

# Northern Hills Area CASA

## Director's Report

May 7, 2024 – June 10, 2024

### Goals:

- **Enhance the work environment through the emphasis of teamwork.**
- **Promote retention of CASA volunteers through continuous support and educational training.**
- **Raise public awareness of NHCASA, child abuse prevention, and the unique role our volunteers play in the child welfare system.**
- **Maintain fiscal responsibility by increasing the amount of income received.**

#### **Foster a positive culture of the work environment.**

- Weekly team meetings are held, which include staffing of all cases and discussions regarding fundraisers, volunteer engagement, and grant applications.
- Monthly one-on-one SOS (Source of Support) meetings between the ED and staff members: Progress with 2024 personal/professional goals. Importance of engaging in self-care activities.
- An exit interview is scheduled with Chelsie Perschbacher for June 13.

#### **Strengthen the quality and professionalism of advocacy efforts.**

- The staff discuss cases on a weekly basis to ensure best practice advocacy efforts.
- We currently have 25 CASA volunteers, along with NHCASA staff, advocating for 48 children on 29 cases. CASA volunteers, Marcia Barnes, Lisa Merkel, and Linda Stambaugh are assigned to two cases each. Thirteen CASAs have been appointed to cases in 2024, with six of them being graduates of our February-March training session. We are lucky to have a larger pool of available advocates vs. the number of abused/neglected children currently in care.
- We have served 66 children thus far in 2024. Since the May 9, 2024, board meeting, we have received one new case in Butte County. Total year-end numbers for 2023 were 85 and 75 in 2022.
- We are fortunate to be able to fulfill our vision by having CASAs assigned to every child who is in DSS custody. We currently have two children waiting for a CASA to be their voice. A Butte County case was reopened and involves a sixteen-year-old boy whose needs are too significant for the mother to handle. Due to the lack of placements, DSS has been staying with the young man and his mother at a hotel in Spearfish since April 24, 2024, at a cost of \$150 per night. The adolescent attends Black Hills Special Services during the day. The new case involves a 2-year-old girl who was involved in a car accident with her mother who was under the influence of methamphetamines. The family has prior involvement with Child Protective Services, due to sexual abuse by the father on the teenage girl. Their parental rights were terminated with regard to her. She is now an adult. The father is a registered sex offender. The Butte County State's Attorney's office and DSS may be seeking termination of parental rights, as ASFA (Adoption and Safe Families Act) is applicable in this case. The child was left alone after the accident in the middle of the night in 38-degree weather, wearing only a diaper. She was sitting on the mother's lap during the accident and spent hours unattended, bruised, muddy, and cold. After an extensive search, she was located in an abandoned warehouse ¼ mile from the accident scene.
- CASA Michelle Clark willingly accepted an appointment regarding the seventeen-year-old Ziebach County male who is placed at Falls Academy in Sioux Falls. He will age out of the system on July 28, 2024, and plans to go live with his father in Michigan. His mother is deceased, and his father had his parental rights terminated due to physical abuse on this young

- man. CASA Michelle visited the teenager over Memorial Day weekend and is advocating for his independent living needs, as a means to prepare him for the reality of adulthood.
- CASA Virginia Mollman has been a volunteer since April 2021. She has advocated for four children on two different cases. After taking some time off from being a CASA volunteer, she completed the necessary continuing education in order to resume to advocacy. CASA Virginia has an extensive medical background. She took on a short-term case involving a sixteen-year-old female who was a victim of sexual abuse by her father. Both parents denied any wrongdoing and didn't want to work toward reunification. They wanted her to be placed with relatives in other states, just like what happened with her biological brother, who also made allegations of sexual abuse by the father. The young lady wanted to remain in the foster home, where she had built a positive relationship with her foster parents. She was enrolled in public school for the first time in her life and enjoyed it immensely. CASA Virginia's contacts and visits with the teenager proved valuable at the hearing, as the young lady was adamant she didn't want to return home. Everyone felt strongly about trying to avoid this adolescent being put on the stand for testimony, in front of her alleged abusers. After diligent efforts by CASA Virginia and the child's attorney, the case closed with a guardianship with the foster parents. Judge Fitzgerald praised the efforts of CASA Virginia.
  - We have attended 93 abuse and neglect hearings since January 1, 2024, plus a federal sentencing in Pennington County, several criminal hearings regarding parents, and Drug Court proceedings. We also participate in Adoption Conference Calls.
  - We hosted our annual Child Watch Tour on May 7. The NHCASA team, along with six volunteers and one board member participated. Five facilities which serve children and families were featured: Compass Point, Children's Advocacy Center, New Alternatives, Arise Youth Center, and the Juvenile Services Center. A special thank you to Vern Bills, of New York Life Insurance, as he was our lunch sponsor.
  - We hosted a Cup O' CASA event on May 29. Two new volunteers were present and shared their experiences of being a new CASA.
  - Please plan on attending the CASA Family Picnic on Thursday, June 20, at the Spearfish City Park, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. Bring a dish to pass.
  - The Court Improvement Program, along with the Center for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment, hosts virtual Lunch & Learn events dealing with child advocacy. The invitation to participate is emailed to all CASA volunteers and board members. Previous sessions can be viewed at <https://sdcpcm.com/our-work/cip/>. May's virtual learning opportunity was facilitated by a former NHCASA volunteer. She talked about child trafficking in South Dakota. Two advocates, two board members, and NHCASA staff participated. The next session is scheduled for June 26, at 11:00 a.m. MT. It will focus on the activities of the 2024 SD Legislative Session. These are free sessions, but you must register in advance in order to receive the Zoom link to participate:  
<https://usd.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEscOuqqjsoHt3alR8x4LCGx1Cor52yF0Lh#/registration>.
  - Refer to the updated NHCASA Calendar of Events for the virtual educational sessions regarding "Understanding ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences), "Enough Abuse," and other learning opportunities. Several CASA volunteers are taking advantage of these learning opportunities for their 12 continuing education hours which are required by the National CASA Association.
  - Anna and I hosted a quarterly meeting with the Family Services Specialist Supervisors from Sturgis and Spearfish, plus the DSS Regional Manager. This collaboration is key to the continued success of our mission.
  - Anna and I continue to meet monthly with the Children's Worker, DSS Supervisor, and Attorney Karen Hunt to discuss long-term cases. We also participate in weekly calls with CASA volunteers and DSS for case updates.

- Team meetings are held on a regular basis between CASA, children’s attorneys, and DSS, in an effort to provide best-practice advocacy efforts regarding the best interest of children.
- Other learning opportunities Chelsie participated in were entitled: “A Strong Pitch: Earning Media for Fundraisers and Events” and “20+ Simple Fixes to Unlock the Power of the Paddle Raiser.”

**Increase public awareness of the mission of NHCASA.**

- We hosted a vendor booth at the Gravel Grinders bike race registration day on June 7 at the Spearfish Pavilion. Over 450 people were present. I shared information about NHCASA and our upcoming summer fundraising races. One person expressed interest in becoming a CASA volunteer. Others were interested in running the half marathon and participating in the BHS6.
- CASA Volunteer Luke May was the guest speaker at the Learn About CASA event. Three people attended and are interested in taking the Fall training class. One potential volunteer read the flyer about the event when she was voting in Sturgis, and another saw the information on a grocery store bulletin board in Belle Fourche.
- Due to personnel issues, along with five people who expressed an initial interest in taking the summer training session, yet because of their busy summer schedules, opted to continue with the Fall class, we will not be hosting the June new volunteer training. We anticipate another very large class in September/October.
- Chelsie promoted our organization by participating in a check presentation with Sturgis Strikers Bowling Alley.
- We will be participating in the Canyon Acoustics Series, sponsored by Spread the Tunes, on Wednesday, July 3, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m., with the proceeds from the 50/50 ticket sales going to NHCASA. We need volunteers to assist with this event.
- We may have a float entry for the Spearfish Independence Day Parade. We are looking into having volunteers donate bags of candy for the activity.
- Anna participated in a video shoot and check presentation with Roughlock Auto. Please share the video on social media.
- NHCASA utilizes our website, social media, area Chamber of Commerce newsletters, church bulletins, flyers hung in various businesses throughout our coverage area, Visit Spearfish, and the Black Hills Pioneer newspaper to promote the NHCASA mission, continuing education training events, and fundraisers. Chelsie is also posting information about NHCASA on Instagram.
- Event sponsorships are continuously being procured. We had a committee meeting for the Black Hills Super 6 Mountain Bike Race, which involved three community members, a board member, CASA Marcia Barnes (who is an avid bike rider, and her family consistently participates in the BHS6), and the NHCASA team. Watch for the KEVN TV ad regarding the upcoming races.
- The May NHCASA “Advocate” newsletter was mailed out to over 350 people and emailed, through Mailchimp, to over 200 recipients.
- In conjunction with Child Abuse Prevention Month, Queen City Salon had two April dates, in which owner/operator Lauren Cermak, donated the proceeds of free haircuts to NHCASA. \$219 was given to our program.
- The Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon/5K promotional flyer was included in the June Spearfish Chamber of Commerce newsletter, which included 670 recipients.
- We partner with other local organizations to promote our program. I am a board member of the Lawrence County Coalition and attend monthly meetings. We are also involved with the Sturgis ABC (Action for the Betterment of the Community) and the Northern Hills Interagency groups.

- NHCASA Monthly Spotlights are highlighted on our website at [www.nhcasa.org](http://www.nhcasa.org), featured in our newsletters, and recognized on our NHCASA Volunteers private page on Facebook. If you would like to view information on this page, please request access. Returning volunteer, Virginia Mollman, was the May honoree.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

- Grants/Donations Received: VOCA monthly drawdowns from the FY24--July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (allocation of \$111,840); Jim and Janice Wright (\$220 monthly donations); Autum Johnson, Mike Zilberstein, Marcia Barnes, Scott Hunter, Ameriprise-Legacy Financial Partners Consulting (monthly contributions); United Way (2023-2024 monthly distributions--\$666.67: This amount should increase significantly this month, as we were awarded \$25,000 from the 2024-2025 Community Impact Grant); Court Improvement Program (\$26,000); CASA Commission (\$23,000); Lawrence County (\$7,500--first half of 2024 installment); City of Spearfish (\$6,500); City of Belle Fourche (\$4,341); City of Lead (\$2,500); Sturgis Chamber of Commerce Event Grant (\$500); Walter & Francis Green Trust (\$500); Vern Bills (\$386); Sturgis Strikers Bowling Alley (\$250); Queen City Salon (\$219); Black Hills First Annual Youth Triathlon (\$140—led by former NHCASA Board Member LeAnn Rosenau), Old Pine Coffee (\$65),
- 2024 Confirmed Allocations: Montana-Dakota Utilities Resources Foundation (\$2,500—payable in August); Midco Foundation (\$1,000)
- Other grants submitted and awaiting response include: 2024-2025 fiscal year city grants--Spearfish, Whitewood, Lead, Deadwood, Sturgis, Belle Fourche, Newell, McIntosh, Dupree, Timber Lake, Buffalo, Lemmon, Bison; County grants for 2024-2025--Butte, Corson, Dewey, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins, & Ziebach; Bush Foundation; Adams-Mastrovich; VOCA; SD Community Foundation Beyond Idea Grant; Allegiant Airlines; Butte Electric Operation Round Up
- Upcoming grant applications: Walmart
- I, along with NHCASA Treasurer Jessie Dufner, presented our grant proposal to the SD CASA Commission. We were allocated \$23,000, as compared to \$18,400 in 2023. It should be noted funding may decrease in 2025 with the addition of two new CASA programs.
- We received grant funding in the amount of \$26,000 from the SD Court Improvement Program, an increase of \$1,000 from 2023. This money is used to reimburse staff salaries.
- Black Hills State University donated 50 cinch bags to NHCASA.
- The Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon/5K registration is open, with 171 people registered thus far (compared to 194 at the same time in 2023). Payments are sent to us via Innovative Timing. Registrations are open for the Black Hills Super 6, as well. We are giving away a donated Strider bike to one lucky winner who registers for the BHS6 by June 14. Sponsorships are continuously being updated on *ItsYourRace* and the NHCASA website. We are also utilizing social media for sponsor recognition.
- Confirmed race sponsorships: Coeur Wharf (\$1,500--Half and \$1,500--BHS6), RCS Construction (\$1,500--Half), Monument Health (\$1,500: 750 for each race plus GIK at Half), Roughlock Auto (\$1,500: 750--Half and \$750--BHS6), Visit Spearfish (\$1,250 combined for both events + GIK information bags for packet pick-up), Lynn's DakotaMart (\$833--Half), Black Hills Energy (\$500 for each event); Spearfish Electric & Heating (\$500 for each event), Lawrence County Coalition (\$500--BHS6), Ketel Thorstenson (\$500--Half), Sabers Agency (\$100 for each event), SoDak Title (\$100 for each event), Spearfish Economic Development (\$100 for each event), Family Optical (NEW Sponsor: \$100 for each event), Stadium Sports Grill (\$100 for each event), Real Estate Center of Spearfish (\$100 for each event), First Interstate Bank Spearfish (\$100 for each event), KEVN (in-kind for both events), Superior Sanitation (GIK--Both events), Alpine Impressions (GIK--Half), Spearfish Holiday Inn

(Discounted rooms for the half marathon and gift-in-kind donation of rooms for the timer for both events), Dakota Gold (GIK--Both events), Spearfish Ambulance Service (GIK--Both events), Lawrence County Sheriff's Department (GIK--Half), Strider (4 bikes--BHS6), and the Black Hills Pioneer (GIK--Both events).

- Dueling Pianos Sponsorship: Legacy Financials--Jody Elmore (\$750), Williams & Associates Architecture (\$750), Monument Health (\$750), Coeur Wharf (\$750)
- See the attached itemized income/expenses for May 7, 2024 – June 10, 2024.

- **CASA Connection:** Rapid City DSS has utilized the space for supervised visits for one family. DSS has scheduled weekly visits for a Lawrence County family, but the parents continue to fail to show up. The space is also utilized for visits between CASA volunteers and the children they serve.

## Case Reports for January 1, 2024 – June 10, 2024

	Total Children	Lawrence	Butte	Meade	Dewey	Ziebach	Corson	Perkins
<b>Currently Active (6-10-2024)</b>	<b>48</b>	16	14	15	1	1	1	0
<b>Children Closed in 2024</b>	<b>18</b> (Reunification with other parent = 6; Guardianship = 4; Dismissed with opposition noted by CASA = 6; Transferred to another state = 1; Kinship adoption = 1)	1	0	16	0	0	0	1
<b>Total Served in 2024</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

YTD COMPARISONS	Total Children	Lawrence	Butte	Meade
<b>Total Served (January 1, 2023 – June 10, 2023)</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>36</b>

### NHCASA Calendar of Events:

- **June 13, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **June 19, 2024:** Juneteenth; NHCASA Closed
- **June 20, 2024:** CASA Family Picnic; Spearfish City Park Shelter; 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- **June 26, 2024:** CIP Virtual Learning; 2024 Legislative Session Recap; 11:00 a.m.
- **June 26, 2024:** Case Staffing with DSS and Attorney Hunt; 3:00 p.m.
- **June 27, 2024:** Justice for Children Conference; One Heart; Rapid City; 8:00 – 5:00
- **July 3, 2024:** Canyon Acoustic Series 50/50 Sales
- **July 4, 2024:** Spearfish Parade; 12:15 p.m.
- **July 4-5, 2024:** Independence Day; NHCASA Closed

- **July 11, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **July 13, 2024:** Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon/5K
- **July 22, 2024:** Cup O’CASA; 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
- **July 24-27, 2024:** Days of ’76 Rodeo VIP Bar
- **August 2-9, 2024:** Amy OUT
- **August 15, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **August 17, 2024:** Black Hills Super 6 Mountain Bike Race
- **August 28, 2024:** NHCASA Lunch & Learn; Topic TBD; Noon
- **September 2, 2024:** Labor Day; NHCASA Closed
- **September 5, 2024:** Learn About CASA; 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- **September 6-10, 2024:** Amy OUT
- **September 12, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **September 19, 2024:** New CASA Volunteer Orientation; 6:00 p.m.
- **September 20, 2024:** Cup O’CASA; 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
- **September 23 – October 17, 2024:** New CASA Volunteer Training
- **October 3-4, 2024:** Community Response to Child Abuse Conference; Sioux Falls
- **October 8, 2024:** NHCASA Traveling Lunch & Learn; Northern Hills Drug Court; 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- **October 10, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **October 14, 2024:** Indigenous People’s Day; NHCASA Closed
- **October 21, 2024:** Request Christmas Wish Lists
- **October 24, 2024:** Volunteer Appreciation Banquet; BHSU Joy Center; 5:00 p.m.
- **November 2, 2024:** Dueling Pianos; Spearfish Holiday Inn
- **November 6, 2024:** NHCASA Lunch & Learn; Topic TBD; Noon
- **November 11, 2024:** Veteran’s Day; NHCASA Closed
- **November 14, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **November 14, 2024:** NHCASA Social (Bingo); 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- **November 18, 2024:** Christmas Wish Lists Due
- **November 20, 2024:** United Way Wednesday WalkAround/Cup O’CASA; 9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
- **November 21, 2024:** Make Tree Tags
- **November 22-25, 2024:** CASA Christmas Gift Project Wish Lists Distributed to Tree Tag Locations
- **November 27-December 4, 2024:** Amy OUT
- **November 28-29, 2024:** Thanksgiving Break; NHCASA Closed
- **December 9, 2024:** CASA Christmas Gifts Due
- **December 10, 2024:** BOD Meeting & Annual Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **December 12, 2024:** Christmas Gift Project Wrap Day; BHSU Joy Center; 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
- **December 25, 2024:** Christmas; NHCASA Closed



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Accrual Basis

NHCASA - Office  
Income by Customer Summary  
May 7 through June 10, 2024

	May 7 - Jun 10, 24
Barnes, Marcia	28.80
Black Hills Youth Triathlon	140.00
Cermak, Lauren - Queen City Salon	219.00
City of Belle Fourche	4,341.00
City of Spearfish	6,480.00
Coeur Wharf	749.36
First Interstate Bank - Spearfish	535.15
Hunter, Scott	49.95
Innovative Timing Systems, LLC	5,052.69
Jarrett, Madisen & Bowles, Jacqueline	890.00
Lawrence County Auditor	7,500.00
Lawrence County Coalition - Invoice	500.00
Lead City Finance Office	2,500.00
Lynn's Discount Foods, Inc RC	833.00
Monument Health - Invoices	2,000.00
Old Pine Coffee Co	65.00
Perkin's County	1,500.00
Realtors for Kids	307.00
Roughlock Auto	1,500.00
Spearfish Family Dentistry	850.00
State of South Dakota	33,459.27
Sturgis Area Chamber of Commerce	500.00
Sturgis Strikers Bowling Alley	250.00
United Way of the Northern Hills	666.63
Walter & Francis Green Charitable	500.00
Williams & Associates Architecture	750.00
Wright, Jim & Jan	440.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>72,606.85</b>



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Accrual Basis

**NHCASA - Office**  
**Expenses by Vendor Summary**  
**May 7 through June 10, 2024**

	<u>May 7 - Jun 10, 24</u>
Adobe Vendor	9.99
All Net Connect	188.98
Amy Cermak	113.90
Anna Schmidt	230.48
Black Hills Pure - Sarah	24.25
Black Hills State	0.00
Brenda Mosset	99.16
Burckhard Construction	9,000.00
Carol Christianson - vendor	400.00
Crow Peak Accounting	550.00
Dollar Tree	6.50
godaddy.com	23.54
Jolly Lane	45.96
Killians	25.01
Life Light Creative, LLC	239.40
Marco	203.94
New China Garden	71.35
One Source The Background Check Company	88.00
Oriental Trading	11.98
Ruby Tuesday	163.01
Spearfish Area Chamber of Commerce	130.00
Strider Sports	0.00
Superior Sanitation.	100.00
Walmart	635.54
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<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>12,360.99</b>
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