



253 W. Lincolnway  
Valparaiso, IN 46383

To receive this  
newsletter by email,  
send your name and  
email to:  
[info@fysb.org](mailto:info@fysb.org)

Thanks!  
We can then put the  
money we save on  
postage back into our  
programs.

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
**Paid**  
Valparaiso IN  
Permit No 134



BoyConn Printers proudly supports  
Family & Youth Services Bureau and  
all they do to help our community.

BoyConn can help you with your  
next print or sign project. Ask us how!

CUSTOM PRINTING • DIGITAL COLOR • COLOR COPYING

BUSINESS CARDS • BUSINESS STATIONERY • BROCHURES

LARGE FORMAT • NCR FORMS • LABELS/DECALS

LAMINATING • WEDDING INVITATIONS • TICKETS & TAGS

YARD SIGNS • BANNERS • MENUS & BAR CARDS

**Tel: 219.462.2665**

803 Glendale Blvd • Valparaiso IN 46383  
[www.boyconn.com](http://www.boyconn.com)

### Help us thank our partners



The Family & Youth Services Bureau provides  
16 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  
219-465-3475

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)

Reaching Out is the newsletter of the  
Family & Youth Services Bureau  
published three times yearly  
253 W. Lincolnway, Valparaiso, IN 46383



# Reaching Out

The newsletter of the Family & Youth Services Bureau September, 2019 volume 8 • issue 3

## Program Highlight—CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates)

### Serving Porter County for the past 30 years!

Every year since 2016, Porter County CASA has served over 350 children who have been victims of abuse and neglect. When the court must intervene because a child's safety is in jeopardy, courts are obligated by statute to provide representation for every child. In Porter County, trained Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs) fill that role and ensure that the children's needs are brought to the attention of the court.

### CASA STATISTICS

#### In 2018

- \* CASAs provided 4,735 hours of service
- \* CASAs served 356 children
- \* Porter County had 80 CASAs
- \* FYSB trained 24 new CASAs

**Due in large part to a sharp increase in parental substance abuse, the number of children served by Porter County CASA has sky-rocketed with an increase of 125% in the last 6 years.**

The CASA program dates back to the 1970s when a judge in Seattle realized that the courts and social service agencies were overburdened so he turned to community volunteers to serve as advocates for children. Based on his efforts, there is now a comprehensive national training curriculum. Porter County CASA is a member of National CASA.

Thirty years ago in 1989, the Porter County CASA program was developed and initiated by Family & Youth Services Bureau at the request of the Porter County Circuit Court Judge at the time, who identified the need for it in our area. He felt strongly, based on the agency's reputation and solid history of providing quality services needed for the community, that Family & Youth Services Bureau had the ability to develop and implement the program.

The longevity and success of the CASA program can be attributed to the uniqueness of what CASAs bring to the process. CASAs spend quality time with the children and important people in the children's lives to gain a first-hand understanding of each child's story. Children experiencing transition, turnover, Cont.on p. 2

Please join us to celebrate and  
support the future of



CASA  
Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

at the CASAblanca Gala

Learn more and purchase tickets  
at  
<https://www.fysb.org/casablanca-gala>  
or call 219.464.9585.





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.

CASA Cont.

and chaos have a constant advocate on their team fighting for them amidst shuffle and uncertainty. CASAs know the child they represent, and they are essential in helping the court make tough decisions on what the family needs and what is in the child's best interest. CASAs offer these children a consistent and positive adult presence during one of the most stressful times in their lives until they are returned to a safe and stable home.

CASA volunteers participate in rigorous and comprehensive training that teaches them about courtroom procedures, social services, the juvenile justice system, child development, the special needs of abused and neglected children, and how to get those needs met by the system. They gather information, interview, write reports to the court, attend court hearings and testify as needed, make regular visits to their children, and work with DCS, family members, teachers, health care and other service providers. Their efforts are undertaken on their own time, with the ultimate goal of making independent and informed recommendations that help a judge decide what's best for a child who has been removed from his/her home due to abuse or neglect.

CASA volunteer Cathy expressed, "The beauty of the CASA program is that it is about the child. Only the child. It also teaches you about life and more about yourself than you might imagine. Advocating with compassion for a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to grow in a safe and nurturing environment is an easy right to stand behind. It is an honor to work on their behalf."

CASA volunteers ultimately save tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars. More important, statistically, a child who is appointed a CASA volunteer is also less likely to languish in the foster care system, less likely to stay in long-term care or to re-enter the system, and more likely to do better in school and to be adopted. CASA ensures that each child receives a volunteer who will advocate for his/her well-being so that children may ultimately heal and thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.

Chalk the Walk

Artwork created for/by our largest 2019 sponsors:



Blachly, Tabor, Bozik & Hartman



Jack & Carol Ronneau



Smith Ready Mix

St. Mary Medical Center



Thank you!!

Employee Spotlight  
Elly Kutch

Elly joined the Clinical Services team at Family & Youth Services Bureau in July of 2018. Prior to that, she worked at the Caring Place as a Client Assistant for over a year. She received her bachelor's degree from Purdue University North Central and a Master of Social Work degree from Loyola University Chicago.



Elly has numerous roles at Family & Youth Services Bureau, including teaching co-parenting and parent enrichment classes, counseling individuals and families,

facilitating the Strengthening Families program, and others.

Elly was born and raised in Valparaiso. She enjoys running and spending time with family and friends in her free time. Elly has grown so much in her short time at FYSB and rises to every challenge she is presented with. Her sunny disposition and ability to connect with people make her indispensable to the Clinical Services team and all of FYSB.

Indiana Child Abuse Deaths in 2017

Family & Youth Services Bureau works to keep children safe. Given the increase in child abuse mortalities in 2017 the need for FYSB's programs remains strong.

According to the most recent statistics from Indiana's 2017 Department of Child Services Report there were **65 child fatalities due to neglect or abuse during that year. This is a 10% increase from 2016.** Two of those fatalities occurred in Porter County due to neglect (none from the more severe category of abuse). Reading through the cases makes it clear that **parental support and guidance are needed badly in Indiana.**

Many of the tragedies were preventable and most of the victims were too young to communicate beyond crying. It's up to the parents to keep their anger in check and know how to keep infants and toddlers safe. Keeping parents informed and teaching good parenting techniques are key to infant and child safety. **Our programs focused on prevention and early intervention and our CASA program strive for a zero rate of infant and child mortality from abuse for Porter County!**

Family & Youth  
Services Bureau

Board of Directors

Bonnie Sullivan, Chair

David Butterfield  
Vice-Chair

Patrick McGinley  
Secretary/Treasurer

Paul Knauff

Connie Rudd

Jon Rutkowski

Johanna Williams

Matt Workman

Staff

BeLinda Georgeff  
President & CEO  
219.464.9585  
bgeorgeff@fysb.org

Melanie Dooley  
Director of Prevention  
and  
Early Intervention  
Services  
219.763.6623  
mdooley@fysb.org

Sarah Fink  
Director of Porter County  
CASA Program  
219.464.9585  
sfink@fysb.org

Kate Flannery  
Director of Development  
and Community  
Relations  
219.464.9585  
kflannery@fysb.org

Carrie Honeycutt  
Director of Operations  
219.464.9585  
choneycutt@fysb.org

Jessica White  
Director of Clinical Services  
219.464.9585  
jwhite@fysb.org



It's time to replenish The Tot Shop and area businesses and service groups are helping with this effort. The clothing that will be collected this year will help many families with low incomes.

The first year of a baby's life requires approximately \$1,500 in baby items which is not affordable for many families in this area. The Tot Shop program alleviates stress on such families while providing the skills and resources for a better family foundation.

Visit <https://www.fysb.org/pick-treat-for-tots> for more information about this year's drive. **We need your support!!**

Pick & Treat for Tots is grateful for the major support of

