

QUARTER 1 - 2022

# THE SCOOP

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF COURT ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

## 2021 CASE REPORT

**1/1/2021 - 12/31/2021**

**CASE STATUS SUMMARY - 74 CHILDREN SERVED**

60 ACTIVE AT START OF THE PERIOD

14 NEW CHILDREN

35 CHILDREN CLOSED

**VOLUNTEER STATUS SUMMARY - 21 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS**



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"Be strong, be fearless, be beautiful, and believe that anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you."

MISTY COPELAND



Despite the challenges that the pandemic continues to throw our way the volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) continue to support our mission to provide best interest advocacy to children in foster care.

In the overburdened child welfare system, we continue with our commitment to assigning a CASA to each child in foster care.

Again this year and for the past 35 years, we have been able to assign a trained CASA to every child in dependency.

Ensuring they are in a safe home, treated with dignity and respect, affording them a chance to thrive.

I continue to be impressed with the resilience and tenacity of our volunteers as they advocate for the child(ren) they are assigned. They have navigated through the restrictions caused by the



COVID-19 pandemic that impacted their ability to visit children, attend DCYF staffings and court sessions. The volunteers have been patient and pursuant when working to connect with teachers and medical providers all while continuing their commitment to investigate, monitor their case, and facilitate services that serve the child they represent.

One of the many overwhelming goals accomplished has been to put all the case files in "the cloud" making the court documents, discovery, and other case-related resources more accessible to the volunteers. I appreciate the volunteers' willingness to learn the new technology as this process was frustrating at times.

Thank you to our volunteers for spending valuable time reaching out to the children, listening to their hopes and fears. Their advocacy work is unquestionably vital to the child their advocating for. The staff and I am honored to be part of such a zealous team.



# Celebration of Hope - 2021

BY SARAH READ

Celebration of Hope, the 35th annual signature event of Court Advocates for Children, took place on Tuesday, December 7th, at Gard Vintners. Attendees, sponsors, and supporters contributed more than \$50 k in gross revenue for Court Advocates for Children, the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program.

Emceed by Mike Engelhart, owner of All Out Entertainment, the program began with Executive Director, Sandra Bankston welcoming the guests and thanking the supporters and sponsors. Guests enjoyed hor d' oeuvres from Pasta Co. and live music by Mel Peterson and Dre all while bidding on fabulous items donated by local businesses.



Midway through the evening Sandra Bankston recognized the CASAs for their "dedication as they continue to change the trajectory of these children's lives" and announced the 2021 Judge Joanne Alumbaugh Volunteer of the Year, Paul Coppin. Sarah Read shared with the guests the impact the CASAs make on children of the community and the need for support to "keep our program alive." Attendees then watched the Voices of Children video "Dear CASA," a video highlighting the impact a CASA volunteer makes on a youth in foster care. There was a not a dry eye in the building!

During Fund-A-CASA paddle raise, guests made pledges from \$100 to \$5,000 to recruit, train and support new CASA volunteers. Over \$27 K was raised from pledges.

**"We are so fortunate to live in a community with so many gracious and supportive members. Our program relies on the community for volunteers and financial support and we continued to be humbled by generosity."**

SANDRA BANKSTON

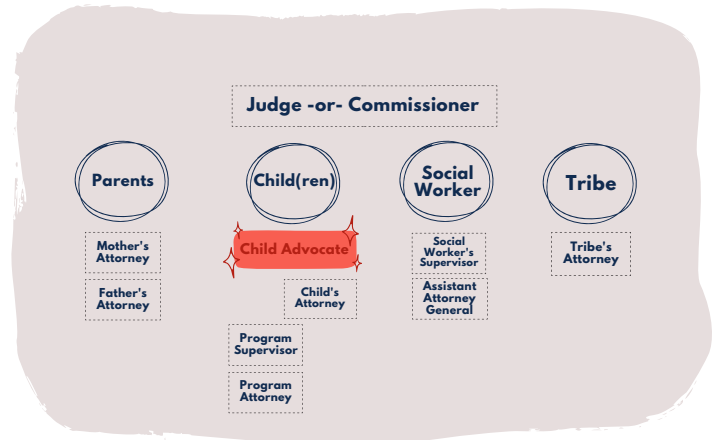


# Did You Know? - Parties to the Case

BY JAMIE SAMUELSON

## You've taken a case and now you are a "party to the case" but, what does that mean? Who are the other parties? What are their roles?

As a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Guardian adLitem (GAL) you are appointed by the court and with that appointment you have duties (RCW 13.34.105) you are expected to fulfill. In order to fulfill those duties "...the guardian ad litem shall have access to all information available to the state or agency on the case. Upon presentation of the order of appointment by the guardian ad litem, any agency, hospital, school organization, division or department of the state, doctor, nurse, or other health care provider, psychologist, psychiatrist, police department, or mental health clinic shall permit the guardian ad litem to inspect and copy any records relating to the child or children involved in the case, without the consent of the parent or guardian of the child, or of the child, if the child is under the age of thirteen years unless such access is otherwise specifically prohibited by law." (RCW 13.34.105.3)



Of course, if the child is twelve years or older they could request counsel. This attorney will represent the child's wishes while you (the CASA) represent the child's best interests.

Respondents are parties, usually, the parents, who are alleged to have abused or neglected the child/children. \*A reminder here: both parents need to be addressed early in the case as to who is the mom and who is the dad. The parents are represented by their attorneys.

### **NOT a party to the case:**

- Foster Parents
- Relatives (even if the child is placed with them)
- School Personnel
- Non-dependency siblings
- Pre-adoptive caregivers

The petitioner is the social worker or caseworker, represented by the Special Assistant Attorney General Chris Herion (SAAG) in court. Mr. Herion's job is to protect the state from liability as well as advise DCYF and the court regarding legal responsibilities regarding the child and parents. The petitioner is often referred to as "the State," I would like to remind you that this is the State's case. The State has the burden of proof placed upon them. I don't have space this time to discuss each hearing and what the state's burden is; the burden of proof differs between hearings. However, we should understand that the rest of the parties are coming to the table knowing the burden is on the state.



What other topics would you like me to go over?

Send requests to

jamie.samuelson@casaprogram.org

NOTE: Native American children (and the tribe from which they share an ancestry) have additional rights and protections collectively known as the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) when they are subject to the dependency process. In effect, the child's tribe is given party status in the case and therefore has equal legal status in the case.

In core training, we emphasize even more so who is NOT a party to the case:

- Foster parents
- Relatives (even if the child is placed with them)
- School personnel
- Non-dependency siblings
- Pre-adoptive caregivers

*Please remember, if you are unsure if you can share case information then err on the side of caution. Redirecting questions/individuals to the social worker is a great way of making sure you are maintaining confidentiality.*

I hope you find these educational editorials interesting and helpful. If you have further questions or comments, please reach out to us at the office.



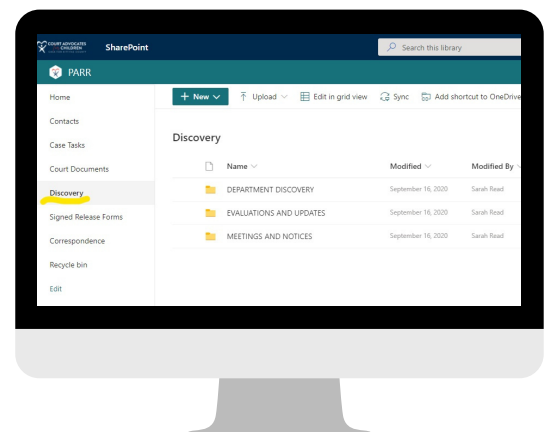
### Quick Tips

Did you know you can add notes to your Discovery List in your case file on SharePoint?

1. Go to your case file
2. Click on **Discovery** in the left menu.
3. Click on "+ Add Column"
4. Add the type of column you want ... in this case we will add **"Multiple lines of text"**.
5. Make a note that will help you to remember the data in that folder, file ,etc.

\*\* You can do this for any list that is in your case file.

For further instructions go to <https://cou950.sharepoint.com/SitePages/The-Scoop.aspx>



# ANNOUNCEMENTS, EVENTS & UPDATES

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*Important Dates*

- **Parents Attorneys & Social Workers** - Jan 4th @ 4 pm | KVH
  - DJ, from the office of CK Powers and Tessie Bakken, Office of Public Defense (OPD) Social Worker will provide insight on working with parents, their roles, and collaboration with CASA.
- **Programs for Older Youth** (i.e. Independent Living Skills, etc.) - Feb 1st @ 12 pm | KVH
  - Monica Jenkins, DCYF Regional Programs Supervisor will be discussing independent living skills (ILS) and other programs for older youth. She also wants to take some time to discuss our education policy and CASAs being assigned as education liaisons.
- Volunteer Fair - February 24th
- **Extended Foster Care** - Mar 1st @ 12 pm | TBD
  - Chris McLaughlin, DCYF Extended Foster Care Program Manager will be sharing with us the EFC options for young adults in dependencies.
- National Child Abuse Awareness Month - April 2022
- **Merit Services** - Apr 5th @ 12 pm | TBD
  - Michael Clement, Clinical Supervisor at Merit will explain the services that Merit provides to many families on our cases.

*\*\* You can find all this information, add it to your calendar, and more on the CASA Team Site.*



*Stay in Touch...*

[www.casaprogram.org](http://www.casaprogram.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/CourtAdvocatesKittitas>

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