Meet Becky Bassett, our new CASA Supervisor

by Cathy Eberly, retired CASA Supervisor and current CASA Advocate



Charlottesville resident Becky Bassett, brand-new supervisor on the Piedmont CASA staff, says she'd driven past the CASA office for years without understanding what takes place behind its doors.

"I'd always been curious about the space," she reports. But it took conversations with close family friend Ann Douglas Irby, Piedmont CASA's advancement director, to educate her more fully about CASA's mission and its role in the local community.

"There are lots of resources here, some overlap, and many organizations work in parallel with each other," she says, "so it was important to learn how CASA fit in."

Becky, a Michigan native who has lived in Charlottesville for twenty years, was looking for a change. She taught elementary school and worked as a reading specialist and English as a Second Language (ESL) reading intervention tutor in city schools. More recently, she was program director for International Neighbors, which supports newcomers to the area from around the world. She also served as a reading coach and literacy advocate for City of Promise, which helps local children acquire the education and skills they need to escape generational poverty. Becky and her husband, Chad, are the parents of an 11-year-old son.

"The longer I was teaching, the more I empathized with how hard it is to raise children," she says. "I used to think, 'Why don't the parents do more?' but I came to recognize the challenges many families face, especially those who don't have the resources — income, housing, education — others do. I started to see the need for this community to do more, and I began to wonder how I could contribute beyond school walls."

That realization prompted her to look into the job opening at Piedmont CASA. Supervisors are responsible for overseeing the work of the organization's 150 advocates, who are trained to support children who have been removed from their parents' custody due to abuse and/or neglect and placed in foster care. CASA volunteers are court-appointed to advocate for these children while their cases move through local Juvenile and Domestic Relations courts. CASA Advocates augment the work of legal counsel. They visit the children monthly. They submit carefully researched reports to the judge at each hearing, outlining how the children are faring in foster care, how well their parents are progressing toward having their kids returned to their care, and what sort of supports these families might need.

The job sounded intriguing to Becky, but she was intimidated by the words "courts" and "court reports" in the position description. Assured that she did not need a legal background to do the work, she decided to apply. And, given her extensive experience in support of local children, she was chosen to join the Piedmont CASA team. She replaces longtime supervisor Kati Naess, who will retire in March.

"I'm in awe of Kati, and I know hers are gigantic shoes to fill," Becky reports. "But I'm leaving court hearings with a profound sense of hope, and the compassion of the CASA staff shines through. I can tell that I've made the right choice."

"Becky's experience in education and nonprofits makes her a natural fit for the CASA supervisor position," says Kate Duvall, Piedmont CASA president and CEO. "Her enthusiasm, empathy, and eagerness to learn were what stood out to me the most during the hiring process. I know that our CASAs will be in good hands with Becky guiding them."



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