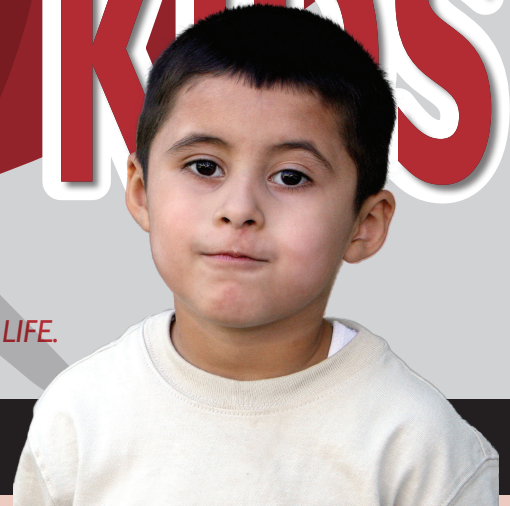


CASA FOR KIDS

FLATHEAD
COUNTY

LIFT UP A CHILD'S VOICE. A CHILD'S LIFE.



A **NEWSLETTER** ADVOCATING FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

OCTOBER 2016



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA FOR KIDS FLATHEAD COUNTY

“Our mission is to recruit, train and supervise volunteers to advocate for abused and neglected children.”

~ CASA for Kids

WYATT'S STORY HAS A HAPPY ENDING BECAUSE OF HIS CASA ADVOCATE

Wyatt's smile lights up the room. He loves to play soccer, baseball and basketball. He loves to tease his grandmother and wrestle with his dad. Chances are, if you met him today you would think he is a typical six-year-old boy. Without your support, this would not be the case.

You see, Wyatt had a rough start in life. While his mother loved him very much, her serious mental illness and drug addiction made it impossible for her to keep him safe. Wyatt met his CASA Advocate, Dave, shortly after he became a foster child at the age of four.

Whenever possible, Child Protection Specialists (CPS) try to place

children with someone the child knows – ideally a family member. In Wyatt's case, his first placement was with his maternal grandmother – unfortunately that didn't last long. His next placement was with his aunt, uncle and a cousin, and, at first, it seemed like this might be an ideal placement. People he knew would be taking care of him and he would have someone to play with.

But when Dave visited Wyatt in this home, he noticed some red flags.

Wyatt had a hard time focusing, his emotions and behaviors were out of control, his cousin fought with him constantly and, as the months went on, Wyatt showed serious signs of regression. Dave shared his concerns and, together, Wyatt's team decided Wyatt needed a new home.

Carol, Wyatt's paternal grandmother, became Wyatt's third caregiver in a year. Your support ensured that during this difficult time Wyatt had at least one adult consistently by his side... his CASA Dave.

“Your support ensured that during this difficult time Wyatt had at least one adult consistently by his side...his CASA Dave.”

(CONTINUED NEXT PAGE)

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STATE AND LOCAL CASA

There has been some confusion about CASA of Montana (“State CASA”) and local CASA offices like CASA for Kids, Inc. of Flathead County (“Flathead CASA”). We would like to assure you that Flathead CASA is alive and well.

Flathead CASA is an independent 501(c)3. We have our own governing board. We are responsible for funding our organization. We are responsible for the recruitment, training and support of advocates who serve abused and neglected children in our community.

State CASA is a different independent organization with an office in Helena. Its role is quite different from the role of the local CASA offices. State CASA offices can support new local programs with their start-up, train new local program directors, and help local programs create a stronger, cohesive statewide voice when working with policy-makers and stakeholders. However, the State CASA does not impact Flathead CASA’s funding or governance.

Thank you for your continued support of Flathead CASA. We look forward to continuing to serve the abused and neglected children in our community for many years to come.



(WYATT'S STORY CONT'D)

As you can imagine, this instability left Wyatt exhibiting signs of emotional disturbance. He had a hard time sleeping, focusing, toileting and regulating his emotions and behaviors in a healthy way. He desperately missed his mother, and, unfortunately, his mom had a hard time remembering to visit him. By the time Wyatt was five her visits were cancelled entirely because she had simply stopped showing up for them. Carol's patient care for Wyatt was apparent and Wyatt gradually began to improve. Carol was diligent about taking him to his therapist, medical appointments, speech therapy and Head Start. As Wyatt's disposition gradually shifted

“Dave consistently looked out for Wyatt’s best interest and now Wyatt is healthy, happy and has the promise of a bright future.”

from dark and troubled to happy and calm, Dave recognized the effect that a supportive and loving home was having on Wyatt.

While Wyatt was settling into his new life with grandma, he was also becoming reacquainted with his dad. His father was in the military and stationed in California, so he hadn't been involved in Wyatt's life. Eventually, Carol became Wyatt's legal guardian and they moved to California so Wyatt and his dad could continue to build their relationship. They are looking forward to spending their first holiday season together as a family. Dave consistently looked out for Wyatt's best interest and now Wyatt is healthy, happy and has the promise of a bright future.



CONNECTING SIBLINGS THROUGH CAMP CONNECT

This summer, your generous support helped us coordinate our first ever Camp Connect. This innovative family camp reunited siblings who have been separated while in foster care. (One of whom saw his siblings for the first time in five years!) Several therapists joined forces to provide specialized training to the foster/adoptive parents, while the children participated in fun team building and recreational activities. Our goal was to help these siblings and families build stronger, more sustainable connections.

A therapist summed up camp well when she reported: “ I found myself in tears many times over the weekend watching the children play together. I am always moved when I work with children in foster care, as I have always felt they are the angels among us and I am humbled to be able to be a part of their lives. Thank you for including me in this weekend. At this point my body is exhausted, but my heart is saying, “I can’t wait until next year”!! Thank you for making this happen. What an example of people using their gifts and talents to serve others. That’s what we’re here on earth to do, Yeah!!”

Partnerships with our donors, eight amazing therapists, CASA advocates, Child-Bridge and Easthaven made this camp the incredible success that it was. We can’t wait to do it again!

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Our spring class of advocates being sworn in, ready to be a voice for children.

CASA STAFF

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Alicia Scofield

Program Coordinator:

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Advocate/Outreach

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MEMBER AGENCY

We had a great crowd for our Super Hero Fun Day, raising awareness for CASA for Kids.

We were part of the Great Fish Community Challenge and had a great super hero booth at the color run!



WAYS TO HELP

Ways YOU can help and make a difference:

- Become an advocate: we have training every spring and fall
- Volunteer with special events or help in the office
- Become part of the Powerful Voice Society: donate \$1,200 to match a child with a CASA for a year
- Donate online: flatheadcasa.org
- Give Christmas gifts for foster children through our Christmas Gift Drive

Want to help? Call the office TODAY 755-7208!