

## A Child's Story - Hope

(Excerpted from "Someone There for Me: Everyday Heroes Through the Eyes of Teens in Foster Care")

The police arrived to take me away from my family when I was 7 years old. Foster homes came and went. Schools were here and there. Caseworkers drifted in and out of my life. I had just moved from an awful six-year placement with alcoholics when the court appointed me a CASA volunteer, Pat.

That summer...the judge sent me home...I entered my mother's apartment and went straight to my room. There was a bed with no blankets, a closet overflowing with trash, and a dresser against one wall. The carpet was littered with cigarette ashes and the entire apartment reeked of smoke, waste, and mildew. I lay down on the mattress and cried.

Pat came to see me quite often and called me when she couldn't come in person. She worked with my lawyer to appeal the court's decision...She told me things can only get better, and that I just needed to hang in there 'til they do...I moved into my eighth home and since then life has been amazing.

I never had someone stand up for me like she did. She stood before the judge, the lawyers, my mother, and caseworkers and wasn't swayed by their opinions. It completely amazed me. I trusted her more with every visit and every call and found myself enjoying her check-ups and questioning. She became not only an advocate, but a friend I could truly count on.



... I [have] testified to a legislative committee on behalf of the *CASA* program. At the end of the testimony I said: "To give a child a *CASA* is to give them a voice. To give them a voice is to give them hope, and to give them hope is to give them the world." I believe that with all my heart.

By Pamela Butler, Oregon teen

Officially, April is Prevent Child Abuse Month. Seward County *CASA* observes prevent child abuse month each and every day. Seward County *CASA* is hosting a membership drive in observance of Prevent Child Abuse Month. There are many ways to prevent child abuse. One of them is to become a supporter of Seward County *CASA*. Please see our mission statement below and to learn more about our program, please visit our website at [www.sewardcountycasa.org](http://www.sewardcountycasa.org)

The Seward County community is invited to become a member of the Friends of Seward County *CASA*. You may choose to donate financially to our program, but you do not need to in order to be a member. Please return the attached Membership Form and show your support for preventing child abuse and your support of *Seward County CASA's* mission. Please read more about our program on the other side of this paper.

There are no financial resources associated with this Membership Drive, only human resources. You have received this Membership Drive information through a current Supporter of *CASA*. Materials associated with this Membership Drive have been provided in-kind to our program. Due to a recent tax law change, donors who itemize on their taxes are required to have a record of their gift; therefore, we will mail you a receipt. To keep our costs minimal, we hope to email as many receipts as possible.



### Mission Statement

Seward County *CASA* is a powerful voice, mentor and dependable advocate who speaks for the best interest of abused and neglected children under the jurisdiction of the court through the efforts of a judge appointed volunteer who is trained to facilitate, monitor, investigate and advocate for the children.

## Goals of the Friends of Seward County CASA Membership Drive:

To outdo Alltel's Circle of Friends

Alltel's Circle of Friends - 10

Seward County CASA Circle of Friends - To recruit 500 members by April 2008.

## History of Seward County CASA

Founded in 1996 - currently advocating for 30 children

2006: advocated for 42 children; 2005: advocated for 21 children; 2004: advocated for 21 children

## Research shows that children with a CASA:

- Have greater self-esteem, can control deviant behavior, have a positive attitude toward the future, value achievement, and work well with others.
- Are less likely to experience new abuse.
- Receive more, and more appropriate, services: therapy, health care, and education.
- Have fewer placement changes.
- Spend less time in out-of-home care.
- Are more likely to be adopted rather than remain in long term foster care.
- Parents of children with a CASA were offered and also completed more services than those assisted by Departments of Human Services alone.

## Real Stories

- A child is branded by the court as having no future at the age of 10. A CASA becomes involved, and she is placed in a permanent home with a legal guardian; she entered college and is now happy and successful.
- A CASA child needed a bike to get to and from work in the summer; the CASA program provided funds to the teen to purchase a bike.
- A CASA worked to reunite a mother and daughter after a separation because the mother's boyfriend molested the daughter and the mother did not initially believe the story.
- A family recently moved from Africa and the child was removed because of a cultural misunderstanding. The CASA was able to help reunite the child and family within 3 weeks.
- A four-year old boy was determined to be "unacceptable" by previous caseworkers. A CASA got involved, worked closely with an adoption worker, helped identify an appropriate family and now the family thrives.
- A boy had been assigned to more than 20 caseworkers, but had only one CASA throughout his case. When he graduated from high school, county services paid to fly the CASA to the graduation, because she was the only person the boy wanted in attendance. She is one of his few close relationships.

## Your Support Will Help Provide

Our program costs are \$1,233 per child. This provides the child with an advocate for a year. We are advocating for 30 children at this time. Six children do not have an advocate at this time. Advocates activity history:

Year	Donated Hours	Miles Driven	Training Hours
2005	364	3,961	366
2006	525	4,631	566
As of March 1, 2007	122	786	220

# Friends of Seward County CASA Membership Form

Because we value your membership, please fill this form out completely and return to Seward County CASA, PO Box 215, Seward, NE 68434 by April 30, 2007. Our office is located in the Seward County Courthouse.

## Membership Level

Please choose one of the following Membership Levels:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distinguished Friend \$2500+ | <input type="checkbox"/> Great Friend \$100-\$249 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Best Friend \$1000-\$2499    | <input type="checkbox"/> Close Friend \$50-\$99   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fabulous Friend \$500-\$999  | <input type="checkbox"/> Good Friend \$1-\$49     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Friend \$250-\$499   | <input type="checkbox"/> Supportive Friend \$0    |

*Please note: The Supportive Friend level is a Friend that is unable to contribute financially, but fully supports our mission.*

*Please select one*

- Enclosed, please find a check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ for my membership.  
 I am unable to give financially at this time, but wish to show my support for your mission.

## Membership Information

*Please select one*

- Individual  Couple  Business  Organization  Agency  Anonymous

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Member's Wishes

Due to tax reasons, please send receipt to me by:  email  mail

*Please select all that apply*

- I give you permission to list my name and membership category on your website or any other print material.  
 I give you permission to list my name without the membership category on your website or any other print material.  
 Please notify me when its time to renew my membership by contacting me  
via: email phone mail

I would like more information about the following:

- Being a CASA Volunteer, please contact me via email mail  
 Being a Board Member, please contact me via email mail  
 Being an Active Friend of CASA – volunteers are called upon when we are in need of help for a special event or project. This allows volunteers to say yes or no to our need on a case-by-case basis. Please contact me via email mail  
 I would like to be notified about Special Events associated with Seward County CASA  
Please contact me via email mail  
 I would like to receive the Seward County CASA Annual Report via email mail

Please list who you received this Membership Information from: \_\_\_\_\_