

A Neighborhood Project: The Kid's Choice Playhouse Raffle

*by Cathy Eberly, retired CASA Supervisor
and current CASA Volunteer*



When Piedmont CASA brought in a shaved-ice truck to treat its volunteers, its High Street-area neighbors were also invited to the party. That celebration brought together employees from several local businesses — and sparked an idea for a unique fundraiser to help CASA meet a Perry Foundation challenge grant that will help them continue supporting local children in foster care.

Bushman Dreyfus Architects and Peter Johnson Builders have joined forces to design a children's playhouse and build it on Piedmont CASA's front lawn. CASA will raffle off the playhouse in November. The playhouse will then be reconstructed in the winner's back yard.

The project is the brainchild of Kate Duvall, Piedmont CASA president. "Don't give me too much credit," Kate laughs. "A number of other CASA organizations around the country have experimented with this idea. Fortunately, we have some pretty amazing neighbors who will help us bring this playhouse to life."

According to Tim Tessier, principal at Bushman Dreyfus Architects, his firm embraced the unusual challenge, mounting what he describes as a "friendly" design competition among its staff. "It was a great break in the day for us," he says, "in support of a very clever project." The resulting eight designs were presented to a group of local children — ages three through middle school — in what architects call a "jury deliberation." Another CASA neighbor, Kitchen(ette), provided sustenance for the children as they reviewed the designs and selected a winner.

The winning design, according to Todd Foster, senior project manager at Peter Johnson Builders, is not what he expected. "It's a very modern, minimalist play set," he says. "There were several very creative designs, but this was the obvious winner."

The playhouse will be built in late October and early November by volunteers, under the close supervision of Peter Johnson staff, from materials donated by their suppliers. Raffle tickets will be sold in November. Community members who don't need a playhouse can "donate" their winning ticket to Piedmont CASA neighbor People Places, an adoption and foster placement agency. People Places staff will identify a foster family who can put the playhouse to good use.

The project's biggest challenge? Architect and builder agree it's designing a structure that can be built, dismantled and moved on a truck, and then reconstructed in a new location.

Both firms, which have long been committed to the Charlottesville community, are up to the challenge. Bushman Dreyfus, designer of the Jefferson School City Center and the Center at Belvedere, is designing the new Boys and Girls Club. Peter Johnson, a residential builder and remodeler, commits to quarterly service projects with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and Camp Holiday Trails. The fact that Bushman Dreyfus and Peter Johnson are interested in continuing to partner with Piedmont CASA on playhouse fundraisers is music to Kate Duvall's ears. "We'd like to do this again," she says. "It's a wonderful community endeavor."

Todd Foster of Peter Johnson Builders puts it more simply. "It's good karma," he says.

[Visit the Kid's Choice Playhouse Raffle Webpage](#)



Cathy Eberly served as a Piedmont CASA Supervisor for 4 years, retiring in 2021. She is currently a Piedmont CASA Volunteer.

September 2022 Edition

