

# Vermont GAL Program Newsletter



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## What's New?

### Governor Douglas Issues Proclamation Honoring Guardians ad Litem

Chief Justice Reiber hosted a Recognition Ceremony for Guardians ad Litem in the Supreme Court on April 13, 2006. Judge Leonard P. Edwards, Juvenile Court Judge from Santa Clara, California, and 2004 Recipient of the William H. Rehnquist Award for Judicial Excellence, Judge Amy Davenport, Administrative Judge for Trial Courts, and Michael Kainen, Representative of Hartford, a ranking member of the House Judiciary Committee, addressed the gathering of GALs, CAO and Court Staff. Guardians ad Litem Sara Ecker of Windsor County and John Wilson of Chittenden County spoke about the GAL experience. Governor Douglas presented a Proclamation declaring April 13, 2006 Guardian ad Litem Day. The Proclamation and a photograph of the ceremony can be viewed on the GAL website at [www.vermontjudiciary.org/GAL](http://www.vermontjudiciary.org/GAL), "Recognition Day".

### Public Awareness and Recruitment

While the major recruitment campaign for two spring trainings is over, the GAL Program has decided to continue the VPR underwriting ads which ended in May through the end of 2006. We appreciate the National CASA grant for allowing the GAL Program to fund continued VPR ads. The GAL Program experienced increased public awareness and many successful referrals to the GAL Program due to the ads. Other public service announcements, CBS Cares on WCAX and Vermont radio stations statewide, will continue to be broadcast statewide through the Fall 2006 recruitment.

## A BIG WELCOME TO 44 NEW VERMONT GUARDIANS AD LITEM

The Vermont Guardian ad Litem Program welcomes the following new Guardians ad Litem who completed the Basic CASA CHINS Training in May 2006 in Burlington and in June 2006 in St. Johnsbury and have been accepted into the GAL Program.

Lisa Ayers	Diana Gauthier	Kimberly Lawrence
Marcia Bedig	Dana Goss	Elsa Lind
Sandra Blanchard	William Graves	Ramona Mann
Alden Blodget	Genevieve Greeno	Bonnie McPhetres
Adam Bortz III	Anna Hadden	Brenda Mitchell
Susan Carney	George Halikas	Tom Nelson
Jennifer Cavacas	Allison Hanzawa	Edward Pellegrini
Beverlee Cook	Riyon Harding	Linda Pelletier
Sarah Copps	William Harlow	Barbara Rowell
Coleman Coyne	Russell Hinton	Victoria Smith
Bernadette Darakjy	Susan Hong	Wendy Soliday
Thomasina Darling	Dorothy Jackson-Turek	Roberta Soll
Susan Duckett	Donnamarie Kingsley	Jacqueline Thibert
Paul Forlenza	William Kirkland	Ruth Wildhorn
Sarah Garey	Lauren LaMorte	

Congratulations to all of the new Guardians ad Litem for completing their training. Many of the newly trained GALs have begun their practical phase of training or "shadowing" an experienced GAL in an actual case. If you are a newly trained GAL and have not begun your "shadowing" training as expected, please let your local court or the Montpelier Guardian ad Litem Program Office know by calling (802)828-6551, or email Mary Hayden at [mary.hayden@state.vt.us](mailto:mary.hayden@state.vt.us).

### Inside this Issue:

What's New.....	Pg 1-2
Training.....	Pg 2 – 3
Brown Bag Lunch Topics.....	Pg 3
Article: History of CASA.....	Pg 4 - 5

### **New Appointments to the Guardian ad Litem Oversight Committee**

The GAL Oversight Committee is pleased to announce the appointments of GAL, Jeannie Walker of Windham County and Assistant Attorney General, Phil Danielson, to the GAL Oversight Committee. Welcome to the new members. Farewell to former GAL Ann Dielensnyder who resigned from the committee in March. Many thanks to Attorney Kate Piper, Esq. who is no longer on the committee but continues to serve emeritus. The committee meets next on July 14, 2006.

### **GAL Program Funding Development**

The Guardian ad Litem Program is pleased to announce that it has been preliminarily awarded a grant from the Vermont Center for Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse in the amount of \$15,000. The funds will be used to hire a contract project coordinator to supervise and support GAL work in CHINs cases in one area of the state. The Vermont Center for Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Abuse is also sponsoring two GALs to attend the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual New England Conference on Child Sexual Abuse to be held in October in Burlington (see next column). Thank you to the Center for its support of the GAL Program!

The Guardian ad Litem Program expects to be awarded funds to create a booklet to assist parents of juveniles in delinquency cases to serve as their child's Guardian ad Litem. Thank you to the Children and Family Council for Prevention Programs for this award.

### **CASA Special Project Grant Ended**

The CASA Special Project Grant expires June 30, 2006. The grant was used to recruit and support GALs in Orange County, Washington County and the Northeast Kingdom. Special thanks to Bunny Flint, who performed project coordinator services under this grant for one year, supporting the Vermont Law School GALs and organizing GAL meetings in Washington County. Thanks to Kenn Stransky who helped with Public Awareness and recruitment of new GALs in the Northeast Kingdom.

## **TRAINING**

**BASIC CASA CHINS TRAINING** October 27-31 in Burlington, VT (tentative dates and location)

### **OTHER IN-SERVICE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES**

**Bridges out of Poverty**, Barre Elks Lodge, Barre, VT, AHS and partners. This is a wonderful training for GALs with nationally known presenter, Jodi Pharr, September 14 & 15, 2006. If you want to attend the conference, please go to website [www.cvtcp.org](http://www.cvtcp.org) to register. We expect there to be a limited number of scholarships available for GALs to attend.

### **4<sup>th</sup> Annual Collaboration Conference on Children, Youth and Families**

Killington Grand Hotel, October 13, 2006; \$70 fee. GAL scholarships may be granted and we will keep you posted. Please let us know if you want to attend this conference and we will request a scholarship on your behalf.

### **9<sup>th</sup> Annual New England Conference on Child Sexual Abuse**

Sheraton Hotel and Conference Center, Burlington, VT, October 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>. The fee is \$250; however the Vermont Center for Prevention and Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse has awarded two scholarships for GALs to attend.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING AWARDED ONE OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS, please email the GAL Program at [www.vermontGAL@mail.crt.state.vt.us](mailto:www.vermontGAL@mail.crt.state.vt.us) stating the reasons you wish to attend. Please note that in order to attend you MUST ATTEND AND COMPLETE BOTH DAYS OF THE CONFERENCE.



## TRAINING NEWS

Due to a significant increase in applicants in 2006, the GAL Program sponsored **TWO** statewide Basic CASA Trainings this Spring, one in Burlington in May and another in St. Johnsbury in June. A total of 65 GALs participated in the training from 12 different counties. We have many people to thank for helping with the training, including the court staffs in both Chittenden County and Caledonia County, especially Chris Brock, Theresa Davidson, Kathleen Hill, Kathleen Pearl, Karen Ackermann and Tammy Tyda. The GAL Program also thanks Vermont Family Court Mediation Program Manager Susan Fay, Windsor Court Manager Tari Scott, GAL Lynn Irwin and Court Manager Laura Dolgin for serving as co-facilitators; and thanks to GAL Andy Mann, GAL Scott Labun, Attorney Howard Kalfus, Attorney Kate Piper, and Case Manager Karen Ackermann, for serving as panel members.

### Juvenile Delinquency Trainings

45 GALs registered to attend Juvenile Delinquency Training in Rutland on June 28<sup>th</sup> and in White River Junction on June 29<sup>th</sup>. We are grateful to Anna Saxman, Esq., Deputy Defender General, for donating her time on both days to train the GALs!

### Newly Trained CASA Facilitators

Case Manager Beth Aiken, Washington County, and Case Manager Charles Hacker, Windsor County, attended National CASA's "Training of Facilitators" in Columbus, Ohio June 13-15. This brings to five the number of Vermont Judiciary CASA certified trained facilitators for the GAL Program, including Mary Hayden, Sandra Seidel and Tari Scott.

## ETHICS/PROFESSIONALISM FOR GUARDIANS AD LITEM

The Guardian ad Litem Program now has a training module for Judiciary Ethics for GALs developed under the Judicial Ethics curriculum by Judge Mary Miles Teachout. This training is to be delivered at GAL Trainings either pre-service or in-service. The GAL Program will let court staff and GALs know when the next GAL Ethics training will be offered.

### Brown Bag Lunch In-Service Training Topics

It is suggested that each court hold regular monthly brown bag meetings for GALs to meet for support, information, or in-service training on a particular topic. Here are some suggested topics for your local court brown bag lunches.

### Drug Treatment Courts

What is Drug Treatment Court? How does it impact on juvenile court cases, especially treatment options in DCF case plans? Invite a drug court case manager to meet with the GALs to explain how the Drug Treatment Courts around the state operate and impact on family treatment plans.

### CHINs Mediation

Many states are starting mediation projects in child dependency cases and Vermont is one of them. Invite Vermont Family Court Mediation Program members involved in CHINs mediation to meet with GALs to explain how it works.

### The Role of the GAL and Rule 6

Invite your presiding Judge, a child attorney, and GAL Program staff to review GAL duties under Rule 6 in CHINs and Delinquency cases.



*As you know, Vermont has been a National CASA member since 2001. In my visits with GALs throughout the state, I am often asked for more information about CASA. Here is an article about the history and mission of CASA. – Mary Hayden*

## History of CASA

In 1976, Superior Court Judge David Soukup of Seattle, WA, saw a recurring problem in his courtroom:

“In criminal and civil cases, even though there were always many different points of view, you walked out of the courthouse at the end of the day and you said, ‘I’ve done my best; I can live with the decision,’ he explains.

“But when you’re involved with a child and you’re trying to decide what to do to facilitate that child’s growth into a mature and happy adult, you don’t feel like you have sufficient information to allow you to make the right decision. You can’t walk away and leave them at the courthouse at 4 o’clock. You wonder, “Do I really know everything I should? Have I really been told all of the different things? Is this really right?”

To ensure he was getting all the facts and the long-term welfare of each child was being represented, the Seattle judge came up with an idea that would change America’s judicial procedure and the lives of over a million children. He obtained funding to recruit and train community volunteers to step into courtrooms on behalf of the children: Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers.

This unique concept was implemented in Seattle as a pilot program in January 1977. During that first year, the program provided 110 trained CASA volunteers for 498 children in 376 dependency cases.

In 1978 the National Center of State Courts selected the Seattle program as the “best national example of citizen participation in the juvenile justice system.” This recognition, along with a grant from the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation of New York City (one of CASA’s earliest and strongest supporters), resulted in the replication of the Seattle CASA program in courts across the country.

As CASA projects developed, each new local program director made an on-site visit to the original Seattle host program for observation and training.

By 1982, it was clear that a national association was needed to direct CASA’s emerging national presence. The National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association was formed that year.

By 1984, the National CASA Association received financial support from several significant sources: the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, under the direction of the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation.

National CASA also receives support from the Kappa Alpha Theta Foundation. This international women’s fraternity selected CASA as its philanthropy and has provided funds for a variety of projects, including start-up grants and a public awareness video.

The association opened its national headquarters office in Seattle, Washington, in the summer of 1984, and launched a membership and fundraising drive.

On April 22, 1985, President Ronald Reagan presented the National CASA Association with the President's Volunteer Action Award for "outstanding volunteer contribution, demonstrating accomplishment through voluntary action." In August of 1989, the American Bar Association, the country's largest professional organization of attorneys, officially endorsed the use of CASA volunteers to work with attorneys to speak for abused and neglected children in Court.

Also during that year the U.S. Congress authorized the expansion of CASA with the passage of the "Victim's of Child Abuse Act of 1990" (P.L. 101-647), so that a "court-appointed special advocate shall be available to every victim of child abuse or neglect in the United States that needs such an advocate."

The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect included utilization of CASA and GAL volunteers among critical first steps recommended to bring the "national emergency" of child abuse and neglect in America today under control.

In July of 1991, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, named CASA an "Exemplary National Program in Juvenile Delinquency Prevention."

In December of 1992, David Soukup, founder of CASA, was recognized with an award from the Caring Institute of Washington, D.C. Also in 1992, Congress initiated funding of a grants program to expand CASA representation of abused and neglected children.

Today the National CASA Association represents 930 CASA programs across the country, including Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Virgin islands. National CASA provides support for starting programs, technical assistance, training and fundraising, media and public awareness services.

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**The Guardian ad Litem  
Program is grateful for all  
of your hard work and  
dedication to the children  
in Vermont.**