



# Reaching Out

The newsletter of the Family & Youth Services Bureau February 2016 volume 5 • issue 1

## CASA Program: Advocating for abused and neglected children

### Your help is needed!

Since 2012, we have seen over a 90% increase in the number of children referred to the Porter County CASA Program.

CASA volunteers are often the most stable influence in these children's lives.

Every CASA volunteer receives 33 hours of training before assigned to a case.

Current CASA volunteers in Porter County include educators, law students, employees from IT firms, retirees, and mill workers.

If you have a passion to help local kids, please talk to us about becoming a CASA.

Every day in this country 1,900 children become victims of abuse or neglect, and four of them will die.

Some people may think that Porter County is protected from this type of statistic, but the opposite is true. In 2015 there were 320 children who were referred to our CASA program, over a 90% increase since 2012.

The Court Appointed Special Advocate—also known as the CASA volunteer—is assigned to work with a child who has been abused and/or neglected. After visiting with the child over a period of time, the CASA volunteer prepares a detailed assessment of the case and reports back to the court what is in the best interest of the child.

This program was established in Porter County in 1990 by the Family & Youth Services Bureau. During that time, CASA volunteers have made a positive impact on the lives of thousands of local children who have been neglected or abused.



*The next training session for CASA volunteers begins in March 2016.*

*For information about the CASA program or becoming a CASA volunteer, please contact Cissie Wardell at 464-9585 or cwardell@fysb.org.*

## Family Life Workshop: Talk Around the Table

The Family & Youth Services Bureau presents a Family Life Series Workshop, titled "Talk Around the Table, Improving Family Communication," held on Tuesday, February 9, 2015 from 6:00 to 7:30 pm, at the FYSB office at 253 W. Lincolnway in downtown Valparaiso.

This workshop is led by Kaye Frataccia, the Program Manager for the Around the Table initiative at EMPOWER Porter County. EMPOWER Porter County was founded in 2012 to coordinate efforts to reduce substances abuse county-wide. Previously Kaye taught Spanish in the Valparaiso School System for more than twenty years.

This workshop is free and open to all community members.

*Limited spaces available; please RSVP for this free workshop by Friday, February 5th to 219-464-9585 or kunderwood@fysb.org; please include your name and contact information.*

### How you'll benefit:

- Learn how family meals can build family bonds
- Discover how to build protective factors to fight off the risks teens face every day
- Practice skills to improve positive communication

# 4th Annual Chalk the Walk

## Saturday, June 11, 2016

Chalk the Walk brings vibrant color, family friendly activities, and the chance to be an artist to the Courthouse Square once again this summer.

A fundraising event for the Family & Youth Services Bureau, Chalk the Walk also offers local businesses and organizations the opportunity to promote their message, and gives area artists of all ages the chance to have their artwork featured in a public space. And the artwork lasts for weeks!

All sponsors receive 3 x 3 foot spaces to create a chalk drawing on the Porter County Courthouse sidewalk, including a box of brightly colored chalk. Sponsorships start at \$150.00.

Are you interested in being a sponsor or an artist for this event? Please contact Jackie Gray at 464-9585 or [jgray@fysb.org](mailto:jgray@fysb.org), or check our website for further information: [www.fysb.org](http://www.fysb.org).

*A video from last year's event is also on our website, check it out! [www.fysb.org](http://www.fysb.org)*



**Our Mission is to assist youth and families through supportive services that create a positive change for Porter County.**

**The Family & Youth Services Bureau will ensure that no person shall be excluded from or denied participation in services based on the grounds of race, age, religion, sex, disability, national origin, ancestry, protected class, or any other protected class as defined by current law, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that directly or indirectly receives state or federal support.**

### FYSB Wish List

### Can you help?

You may be able to help the programs at Family & Youth Services Bureau in creative new ways! Check out the wish lists below for each of our programs:

#### Healthy Families

- Items for Moms, such as nail polish, lotions, shower gels
- Books for children, infants to 3 years old
- Baby Slings/Wraps for carrying babies
- Infant/newborn toys, rattles, teethingers

#### The Tot Shop

- Child safety gates
- Hooded bath towels
- Sheets for Cribs
- Umbrella Strollers

#### CASA

- Items that will be used to start conversations with young children: paper dolls, Lego sets, coloring books, crayons, matchbox cars

#### Clinical Services

- New or used television to show parenting DVDs
- Bookshelves

#### The Learning Place

- Television/DVD player for education videos/DVDs
- Barnes & Noble gift cards for curriculum
- 3 ring binders, 1 to 2 inch

#### Risk Management

- Barnes & Noble gift cards for curriculum
- Sharps School Services gift cards
- \$5 to \$25 gift cards for graduation gifts

*Can you, your business, or organization help out with a donation of items to one of our programs?*

*Check our website at [www.fysb.org](http://www.fysb.org) for a detailed description about any of our programs. All gifts are tax deductible.*

*New items only, unless otherwise noted.*

*Contact Jackie Gray at 219-464-9585 or [jgray@fysb.org](mailto:jgray@fysb.org) for more information.*

## Featured Donors

## Fun, Friendship, Breakfast, and Giving

Over 25 years ago a group of women associated in one way or another with Valparaiso University began meeting on a weekly basis for fun and friendship. To this day, they meet weekly at Jimmy's Café in Valparaiso. For the past three years, they have decided to make contributions to FYSB's Tot Shop Program, and typically bring coats, hats and winter clothing to us each December.



We appreciate their generosity and admire the close bonds of friendship they have sustained. That combination of friendship and scrumptious breakfasts can't be beat! Thank you again for sharing your group's activity with us!

*Are you a member of a group or organization who would like to help out with a donation of items to one of our programs? Contact Jackie Gray at 219-464-9585 or jgray@fysb.org for more information.*

## Featured Board Member

## Connie Rudd

"When I was approached a few years ago about becoming a Board Member for FYSB I was delighted. I felt I had an awareness of the youth/family programs but now would have a chance to lend my support and encouragement to this needed programming." says Connie, who is the Director of Nursing at the Porter County Health Department. "Youth services seem to be lacking in Porter County, especially youths in crisis. FYSB fills the gap by offering programs that are based on current relevant issues for youth and families."



Connie enjoys spending time with the people who bring love and joy to her life, Neil, her children and grandchildren, and the rest of her family. When she gets the chance you can find her backpacking and hiking in the Grand Canyon or taking in the sun and fresh air at The Dunes or the trails at Sunset Hill Park. Thanks Connie for your dedication and the time you spend with FYSB!

## Featured Staff Member

## James Orbit Simons

He has worked in education and social services for 20 years, doing stints as teacher, juvenile probation officer, tennis coach, and a mentor to all the kids whose lives he has impacted. James Orbit Simon has been the Lead Teacher in our revived Learning Place Program since August 2015.



"I find it rewarding when I discover the talents of the youth I teach, and then can help them understand how those talents can be used to guide them through life," remarks James. "Also it is interesting to interact with them and learn about their life experiences. We learn from each other."

In his spare time, James is a busy musician, playing trumpet in local orchestras including in the South Shore Orchestra, and for Memorial Opera House and Towle Theater. He also plays with the Not For Nuthin Jazz Combo.

Thank you James for all the energy, passion and integrity you bring to your work; we like the music you create!

## Family & Youth Services Bureau Board of Directors

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### Help us thank our partners



The Family & Youth Services Bureau provides  
over 20 programs and services for the community  
at the following locations

253 W. Lincolnway  
Valparaiso, IN 46383  
219-464-9585

6469 Central Avenue  
Portage, IN 46368  
219-763-6623

257 W. Lincolnway  
Valparaiso, IN 46383  
219-464-9585

1660 S. State Rd. 2  
Valparaiso, IN 46385  
219-464-4641

If you have a name or address correction  
or would like your name removed from our mailing list,  
please contact us at 219-464-9585 or [info@fysb.org](mailto:info@fysb.org)

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