

## Light of Hope Celebration

The tenth annual Light of Hope celebration was held May 10, 2012, at the United Way Conference Room. The ceremony is held to honor and celebrate our CASA Youth, CASA volunteers, Foster Parents & siblings, Social workers, therapists, Educators, Donors, Program Directors, Court Officials and all other who have advocated on behalf of abused and neglected children. Chris Krager, Executive Director of the Samaritan House in Kalispell spoke of the need for CASA. At Samaritan House he sees many many, families come and go from the shelter and has the opportunity to visit with them and to make certain to the best of his ability there isn't any abuse of the children. Schylar Canfield, President of CASA of MT Chair, former foster child, and a Foster Club Allstar! was the other guest speaker. He told a very poignant story about being in foster care, being abused for many years, leaving foster care because of his age, and finally being able to turn his life around after many years of pain. A touching part of his story was him coming face to face after many years with his first grade teacher—the one who made the call to report Schylar's abuse. It was a wonderful reunion for the both of them, especially when Schylar learned his teacher had become a CASA volunteer. Schylar did not have a CASA volunteer during his time in foster care and stressed the need for such an advocate for these abused and neglected children.

Flathead High School Choir Director, Kevin Allen-Schmid, and his talented students were the musical entertainment.

The Light of Hope award for 2012 was presented by Judge Kitty Curtis to Pastor Dave Merkel. Dave has been deeply involved with CASA for quite a few years from being on the Advisory Council to producing the annual Spirit of Christmas concert. Dave has been called to a congregation in Billings, Montana, and will be deeply missed by not only his congregation but all those involved with CASA for Kids.

The CASA's Choice award for 2012 was presented by last year's recipient Rex Boller to Lindsay Santa .

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**A child's voice**  
A child's life  
Lifted up  
By you

**I am for the child**



*We Advocate  
for Abused  
and Neglected  
Children in Court*

q u o t e

*"There can be no keener revelation  
of a society's soul than the way in  
which it treats its children."*  
~ Nelson Mandela,  
former president of South Africa



You can be a hero in the life of a child  
through your financial support or by  
becoming a CASA volunteer.

# CASA\* FOR KIDS

\* court appointed special advocate

On September 8, 2012, Broadway Star and Recording Artist Mike Eldred gave a benefit concert at the Whitefish Performing Arts Center benefiting VOICES for CASA and CASA for Kids of Flathead County. District Court Judge Kitty Curtis gave her opening remarks which clearly stated the plight of children and the need for CASA volunteers.

"It has been said that children are our most precious asset, and this is surely because they are our most vulnerable asset. Every year in this country thousands upon thousands of children are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. For these children, things are not great at home; maybe their parents drink or use drugs and neglect them, leaving them with strangers for days at a time. Maybe their parents are violent towards each other; or towards them. But this is their family and their home; and these are the people they love. Then suddenly one day, without an explanation, everything changes; strangers show up at the door, pack up the children's belongings in a bag, and take them away. These children begin a journey through a foster care and court system that makes no sense to them. But soon, a new person enters their life, someone who is solely interested in listening to them, being there just for them, helping them understand what is going on, and most important, speaking up for them and their interests. This person is a trained CASA volunteer, appointed by the Court to investigate the child's circumstances and advocate solely for the best interest of the children.

These CASA volunteers are my heroes. They work tirelessly to help the children feel more secure and to guide them through the Court process. They offer invaluable input to those of us who must make the decisions about what is best for these children.

Flathead County CASA for kids, since its humble beginnings about 11 years ago, has provided CASA volunteers for almost 700 abused and neglected children. This year alone, about 150 children have been or are being served by CASA volunteers. Unfortunately, there are right now almost 30 children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse and neglect who do not have a CASA volunteer...

Of course, our utmost thanks go to Mike Eldred and his band who have made this evening possible, and we are here to hear some grand music. From Broadway stages to concert halls across America, Mike does not disappoint. And his heart is as big as his voice-- in addition to his appearance here tonight on behalf of CASA for Kids, Mike will be riding this week in the Montana Park-2-Park fundraiser bike ride."



**advisory council**

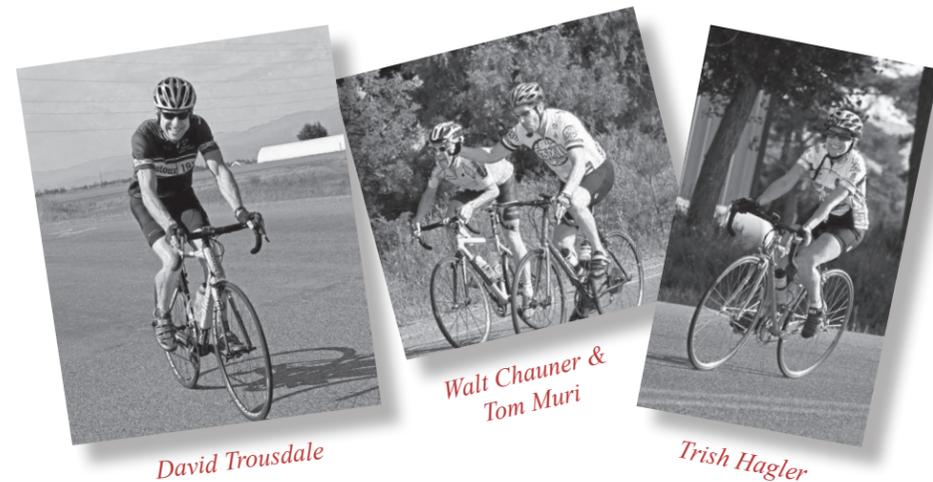
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**Cycling for Children**

“Cycling for Children” was the theme for a biking event held on a beautiful summer day, July 28, 2012. Participants had the option of riding either 40 miles or 70 miles to raise awareness and support for CASA for Kids of Flathead County. Voices for CASA would like to thank Hammer Nutrition, Whitefish Mountain Report, Sportsman & Ski Haus, Great Northern Cycles, Glacier Bank and National Parks Realty for their sponsorships!

Thanks to Piggyback BBQ for providing sandwiches at the end of the event. Two weeks before the event 20 people had registered for the event, but once the enthusiasm grew for this great ride and cause a total of 140 cyclists participated! Voices for CASA would especially like to thank the Mennonite Church of Creston for allowing the cyclists to stop midway for their break at the church.



David Trousdale

Walt Chauner & Tom Muri

Trish Hagler

**Searching for Super Heroes**

A warm spring evening, a beautiful home, superb food and fine wines... the perfect setting for “Searching for Super Heroes” a benefit for CASA for Kids of Flathead County. The auction and cocktail supper was held at the residence of Tanya and Judah Gersh in Iron Horse. John’s Angels Catering catered the event and Fun Beverage provided the fine wines. Auctioneer Tracy Finn and her assistant Shelby Nash Hunter were very engaging during the live auction! A great highlight of the event was the donation of an original oil painting by Marshall Noice. Voices for CASA is deeply grateful to all those who supported this event!



**Park2Park Montana 2012**

by Betsy Bayne, VOICES for CASA Board Member, Advisory Council, Flathead County CASA for Kids

From September 10-14, 2012, 50 riders participated in this year's Park2Park ride. This was a new route which began at Glacier National Park and 428 miles later ended at Yellowstone National Park. There were chilly mornings, 20 mph headwinds and plenty of challenging hills. Beautiful terrain and lots of friendly communities diminished the challenges! Local CASA offices greeted and fed us in Condon, Drummond and Ennis. One of the highlights for all of the riders was the ride through Anaconda. A couple of riders from Anaconda arranged for school children to line the streets as we passed through town. Seeing the posters and hearing cheers and shouts of encouragement brought tears to our eyes. It was a most moving event.

At the end of the ride all 50 riders gathered outside of town so we could ride through



Anita DiCello, Mike Eldred, Betsy Bayne



Check us out on facebook and at our website!

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



A service of the



A child's voice in court

town together maximizing the impact of all of us wearing our CASA jerseys. It was an emotional moment when we all reach the “Welcome to Yellowstone” sign-our destination after 5 days 428 miles.

It was an incredible journey. It was fun getting to know other riders, helping to pull each other in the pace lines, developing that sense of community and cause. The support crew was amazing. A sag wagon was there with water, and snacks just about every 15 miles. Their encouragement and bright smiles did wonders in keeping us all motivated.

I ride in the P2P for the challenge of the miles. I learn along the way how great of an impact CASA has made in the lives of so many children. I am proud of my accomplishments and proud to have ridden to help increase awareness of CASA.

**SAVE CHRISTMAS**  
**CONCERT**  
**THE 12.10.12**  
**DATE AT 6:30PM AT**  
**GLACIER HS**

**active CASAs**

Cindy Basnett	Chris Lindsay
Lynne Beauclair	Janet Loranger
Debbie Biggar	Shannon Lund
Alex Bokor	Marcy Mangold
Rex Boller	Stacie Martin
John Brakefield	Carol McElwain
Mary Buenz	Sherry Miller
Don Clark	Sally Modie
Anne Collins	Susie Moore
Joan Creek	Beth Morgenstern
Vicki Dickinson	Kathy Norlander
Joyce Funda	Chany Ockert
Gordon Gibbs	Betty Olson
Kim Gress	Pati Pennington
Doris Guidi	Annabel Petty
Terry Hamik	Michelle Rensel
Debbie Hawkins	Shari Roubinek
Bonnie Hegwald	Heather Sande
Mary Ann Hemp	Christian Shaeffer
Dory Hicks	Mary Sillstrop
Marge Hoene	Randy Snyder
Jan Jarvis	DJ Steines
Teresa Kennedy	Lynn Sundelius
Deb Knaff	Marcia Tharp
Joanne Knutson	Holly Walsh
Tami Kreitinger	Myrt Webb
Devin Kuntz	Dawn Westphall
Connie Leistiko	Sue Wilkinson
Lila Leuning	

thanks for all that you do!



**Support CASA for Kids, a child's voice in court.**

Lift up a child's voice. A child's life.

Voices for CASA Foundation is a non-profit organization whose sole purpose is the continuing support of CASA for Kids of Flathead County. Through your contribution more CASA volunteers can be trained to advocate for abused and neglected children in court. Thank you for your support!

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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I would like to receive the CASA for Kids Newsletter.

All contributions are tax deductible.  
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