

Northern Hills Area CASA

Director's Report

July 10, 2023 – August 14, 2023

Goals:

- **Enhance the work environment through the emphasis of teamwork.**
- **Promote retention of CASA volunteers through continuous support and educational trainings.**
- **Raise public awareness of NHCASA, child abuse prevention, and the unique role our volunteers play in the child welfare system.**
- **Maintain fiscal responsibility by increasing the amount of income received.**

Foster a positive culture of the work environment.

- Weekly staff meetings are held.
- Monthly one-on-one SOS (Source of Support) meetings between the ED and staff members: Focusing on the effects of vicarious trauma, the importance of self-care, strengths, and challenges, and the team approach.
- An exit interview was held with Development Coordinator, Becky Helmberger, on July 11.
- Anna's 6-month performance review was held on July 24. She received outstanding rankings in all of her job expectations. BOD Treasurer Tiffany Even was present, as well.
- We hope to hold interviews for the Development Coordinator position starting on August 22.

Strengthen the quality and professionalism of advocacy efforts.

- We currently have 20 CASA volunteers actively serving 36 children.
- Since the July BOD meeting, three children achieved permanency: one through an adoption by the non-relative foster parents, one with a guardianship, and one who returned home in a successful trial reunification. The two-year-old boy was in the foster home since his birth. We are cautiously optimistic about the little girl (Age: 3 ½) who returned to her mother's custody, as this was her second time in care. The mother had her parental rights terminated on two other children in 2017.
- Two veteran CASA volunteers, Vicky Hogrefe and Linda Stambaugh, who just completed other cases, were recently assigned to new ones, serving 4 children.
- We have a new Butte County case involving two teenagers with significant trauma histories. The father is incarcerated, and the mother has substance use issues, pending criminal charges, with her whereabouts unknown.
- We currently have 8 children waiting for a CASA to be assigned. In addition, a 17-year-old girl remains on runaway status. She will age out of the child welfare system on September 4, 2023.
- Court hearings attended to date total 132, as compared to 121 hearings during the same time frame in 2022.
- Termination of parental rights occurred regarding a soon-to-be two-year-old boy. CASA Meg English is the volunteer on the case, as she previously served as the CASA for another one of the father's children. His parental rights were also terminated in that case in 2020. Meg has been a volunteer since March 2011 and has been appointed to 8 cases involving 10 children.
- CASA Denise Schipke-Smeenck became a volunteer in October 2022, specifically to advocate for a teenage boy with whom she had been acquainted with through her role in the school system. She has played an integral role in his life and visited him at several of his placements over the last ten months, one of which was in Winner, SD. Denise expressed her concerns about a foster home placement, and the Court agreed. After spending nearly 11 years in and out of the child welfare system, this young man found permanency through a guardianship at the beginning of August.

- CASA Bonnie Speidel has been a volunteer since 2019 and was appointed to 2 cases involving 3 children. The latest case involved severe physical abuse resulting in a traumatic brain injury of an infant, at the hands of her father. The parents faced felony child abuse charges, but ended up with light sentences. The girls (ages 6 ½ weeks and 16 months at the time of removal) were initially placed in a foster home, as the paternal grandmother was on the Child Abuse Registry herself. She ultimately got off of the registry, and since the foster home was not an adoptive placement, the girls were placed with her in North Dakota, after spending nearly 9 months in the foster home. The grandmother was adamant her son didn't hurt her granddaughters and sided with him. This caused immense frustration to Bonnie, to which she expressed to the Court. While we all understand the importance of placing children with biological family members, sometimes it doesn't seem like the right answer, as the cycle of generational abuse/neglect is extremely difficult to break. Unfortunately, it is unknown if Bonnie will ever take on another case. At this time, she is taking a break from being a CASA.
- I participated in a webinar regarding the FY24 VOCA grant.
- I was involved with the National CASA Association Rural Affinity group meeting which focused on volunteer training, recruitment, and retention.
- The Court Improvement Program, along with the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment, hosts virtual Lunch & Learn events dealing with child advocacy. The invitation to participate is emailed to all CASA volunteers and board members. Previous sessions can be viewed at <https://sdcpcm.com/our-work/cip/>.
- Anna and I facilitated weekly contact with DSS, attorneys, and CASA volunteers regarding updates on services and permanency for children.
- Anna facilitated/participated in team meetings regarding two different cases. CASA volunteers Jessica Anderson and Denise Schipke-Smeenk were also present.
- Anna and I met on two different occasions since the last BOD meeting with Attorney Karen Hunt, DSS Children's Worker Erica Baker, and FSSS Kelly Millard regarding permanency for the children who have been in care for several years. There is currently an abundance of staff turnover at DSS. We are hopeful for smooth transitions.
- I participated in team meetings regarding 3 boys, two of whom are placed at the Black Hills Children's Home and one in Huron at Our Home. CASA Kim Marsing and CASA Jessica Stanton also provided input on next steps based on the best interests of these youth.

Increase public awareness of the mission of NHCASA.

- Our new website is user friendly, easy to navigate, and appealing to the eye. NHCASA staff received multiple training sessions on the utilization of the website.
- Becky attended the Spearfish Chamber of Commerce Coffee Connection and shared information about NHCASA.
- We partner with other local organizations to promote our program. I am a board member of the Lawrence County Coalition and attend monthly meetings during the school year. I also participate in the Sturgis and Butte County ABC (Action for the Betterment of the Community) meetings.
- NHCASA Volunteer of the Month recipients are highlighted on our website, Facebook, and are featured in our newsletters. The August honoree is event volunteer, Karen Hahn, who was instrumental in starting the 5K in conjunction with the Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon. The award winners' testimonials can be found on our website at www.nhcasa.org.
- I presented information regarding our grant requests to the Spearfish City Council on July 12 and to the Meade County Commissioners on July 25.

- At the request of CADCA executive policy members (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America), I have been facilitating meetings with other local coalitions regarding the proposed Farm Bill which addresses unregulated hemp in Delta 8 products marketed toward youth. We had a virtual meeting with U.S. S.D. Senator John Thune on July 28.
- We were invited back to host the Days of '76 Rodeo VIP Bar. We raised \$3,472.25 in tips and spread the word about the CASA mission to hundreds of people. Thanks to all who volunteered their time to help with this annual event. The committee is eager to have us return in 2024.
- We sold 50-50 tickets at the Spearfish Sasquatch baseball game. The winner of the drawing, Pam Mettler, donated her portion of the winnings (\$272) back to NHCASA. We raised \$544 total. A special thanks to Natalie Owens and her daughter who helped with this event.
- Julie Lane with Old Pine Coffee Company donated \$120.45 as a result of the giving campaign she held during the month of June for NHCASA.

Fiscal Responsibility

- Grants/Donations Received: VOCA FY24--July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (\$111,840); Montana-Dakota Utilities Resources Foundation (\$2,000); Liz & Mike Manning Charitable Fund (\$1,000); Lawrence County States Attorneys’ Office (\$1,500); Jim and Janice Wright (\$220 monthly donations); Days of '76 Rodeo VIP Bar (\$3,472.25); Spearfish Sasquatch (\$544); Court Improvement Program Training Grant for additional expenses incurred from the National CASA Conference (\$1,162.72); United Way (monthly distributions)
- We received notice from the Lawrence County Commissioners regarding a grant allocation for 2024 in the amount of \$15,000.
- Refer to the Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K detailed expenses/revenue spreadsheet for our total numbers.
- The Black Hills Super 6 Mountain Bike Race is set for Saturday, August 19, 2023, at Big Hill Trails. Early bird registrations opened on June 1. Individual and team prices increased by \$15 on August 1. We are set to receive \$9,200 in cash sponsorships, plus over \$14,000 of in-kind donations. There are currently 86 riders registered. Please spread the word.
- See itemized income/expenditures for July 11 – August 14, 2023.

▪ **CASA Connection**

Brenda has been busy pulling weeds in the play area and will be replacing the turf as soon as time allows. She also fixed the fence to allow for proper water flow.

Case Reports for January 1, 2023 – August 14, 2023

	Total Children	Lawrence	Butte	Meade
Currently Active (8-14-2023)	45	12	8	25
Children Closed in 2023 thus far	21 (Adoptions by foster parents +1 = 4; Adoption by fictive kin = 1; Guardianship + 1 = 8; Case dismissed with opposition noted by CASA = 4; Aged out = 2; Custody given to other parent = 1; Reunification with a parent = 1)	4	6	11

Total Served in 2023	66	16	14	36
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YTD COMPARISONS	Total Children	Lawrence	Butte	Meade	Corson	Ziebach
Total Served (January 1, 2022 – August 14, 2022)	64	17	14	30	1	2

NHCASA Calendar:

- **August 17:** NHCASA BOD Meeting; Noon; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce
- **August 18:** Black Hills Super 6 Packet Pick-Up; 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- **August 19:** Black Hills Super 6 Mountain Bike Race; Big Hill
- **August 22-24:** Tentative Dates for Development Coordinator Interviews
- **August 23:** Cup O’CASA; NHCASA; 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
- **August 28-31:** Amy OUT
- **August 29-30:** Human Trafficking Conference; Spearfish Holiday Inn; Anna to attend
- **August 30:** CIP Lunch & Learn; 11:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.; The Value of Family Voice in System’s Work
- **September 4:** Labor Day; NHCASA Closed
- **Fall:** CASA Social—Activity to be determined.
- **September/October:** New Volunteer Training
- **September 14:** NHCASA BOD Meeting; Noon; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; Guest Speaker: Sara Kelly (SD Court Improvement Program)
- **September 20-21:** Victims Services (VOCA) Symposium; Mitchell; Amy to attend
- **October 5-6:** Community Response to Child Abuse Conference; Sioux Falls; Anna and Amy to attend
- **October 9:** Native American Day; NHCASA Closed
- **October 12:** NHCASA BOD Meeting; Noon; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce
- **October 19:** Volunteer Appreciation Banquet
- **October 27:** Dueling Pianos
- **November 9:** NHCASA BOD Meeting; Noon; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce
- **November 10:** Veteran’s Day; NHCASA Closed
- **November 23:** Thanksgiving; NHCASA Closed on November 23-24 (Staff to likely take PTO on November 24)
- **December 14:** NHCASA BOD Meeting/Annual Meeting
- **December 15:** CASA Christmas Wrap Day; BHSU Joy Center; 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- **December 25:** Christmas; NHCASA Closed; Office hours may be limited December 26-29

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Accrual Basis

NHCASA - Office
Income by Customer Summary
July 11 through August 14, 2023

	<u>Jul 11 - Aug 14, 23</u>
ABBVIE	120.00
Barnes, Marcia	28.80
Black Hills Community Bank	650.00
Black Hills Energy	1,250.00
Cash Customer	3,754.25
Dardis, Calvin	115.65
Dyck, Jeremy	77.05
Even, Chuck	500.00
First Interstate Bank	13.67
Foltz, Glenn	1,500.00
Hite, Marilyn	0.00
Hunsley, Christina	650.00
Innovative Timing Systems, LLC	281.85
Johnson, Autum	10.00
KEVN Fox 7	0.00
Larvie, Brynne	19.15
LFP Consulting	50.00
Manning, Mike & Liz	1,000.00
MDU Resources Foundation	2,000.00
Mettler, Pam	272.00
Monument Health	2,500.00
Northern Hills FCU - Sturgis	250.00
Old Pine Coffee Co	120.45
Quinn, Gil	19.15
Scheels Store	0.00
State of South Dakota	4,755.00
Tatro, Tammy	57.75
Tufte, Josh	0.00
United Way of the Northern Hills	666.67
Wright, Jim & Jan	220.00
TOTAL	<u>20,881.44</u>

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Accrual Basis

NHCASA - Office
Expenses by Vendor Summary
July 11 through August 14, 2023

	<u>Jul 11 - Aug 14, 23</u>
Alpine Impressions	3,379.68
Amazon.com	320.41
Amy Cermak	222.70
Anna Schmidt	256.76
black Hills Equipment Rental	0.00
Black Hills Pure - Sarah	8.75
Chambois Butter	0.00
Collins Carpet Cleaning	6,151.50
Crow Peak Accounting	500.00
Frasier, Elana	68.75
Golden West	397.00
Holiday Inn	0.00
Julia O'Neil-King	244.07
Knecht	15.55
Lueder's Food Center-Vendor	245.57
Lynn, Jackson, Shultz & Lebrun, PC	5,413.00
Mangled Momentum	2,362.50
Marathon Printing Inc.	130.74
Marco	194.64
Spearfish Ambulance	0.00
SRAM/Quarq	0.00
Stanton, Jessica - Volunteer	209.58
Superior Sanitation.	0.00
Walmart	53.94
TOTAL	<u><u>20,175.14</u></u>