the fourth TICN meeting (3/27/17) □ Co-Owners of Obrigado Restaurant and Floozies Pie Shop, Debbie Wollett and Jade Lourenco, present a $575 check to Piedmont CASA Supervisor Sherri Rosser □ Holiday elves make holidays bright for CASA kids: the men and women of GE Intelligent Platforms, the JAG Legal Center and School Club, and the Junior League of Charlottesville (12/15/16).
May is National Foster Care Awareness Month and on May 5, during the lively First Friday ArtWalk, about 200 men, women, and children met at Piedmont CASA to carry 247 bluebirds in a Bluebird Parade on the downtown mall. Each bluebird work of art represented a child in foster care in our community. The bluebirds were created and donated by scores of artists, crafts people, and organizations.

**Bluebird Organizations include:** Alzheimer’s Association-Arts Fusion | Blue Ridge PACE | Buckingham County High School, RAGU Club | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Relief Society | Congregation Beth Israel Preschool and Kindergarten | Cub Scouts | Firnnew Farm Artists’ Circle | JABA Cecilia Epps Community Center | Jefferson School | Innisfree Village | Lewis and Clark Exploratory School | Lexis Nexis | Mary Williams Community Center | Mollie Michie Preschool | Mt. Zion School | Palette Art Gallery | Piedmont Virginia Community College art students | Portico Church children | Troop 803 Girl Scouts at Agnor-Hunt | YMCA Daycare | Village School | Virginia Department of Health.

**Individual Artists include:** Cris Arbo | Cindy Burke | Sarah Buell Dowling | Lara Call Gastinger | Christen Yates | and scores more!

After the Bluebird Parade, 35 works of bluebird art were sold in a silent auction. Proceeds were split between Piedmont CASA and the Foster Care Adoption and Awareness Coalition. The Coalition, which made The Bluebird Project possible, consists of Piedmont CASA, Community Attention Foster Families (CAFF), the Departments of Social Services in Albemarle and Charlottesville, DePaul Community Resources, Foster Care Alumni of America, and PeoplePlaces. [More photos on Pinterest](https://pinterest.com/pca13)
A boy gets a chance to go home

The eldest daughter had consistently said she wanted to return home to live with her dad. Her two younger brothers said never. Based on the severity of the abuse and neglect, the Court decided that a safe, therapeutic reunification was not possible within the foster care timeline, and the process of terminating parental rights for the two younger siblings was begun.

After a year of individual and family counseling, parent coaching, and team support, the Court continued the goal of returning home for the eldest daughter. One of her brothers, Simon, who had been processing, healing, and observing the progress of his sister and dad, changed his mind and decided that he wanted to live with his father, too.

Based on the significant positive changes in the father, Simon’s CASA Volunteer, therapist, GAL, and foster parents supported his request. The Department of Social Services (DSS) did not. When the Judge ruled in favor of termination of parental rights and a goal change to adoption, Simon was devastated.

Simon’s sister was now living with their dad on a trial basis, and things were going well. His CASA Volunteer and other team members held meetings with DSS and they united to seek a dismissal of the termination of his father’s rights, and request a continuance with the goal of returning home. In a highly unusual decision, this request was granted at the Circuit Court level.

Thanks to Simon’s CASA Volunteer and his unwavering determination to advocate for the best interest of Simon and give him a voice, DSS changed their position so that Simon and his dad could have another six months to work toward reunification.

A teenager starts building his future

Ricky is a smart kid, but it’s much easier to believe in yourself if someone else believes in you. Since March, our first Bridges Coach has done just that. He and Ricky go to the gym, play basketball, and hike the Monticello Trail. But it’s not just about activities that engage the interests of a teenager, it’s about talking and collaborating on a plan to build Ricky’s future.

Since our Bridges Coach has been mentoring this young man, Ricky has obtained his GED, landed an internship, and started his application process to Piedmont Virginia Community College. His internship has turned into a full-time job offer that begins in the fall, so Ricky is well on his way to being able to support himself as he pursues a degree.

Ricky can see his path to a good future, because our Bridges Coach is shining the light.

"Bridges to Success for Older Youth in Foster Care", a new Piedmont CASA initiative, is already showing great promise. In only three months, we are seeing significant progress in mentoring teenagers to build healthy, sustainable foundations for their future independence.

Piedmont CASA Facts as of May 22, 2017

- 261 children from 136 families have been served so far this year
- 53 children are on our wait list
- 106 children are in foster care in our area
- 112 Volunteers are active
- 108 cases have been closed
- Piedmont CASA turned 22 years old this year
Thank you!
This newsletter only captures a small portion of the difference your support makes to the abused and neglected children in our community.

On October 19, 2016, Board Chair Julie Christopher and Marge Connelly hosted an appreciation event at UVA Morven Farm for Piedmont CASA Donors and Volunteers, who have been so generous with their time, talent, and support. More than 130 arrived to congratulate Chuck Gross, who received the Ruth Stone Child Advocate of the Year, and Judge Edward DeJ. Berry, on his 23 years of taming dragons for children in the 16th Judicial District Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Photos by Jennifer Byrne Photography.

Second Row: Board Member Emeritus Carolyn Achenbach introduces Judge Berry, Delegate David Toscano shares a laugh with Ron Ignotz and Retired Board Member Marty Sayler, Judge Berry receives his award from Board Member Emeritus Kathy Parker. Third Row: Board Chair Julie Christopher greets Delegate David Toscano, Volunteer Chuck Gross and Judge Berry, Piedmont CASA President Alicia Lenahan thanks everyone for making the mission of Piedmont CASA possible. More photos on Pinterest. 

Kati’s Corner
From the bookshelf of Piedmont CASA
Supervisor Kati Naess

Program Director Randy Nolt and CASA Supervisor Kati Naess

Hillbilly Elegy
A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis
J.D. Vance

The Connected Child
Because Every Child Matters, Every Parent Matters, Every Teacher Matters
Barbara Ann Kuss, Jerrell Neal, Jenny Montgomery, Megan Soffian, and Julia Wilson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Julie Christopher Chair
Tarpley Gillespie Vice Chair
Frank Winslow Treasurer
Bobby Parmar Secretary
Kerry Abrams
Rob Atherton
Jack Bocock
Karen Kati Chapman
Peter Kilburn
Rachel Lloyd Miller
James F. Miller
Judy Smith

BOARD MEMBERS EMERITUS
Carolyn Achenbach
Stephanie Commander
Sarah Dandridge
Kimberley C. Emery
Tracey Hopper
Carol B. Hurt
Diane Long
Kathryn Parker
Julie Stamm
Edward M. Wayland

STAFF
Alicia Lenahan President
Lexie Boris Advancement Director
Randy Nolt Program Director
Cathy Eberly CASA Supervisor
Annie Izard CASA Supervisor
Kati Naess CASA Supervisor
Sherri Rosser CASA Supervisor
Alison Taravella CASA Supervisor
Leah Cole Bridges Coach
Adam Crist Bridges Coach
Gwen Jones Bridges Coach
Janet Williams Office Administrator
When we set up our Kids4Kids studio at events around the community, we ask children to draw what makes them happy. They draw blue skies, flowers, trains, birds, rainbows - but mostly they draw their families and their homes, which many donate to our Kids4Kids gallery. You can see their work in almost everything we do, including this newsletter, our annual report, and social media. Artwork from the Kids4Kids Gallery is a great help in telling the story of our mission. If you’d like us to set up the studio at one of your events, call us at 434-971-7515, or email kids4kids@pcasa.org.

Draw What Makes You Happy

We’re waiting to meet you.
We've got someone

Thinking about becoming a Piedmont CASA Volunteer?