

## **CASA Commission Meeting Minutes May 15, 2007**

**Commissioners Attending:** Judge Kathleen Trandahl, Kimberly Max, Kristi Feigen, Jaime Reiff

**Staff:** Jill Gusso and Sara Kelly

**CASA Directors:** Brenda Schulte, Amy Benda, Julie Wermers, Gypsy Petz, Shirley Schwab, Kent Huckins, Sheila Troxel-Snyder, Arlana Bettleyoun, and Jesse Kuetchenmeister

### **Presentations:**

1. Sioux Falls Area CASA (2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit): Amy Benda, Executive Director, presented information on the Sioux Falls CASA program. Amy stated the current number of volunteers is 101 and nine individuals are scheduled for upcoming training. Their goal is to serve 100% of the children assigned to CASA. They continue to recruit from diverse population. They are updating the website to reflect diversity as well. Recently developed their strategic plan and will work on developing diversity in to the frame work of the organization. The strategic plan also looked at how to improve recruitment and retention of volunteers. The strategic plan also looked at fundraising and public relations. The program has had very good return on direct mailings. The program continues cause related marketing. Amy pointed out on the spread sheet the difference of numbers between number of new petitions versus petitions assigned to CASA is due to temporary A&N are added to the new petitions.
2. CASA of Aberdeen (5<sup>th</sup> Circuit): Shirley Schwab, Executive Director, presented information on the Aberdeen CASA program. Shirley discussed the turn over and transition of staff at the States Attorney's office and local child protection office. Due to the recent flooding in Aberdeen this past week they had to delay a planned fundraiser. An upcoming Fun Run fundraiser with Frank Ferrar, First Premier Bank, as the race official is planned. The Fire and Ice Gala is the major fundraising event, held in the fall of the year. They are working with a financial planner to identify and recruit potential private funds. Shirley stated she is working with Judge Myrens on training volunteers for the Walworth county area. Kristie Fiegen asked why the number of children served by staff on the NCASA local program survey is different than the number on the spread sheet. Shirley referred the question to Sara Kelly. Sara explained the NCASA survey combines the number of children receiving advocacy service from staff with the number of children monitored by staff. The spread sheet separates the two out. Kristie asked about the programs internal controls for financial security. Shirley stated they have not been required to have an audit in the past, but will have an audit next year. Shirley also stated that the board had policy on internal controls.
3. Oglala Lakota CASA (Pine Ridge): Arlana Bettleyoun, Executive Director, Beverly Tuttle, CASA staff, and Richard High Elk, board chair presented. Arlana stated this is the second year of applying for CASA funds. All three presenters

talked about the difficulty of recruiting and retaining volunteers due to the geographical distance and personal challenges on the reservation. The program received 15 new children last week and has a list of potential volunteers, approximately 200. The total number of children listed on the statistic spread sheet is a compilation of children receiving services from BIA social services, state social services, Casey program and ICWA cases. Oglala serves the Pine Ridge and Kyle tribal courts. Arlana stated that in November 2006 NCASA CEO, Michael Piraino and NCASA Board Chair, MiMi Fellar came to Pine Ridge for a visit and to get a true picture of the struggles on the reservation. The NCASA representatives are looking at funding sources to permanently fund tribal CASA programs. Arlana stated she applied for a NCASA tribal grant of \$40,000 and is expecting to hear soon on the award. Beverly Tuttle spoke about the plan to recruit volunteers from tribal offices. A proclamation was created a few years ago under a former tribal president allowing tribal employees time off with pay to volunteer for CASA. The hope of the program is to re-instate the proclamation with the current president. Beverly stated the program receives a lot of referrals for services from various people and agencies. They either assist in services or refer them to another agency. Kristie asked for a copy of the actual audit report, Arlana said they will send that to UJS. Kimberly stated that the Children's Justice Act funds are to be used for forensic interviewing and asked what those funds cover for her program. Arlana stated they are for mileage, training and CASA director's salary. Kristie asked what the consultant fees go towards, Arlana's stated it was for the psychologists at the Child Advocacy Center. The psychologists also participate in bi-weekly conference calls for case reviews. Jill asked Arlana to add the CIP and CASA funds on next years financial report.

4. CASA of Rapid City (7<sup>th</sup> Circuit): Sheila Troxel-Snyder, Executive Director, presented information on the Rapid City CASA serving primarily Pennington county, but serving Custer, Fall River, and a small section of Shannon counties. Sheila stated their primary need is more volunteers. They currently have 289 children on a waiting list, averaging 30 new children per month. Sheila stated that 60% of their case load is Native American children and they are focusing volunteer recruitment towards the Native American population. The program hired a Volunteer Recruiter from a Vucurevich grant. The Volunteer Recruiter has partnered with Judge Kerr in recruitment efforts, as well as making weekly contacts at the Oglala Lakota College for recruitment and assist in filing out paper work. They are creating a Native American CASA brochure. Sheila talked about the "Horsing Around" fundraiser the program is doing to commemorate their 20<sup>th</sup> year of service. Monte Yellow Bird is working on his painting at the Rushmore Mall. There is a table of CASA information and this is another public awareness and recruitment tool for the program. Kristie asked how the program was able to hire a full-time employee in 2006 when the funds for the program decrease from 2005 to 2006. Sheila will investigate and let the commission know. Discussion took place regarding the benefits of staff monitoring cases verses having an advocate assigned. Sheila explained the benefits of having a file already going when a volunteer becomes available and having the presence in the court

room and at meetings. Kim expressed a concern that CASA will be looked at as a data collection engine and not an advocacy service. Judge Trandahl stated monitoring also helps in prioritizing cases as volunteers come available.

5. Northern Hills CASA (4<sup>th</sup> Circuit): Gypsy Petz, Executive Director, presented information about the Spearfish CASA program. The program serves all counties in the 4<sup>th</sup> circuit and considers Meade, Butte, and Lawrence counties as the core counties. Gypsy stated the 4th circuit population is primarily Caucasian and diversity with people of color is limited. Gypsy stated the program has three major fundraisers annually. They are a half marathon, Horse Expo, and an auction. They use the fundraisers as a recruitment tool, as well. The program is in its 20<sup>th</sup> year of service. Gypsy stated they have a low number of children on a wait list and staff monitored cases. Most cases are assigned to a volunteer.
6. First Circuit CASA (Mitchell): Brenda Schulte, Executive Director, presented information about the Mitchell area CASA program. Brenda stated the program became members of the SD Network against Family Violence and Sexual Assault. The network provides training for volunteers and strategic planning for the board. The program recently completed a 5 year strategic plan. The program will begin a volunteer recruitment campaign in June. A Bush grant fund will fund bill board advertising in the 1<sup>st</sup> circuit. In October 2006, a consultant was hired to assist the program in fund development. The annual fund drive goal is set for \$40,000, and as of May 2007 they've raised \$27,000. United Way's black out period is June – October for the Mitchell area and any other fundraising, during the off months, must be approved by the United Way. The program will conduct a playhouse fundraiser this year. If it is successful it may expand to the other counties in following years. The play house fundraiser will also be a tool for public awareness and recruitment. Brenda stated that she was asked by Judge Mueller of Crow Creek Tribal Court in Ft. Thompson to start a CASA program in Brule and Buffalo counties. Brenda is investigating this option, ensuring the communities will support a CASA expansion and possible satellite office. The women's shelter in Chamberlain has committed office space to CASA. Brenda discussed child tracking with Judge Mueller and they are looking at using COMET in the tribal court. Brenda stated she will apply for an expansion grant for Brule and Buffalo counties.
7. CIVIC CASA (6<sup>th</sup> Circuit): Kent Huckins, Executive Director, presented information on the Pierre area CASA. Kent stated the program has expanded to Tripp County with a volunteer coordinator and plans for a volunteer training soon in the Winner area. The program currently has no waiting list. The program serves a high percent of Native American children. The program currently has three volunteers and five board members that are Native American. Kent applied for a diversity grant from NCASA, the award notice should be sent out in June. The program has one big fundraiser that nets approximately \$18,000 and several small fundraisers through out the year. Kent amended the budget to decrease spending.
8. East Central CASA (3<sup>rd</sup> Circuit): Julie Wermers, Executive Director, presented on the Brookings area CASA. Julie stated the CASA program dually serves state court and the Santee Sioux Tribal Court. Plan to open a satellite office with

- NCASA tribal funds. The program turning their recruiting efforts towards male volunteers. Julie stated that she was a CASA volunteer and assigned to a case prior to becoming the executive director. She continues to serve this case due to continuity of services. The program has two annual fundraisers, Fire and Ice event and a Golf Tournament. These fundraisers are also good public awareness tools.
9. SD CASA Association (Pierre): Jessica Kuetchenmeister, Executive Director, gave information of accomplishments and goals for the state association. Jessie began her duties as executive director on April 4, 2007. Several state association sponsored events are planned for local programs. In July, and ICWA training via DDN will take place statewide. In September and October, training on separation and grief will take place in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. The local programs will be able to send two members to the NCASA conference in June. These trainings are made available due to a Bush Foundation grant. Jessie stated she will apply for funds from the Shakopee Tribe in Minnesota to help support services to Native American children. Jessie stated the board developed a public relations committee to create more statewide public awareness. Kristie asked what percent of the Bush funds are applied back to the local program. Due to the recent change in executive directors, Sara Kelly responded. The percent is about 90% of funds go back to the local programs for training. Kristie asked why the increase in the bookkeeping and rent line item. Sara again responded, this is due to the increase in financial reporting, due to the Bush grant and the rent is a padded amount in case rent is increased.

### **Fund Distribution:**

After discussion of the distribution of CASA Commission funds, the commissioners decided the following CASA programs will receive the following amounts:

1. First Circuit CASA ( Mitchell): \$20,000
2. Second Circuit CASA (Sioux Falls): \$60,000
3. Third Circuit CASA (Brookings): \$20,000
4. Fourth Circuit CASA (Northern Hills): \$33,000
5. Fifth Circuit CASA (Aberdeen): \$29,000
6. Sixth Circuit CASA (Pierre): \$23,000
7. Seventh Circuit CASA (Rapid City): \$60,000
8. Tribal CASA (Oglala): \$20,000
9. SD CASA Association: \$10,000

### **Recommendations for 2008 grant application:**

1. Ask for brief description of goals for current fiscal year
2. Ask for accomplishments for past year
3. Omit questions 2,5,7,9,11&13 from 2007 grant application
4. Turn ICWA question in to a yes/no question.
5. Ask if the program has a strategic plan, briefly list goals

6. Question 8 of 2007 application, ask for bulleted diversity training
7. Number pages
8. Grant attachments need to be:
  - a. Detailed operating budget
  - b. Copy of previous fiscal year financial/audit report
  - c. Two years of actual financial reports (most recent years)
9. CASA staff can review and indicated copy on file of:
  - a. NCASA membership
  - b. Proof of MOU
  - c. Letters of support
  - d. Spread sheet of amount requested, previous award amount, complied with required attachments.
10. Add to spread sheet, number of total volunteers for past two years and current and number of children for past two years and current. (Accumulated-v-current)
11. Question 12 of 2007 application should be income and expense budget report.

Kimberly Max motioned to have these recommended changes sent to the commissioners for approval before the next CASA Commission application process. Jamie Reiff second the motion, motion carried.

\*Kristie Fiegen recommended that programs not in compliance with required attachments are not considered for funding.

#### CASA Directors

- Requested a general format to follow when making presentation.
- They asked if the discussion on funding distribution had to be discussed in front of the CASA directors.
- What is the protocol for having staff and board members attend and present at the meeting.