

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

MEETING MINUTES

October 3, 2008

A meeting of the Advisory Committee to the Court Appointed Special Advocate and Children's Justice Act programs was held on Friday, October 3, 2008, at the Richmond Police Training Academy in Richmond.

Members Present

Lauren Caudill
Michelle Clayton
Ruth Anne Cutright
A. Michael Hall
Nan McKenney
Claudette Overton
Shawn Schwertfeger

Members Not Present

Cliff Harrison
Mindy Loiselle
The Hon. Stephen Rideout
Darby Lowe

Staff Present

Laurel Marks
Melissa O'Neill
Hope Hodgson
Denise Hampton
Roz Trent

Staff Not Present

Guest Present

Deborah Eves

- I. **Call to Order and Approval of Minutes** – A. Michael Hall called the meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved.
- II. **Citizen's Review Panel – Nan McKenney, Virginia Department of Social Services –**

CPS Regulations - The CPS Regulations are currently available for public comment until October 17th. Committee members were asked to forward any comments to Ms. Nan McKenney directly by that date. The current VCPN Newsletter was shared with committee members and the website was also provided to members for downloads of past editions <http://psychweb.cisat.jmu.edu/graysojh/>.

Stakeholders Focus Group Discussion/Child and Family Service Review - Ms. Deborah Eves from the Virginia Department of Social Services led the Advisory Committee in a focus group discussion to assist the Virginia Department of Social Services in obtaining information on how the state is achieving the outcomes in child protective services. The Stakeholder Focus Group discussions are a part of the Child and Family Service Reviews. Virginia will be reviewed again in July 2009.

III. CJA Program Update

Finding Words Virginia – September 15 – 19, 2008. Forty people were accepted to this training. Of these 40, one could not attend and 37 of the remaining 39 successfully completed the program. The 2 people that did not successfully complete it will be given the chance to re-take the test next week. This training was held at a new location this session – the Eanes-Pittman Training Center in Chesterfield County. The evaluations showed great success. Ms. Hodgson indicated that if committee members were interested in copies of the evaluations to let her know.

Improving Investigation and Prosecution of Child Abuse – October 23rd and 24th, Portsmouth, Virginia – As of the morning of this meeting, 101 people have registered to attend. Lecture topics were discussed with the committee and members were invited to let us know if they would like to attend. Advisory Committee members are invited to attend as guests.

IV. CASA Program Update:

CASA Conference – The State CASA training conference will take place November 7th and 8th at the Williamsburg Marriott. Currently there are 69 registrants. Advisory Committee members are invited to attend as guests.

CASA Regulations - The final regulations have been published and are available for review on the Town Hall. The final public comment period will be from September 29th through October 29th. Absent any significant public comment, the regulations will be adopted on October 29th.

Virginia COMET Standardization – This implementation of Virginia COMET continues. The COMET Senior Programmer, Bob Holet, has designed a statewide aggregation tool and has provided individual technical assistance for each program to run the annual statistical reports. Further, he has worked with a remote software program that has enabled the reduction of on-site technical assistance and travel. The statewide standardization workgroup is developing a User's guide to enhance local program's use of the VA COMET program.

NCJFCJ National Conference – DCJS and local CASA programs partnered with NCASAA to provide an exhibit table at the National NCJFCJ Conference held in

Norfolk in July. This was an excellent opportunity to provide CASA information to Virginia judges and attorneys as well as provide a CASA presence on a national level.

CORE - DCJS has been invited to participate on the Council on Reform (CORE). This is the Virginia Department of Social Services initiative for transformation of social services delivery.

Annual Judicial Conference – CASA was represented at the Annual Judges Conference in August. The purpose of this participation is to provide information about existing CASA services and to invite new judges to consider program development in areas where there are not CASA programs.

Case Studies Training – A training session was held and supported by DCJS on August 2nd for the Metro Richmond collaborative CASA programs. 77 volunteers attended the session and the evaluations from the participants were excellent. This training continues to be very well received and provides volunteers with training that enhances their advocacy skills as well as cultural competency. A collaborative group from Central Virginia CASA programs has expressed interest in hosting a training session in early 2009.

Virginia Law Foundation Training Project Update – Fairfax CASA has been working to complete a grant project through the Virginia Law Foundation. This project will provide a set of DVDs to each CASA program in Virginia. The DVDs will be video taped portions of the pre-service training based on the NCASAA curriculum. This will allow local programs to augment the pre-service training for volunteers who are unable to attend those sessions or can serve as in-service training opportunities. The first session was previewed at the network meeting and was very well received. The DVDs will be ready for distribution at the state conference and a presentation will be made to the Virginia Law Foundation thanking them for their support.

Network Meeting – A CASA Network meeting was held in September with an excellent attendance by local programs. CASA directors participated as a Stakeholder Focus group for the Virginia Department of Social Services Child and Family Services Review process. This was a productive discussion that yielded helpful information for the reviewers. A representative from VARisk2 made a presentation on the availability of liability coverage for CASA programs. Programs found this to be most informative.

V. New Business –

By-laws - A copy of the By-laws for the CASA/CJA Advisory Committee were distributed with suggested revisions. Discussion took place by committee on

recommendations for any changes. The committee will review the proposed changes prior to the next meeting.

New Members - Shawn Schwertfeger was reappointed to the committee for another term. New members have been appointed but were unable to attend this meeting due to prior scheduling commitments. Mr. Cliff Harrison from Pulaski will serve as the Guardian Ad Litem representative and the Honorable Stephen Rideout, Retired Judge from Alexandria, will serve on the committee in the judicial representative.

VI. Adjourn – There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.