

Northern Hills Area CASA

Director's Report

July 9, 2024 – August 12, 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.
- 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 23 CASA volunteers, along with NHCASA staff, advocating for 44 children through 26 cases. CASA volunteers, Marcia Barnes and Lisa Merkel, are assigned to two cases each. Fourteen 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 68 children thus far in 2024. The 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.
 - Since the July 11, 2024, board meeting, we have received two new cases. One involves a 15-year-old male who was in the previous custody of DSS from 2015 - 2021. After years of advocating for the child's needs, his CASA volunteer adopted him. However, due to the adolescent's escalated behaviors which resulted in an unsafe home environment, the adoptive father requested to have his parental rights terminated, as he is unable to meet the boy's needs. The youth is currently in the legal custody of both DSS and the Department of Corrections. With past scenarios like this, the abuse and neglect case was simply re-opened. Consequently, DSS has stated this is no longer the policy/procedure. Thus, a new abuse and neglect petition was filed against the adoptive father. A Meade County case was filed during the Sturgis Rally. Mom has a history of involvement with Child Protective Services in another state. She was apparently moving to South Dakota with her boyfriend. She was arrested for possession and ingestion of drugs. The 7-year-old boy is placed in a temporary foster home.
 - CASA volunteers, Shawna & Patrick Goldhammer, were appointed to the Butte County case involving a sixteen-year-old boy with significant developmental delays. Sadly, this young man's placement in Nebraska was disrupted, so he is again residing in a hotel in Spearfish, under the direct 24/7 supervision of DSS. He will be placed in a fictive kinship home prior to the start of the school year and will continue with his education through Black Hills Special Services.

- Julia O’Neil-King has been actively involved in the NHCASA program since October 2020. She has been the voice for 6 children through 3 cases. She has played an instrumental role in effective advocacy for the 3 young girls on her current case. The children have experienced multiple placements, some of which were in Sioux Falls. Thankfully, she conducted monthly visits with the children, at each location, over the past two years. CASA Julia has encouraged the girls to participate in culturally appropriate activities and will be taking them to an upcoming Pow Wow. The mother’s parental rights were terminated in April 2023. Additional trauma occurred with the murder of their father and half-brother on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. CASA Julia, along with a DSS worker, transported the oldest child to the funeral. DSS, attorneys, and Judge Fitzgerald have praised CASA Julia for her efforts, as she continues to go above and beyond. She has been featured as a guest speaker at “Learn About CASA” events and multiple new volunteer training sessions. She also spearheaded endeavors to present information about our program to various civic organizations within the community. CASA Julia has received the Optima Excellence and Excellence in Court Reporting awards.
- CASA Kattie Bland was sworn in on October 13, 2022. She was appointed to her first case in January 2023. After 18 months of advocating for a girl, who is now six years old, the case ended with an adoption by the maternal grandparents. Throughout her time as a CASA, Kattie, a teacher, had another child and switched school districts. The adoptive resource intends to keep CASA Kattie involved in the child’s life.
- We have attended 132 abuse and neglect hearings since January 1, 2024, plus a federal sentencing in Pennington County, several criminal hearings regarding parents, juvenile delinquency hearings, and Drug Court proceedings. We also participate in Adoption Conference Calls.
- We hosted a Cup O’CASA event on July 31. Two board members and four CASA volunteers were present for coffee and conversation.
- 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. Previously recorded sessions can be viewed at <https://sdcpcm.com/our-work/cip/>. The next session is scheduled for August 28, at 11:00 a.m. MT. The topic will be “The Role of a Qualified ICWA (Indian Child Welfare Act) Expert.” These are free sessions, but you must register in advance in order to receive the Zoom link to participate. <https://sdcpcm.com/our-work/cip/>
- 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.
- Another free virtual training entitled, “Understanding and Responding to Problematic Sexualized Behaviors in Children,” will be held on August 15, 22, and 29. Refer to the board packet for more information.
- Anna and I continue to meet monthly with the Children’s Worker, DSS Supervisor, and Attorney Karen Hunt to discuss long-term cases. Unfortunately, the Sturgis and Spearfish DSS offices were forced to take on additional Rapid City cases, which has resulted in increased caseloads. For example, one Family Services Specialist (FSS) had a case transferred to him which involves 11 children in 6 different placements. A veteran FSS Supervisor switched jobs. We are grateful for the hiring of a current worker from within that office.

- Anna and I facilitate weekly calls with CASA volunteers, children's attorneys, state's attorneys, and DSS for case updates. We are also prioritizing contact with advocates who aren't currently assigned to cases, in an attempt to keep them actively engaged. This is a prime retention method.
- In-person team meetings are held on a regular basis, between CASA, children's attorneys, and DSS, in an effort to provide best-practice advocacy regarding the best interest of children.

Increase public awareness of the mission of NHCASA.

- I presented a grant proposal request to the Meade County Commissioners on July 23. Even though our largest caseloads come from Meade County, we haven't received funding from them since 2010, despite the annual requests. Over the last few years, the percentage of children we serve in Meade County, as compared to our overall totals, has been consistently in the 44-47% range. We have advocated for 68 children in 2024 thus far, with 32 of them from Meade County. With regard to county funding, grants continue to be fulfilled from 6 of the 8 counties we serve. It appears NHCASA was awarded varying amounts from Meade County from 2005-2010, totaling \$2,500 - \$11,440, for each of those years. I explained the annual average cost of one CASA volunteer to an organization is \$4,341. In the first seven months of 2024, there have been 15 advocates appointed to cases in Meade County, which equates to a financial burden to our program of \$65,115. We requested a grant for \$17,364 which would offset the expenditures for four volunteers serving children in their community. I urged them to make abused and neglected children in Meade County a priority. It should be noted we also haven't received money from the City of Sturgis since 2020. However, we are grateful for the support of the Sturgis Rally Charities (*annual est. funding of \$5,720*).
- We utilized social media, websites of the Chamber of Commerce in Spearfish, Sturgis, Lead, Deadwood, and Belle Fourche, Chamber of Commerce e-news, Visit Spearfish, our website, and the ITSYOURRACE app to promote the half marathon/5K and the BHS6 mountain bike race. We also distributed flyers in nearly every community from Newell to Rapid City. KOTA Territory featured advertisements about the races on television. The Black Hills Pioneer donated ad space, as well.
- The Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon-5K had 455 registered participants. Each person received information about our program during packet pick-up. We were thrilled to have eight CASA volunteers and four board members help with the event. Refer to the attached revenue-expense spreadsheet for additional details.
- The Days of '76 VIP Bar was a huge success, raising \$4,560.30, breaking a new record for tips. The revenue was up \$1,100 from the 2023 event. We utilized NHCASA koozies and cowbells as incentives for \$5 tips, "selling" over 150 items. We talked to many people about the CASA mission and ways to volunteer.
- We hosted a Pre-Registration Party at Sawyer Brewing Company on August 9, 2024. Unfortunately, most of the patrons were Rally-related.
- The inaugural BOD onboarding session occurred on July 9. Present were the 3 new board members, along with their mentors. Board Development Chairperson Natalie Owens and I presented information regarding BOD responsibilities, committees, bylaws, policies, procedures, program-related activities, and various other NHCASA items. Each mentee received their board manual.
- Due to the staff shortage, I participated in a website refresher training with Life Light Creative.
- NHCASA Monthly Spotlights are highlighted on our website at 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. Patrick & Shawna Goldhammer are the August honorees.

- 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). We provide the Zoom link and facilitate the Northern Hills Interagency quarterly meetings. The last meeting was held on July 9, with Anna as the facilitator.

Fiscal Responsibility

- Grants/Donations Received: VOCA monthly drawdowns from the FY25--July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 (\$51,500—significant decrease from the FY24 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); Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon-5K Revenue (See attached); United Way (2023-2024 monthly distributions--\$666.67: The monthly allocation increased significantly in June 2024 to \$2,083.33, as we were awarded \$25,000 from the 2024-2025 Community Impact Grant); Days of '76 (\$4,560.30); Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church (\$1,347.68); Half Marathon-5K registration donations (\$912.08 net after \$58.28 in IYR fees); CASA Lacey Schwindt (\$300); Fariba Matin Backens (\$300 plus clothes); Canyon Acoustic Series/Spread the Tunes (\$250)
 - 2024 Confirmed Allocations: First Interstate Bank “Believe in Local” Award (\$25,000—payable in August); Montana-Dakota Utilities Resources Foundation (\$2,500—payable in August); Lawrence County (\$7,500—the first half of the 2024 installment was received); Lawrence County 2025 funding (\$15,000)
 - Other grants submitted and awaiting response include: 2024-2025 fiscal year city grants--Spearfish, Lead, Deadwood, Sturgis, Belle Fourche, Newell, McIntosh, Dupree, Timber Lake, Buffalo, Lemmon, Bison; County grants for 2024-2025--Butte, Corson, Dewey, Meade, & Ziebach; Adams-Mastrovich; Allegiant Airlines; Butte Electric Operation Round Up
 - Registrations are open for the Black Hills Super 6, with 102 participants registered thus far.
 - Confirmed BHS6 sponsorships: Spearfish Family Dentistry (\$750 + GIK as race coordinators and prize donors), Coeur Wharf (\$1,500), Monument Health (\$750), Roughlock Auto (\$750), Visit Spearfish (\$625), Black Hills Energy (\$500); Spearfish Electric & Heating (\$500), Lawrence County Coalition (\$500), Mad Mountain Adventures (NEW Sponsor: \$100), Twisted Pine Design Company (NEW Sponsor: \$100), Sabers Agency (\$100), SoDak Title (\$100), Spearfish Economic Development (\$100), Family Optical (NEW Sponsor: \$100), Stadium Sports Grill (\$100), Real Estate Center of Spearfish (\$100), First Interstate Bank Spearfish (\$100), Master Blaster (NEW Sponsor: \$100 and GIK), KOTA Territory (GIK), Superior Sanitation (GIK), Alpine Impressions (GIK), Coca-Cola Bottling Company High Country (GIK), Sawyer Brewing (GIK), Toppling Goliath Brewery (GIK), Munro Earthmoving (GIK), Spearfish Holiday Inn (comp room for the timer), Dakota Gold (GIK), Spearfish Ambulance Service (GIK), Two Wheeler Dealer (GIK), Strider (4 bikes), Scheels (5-\$20 gift cards), Black Hills Pioneer (GIK)
 - Dueling Pianos Sponsorships: Legacy Financials--Jody Elmore (\$750), Williams & Associates Architecture (\$750), Monument Health (\$750), Coeur Wharf (\$750), Highmark Federal Credit Union (\$600 Table Purchase)
 - See the attached itemized income/expenses for July 9, 2024 – August 12, 2024.
- **CASA Connection:** In addition to DSS-supervised family time, the space is also utilized for visits between CASA volunteers and the children they serve.

Case Reports for January 1, 2024 – August 12, 2024

	Total Children	Lawrence	Butte	Meade	Dewey	Ziebach	Corson	Perkins
Currently Active (8-12-2024)	44	16	14	12	1	0	1	0
Children Closed in 2024	24 (Reunification = 3; Reunification with other parent = 6; Guardianship = 4; Dismissed with opposition noted by CASA = 6; Transferred to another state = 1; Kinship adoption = 3; Aged out = 1)	2	0	20	0	1	0	1
Total Served in 2024	68	18	14	32	1	1	1	1

YTD COMPARISONS	Total Children	Lawrence	Butte	Meade	Corson
Total Served (January 1, 2023 – August 12, 2023)	67	16	14	36	1

NHCASA Calendar of Events:

- **August 15, 2024:** BOD Meeting; Spearfish Chamber of Commerce; 11:30 a.m.
- **August 15, 22, & 29, 2024:** Virtual Learning “Understanding & Responding to Problematic Sexualized Behaviors”
- **August 17, 2024:** Black Hills Super 6 Mountain Bike Race; 6-hour course 8:00 a.m./3-hour race 10:00 a.m.
- **August 19 - 23, 2024:** Development Coordinator Interviews
- **August 28, 2024:** CIP Virtual Learning (The Role of the Qualified ICWA Expert); 11:00 a.m.
- **August 28, 2024:** NHCASA Lunch & Learn; Topic--Resiliency; Noon
- **August 28, 2024:** DSS Team Meeting with Attorney Karen Hunt; 3:00 p.m.
- **September 2, 2024:** Labor Day; NHCASA Closed
- **September 4, 2024:** Meeting with DSS Supervisors and RM; 11:30 a.m.; To be rescheduled due to HR Meeting
- **September 5, 2024:** Learn About CASA; 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- **September 6 - 11, 2024:** Amy OUT
- **September 11, 2024:** First Interstate Bank Volunteer Day
- **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; Anna & Amy to attend
- **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.
- **October 25, 2024:** Judges' Meeting; 11:00 a.m.; Sturgis
- **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 Walk-Around/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
July 9 through August 12, 2024

	<u>Jul 9 - Aug 12, 24</u>
Aberle, Tanner	19.15
Backens, Mark & Fariba	300.00
Barkley, Tyler	975.00
Barnes, Marcia	28.80
Bolhus, Nicole	19.15
Cash Customer	4,960.30
Dakota Bus Service - Customer	275.00
Eldridge, James	19.15
First Interstate Bank - Spearfish	661.60
Harlan, Cindy	19.15
Health Source	0.00
Henderson, Allison	19.15
Hicks, Harvey	50.00
Hofmann, Max	100.00
Hovdenes, Jason	50.00
Hunter, Scott	49.95
Innovative Timing Systems, LLC	3,452.65
Jacobs, Holly	19.15
Jarrett, Madisen & Bowles, Jacqueline	890.00
Johnson, Autum	25.00
Jones, Ashley (Skavang)	100.00
Kaltenbach, Carrie	100.00
Mad Mountain Adventures	99.91
Mader, Jaunqin	57.75
Mettler, Kate	96.20
Miles, Jim	19.15
Porter, Angela	50.00
Quiett, Duane & Janel	55.00
Radke, Madison	19.15
Schwindt, Lacey	300.00
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	1,347.68
Simonyak, Kathryn	40.00
Spread the Tunes	250.00
State of South Dakota	4,804.51
Tvrdy, Kat	19.15
Twisted Pines Design Co.	99.91
United Way of the Northern Hills	2,083.33
Visit Spearfish, Inc.	625.00
Wilkes, Blake & Lana	20.00
Wilson, Matthew	48.10
Wright, Jim & Jan	220.00
TOTAL	<u>22,388.04</u>

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Accrual Basis

NHCASA - Office
Expenses by Vendor Summary
July 9 through August 12, 2024

	<u>Jul 9 - Aug 12, 24</u>
All Net Connect	295.73
Alpine Impressions	3,224.80
Amazon.com	271.51
Amy Cermak	861.62
Anna Schmidt	119.26
Black Hills Pure - Sarah	15.50
Burckhard Construction	7,811.28
Crow Peak Accounting	550.00
Dominos - Spearfish	26.77
Fuji San	74.52
IdeaStage Promotions	152.50
Karls Furniture	229.99
Kauffman, Colten	257.00
Knecht	4.59
Lueder's Food Center-Vendor	14.94
Mangled Momentum	2,637.50
Marco	203.94
One Source The Background Check Company	317.00
Safeway - Vendor	7.96
Sam's Club	150.30
Spearfish Area Chamber of Commerce	125.00
Stadium Sports Grill - Vendor	62.48
Stanton, Jessica - Volunteer	78.75
Target	56.22
Viehauser Ent, dba Gene's Lock Shop	7.43
Walmart	179.56
White's Electrical Service & Technology	100.00
TOTAL	<u>17,836.15</u>