

Volunteer Spotlight

MAY 2011

Each month, we'll be featuring three CINC Advocacy volunteers and a Citizen Review Board volunteer.



Becky Bodine has been a CASA volunteer since 2007 as well as a member of CRB #2 since Nov. 2010. Starting May 24th, Becky will be our new Volunteer Recruiter, too! The Bodines officially retired from being foster parents in March, after caring for

about 30 children—mostly teenage boys—over the course of 12 years! Becky has been in the Air National Guard for almost 18 years, and is the office manager and part owner of a local pest control business. Nicole Bartell, the CRB Coordinator, says that Becky is an asset to her Board especially with her ability to ask the hard questions of people; she is also very compassionate and enthusiastic about CRB. Becky enjoys that her background enables her to bring a unique view to the cases she works. If she could change Kansas' child welfare system, it would be to decrease bureaucracy and implement consistent policies so that children benefit from the "phenomenal people working for the good of the children in all the various areas," and don't get lost in the System.



Ermilou Bryan is one of our longest-certified CASA volunteer, at 21 years! Ermilou has a degree in music education and taught 4 years in the Springfield, MO, area. She also substituted in the public school system and works in church music. Her husband, Ted, worked for the Frisco and Santa Fe Railroads; after they married he was transferred to Enid and

Tulsa, OK; Chicago, IL; and finally Topeka. They have three children and 8 grandchildren. According to her supervisor, Carole Wright, Ermilou has been incredible in her dedication to CASA. Her biggest strength is how she communicates with other professionals and families: without judging or making people feel threatened, and always with a positive goal in mind. Ermilou appreciates that CASA provides the opportunity to truly make a difference in the life of a child. Ermilou would like to see more consistency for foster children during their time in Care: fewer placement changes, a contracting agency that maintains their contract for a long period of time, and low turnover of agency workers.



Rebecca Brown has been a volunteer **and** an employee with CASA of Shawnee County since Summer 2005, soon after she graduated from Washburn University with a Bachelor of Criminal Justice. Rebecca was born and raised in Topeka and married her high school

sweetheart, Ezra, in 2004. The Browns have two daughters, Kendalyn (4 yrs.) and Kassidy (2 yrs.). Rebecca's favorite things about being a CASA are the one-on-one interactions with the children, and seeing the fruit of her "behind the scenes" work playing out in the children's lives after some consistent and assertive advocacy. Her volunteer/staff supervisor, Sharolyn Dugger, appreciates Rebecca's commitment to the children on her cases and her diligence in balancing being the voice of the children with what is in their best interest—and she keeps meticulous records. If Rebecca could change one thing about the KS child welfare system, it would be to lessen the pressure on the contracting agency to meet objectives, which can make it more difficult for children's individual needs to remain the focus.



Kathy Busch has been a CASA volunteer since 1999. She also has been active on the Board of Directors and served as president for five years. She has been active in raising money, especially through the Homes for the Holidays Tour the past several years. She says, "I find that being a CASA is

a meaningful way of helping kids who are out of their homes and in the middle of the foster care system. So often, these kids need an adult they can trust, someone who's going to be around through the good and the bad—for the long haul. I think that's our most valuable role." According to her supervisor, Rebecca Brown, Kathy has been a very dedicated CASA. She has been the only CASA to have a particular case for over 13 years, and throughout this time Kathy has remained very involved, seeing her child a minimum of one time a month. Kathy also went above and beyond and has done emergency transports, assisted in moving the child from placement to placement, coordinated and supervised family visits, and coordinated special therapy appointments for her CASA child. This month celebrates her CASA child's 18th birthday.