



# Yuma CASA Program

## Volunteers Voice

October 2015

Volume 6 Issue 10

<i>In This Issue:</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Coordinator's Comments</i>	1
<i>CASA Anniversaries</i>	2
<i>Changes to Newsletter</i>	2
<i>Dates to Save</i>	2
<i>Thank You - YCCI Board</i>	3
<i>September CASA Lunch</i>	3
<i>September Training Program</i>	4
<i>Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation</i>	5
<i>FCRB/CASA Conference</i>	6
<i>September Calendar</i>	7
<i>Contact Info</i>	7



### *Coordinator Speaks Out*

Hello Advocates,

As we move into the holiday season and prepare for the upcoming New Year, we will be hosting the Exploring CASA and New Beginnings Meeting, location to be determined, on October 23, 2015 at 9:00 - 11:00 am. Light refreshments will be provided. We will be sharing great information about what is in store for 2016, to include some fun projects to do with your CASA children. The office will be sending out invitations in the very near future which will include the agenda for the meeting. We look forward to meeting with you and getting your input for next year.

The YCCI Board has added a new fundraiser this year, a Pancake Breakfast. They will be taking over the Applebee's on 16<sup>th</sup> Street this Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> from 8:00 - 10:00 am. You can purchase tickets in the CASA office for \$5 or at the door on Saturday for \$6. Let your friends and family know what a great deal this is. For \$5 you get 2 pancakes, bacon/sausage and a drink. The money, of course, is for a very good cause. You can also volunteer to help out at this event by contacting the CASA office at 314-1858, Brooke at 246-3034, or Cori at 580-5379. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

Keep up the good work!

*-Misty*

**Visit our CASA of  
Yuma County  
Facebook Page  
& the  
Arizona CASA website**

**Newsletter Committee  
Susan, Kerrie, Carol, Ruth**

# **CASA Anniversaries**



**Thank You!**

**Vince Coppola 7 Yrs.**  
**Michelle Rasmusson 1 Yr.**

## **Changes to Newsletter**

We are working on making changes to the newsletter (NL) to make it simpler and easier to prepare and read. If you have suggestion, please contact one of the committee members or our Coordinator. One change is the removal of the monthly theme; this will allow us to put in a variety of topics. Also we are changing some monthly topics to quarterly. For example, the lunch photos will be a combination of the lunches held in a three month period.

If you are interested in joining the NL Committee, joint us at our monthly meeting at 9am on the first Monday of the month in the CASA office. Suggestions may be given to committee members or to our CASA Coordinator.

## **Save the Dates**

**Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**, 8-10am, YCCI will have an Applebee's takeover Pancake breakfast. Tickets will be \$5 in advance and \$6 at the door. We will be looking for volunteers to help cook, pancake mixers, servers/host and line people. Let the office if you can help.



**October to December:** Sign up to be trained on the new AZ Casa e-mail and Dashboard training. Misty sent out an e-mail with dates of available sessions for groups of 5. The goal is for all CASAs to be trained by January. Call the office if you didn't receive the schedule.

**Friday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 9 to 11**, Exploring CASA and New Beginnings Meeting, location to be determined. Misty will discuss several initiatives, such as, training for the CASA e-mail and Dashboard, the Peer Coordinator Model and next year's events and trainings/workshops. Hope you can make it. Please RSVP by email, phone or text.

**November 21<sup>st</sup>,**  
**National Adoption day, Juvenile Court**



# ***“Thank You” -YCCI Board***



The Yuma Council for CASA Inc. (YCCI) is a non-profit organization that consists of volunteers who are there to help raise funds to support the CASA program. Scot Bruce, our wonderful “Elvis”, is their largest fundraiser. Funding support for our CASA children includes but not limited to: clothing, personal items, therapeutic horse riding & care, trips to adventure & amusement parks, tutoring, toys, recreational activities (swimming lessons, Kids picnic, etc.) and Educational scholarships. YCCI also supports CASA Volunteers with additional training, such as the Day of Education and the National Convention. We, the CASA Volunteers, want to send out a BIG THANK YOU!!! We appreciate the time and effort each of you put forth raising the funds and then spending the time to evaluate each request we submit. Being in the “system” limits these children and their financial needs, being either for a tutor or for some normal fun such as swim lessons or being able to go on vacation with their placement, each of these requests is done with sincerity. And for the CASA volunteer, some of us need some assistance when training is made available. We are so GRATEFUL for that financial assistance allowing us to further our training experiences. Again, to each and every YCCI Board Member, we truly appreciate your time and dedication.

## ***September CASA Lunch - Potluck***

It was a rare opportunity to relax with homemade goodies. It was a fun activity.



**Note: To make it easier to schedule, lunches will normally be held at Brewers, Avenue B, on the third Tuesday of the month. Lunches are another venue for socializing with fellow advocates and getting to know each other and build camaraderie. It's recommended that advocates attend a luncheon at least every six months. We know those who work may find it difficult to take the time to attend, but it will be worth the effort to connect with other CASAs.**

# September CASA Training Program

Thanks to Grant Rader for his presentation and tour of the Juvenile Detention Center and the fairly new Hope Assessment Center. Grant is a Detention Supervisor and has held a variety of jobs in different departments for the last 15 years.

The current philosophy is that every child is capable of success, no exceptions. The goal for placing kids in detention is to ensure that the right kid is in detention for the right reason. Not every infraction of the law or action deserves detention. The staff uses a computer evaluation tool to validate they belong in detention.



Grant Rader

If you missed the tour, make plans to participate in a future one. It provides an understanding of the outstanding work done by the Courthouse employees and Judges.

The Hope Assessment Center is a voluntary intervention program that provides fast responding services, such as counseling and medical. The youth and their families accept help at the Center. This can turn the child's attitude or behavior around. It's a non-judgmental second chance.

The workers at both facilities are dedicated and support the efforts of youths to turn their lives around. The Hope Assessment Center was built with the workers providing the work to set it up and donations of materials and furniture by others.



**There will be no CASA Training Program for October, due to the Special CASA Meeting on October 23rd.**

## Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation

By Judge Benjamin R. Norris (ret.)<sup>1</sup>

### What is the Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation (AFFCF)?

AFFCF is a local 501(c)(3) organization that provides children in foster care in Arizona with awards for social, athletic and educational opportunities that are not funded by the standard DCS allowances or in any other way. When I was hearing cases in the Juvenile Court, I had a number of hearings in which it was obvious that a particular foster child would benefit significantly if we could just find a way to provide a simple good or service that was not covered by any of the DCS allowances, which is why I was so pleased to find AFFCF.

### So what exactly does AFFCF do to help Arizona kids in foster care?

Even if you think you already know about AFFCF, you may not be aware of all of the different things AFFCF does, so ask yourself if you know of a child in foster care who could use any of the following:

- Athletic Registration and Equipment (sign-up/registration fees, soccer cleats, etc.)
- Apartment Set-Up (for youth aging out of foster care; covers things such as pots and pans, dishes, towels, shower curtains, rugs, cleaning supplies, lamps, small appliances, etc.)
- Bicycles, Scooters, Skates and Skateboards
- Camp (up to one week of summer camp or other camp per child per year)
- Citizenship/Immigration (fees for green card or immigration physicals, but not attorney fees)
- Class pictures (once a year per child)
- Clothing (special event clothing only, e.g. prom, 8th grade graduation, Quinceañera, etc.)
- Graduation Expenses (i.e., cap, gown, ring, yearbook, and other related expenses)
- Instrument Rental (in 12-week funding periods; once initial request is approved, renewals can also be processed in 3-month increments)
- Lessons (12-week funding periods for gymnastics, karate, music, swimming, etc.; once initial request is approved, renewals can also be processed in 3-month increments)
- Optical Expenses (may be considered if DES will not fund; contacts can be considered for one-time only, and documentation is required that states a specific, special need for the youth)
- School Field Trips (class trips to Catalina Island, etc.)
- Theme Park Admissions (only for parks outside Arizona)
- Tutoring Services (12-week funding periods)
- Driving Lessons (for those who have turned 18 and aged out of foster care; foster children under 18 are generally not allowed to drive for liability reasons).

For the most part, AFFCF will consider paying 100% of the cost of these items. AFFCF does have limits on how much it can pay for any one item, but AFFCF will work with foster placements and providers of goods/services in an effort to cover 100% of the costs. AFFCF assistance does require submitting an award application and receiving approval from AFFCF before purchase; AFFCF cannot reimburse for anything paid for prior to receiving approval. But applying is easy; just visit [AFFCF.org](http://AFFCF.org), click on the "General Awards" tab, and then click on "Award Application" (or contact AFFCF by mail or phone; see below). Remember, in its 30 year history, AFFCF has never turned down a request that fell within its guidelines.

---

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin R. Norris is a retired Maricopa County Superior Court judge and a member of the board of directors of Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation. The views expressed in this article are his and do not necessarily represent the views of the Court.

AFFCF also is the go-to source for information on how to obtain other goods and services for children in foster care that the agency does not cover. For example, AFFCF does not pay for furniture, regular-use clothing and some other things, but AFFCF can help you find them from other sources. Similarly, while AFFCF generally does not pay for electronics (such as laptops for older students), AFFCF sometimes receives donated items that it can distribute.

### How can I help AFFCF help Arizona kids in Foster Care?

How does AFFCF pay for these things? While we do receive some grants, the vast majority of our funds come from individual donors. These donations are supported by Arizona's Qualified Foster Care Organization tax credit, which provides that donations to AFFCF qualify for a tax credit of up to \$800 for couples filing jointly (\$400 for individuals). Unlike a tax deduction, a tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the donor's tax liability. This means that a couple giving \$800 in calendar year 2015 will see their Arizona tax liability reduced by \$800 (or their refund increased by \$800) when filing their 2015 Arizona tax return. AFFCF will even send donors the Arizona tax form they need to claim the credit at the end of the 2015 year. Finally, donors do not need to itemize to claim the tax credit – any couple who would otherwise owe \$800 (or \$400 for individuals) in Arizona income tax for 2015 can take advantage of this tax credit. Donating is easy; just visit [AFFCF.org](http://AFFCF.org), click on the "Donate" tab, and then click on "Tax Credit" (or contact AFFCF by mail or phone). Remember, no one needs to donate to AFFCF in order to receive an award from AFFCF, but donations are what make our awards possible.

### Contacting AFFCF

Finally, if you need to contact us, AFFCF's direct telephone line is (602) 252-9445, the website is [AFFCF.org](http://AFFCF.org), and the mailing address is 1645 E. Missouri Ave., Ste. 220, Phoenix, AZ 85016. We look forward to hearing from you!

## ***FCRB/CASA Conference***



# October 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 <b>CONTACT LOGS DUE</b>	2	3
4	5 <b>Newsletter Meeting 10:00 for Nov NL</b>	6 <b>Hopeful Hearts Meeting 11:00</b>	7 <b>FCRB</b>	8 <b>FCRB</b>  <b>CASA Academy Tucson</b>	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 <b>Lunch Brewers 11:30</b>	21  Carolyn Shald	22	23 <b>Exploring CASA &amp; New Beginnings Meeting 9:00 - 11:00 Location TBD</b>	24
25	26	27 <b>Peer Support Group Time to be announced</b>	28	29	30  Mike Friends	31

**CASA Program**  
**Yuma County Juvenile Justice Center**  
**2440 W. 28th Street**  
**Yuma, AZ 85364**

## Contact Info

**Tel: 928.314.1830**  
**Fax: 928.314.1995**  
**E-mail:**  
**mcicala@courts.az.gov**  
**vdavis@courts.az.gov**

**We're on the Web!**  
**See us at:**

**<http://www.supreme.state.az.us/casa/default.htm>**  
**Facebook: <http://www.azcourts.gov/casaofyumacounty/Home>**



***Make a difference in a child's life — Become a CASA Volunteer***