

# The Advocate *A Child's Voice!*

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Talbot County



Summer 2010

## From the Executive Director



The following is a beautiful example of the small magic that can happen when CASA of Talbot County is appointed to work with a child under the court's protection due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment.

Not long ago, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer and her appointed child were scheduled to visit together at the CASA office, a place where they often meet to work on puzzles, play board games, or just

to chat. Recently removed from her home due to her parent's failure to keep her safe, this young girl was sad, confused, and very tired.

Knowing that many children, and particularly sad ones, find comfort in stuffed animals, in preparation for this visit I decided to see what treasures I had squirreled away in my home for that proverbial rainy day. I hoped to find some comforting, unused toys that might be of help during the child's visit to our office. Fortunately for me, over the years my daughters were the recipients of scores of fantastic stuffed animals and dolls from generous grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends. Their beds being only so big, my daughters would periodically bring me a brand new stuffed animal or doll with the specific request that I keep it somewhere safe, to be brought out if needed in the future. Until now, most of these toys remained securely tucked away, and I consequently found that I had quite a collection from which to choose.

I was pleasantly surprised to recognize many, and those I knew by name did not make the cut to come with me to the CASA office. Brave Bunny, Windsong, Melba, and a number of dolls all named Sarah are among those that remain tucked away in my home for a future day when my now-grown daughters decide to take a trip down Memory Lane. Among those that accompanied me to the office was an adorable cat that was soft, quite huggable, and very pink. I sat all of the

stuffed toys on a chair in our office, where they offered silent comfort to any who might need it.

Immediately upon entering the office, the little girl approached the chair full of animals. She gently touched them all, but the pink cat seemed to capture her heart. For the entirety of her time at the CASA office, she kept the cat close to her, carrying it around with her and periodically hugging it tightly. During the visit, she spoke quietly about her sadness and confusion, all the while keeping her arms wrapped around that little pink cat. Toward the end of the visit, we told her that it seemed like she and the cat were meant to stay together and that it was hers to keep. The little girl's eyes brightened with delight, and she was asked if her new animal had a name. The child nodded affirmatively. "Its name is Feelings," she answered.

As far as I'm concerned, the cat's name is magical.

*Robin Davenport*



CASA Staff: Jane Crawford, Judy Weaver, Karen Orem, Carol Heisterhagen and Susan Schumacher

# CASA's Carpet Ride was Magical!

Enchanting and magical, CASA of Talbot County's April 17th spring fundraiser, A Magic Carpet Ride, delivered as promised. Thanks to the combined talents extraordinaire of event co-chairs Christina Hoff and Dave Tuthill, along with Jamie Merida's artistry and the generosity of multiple donors, guests were treated to a Moroccan wonderland complete with flowing tents, palm trees, and scores of glowing lanterns. Special guest star Aladdin, a live, domesticated camel, greeted guests as they arrived, setting the perfect mood for a delightful evening that included belly dancers, henna tattoo artists, fortune tellers, gourmet Moroccan cuisine, and an International Wall of Wine.

"We are very pleased that our event was so successful and enjoyed by 200 of CASA's friends and supporters", said Robin Davenport, CASA of Talbot County's Executive Director. "None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors and the monumental effort of so many who volunteered their time and talents to create this spectacular evening." Indeed, Hoff and Tuthill, along with Tuthill's wife, Martha, pulled out all the stops to benefit CASA of Talbot County, and generous businesses got into the spirit by lending merchandise to help set the scene. A cadre of skilled volunteers donated hundreds of hours and materials for the Moroccan tents, silk pillows, scenery, stunning table arrangements,

*Right:* Jamie Merida and friends hang the magical tent.

*Below:* Board President Stephanie Handy and Aladdin share a greeting.



## Thank you

Our CASA volunteers, board, staff, friends of CASA, local judges and masters and legislators lined the steps of the Oaks after the volunteer appreciation luncheon in May. Johnny O'Brien, past president of The Milton Hershey School was the guest speaker. In addition to recognizing our CASAs' work, the legislators gave Robin Davenport a citation from the Maryland House of Delegates, a resolution from the Senate and a citation from Maryland Governor Martin O'Mally in recognition of her 20 years with CASA of Talbot County.



Photo courtesy of the Star Democrat

and an up-lit ice sculpture in the shape of a camel. Christina Hoff joined Davenport with thanks to the community, stating, "Together with the sponsors, the generosity of the wonderful individuals in our community helped to minimize the expenses to produce the event, thus allowing more of our dollars to be spent on our work with vulnerable children who need volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocates."



Photos courtesy of In His Grace Photography



David Tuthill, Martha Tuthill, Aladdin the camel, and Christina Hoff are all smiles as they welcome guests to CASA of Talbot County's "Magic Carpet Ride" this past April in downtown Easton.

*Right:* Bruce Summer and Carol O'Driscoll have their fortune told by Barbara Barrowcliff. See inside for more information about the fabulous time had by all, while supporting CASA's mission to help children in need.

Watch for "The Magic of CASA"  
Our spring 2011 fundraiser

*The Magic*  
of CASA



## Answering a neighbor's call for help!

At the request of the Circuit Court in Dorchester County for CASA services, CASA of Talbot County kicked off a pilot project in January of 2010 and began serving some of Dorchester County's Children in Need of Assistance. With the support of the Maryland Judiciary's Department of Family Administration, CASA of Talbot County will expand this project within Fiscal Year 2011, with the ultimate goal of serving additional children in Dorchester County. A letter applauding this project was written recently by Judge Brett Wilson and Master Karen Ketterman, and we are pleased to share it with you.



The First Judicial Circuit of Maryland  
CIRCUIT COURT FOR DORCHESTER COUNTY

BRETT W. WILSON  
ASSOCIATE JUDGE

August 6, 2010

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To Whom It May Concern:

We write to express our deep appreciation to CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) of Talbot County for the services they have begun to provide to children in Dorchester County, as well as to state our support of this CASA program. We are deeply grateful to CASA of Talbot County's Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers for their willingness to begin service provision to children who are under the protection of the Dorchester County Circuit Court.

In Dorchester County, CASA of Talbot County (CASA) works independently, yet in close conjunction with, the local Department of Social Services and individuals within the court system. CASA is in full compliance with the Maryland CASA Rules and Guidelines as provided by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), and continues to excel under the able leadership of its Executive Director, Robin Davenport.

CASA's staff has worked diligently over the past several months to facilitate much-needed services to children in Dorchester County, and it is anticipated that CASA's work in our county will expand during Fiscal Year 2011. The valuable and insightful assessments and recommendations provided to the court by CASA volunteers greatly enhance the court's ability to make critical decisions in complex cases. The high level of training, supervision, and guidance provided by CASA's professional staff to the CASA volunteers is to be commended.

CASA of Talbot County provides a critical and necessary service to the court system and to our community's children, and it is anticipated that in FY 2011 the children of Dorchester County will benefit from this very worthy program.



Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Wilson".

Judge Brett W. Wilson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Ketterman".

Master Karen R. Ketterman

From left to right, CASA President Stephanie Handy, Judge Brett Wilson, CASA 1st Vice President Judge William S. Horne, Master Karen Ketterman, and CASA Executive Director Robin Davenport pose after a recent meeting to discuss future plans for CASA services in Dorchester County.