

QUARTER 2 - 2022

THE SCOOP

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF COURT ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

2022 - CASE REPORT

JANUARY 2022 - MAY 2022

CASE STATUS SUMMARY - 74 CHILDREN SERVED

37 ACTIVE AT THE START OF THE PERIOD

5 NEW CHILDREN

5 CHILDREN CLOSED

VOLUNTEER STATUS SUMMARY - 21 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

CHILD ADVOCATE, JUDY BACKLUND WILL BE MISSED.

It is with great sadness and heavy hearts that we inform you of the passing of a fellow child advocate, colleague, and friend, Judy Backlund. Mrs. Backlund had been a valued member of our team since July 2021 and will be missed.

Mrs. Backlund was introduced to Court Advocates for Children by her longtime friend and our CASA Liaison/Advocate, Debbie Schmit. Judy's longtime commitment and passion for child welfare made her an excellent candidate for our program as a child advocate. Very quickly after initial introductions Judy completed her 30+ hours of pre-service training and was sworn in as an officer of the superior court on July 08, 2021, as a court-appointed special advocate (CASA). Judy and her husband, Phil enthusiastically attended and supported our program's fundraisers and community awareness events. Judy's easy smile and enthusiasm for serving families in our community was contagious to all those around her. Court Advocates for Children feels a great loss.

A Celebration of Life service will be conducted at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, June 10 at the Rexinger's Barn at 291 Aviator Lane, off Kittitas Highway. Judy will be laid to rest in a private family service at the IOOF Cemetery in Ellensburg. You are invited to read Mrs. Backlund's complete obituary and leave condolences for the family at www.johnston-williams.com

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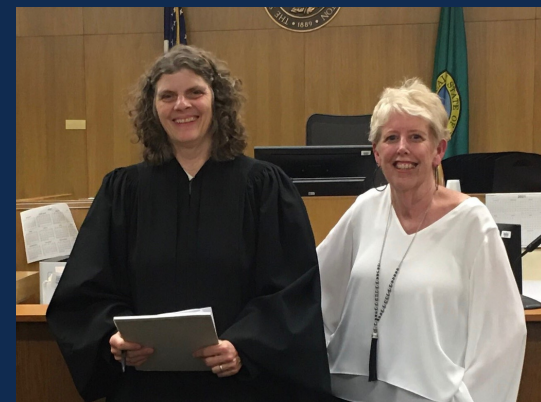
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Judge Hooper & Judy Backlund
at swearing-in ceremony.

The Importance of Caregivers When Children Enter the Foster Care System

BY SANDRA BANKSTON

“I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.”

MOTHER TERESA



Research reveals that the connection parents make with their children shapes and influences the child’s journey through life. Court Advocates for Children observes first-hand how children’s connection with their parent(s) is disrupted when they enter the child welfare system through a dependency action. Family Foster Care can help to minimize the disruption by providing a nurturing transition and maintaining a connection with the family of origin.

In family foster care, children live with relative or nonrelative adults who have been approved by the State, or by an agency licensed by the State, to provide them with shelter and care. As a community, it is important to support the family foster care (aka caregivers) through this process and acknowledge the efforts they make to create a nurturing home for the children they will foster-parent for an undetermined period of time. These caregivers are responsible to enroll the children in school, taking them to well-child visits, and providing emotional support as the child(ren) transitions to an unfamiliar environment (i.e. new home, new bed, and new schedule). The caregivers witness the results of children who have been living in an unhealthy environment such as issues of mental health, substance abuse, and/or homelessness. Often the child(ren) is coming from a chaotic environment lacking routines or a sense of normalcy. These children learn for the first time what it is like to have a consistent schedule; get up and go to school, eat regular meals, and go to bed at a regular time.

It goes without saying that biological parents love their children, but often their own struggles, lack of support and resources get in the way of parenting. Family foster care can provide a safe transition period while the biological parents get the support needed to resume parenting in a safe and stable environment.

When children cannot remain safely in their home, placement in family foster care can increase stability, reduce trauma, and help children maintain a sense of family, belonging, and identity. A caregiver in family foster care has the opportunity to provide encouragement and hope in a child’s life.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a caregiver in family foster care go to <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/foster-parenting/become-a-foster-parent> for more information.

Lastly, if you know of foster caregivers, please take a minute to send them a note of thanks for the work they are doing.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH - APRIL

BY SARAH READ

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Each year, nearly 6,000 children in Washington State experience abuse or neglect, ushering them into the dependency court and foster care systems. A child in foster care, on average, will move into multiple homes and attend multiple schools. All this chaos and inconsistency has long-term effects.

Court Advocates for Children runs a campaign (#childabusepreventionmonth, #thrivingfamilies) each year to spread awareness and gain support in Kittitas County. The month is full of presentations to community partners and public events with the goal that child abuse prevention includes the availability of and access to resources. Court Advocates for Children's child advocates help to identify those resources for children and their families to help strengthen families and prevent crises before they occur.

Here is all the ways in which we helped to spread awareness...



Arnold's Ranch & Home kicked off the campaign by inviting us back to Chick Days to help hand out free food - biscuits, gravy, and pulled pork sandwiches provided by Twin Pines (Josh & Erin Bender).

A representative from Court Advocates for Children presented at Cle Elum City Hall Meeting, Kittitas City Hall Meeting, Ellensburg City Hall Meeting, and the Kittitas County Commissioners Meeting illustrating the importance of awareness and asking for each to sign a proclamation recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.



*Check out all the
proclamations
here!*

Once again one of our very own child advocates, Debbie Schmit asked Court Advocates for Children to sell over 40 of her handmade quilts so that she could donate a portion of the proceeds back to the program.



GARD Vintners in Ellensburg, WA supported our month-long campaign by showcasing Debbie's Quilt Collection and supporting many gatherings and events.

With support from the Kittitas County community Court Advocates for Children can support and promote court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child who has experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home and the opportunity to thrive. As a consistent, caring adult in the child's life, Court Advocates for Children volunteers help the Kittitas County judges make the most informed decisions for the well-being of the child.

We would not be able to provide best interest advocacy to the abused and neglected children in Kittitas County if it were not for the child advocates that volunteer their time or our community supporters that keep us open.

**Join!
us!**

Become a FRIEND OF CASA and help us extend our reach by assisting with the planning and/or implementation of community events.

For more information email friend@casaprogram.org

THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON FAMILIES

Hello, my name is Audrey Higginbotham I am originally from Buckley, but I have been living in Ellensburg for the past four years. I am currently a fourth-year student at Central Washington University, studying social services and family science. I have been interning with Court Advocates for Children since April 1, 2022.

During my internship with Court Advocates for Children I have experienced how impactful child advocates can be and have learned how much effort and energy goes into preparing for court and advocating for the child with their best interest at heart. I have recognized how classes I am taking or have taken directly relate to the demographic of families Court Advocates for Children serve and would like to share a recent study.

As a part of my Family and Public Policy class at CWU, I participated in a poverty simulation. This simulation is intended to give its participants insight into the struggles families who are experiencing poverty face. The key takeaways from this simulation are, that poverty is stressful and there is a lack of knowledge about the resources available. Many of the families in poverty are continuously in survival mode, working for food money, and other necessities or trying to pay rent and keep a roof over their heads. Those who have children are trying to balance those stressors along with caring for their children. As a community we can better help these families by understanding the resources available and how to access them. Spreading awareness and providing support to available resources can help to alleviate some stress for the families in need.

Many of the families Court Advocates for Children serves are living in poverty and therefore struggling with the stresses that come with it. As child advocates, understanding the constant stress that these families experience as well as acknowledging how this stress can impact the children within the families helps us to better serve them. Supporting the families we serve by informing them of resources (i.e., services and programs) available can also be very beneficial in getting them on track to having a more stable home life.

LARGEST RACE OR ETHNICITY LIVING IN POVERTY

White

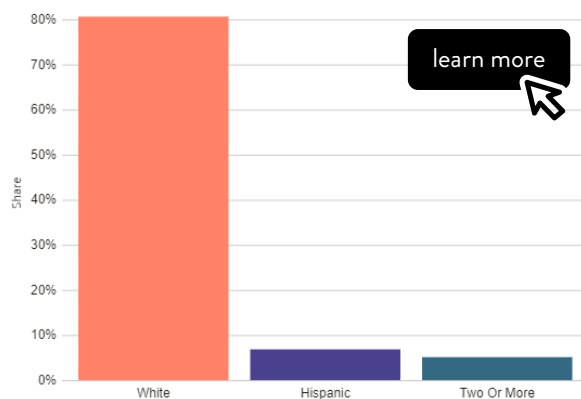
6,755 ± 577

Hispanic

571 ± 177

Two Or More

427 ± 196

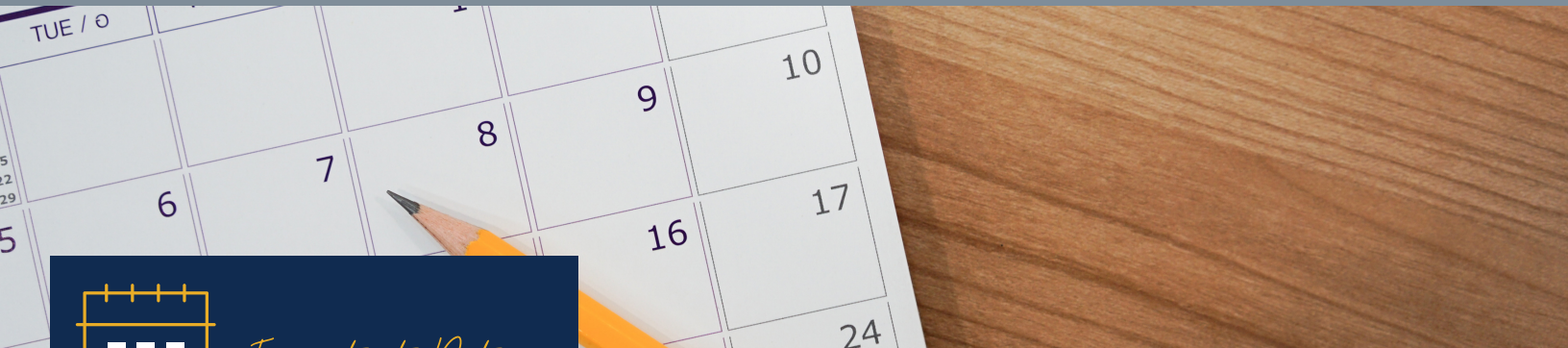


RESOURCES

- **HopeSource** - This resource offers many services such as financial support for heating bills, a cold weather shelter, youth scholarships, youth homelessness prevention, transportation, and many more. <https://hopesource.us/ellensburg>
- **WorkSource** - This resource helps individuals find and apply for jobs. There is training available through this program that teaches basic computer skills as well as other training opportunities specific to your goals. <https://worksourcewa.com/>

To read more about the demographics in Kittitas County go to <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/kittitas-county-wa#>

ANNOUNCEMENTS, EVENTS & UPDATES



Important Dates



Campaign



Event

 MAY - NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

 JUNE - NATIONAL RECONCILIATION MONTH

 National Night Out - AUG 2nd

 Thorp Bike & Car Show - AUG 13th

 CASA Rocks - Cornhole Tournament - SEP 24th

** You can find all this information, add it to your calendar, and more on our website



Stay in Touch...

www.casaprogram.org | info@casaprogram.org

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

https://www.instagram.com/casa_kittco/

421 N Pearl St, Suite 208, Ellensburg 98926 | 509 925 4871