

2021 Resolutions!

It seems like just yesterday that we were challenging you guys to make meaningful New Year's Resolutions for 2020! What a year this has been. Our staff has been amazed at the resiliency and dedication of our advocates. When we had to stop in person visits at the beginning of the pandemic, you guys went above and beyond to video chat, call, or do "drive by" visits to maintain connections with your CASA kids. Many of you rushed out to see your kids as soon as we got the all clear for in-person visits. We quickly realized that it would take more than a pandemic to keep our volunteers from advocating.

This has been a year of learning for all of us. Our new volunteers completed pre-service training via Zoom, many of you are testifying in court via Zoom, and you continue to find innovative ways to be there for the children we serve. Your bravery and dedication is immeasurable!

As we transition into the next year, we would like to challenge you one again, to make some CASA specific New Year's Resolutions. Our kids need us more than every! Below are some resolutions to consider:

- Do more than the minimum required contact. CASA Volunteers are often the person who has been with the child the longest on their journey towards permanency. If visiting more than one time is not possible, call your CASA child or send them a note.
- Spend quality time with your CASA child. Having contact with the caretakers and parents is important but it should not distract you from making the visit special for the child you are serving. If you have to visit virtually or by phone, please try to make sure there is some time set aside for interaction with your CASA kiddo.
- Make your visits fun by playing with your CASA child. Bring board games, coloring books, books, jump ropes, basket balls, or whatever activity your CASA child enjoys. Playful interaction builds trust and rapport. This is a great suggestion for virtual visits. There are some great suggestions online and our staff can provide resources to help you with make those virtual visits fun for the kids.
- Become a trauma informed advocate; take advantages of training opportunities that help you understand how trauma impacts all foster children and how resiliency is built. This is especially important during the pandemic.
- Make your CASA child feel like a super star! Be mindful of how you respond when caretakers, parents, or teachers are telling you about every negative behavior your CASA child displays and make sure the child is not hearing these words. Words are powerful and can impact a child tremendously. Don't be afraid to ask the adults in your CASA child's life to look at the need behind the behavior.
- Tell yourself every day that your work matters to your CASA kiddos!

- Take care of yourself! Our staff is here to support you.
- Remember how much you are appreciated and valued by our staff, the courts, and most of all by the children you serve.

You guys have inspired us this year! We look forward to another year of serving children with you!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!