Our best news this spring is that 20 new volunteers have just completed the 32-hour training course and have been inducted by the court to serve abused and neglected children. This new class of volunteers comes at a time when this community – and these children – really need them. Already this fiscal year, Piedmont CASA has surpassed the number of children in the program from all of 2008. Today, 18 children are on the waiting list. Despite difficult economic conditions, which are known to increase the number of abuse and neglect cases, members of this community have continued to support CASA’s work. The Board of Directors is thankful to the volunteers, both the newly minted and the veterans, who have committed to speak up for vulnerable children. We are also grateful for our loyal donors.

Volunteer Spotlight: Liz Blankenship & Nancy Grable

Teamwork. Nancy Grable and Liz Blankenship have been friends for close to 30 years. They worked in the airline industry together, retired to Charlottesville together, and now they volunteer with Piedmont CASA to advocate for abused and neglected children together.

Cases involving abused and neglected children can be complicated. Often there are situations where caregivers both love and harm their children. “Not only are there logistical advantages to working together as a team, but having someone to discuss the case with is invaluable,” said Nancy reflecting on how they sometimes struggle with making recommendations.

Suggesting services or the best placement for a child can be complex and challenging. Due to the absolute requirement for confidentiality, volunteers cannot discuss their cases with family or friends. Hence, Nancy and Liz have found the advantages of working as a team.

“Working as a team has also allowed us to advocate for children involved in cases that have frequent court appearances,” said Nancy speaking of their involvement in Family Treatment Court. Some cases have hearings every week and working as a team allows the volunteers to take turns attending hearings.

Both Liz and Nancy commented on the many benefits of the Family Treatment Court process. “In particular, we have been amazed at the level of services through Family Treatment Court in helping families with substance abuse problems. The quality of service and dedication provided by the social workers, therapists, the Judge, and CASA have been literally amazing.”

Nancy and Liz are quite the team. In the five years they have volunteered with Piedmont CASA they have worked on three cases involving eight children. Many of the cases CASA works with have multiple children in one family. Working together as a team allows Nancy and Liz to provide advocacy for all the children in a large family in a way that does not overburden the family or the other professionals involved in the case.

Nancy and Liz have frequent discussions about the case and focus on speaking to the family with “one voice.” Nancy describes her proudest moment as a CASA Volunteer, “We got off to a rocky start with the Mom and she was very upset, by the end of the case we had a good relationship, she trusted us and actually called us and asked us to participate in school meetings.”

Liz Blankenship, Nancy Grable

As CASA Volunteers the first and foremost concern is helping the children. Liz describes her role as a CASA Volunteer as unique, “I feel liberated to go with my heart and instincts and recommend what is right and that feels really good.”

Both Liz and Nancy emphasized the professionalism and expertise of all the staff at Piedmont CASA. “The Supervisors, Ruth and Janet are the best. They are always willing to be a sounding board, provide sage advice, and keep us on track.”

When asked what they would say to anyone considering volunteering for Piedmont CASA, both Nancy and Liz gave a resounding “do it.” They recommended considering working as a team, it will be rewarding for the volunteer and maximize advocacy for the children.
May Day Party Raises $28,000

On May Day a group of CASA supporters gathered at L.F. and Susan Payne’s home to raise funds to help abused and neglected children in our community. The evening was underwritten by:

- McGuire Woods
- George Beller and Kakie Brooks
- Beth duPont
- Terry and Eugene Lockhart
- Paula and Rob Newcomb
- Susan and L.F. Payne
- Randy and Allison Shure

Thanks to our sponsors, 100% of the ticket proceeds will be directed to improving the lives of vulnerable children.

Special thanks to:
- Chairs Brooke Spencer and Jerry Northcutt;
- Honorary Chairs Anne Fife and Diane Long;
- Hosts L.F. and Susan Payne; and,
- Frank Byers for pulling it all together.

Since opening our doors fourteen years ago, Piedmont CASA has served almost 1,000 child victims of abuse and neglect. Thank you to all of our volunteers and donors who have been here to support CASA’s children.
As Alan N. Culbertson, a long-time friend of CASA, wrote recently, “Recessions come and go; the needs – and the joy of responding to them – are with us always. In a time when it would be easy to do less, please find ways to do more.” Alan conveys the sentiment that giving is especially important during tough economic times.

When so much in today’s world is uncertain, one thing is clear: a gift to Piedmont CASA is the gift to a child victim of someone to count on. A gift ensures that abused or neglected children will have advocates to stay with them while the community works to put their broken lives back together.

Thank you to so many of you who help in so many ways.

Piedmont CASA is fortunate to have a diverse and talented staff. The group of five Supervisors has some familiar and some new faces, and all enjoy working together as a team. The Supervisors are there to support the volunteers as they provide their amazing advocacy for children. From editing court reports, attending hearings and acting as a sounding board for volunteers, the Supervisors are there helping volunteers help children as their cases proceed through the legal system.

In addition to advising the current volunteers, Becky Mooney serves as the CASA representative for Family Treatment Court; Hope Payne coordinates volunteer in-services and the Multidisciplinary initiative; Lindsey Henry serves as our training coordinator, Annie Izard is the liaison to the volunteer support committee and Rachel Miller manages reporting and the volunteer e-newsletter. “The training provided to do the job is excellent...the expertise of the staff is very helpful and they are wonderful people to be associated with,” said current CASA Volunteer Joe Ronan.

The CASA Supervisors have just completed the Spring training with an excellent group of twenty new volunteers. The CASA Supervisors are eager to put our new volunteers to work helping abused and neglected children in our community. In May, this new group was inducted by Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Judge Johnson and joined our fabulous group of committed and seasoned CASA volunteers.

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Annie Izard, Hope Payne, Lindsey Henry, Becky Mooney
Not Pictured: Rachel Miller

Check out our new and improved website! www.pcasasa.org
Special thanks to CASA Volunteer Erin Spencer of EastCoast Web Design for donating her design and hosting services.

Thank you to those of you who have generously participated in the 2008-2009 Annual Fund Campaign.

There is still some time to contribute!
The 2008-2009 Campaign goes through June 30, 2009. Please look for Piedmont CASA’s Annual Report this Fall for a comprehensive list of donors.
To find out how you can help abused and neglected children find safe, permanent homes please call Piedmont CASA at (434) 971-7515, email pcasa@embarqmail.com, or apply on-line at www.pcasa.org.

JOIN US: VOLUNTEER TO ADVOCATE FOR A CHILD

Fall 2009 training begins in September