

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE/CHILDREN'S JUSTICE ACT
PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

November 2, 2006

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Thursday, November 2, 2006 at the Richmond Police Training Academy in Richmond.

Members Present

Mike Hall – Chair Person
Michelle Clayton
Ruth Ann Cutright
Sharon England
Nan McKenney
Peggy O'Neill
Claudette Overton
Shawn Schwertfeger

Members not Present

Terica Hodge
Mindy Loiselle
Lauren Caudill

Staff Present

Laurel Marks
Denise Hampton
Hope Hodgson
Holly Oehrlein
Melissa O'Neill

- I. Call to Order/Approval of Minutes: The regular quarterly meeting of the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee was held on Thursday, November 2, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the Richmond Police Training Academy. The meeting was called to order by Michael Hall at 10:15 a.m.

Mike Hall called for a motion to approve the minutes from the July meeting. Nan McKenney motioned for approval of the minutes and Shawn Schwertfeger seconded the motion. The committee approved the minutes.

- II. Citizen's Review Panel – Nan McKenney, Virginia Department of Social Services. Discussion took place regarding legislation which allows additional people to be mandated reporters effective January 1, 2007. VISSTA developed an online training curriculum that mandated reporters can use. This will allow anyone over the age of 18 to take the training and become a mandated reporter voluntarily. They must receive training from DSS on recognizing and reporting child abuse and neglect before they are considered a mandated reporter. The training is available at the Department of Social

Services web site. A draft of this material was provided to the committee as a CRP and it was asked that they review it and make any comments/suggestions by Thursday, November 9, 2006. An electronic version will be provided at a later date so the committee members that were not present could review it. Discussion also took place among committee members regarding reasons people may not want to become mandated reporters.

III. CASA Program Update – Melissa O'Neill provided an update for the committee on the following CASA activities:

- **Regulatory Revision Update:** The process is currently underway and the first public comment period closes on November 15, 2006. A copy of the draft regulations will be provided to interested parties, including Advisory Committee members on November 16th. A 30-day public comment period will follow and will close on December 16, 2006.
- **Access to CASA Program Information:** CASA Program information is available at the Dept. of Criminal Justice Services, Juvenile Services section of the website (www.dcjs.gov) under the CASA tab
- **COMET Standardization:** A COMET Standardization Workgroup has met over the summer to establish statewide standards and outcomes for use by all programs. CASA programs are required to use the COMET database as a grant condition beginning in January 2007.
- **Best Practices Court Conference:** CASA programs will be invited to attend the Best Practices Court Conference in Williamsburg November 28th and 29th, 2006 sponsored by the Court Improvement Program. There are currently 24 Best Practices Courts in the State of Virginia. There will be breakout sessions during this conference highlighting various initiatives and CASA will be highlighted during one of these sessions.
- **Key Contact Judges Program:** Judges Ellen White, Denis Soden and Nolan Dawkins are key contact judges for CASA Programs. They will serve as ambassador judges for CASA programs. This information was made public at the Judicial Conference in August and at the Statewide Virginia CASA Conference in October.
- **CASA Conference:** The bi-ennial CASA conference took place at the Williamsburg Marriott on October 13th and 14th, 2006. There were 320 registered participants. Copies of the evaluation summary table were distributed to the members. The handouts provided by speakers will be posted on the CASA section of the DCJS website.

- Resource Development Grant: - The Committee was given an update on the implementation and conclusion of the Resource Development Grant. The committee provided feedback on evaluation results.
- VACE – Eight local CASA programs have applied to NCASAA to become an “Auxiliary” CASA organization called the Virginia Association of CASA Executives (VACE). This organization is a non-profit entity and the membership is open to all Virginia CASA programs. Advisory Committee members suggested that as the organization develops to ask representatives to come and speak to the committee to discuss the organization.

IV. CJA Program Update: Holly Oehrlein provided an update on the following Children’s Justice Act activities:

- The CJA Grant application was due in April and was funded.
- Finding Words Virginia: It was reported that 115 people graduated from Finding Words Virginia in 2006 (April 39, June 38, and September 38). We received well over 100 applications for the September training. Copies of the evaluation summaries will be e-mailed to committee members once they have been compiled. It was also reported that DCJS was certified to continue teaching this program by APRI after the September conference was completed. A faculty meeting is scheduled for December to discuss the 2007 training sessions. One of the items that needs to be addressed is the development of interview video clips. A letter has been sent to past graduates requesting clips, as well as permission slips to be signed by the parties involved in the interview. These cases must have reached final disposition before the videos can be used. It was also reported that positive feedback has been received from graduates who are currently using the RATAc protocol.
- The Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse Conference was held at the Ramada Plaza Resort in Virginia Beach on October 19th and 20th, 2006. The evaluation summaries will be e-mailed to the committee members once they have been compiled. This conference had approximately 220 participants and we had to turn away approximately 50 people. The 2007 dates are May 3rd and 4th in Richmond, and October 18th and 19th in Williamsburg. Ms. Oehrlein requested suggestions from the committee for future speakers.
- Abuse and Neglect with People with Disabilities Curriculum: Peggy O’Neill updated the group on this project. Two training programs were conducted last week in Lynchburg and Spotsylvania. The program is

being promoted through CAC's and local hosts. The evaluations have been very positive and the trainings went very well. Three additional training sessions are planned for the spring. Ms. O'Neill will distribute the full schedule when it is confirmed.

- A proposal submitted to the Bureau of Justice Assistance to serve as a learning site for their grantees and co-host a national conference in July or August, 2007 on Closed Circuit Television has been approved.

V. New Business

The next meeting will take place on January 19th, 2007.

VI. Adjourn: There being no additional sharing of information, the meeting adjourned at 1:30.