

National CASA Association Certifies Idaho's Programs

All seven Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) organizations operating in each of Idaho's Judicial Districts and the Idaho State Guardian ad Litem office have been awarded certification by the National CASA Association. This certification recognizes that the Idaho CASA organizations meet National CASA's high standards for program operations and management.

According to Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association, "The National CASA quality assurance process is very rigorous, and reflects our commitment to ensure every child we serve has the most powerful volunteer advocate working on their behalf. This certification says the Idaho CASA programs have demonstrated a strong capacity to support the work of advocating for abused and neglected children within the state."

The process includes a review of program mission and purpose, program governance, development and implementation, human resources management, volunteer management, financial, facility and risk management, public relations, planning and evaluation, record keeping and inclusiveness and diversity. With the completion of standards assessment for the CASA programs, the state ensures that the over 500 volunteer Guardians ad Litem in the state provide the quality advocacy each youth in Idaho's child welfare system deserves.

The Idaho State Legislature has been very supportive in allocating funding to provide services to abused and neglected children through the Idaho Supreme Court who administers those funds. This transition and success has been in large part due to Nanci Thaemert, the State Guardian ad Litem Coordinator. Nanci has ensured that all statutory and national standards are followed by each CASA program and consults with all participants to ensure best practices are followed. It is through Nanci that training and

networking opportunities for the CASA programs leads to such major strides as the national certification.

As stated by one of the district directors in a recent CASA program survey, “The state coordinator position has been vital in creating state unity with casa programs. We have uniformity in our reporting, court reports, recruitment and a general sense of understanding between each program. It has created a crucial support system throughout the state and provides needed communication between all programs. The state coordinator position has provided key legal support for each director in times of chaos and crisis.”

The State of Idaho and the Judiciary are proud of the work well done by all of our CASA staff. Congratulations to those obtaining certification, and a special thank you to Nanci for all she has done to make this possible!