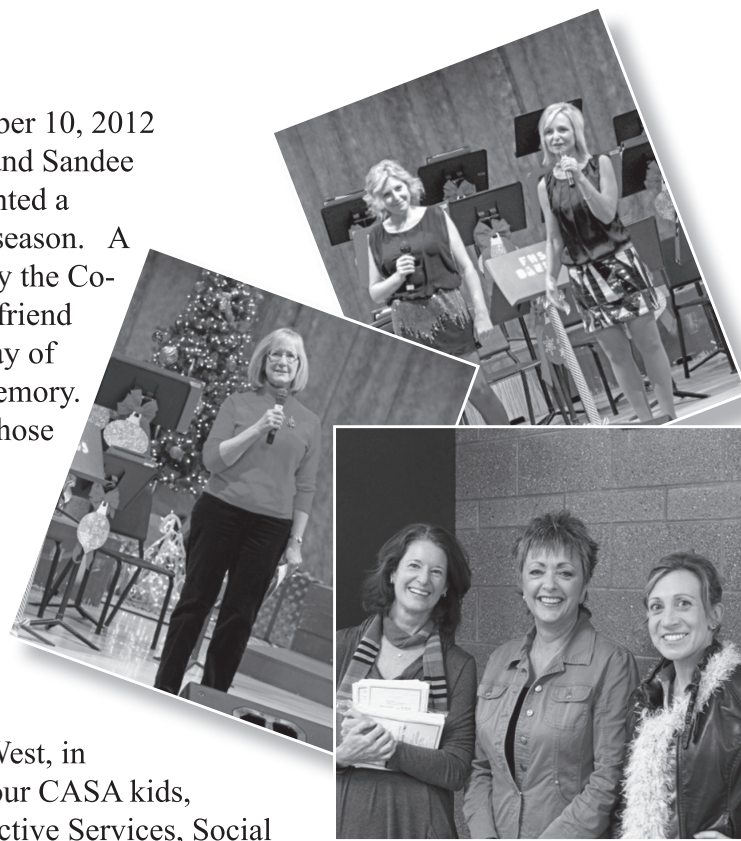


## The Spirit of Christmas Concert

The annual Spirit of Christmas Concert was held December 10, 2012 at the Glacier High Performance Hall. Penni Chisholm and Sandee Sauer along with a host of musicians and vocalists presented a wonderful evening of music and song for the Christmas season. A poignant highlight of the evening was the performance by the Columbians from Columbia Falls High School. Their dear friend and school mate, Taylor Peterson had passed away the day of the concert so they dedicated their performance in her memory. CASA for Kids would like to thank the many sponsors, those involved behind the scenes for the concert, as well as the many volunteers.

## The Light of Hope Ceremony

The annual Light of Hope Ceremony will be May 22, 2013 @ 3:30 P.M. at the Gateway Community Center in the United Way Conference Room, 1203 Highway 2 West, in Kalispell. The ceremony is held to honor and celebrate our CASA kids, CASA volunteers, Foster Parents & siblings, Child Protective Services, Social Workers, Therapists, Educators, Donors, Program Directors and Court officials who have advocated on behalf of abused and neglected children.



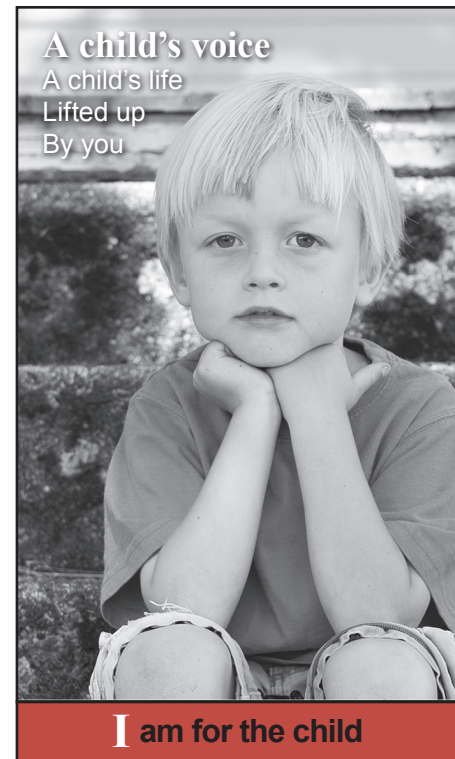
(Top) Penni Chisholm and Sandee Sauer  
(Middle) Judge Curtis (Bottom) Betsy Bayne, Hellen Brien and Trish Hagler

Return Service Requested

**CASA for Kids**  
Gateway Community Center  
1203 Hwy 2 West, Suite 39  
Kalispell, MT 59901



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*We Advocate  
for Abused  
and Neglected  
Children in Court*

q u o t e

*"Child abuse casts a shadow the length of a lifetime."  
~ Herbert Ward*

*Children will not remember you for the material things you provided but for the feeling that you cherished them.  
~ Richard L. Evans*



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

n e w s l e t t e r

March 2013 1203 Hwy 2 West, Suite 39, Kalispell, MT 59901 • 755-7208

# CASA\* FOR KIDS

\* court appointed special advocate

## Judge Curtis is Retiring

"In the late 1970's Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle, Washington recognized the professionals working in the child welfare system were overwhelmed with their case load which left the judge wondering if decisions he made pertaining to a child's welfare may not have had adequate information.

This lack of potential detailed knowledge of these children proved to be the catalyst for an innovative concept – CASA. The Seattle pilot program began in 1977; by 1978 the National Center of State Courts selected the Seattle program as the "best national example of citizen participation in the juvenile justice system. In 1998, 11th Judicial District Court Judge, Kitty Curtis, found herself asking the same questions Judge Soukup had asked himself. Judge Curtis, along with concerned citizens, formed a steering committee to investigate the possibility of bringing a CASA program to the Flathead Valley.

By 2000 the group had successfully obtained a National CASA Start-up grant and hired the first CASA for Kids Program Director, Carol Lee. The community volunteers who started the Flathead County CASA program knew, undoubtedly, of the abused and neglected children in our area and that the Court system needed all available information to make very important decisions about the futures of these children. What they didn't know was that hundreds of similarly dedicated community volunteers would join the effort. Because of dozens of wonderful staff, administrative personnel, and dedicated board members; the financial support of the entire community; the embrace of CPS and the Court system, lawyers and judges; the incredible support of United Way; and, most of all, the almost 100 trained CASA volunteers who have given so selflessly of their time, effort and energy, CASA has exceeded and succeeded beyond anything that could have imagined in the beginning." (from "A Judges Perspective", flatheadcasa.org.)

Judge Curtis is retiring after 18 years as a District Court Judge. While she will not be involved in the court system as in the past, she will still be deeply involved with CASA for Kids. She will continue to be a voice in the community to bring awareness to this program and the dire need for CASAs to help the abused and neglected children in Flathead County. CASA for Kids is deeply grateful to Judge Curtis for her dedication to bring the CASA program to Flathead County and for her tireless efforts to promote the needs of the children. The Children's Hero Award has been established in honor of Judge Curtis. It will be given each year at the annual Light of Hope ceremony honoring a CASA volunteer for his or her dedication to the CASA children.

advisory council

Betsy Bayne Linda Sauer  
 Paula Buckley Sarah Simkins  
 Julie Constenius Sherry Stevens  
 Kim Downey Paul Sullivan  
 Tom McElwain Heidi Ulbricht  
 Mikel Moore Jeannine Wirth  
 David Ortley

Newsletter: Hellen Brien, Linda Sauer  
 Program Director: Jamie Campbell  
 Graphic Designer: Ilyse Sheppard

2012 CASA Judge of the Year

Judge Stewart Stadler of the 11th Judicial District (Flathead County) was named as the 2012 CASA Judge of the Year for service on behalf of children, volunteers and the Flathead CASA program. Judges appoint CASA volunteers to advocate for the best interest of the child, often as a Guardian ad Litem.

Judge Stadler started the Accountability Court in Flathead County with a shared vision from community members and agencies serving families in distress whose children were suffering. The concept of Accountability Court was for a quicker resolution for the children. The children would be either reunited with their parents or in some cases the parents realized they couldn't parent.

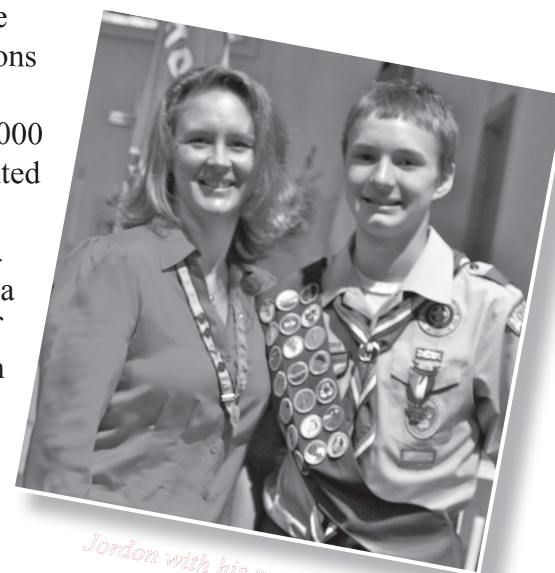
The program helped the parents be made aware of all the resources available to them which in turn helped them to have better parenting skills. The families and all of the agencies that participated in this program were held accountable to one another. This program was facilitated without funds or grants but with the full cooperation of all agencies involved.

Judge Stadler is retiring after 12 years as District Court Judge. Thank you, Judge Stadler for your accomplishments and dedication to the children of Flathead County.

Jordan Buxton Making a Difference

Jordan Buxton was a Life Scout and his project to become an Eagle Scout was the purchasing of sports bags for foster children. These children typically use garbage bags when they are transitioning from home to home. Jordan raised \$7485 which was more than the necessary funds needed to purchase 300 sports bags. Some of these funds were in kind donations from the community. After all the purchases had been completed, \$2000 was left over which Jordan presented to CASA for Kids for future use.

What an extraordinary young man. On the inside of each bag, there is a Troop Patch sewn to the bottom of the bag which reads "we believe in you." Thank you Jordan for your dedication to these children. On November 17, 2012, Advisory Council members Bonnie Olson and Hellen Brien attended the ceremony when Jordan received his Eagle Scout badge.



Jordan with his mom Susanne

SAVE THE DATE  
 5.4.13

Searching for Super Heroes

A Funding Raising Event for CASA for Kids

Join us at 5:00pm at the home of Judah & Tanya Gersh. 166 Shooting Star Circle, Iron Horse, Whitefish, MT.

Tickets may be purchased at the CASA for Kids office 1203 Hwy 2 West, Suite 39, Kalispell, MT.



facebook  
 Check us out on facebook and at our website!  
 www.flatheadcasa.org

For Bonnie Olson, It's About the Kids

For the past 34 years, Bonnie Olson has worked for the judicial system in Flathead County. Bonnie was the Office Manager for the County Attorney's Office and then became the first District Court Administrator.

Shortly after Judge Kitty Curtis began exploring the possibility of bringing a CASA program to the Flathead area, Bonnie joined the many community members who also saw the need. When the committee secured their start-up grant, Bonnie helped with selection of the first Director, Carol Lee.

Bonnie was able to secure the first trainer and training materials through a friend who was an Arizona statewide CASA trainer which really gave the local program a jump start. Because of her longtime work in the court system, she was well aware of the increasing need for a significant advocate for the kids who were subjected to neglect and abuse. Working with the program to help the community to embrace the true meaning of being a CASA was and is a passion for Bonnie.

In 2005, Bonnie was given the Light of Hope award for her work with CASA. In 2013, Bonnie was honored again with a scholarship established in her name for kids who are in care who would like to attend swimming lessons, learn how to play tennis or other endeavors their foster families cannot afford. Donations to "IT'S ABOUT THE KIDS" scholarship may be sent to CASA for Kids, 1203 Highway 2 West, Suite 39, Kalispell MT 59901.



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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name \_\_\_\_\_  
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 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to receive the CASA for Kids Newsletter.

All contributions are tax deductible.  
 Mail to: Voices for CASA, c/o Paul Sullivan, P.O. Box 918, Kalispell, MT 59903

active CASAs

Cindy Basnett Lila Leuning  
 Lynne Beauclair Chris Lindsay  
 Debbie Biggar Janet Loranger  
 Vicki Billmeyer Shannon Lund  
 Alex Bokor Jamie Mack  
 Rex Boller Marcy Mangold  
 John Brakefield Stacie Martin  
 Mary Buenz Carol McElwain  
 Iris Butler 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 Tamara Olson  
 Doris Guidi Pati Pennington  
 Terry Hamik Annabel Petty  
 Debbie Hawkins Michelle Rensel  
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 Mary Ann Hemp Heather Sande  
 Dory Hicks Christian Shaeffer  
 Marge Hoene Mary Sillstrop  
 Jan Jarvis Randy Snyder  
 Brianne Javorsky DJ Steines  
 Al Johnson Lynn Sundelius  
 Teresa Kennedy Marcia Tharp  
 Deb Knaff Holly Walsh  
 Joanne Knutson Myrt Webb  
 Tami Kreitinger Dawn Westphall  
 Devin Kuntz Sue Wilkinson  
 Connie Leistiko

thanks for all that you do!