



Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**



### **Pinal County Juvenile Court Services**

#### **Pam Burke**

CASA Coordinator  
820 E. Cottonwood Lane  
Casa Grande, AZ 85122  
(520) 866-7710  
Pam.Burke@pinalcountyz.gov

#### **Greg Clark**

CASA Coordinator  
971 Jason Lopez Cr.  
Bldg D, Suite 500  
Florence, AZ 85132  
(520) 866-7078  
Greg.Clark@pinalcountyz.gov

#### **Gina Redmond**

Support Staff  
P. O. Box 906  
Florence, AZ 85132  
(520) 866-7076  
ReGina.Redmond@pinalcountyz.gov

#### **Dave Franklin**

Program Coordinator I  
971 Jason Lopez Cr.  
Bldg D, Suite 500  
Florence, AZ 85132  
(520) 866-4415  
DFrankli@courts.az.gov

#### **Donna McBride**

Supervisor  
971 Jason Lopez Cr.  
Bldg. D, Suite 500  
Florence, AZ. 85132  
520-866-4405  
DMcBride@courts.az.gov

**TOLL FREE**  
**1(800) 208-6897 #7076**  
**FAX (520) 866-7081**

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

# CASA of Pinal County

*Positive Action, Powerful Results*

## **ALL SMILES AT THE PINAL COUNTY SUPERIOR COURTHOUSE 38 FOSTER CHILDREN ARE WELCOMED INTO THEIR NEW FOREVER FAMILIES**

(Florence, AZ) Saturday, November 1<sup>st</sup> was a magical day at the Pinal County Superior Courthouse as families throughout the county welcomed the newest members of their families. The Courthouse was alive with the sound of joy and laughter as 29 families, 6 judges and 80 plus volunteers and court staff collaborated to make this incredible event happen. As a result, the lives of 38 children took a sharp turn off of a road marred with uncertainty onto a road filled with hope and promise. And the lives of countless community members were forever changed.

Volunteers consisted of CASA advocates, student from Central Arizona College and Arizona State University, Home of Hope students, Pinal County Community Advisory Board (CAB) members, Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation members, Knights of Columbus, Pinal Council for CASA/Foster, Inc. board members, as well as other distinguished members of



the community. The volunteers were joined by 6 Superior Court Judges including: Judge Figueroa, Judge Oldham, Judge White, Judge Eppich, Judge Raymond and Judge Scales from Gila County. State, County and Private Attorneys, Arizona Department of Child Safety Case Workers, Juvenile Court Services staff and an array of other court employees (bailiffs, clerk's office, court reporters, etc.) helped throughout the day.

For most, proceedings at a courthouse are not typically joyful occasions. The course of events that lead to adoption are typically not positive, making courthouse visits usually filled with anxiety and frustration. But on this beautiful Saturday morning the courthouse was a place of celebration and achievement, a day when the hard work of many has finally paid off. As a result, these children will never look at this courthouse the same way again!

In fact, if they didn't know any better they may have thought that they were at an amusement park rather than a courthouse. There were clowns, fun and games, decorations were strewn throughout the lobby, cameras were going off in courtrooms throughout the building, food and refreshments were being served in the jury room and fun was being had by all.

It was truly an amazing day at the "Little Courthouse That Could". When asked to explain what Adoption Day meant to her, one of the adopting parents, Michele Reimer, summed up the overall sentiments of everyone who was present for this wondrous occasion, when she said that "Adoption Day means that my family is finally complete. Our girls have given us so much and we are so thankful that we get them in our hearts and family forever".

*By Dave Franklin*

## Quality Training Means More Educated Advocates

By Donna McBride

The CASA of Pinal County team have been working hard to provide the best training opportunities to their CASAs. During their annual planning session last January they looked at how to bring volunteers together in the best interest of time, provide quality training topics and help them meet the requirements for training hours.

The result? Creating a Training booklet of articles, a check-out CASA library and two full-day trainings that would take place each spring and fall. The trainings, covering nearly 7 hours each meant that if volunteers did nothing else but attend the 2 trainings, they could accomplish the required hours. But just as important has been to provide good, solid training based on what the volunteers were requesting. The Fall Training took place on October 4<sup>th</sup> with 30 volunteers and staff present, including several from local Foster Care Review Boards (FCRB).

Topics included:

- Compassion Fatigue
- CASA Ambassador Program Debut
- Micro Aggression: Did I really say that?
- Adoption: How it All Comes Together
- Words from the Heart: *Sycamore Canyon Students*
- Local and state CASA updates

The highlight of the day was the panel with Sycamore Canyon students. Five young men shared their stories and how they ended up at the facility. There were candid confessions, stories and compelling questions. In closing up the session, one young man reminded the group, "We know there are a lot of 2 and 3 year olds that need a CASA, but don't forget we need you too. We need a voice for us." Needless to say, there were not many dry eyes in the room. The reviews were outstanding. Networking coupled by quality speakers and topics made the day disappear quickly. One volunteer said, "This is the best training I've ever attended".



Hello Volunteers! In case you hadn't heard yet we have created a dedicated Facebook page for Pinal County CASA volunteers! It's a private group that only us volunteers and program administrators can see. This is a way for us to connect with each other and get support and advice about our cases, information on training opportunities and more! You should be receiving an email invitation to join the group. All you need to do is click on the link in the email to join. If you are on Facebook and want to be a part of this group but have not gotten an email invitation, contact Pam, Greg, Dave or Donna. Happy Connecting!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/casacasavolunteersofpinalcounty/>



**PCCI CHRISTMAS PARTY!**

It's time for the Christmas party for foster children of Pinal County.

Saturday, December 13th  
11:00am—3:00pm  
Florence/Coolidge Elks Lodge

*How can you help?*

- Make sure your CASA child is registered!
- Volunteers needed for registration table.

Contact:  
Coordinator Pam Burke

## Spotlight on Success!

### Maricopa POD Finds Value In Networking

By Amber Johnson

The City of Maricopa CASA volunteers have come together to start a POD group. POD (Peers Offering Discussion) groups started in Pinal County last year as a way for CASAs network in their own community.

The Maricopa POD meets just about once per month for training, networking and individualized support. Through the generosity of the owners of Honeycutt Coffee in Maricopa the group is able to meet after business hours. This provides a great place to meet and is private enough for our needs.

Speakers come in to that provide information and training on a variety of topics. Most recently we had a representative from Pinal County *Parents as Teachers* speak about their program.



We also discuss what is happening in our cases, while maintaining confidentiality. This group also allows us to lean on each other for advice and suggestions about how to handle case related issues. CASA Amber Johnson of Maricopa spearheaded the POD and feels "It has been an amazing way to connect with people who understand what we see every day through our volunteer work as well as a source of support and encouragement for all of us." **Good job Maricopa!**



The Pinal County Community Advisory Board (CAB) will be hosting a Diaper Drive during the months of November and December. The purpose of the drive is to help collect necessary items for babies in foster care.

Pinal County currently has 169 children under the age of 1 in the foster care system. The CAB has rallied to help by providing "Baby Bags" that will be filled with diapers, blankets, toilet necessities and stuffed animals. Bags will be distributed through the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program.

Diapers may be provided to the CAB by dropping off to Juvenile Court Services during regular business hours at the Florence office to Donna McBride (971 N. Jason Lopez Circle, Building D, #500) or to Pam Burke at the Casa Grande Office (820 E. Cottonwood Lane, Building F-2).

For more information, contact Donna McBride, CAB Adviser, at 520-866-4405 or [DMcBride@courts.az.gov](mailto:DMcBride@courts.az.gov).



## OUT N' ABOUT



Dave Franklin has spent his first few months with CASA and Juvenile Court Services getting to know our communities. He's made appearances at a number of events. CASA community outreach efforts took him to Maricopa at Kid's Day as well as Coolidge at GAIN. Dave and Kayla Fulmer of Arizona CASA had the children in Maricopa help design a Family Tree by making their own leaves and writing what family means to them.

## Outstanding Advocate!



Dr. Kay Halverson has been with Pinal CASA since 2012 and has hit the ground running! Living in Gold Canyon, "Dr. Kay" has taken on challenging cases from the very beginning and seems to gravitate towards the younger children who come to the court as foster children. She is passionate about being a voice for younger children who cannot speak for themselves. Before her retirement, Kay was an associate professor of early childhood and special education, a director of a university child development center, a child and family therapist at a mental health center, as well as an infant and preschool specialist at two different state departments of education.

As the Pinal County Superior Court is moving to adopt the Best for Babies concept, Kay has graciously volunteered to serve on a court steering committee to help guide the process in addition to her other CASA duties. This model of care will help get the right services in place early for our younger children and improve the foster care outcome. Always positive, always showing ownership in her assigned CASA case and as a CASA recruiter, Dr. Kay Halverson is a valued member of our team and a voice for foster children!

*By Greg Clark*

# Frequently Asked Questions ?????

**Question:** What happens when the CASA volunteer doesn't agree with DCS? Does DCS have priority in the case plan?

**Answer:** A CASA volunteer must always make the case manager and other team members aware of what his or her opinion is even if it is not in agreement with the team. Remember, the judge wants to know all opinions, and it is to the judge that the CASA recommends what they think should happen. So, disagreeing with the case manager is okay; however it may be frustrating for the CASA to see the case go in a direction that the CASA does not agree with, until a hearing takes place and the judge decides on a course of action. Then, both parties must comply with what the judge has ordered.

**Question:** How legally savvy do CASA Volunteers have to be?

**Answer:** CASA volunteers are valuable because they come from all walks of life and can pull from a variety of professional and personal experiences. You don't need to be a lawyer or legally savvy to be a great CASA, but over time you will learn a lot about the dependency process, so there is a chance you will become legally savvy.

## *A little bit of this....a little bit of that!*

- **Notice:** Those of you that are approaching your 6 month anniversary as CASAs will be receiving your Entrance Surveys in the mail shortly. Please take the time to fill them out as they are extremely important to us as well as the State Office. The answers you provide will be used to better serve you and your fellow CASAs.
- **Reminder:** If you haven't met your yearly training requirement of 12 hours you still have time. The following links will give you access to a number of useful training opportunities: <http://www.azcourts.gov/casa/Training/OutsideTrainingCourses.aspx> or <http://www.azcourts.gov/casa/Training/TrainingCourses.aspx>. Also, feel free to contact Dave, Pam or Greg if you have any questions related to your training hours.
- Welcome aboard to all of our recently assigned CASA volunteers including: **Stephanie Nelson, Katherina Haub and Rachel Hernandez!**

## Upcoming Community Events

### **Tree Lighting & Electric Light Parade, Saturday December 6th in Casa Grande**

Ring in the holiday season by attending the Tree Lighting Ceremony followed by the Electric Light Parade at 5:00 p.m. in front of City Hall. Be sure to stop by the announcer's booth at 3rd & Florence Streets to say hello to CASA Supervisor Donna McBride who will be serving as a parade announcer!

### **Merry Copa, Saturday December 6th in Maricopa**

The first annual Merry Copa Holiday festival will be from 3-7 pm. The City Mayor will lead a countdown to reveal a Christmas tree covered in lights and decorations. Guest will have the opportunity to enjoy hot chocolate while listening to local community group performances and take pictures with Santa.

### **Holiday Festival and Parade, Saturday December 6th in Queen Creek**

The 32nd annual holiday festival and parade. The festival begins at 2:00 pm and the parade starts at 3:00 p.m. The parade will run north on Old Ellsworth Road and will end at the Recreation Annex/Library. Be sure to stay for the Tree Lighting Ceremony in the Library area at 6:00 p.m.



**Thank you Advocates!**

**All of your hard work and dedication has helped to improve the lives of numerous children within Pinal County! You are all amazing people and we truly appreciate each and every one of you!**

**Have a safe and happy holiday season!**