

CASA CORNER

CASA of the Southern Tier's Quarterly Newsletter



Signs of bullying

Everyone should know and look for signs of bullying because early recognition can prevent the situation from escalating. Noticing the warning signs also allows adults to intervene, provide support, and create a safer environment for everyone involved.

- Unexplained injuries
- Lost or destroyed property
- Feeling sick or faking illnesses
- Declining grades or loss of interest in school
- Difficulty sleeping or nightmares
- Sudden loss of friends
- Change of eating habits; such as skipping meals or binge eating
- Self destructive behavior; running away, harming themselves, or suicidal ideations.

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/warning-signs>

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Ask a CASA

How has being a CASA changed your view of a child's life going through Family Court striving for permanency?

-Paula Stark

As Foster Care children they are 'the guest' who resides in the assigned home without knowing how long they will stay and what will occur to cause them to leave. The children fear abandonment and separation thus they are unable to 'settle into' their prospective adoptive homes or educational settings. The prospective adoptive parents/families are not biological relatives and contact with biological siblings/relatives is limited. Everyone is functioning in limbo, never knowing the outcome of the next Family Court Permanency Plan Hearing (PPH), which occurs every 6 months, or a decision made by local Department of Social Services (DSS regarding their placement.

"As a guest", the children may acquire what they perceive as their belongings/property but in reality the Foster Care parent/s determine what is theirs and what moves along with them or remains behind.

The children's 'sense of belonging' within the foster-family is always under question leaving the children to doubt their self-worth.

-Tina Webber

Being a CASA has deeply humanized what once felt like abstract legal processes beyond my influence. While it is amazing how incredibly resilient children are, it has been eye-opening to see firsthand how vulnerable they become when the adults and systems meant to protect them are unreliable, inconsistent, or overwhelmed. I've come to realize how critical it is for children to be heard—not just spoken for, but truly heard. Being their advocate has taught me to listen differently, to look for what's unspoken, and to use my voice to help them reclaim theirs. My influence matters.

The other thing that has hit me hard is how the uncertainty of things like court proceedings, delayed decisions, parental behavior, or repeated moves can profoundly affect a child's sense of stability, self-worth, and emotional regulation. As a teacher, I've always known that what we see in our classrooms is just the "tip of an iceberg" that has so much underlying backstory that we seldom are privy to. What might appear as "acting out" is often a child's way of coping with loss, fear, and confusion. Being "unprepared" for class can sometimes mean that a child is prioritizing their basic needs before our more superficial requirements. Being a CASA has made me more compassionate and more committed to advocating for trauma-informed decisions in our schools, a place that should be one of the more stable environments our children can rely on.

Save The Date



INFO SESSIONS:
JANUARY 14TH - 10AM
FEBRUARY 11TH - 6PM

CLASS START DATES:
JANUARY 27TH - PM
JANUARY 29TH - AM

UPCOMING EVENTS:
VOLUNTEER BANQUET

NEXT NEWSLETTER:
WINTER 2025

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**



Stay In Touch With Us

CASA Board of Directors

Kristen Henderson

Chukwudi Okoro

Bruce Sharpe

Amanda Stork

Jonathan Smith

Heidi Wahl

Feel free to follow us on social media!

<https://www.facebook.com/casaoftthesoutherntier>



<https://www.instagram.com/casasoutherntier/>

For your convenience, the QR code below is to our donation page.



<https://app.donorsnap.com/dsDB.aspx>

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

THOSE AT CASA OF THE SOUTHERN TIER, INC. HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING DR. SHARON ZAFFARESE-DIPPOLD AT OUR 2025 VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION DINNER. SHE TOUCHED EVERYONE IN THE ROOM WITH HER FOSTER CARE/ABUSE HISTORY AND HER RESILIENCE. DR. SHARON ZAFFARESE-DIPPOLD MOVED NUMEROUS TIMES IN AND OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, THE ONE CONSTANT BEING HER SOLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT--THE HATED GARBAGE BAG. HER BOOK SERIES EXPLORES ALL TYPES OF ABUSE PATTERNS SHE ENCOUNTERED AND HER RISE ABOVE.

DR. SHARON ZAFFARESE DIPPOLD HAS AGREED TO DONATE 10% OF HER LATEST BOOK, "JUST ANOTHER DOOR" TO HELP OUR LOCAL CASA. PLEASE PICK UP THE BOOK (OR THE SERIES) AND SUPPORT CASA. TISSUES ARE A MUST!

AVAILABLE ON AMAZON



*"Not in it for the
income, in it for the
outcome"
Unknown*

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