

Date of Meeting: August 18, 2023

## Roll Call

### *Members Present*

Katie Hall, Rich Kosmala, Joann Price, Lee Anne Owens, Emily Shaw, Kurt Kiefer, Leslie Hendricks (Chair), Therese Miller, Judge Ryan King, Brenda Matuszkiewicz, Magistrate Matt Gruett, Kristen Bishay, Magistrate Shawna Webster, Karen Bowen, Judge Stephanie Campbell

### *Ex Officio Members Present*

State GAL/CASA Director Rae Feller, Teresa Lyles, Tara Rochford, Stan Piercefield

### *Members Absent*

Annette Craycraft, Judge Holly Harvey, Magistrate Virginia Lawrence

### *Guests/Committee Chairs Present*

Committee Chairs present included Katie Hall (State Conference and Training Committee. Also, Tara Rochford was present to represent the Optima Users' Working Group.

## Welcome and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Commission Chair Leslie Hendricks called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. After a brief welcome, members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes from the May 2023 meeting that had been sent via email. After everyone indicated that they had, Lee Anne Owens motioned that the minutes be accepted as written, and Katie Hall seconded the motion. After no further discussion being held, all members voted in favor.

## Special: Chair's Items for Discussion

Chair Leslie Hendricks requested that two items be discussed at the meeting: Support for Directors/Executive Directors Update and Drug Testing for Programs. Rae Feller reported that she had reached out to The Thought Kitchen, and they were interested in collaborating with the State Office to provide support for our local directors. They would like to know specifics such as the number of people involved, how often a group would meet, would it be in a Zoom setting, etc. All directors present in the meeting agreed that this would be a good outlet for local directors. Judge Ryan agreed and said it would be beneficial and helpful to our directors. Suggestions for The Thought Kitchen include having breakout rooms for discussions if held via Zoom, possibly having rotating dates for sessions to work with court schedules, and possibly holding the sessions after working hours for confidentiality. Rae will take this information to The Thought Kitchen to move forward with the process.

The other item discussed was the potential of drug testing for our GAL/CASA volunteer programs. Of the local programs represented in the meeting, only one program conducts drug testing of their staff and volunteers. After further discussion, it is believed that may be the only program in the state that does this at the current time. Problematic barriers such as cost and the potential of losing volunteers to another level of screening.

## Committee Reports

### *State Conference/Training Committee*

Chair Katie Hall reported that the 2023 Conference would be occurring on September 7-9 at the Marriott East Hotel in Indianapolis. All speakers have been secured, and at the time of the Commission meeting over five hundred people had registered to attend.

### *Public Relations and Legislative Committee*

Chair Annette Craycraft was absent, but Rae Feller reported that a meeting would be scheduled soon for this Committee to discuss CASA Day 2024, as well as any legislative updates.

### *Certification, Standards, and Best Practices Committee*

Nancy Springer is the newly named Chair of the Certification, Standards, and Best Practices Committee. The first meeting this fiscal year is scheduled for Friday, August 25, 2023

## Other Reports

### *Judge Reports*

Judge Campbell mentioned that she has recently lost her CASA program director, and asked members to reach out to her if they knew anyone who may be interested in interviewing for the position. She also reported that she is now serving as the Secretary of the IJA.

Judge King reported that he is looking forward to the upcoming GAL/CASA conference, and added that CASA is important in the Ripley County Court. He feels that the juvenile court judge is the secondary beneficiary of a CASA volunteer, with the child being the first.

### *State Director Report*

Rae Feller shared that the marketing company C2 Strategic has been selected to manage our upcoming statewide volunteer engagement and recruitment campaign. Staff at the State Office will be meeting with C2 weekly in late September as the campaign takes shape. The State Office will also be part of the Every Child Indiana initiative that will be officially launched later this fall as well. It is a joint effort with DCS and other stakeholders to bring awareness of the need for more foster homes and volunteers for child/family serving organizations. As we gear up for what we are hoping will be many new volunteers applying to be advocates, State Office staff are also working on condensing the current pre-service training, making it more applicable to Indiana, and including coaching and mentorship in the training process.

The 2024 Matching and Capacity Grant Applications will be going out in mid-September to the network, and will be due by Friday, October 20, 2023. The applications are being sent out earlier this year to allow more time for directors to complete them, and for State Office staff and the Grant Review team to go over them. The National CASA/GAL Association is currently experiencing a delay in funding from OJJDP, and has placed much of their staff on furlough. This also has caused a delay in funding to programs in Indiana and across the country who receive pass-through funds from National CASA/GAL. Rae reported that she will be speaking with the Chief Justice about the situation next week.

There was not a great deal to report in the way of a legislative update, but Rae stated that she and the Legislative Committee are watching for new and proposed legislation. Rae mentioned the current class action federal lawsuit that DCS is involved in. This is similar to the lawsuit filed in 2019, and the drivers of the legal action are from out of state. Finally, Rae mentioned that the State Office is willing to come

to local programs if specific training is needed on topics such as Collaborating with DCS or Third-Party Guardianship. This also includes any assistance the State Office can provide via Regional Meetings.

*Program Coordinator Report*

Program Coordinator Teresa Lyles reported on the topics and registration for recent CASA Training Academy sessions: May—Grief for Families and Children Involved in the Child Welfare (358 registrants); June—Top Ten Tips for GAL/CASA Volunteers (506 registrants); July—Volunteer Discussion Panel (305 registrants).

*Adjournment*

Joann Price moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Therese Miller seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned. Next meeting—November 17, 2023.

## February 17, 2023

### Roll Call

#### *Members Present*

Brenda Matuszkiewicz, Katie Hall, Coleen Connor, Kurt Kiefer, Annette Craycraft, Karen Bowen, Lee Anne Owens, Therese Miller, Rich Kosmala, Judge Stephanie Campbell, Judge Holly Harvey, Judge Gara Lee, Judge Matthew Gruett, Leslie Hendricks (Chair), Emily Angel

#### *Ex Officio Members Present*

Rae Feller, Teresa Lyles, Tara Rochford, Stan Piercefield

#### *Members Absent*

Kristin Bishay, Magistrate Shawna Webster

#### *Guests/Committee Chairs Present*

Katie Hall—State Conference/Training Committee Chair; Coleen Connor—Certification/Standards/Best Practices Committee Chair; Annette Craycraft—Public Relations and Legislative Committee

### Welcome and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Commission Chair Leslie Hendricks called the meeting to order at 10:04 A.M. After a brief welcome, it was announced to the Commission that Judge Dana Kenworthy has been appointed to the Indiana Court of Appeals and will no longer be a member of the GAL/CASA Advisory Commission. Members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes from the November 2022 meeting that had been sent via email. After everyone indicated that they had, Annette Craycraft motioned that the minutes be accepted as written, and Kurt Kiefer seconded the motion. After no further discussion being held, all members voted in favor.

### Committee Reports

#### *State Conference/Training Committee*

Committee Chair Katie Hall reported that the 2023 Spring Directors' Meeting will be held on April 3-4 at the Renaissance Hotel, Carmel. The 2023 Annual Conference will be held September 7-9 at the Marriott East, Indianapolis.

#### *Public Relations and Legislative Committee*

Committee Chair Annette Craycraft announced that CASA Day at the Statehouse will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, in the North Atrium of the Statehouse. The day will begin with breakfast and "meet and greet" with legislators and program directors, with the program itself beginning at 12:00 noon in the Atrium. Programs are being encouraged to reach out to their legislators to let them know they will be present and would like to meet with them.

#### *Certification Standards and Best Practices Committee*

Committee Chair Coleen Connor reported that she has decided to retire from her position as Program Director for the Tippecanoe County CASA Program. She will be joining the Peace Corps and will be leaving in the fall of 2023 for a two-year assignment. A meeting of the Committee will be organized in the new future so a new chair can be chosen by the group.

## Other Reports

### *Judge Reports*

Judges Holly Harvey and Stephanie Campbell reported that they have been following proposed legislation on several issues that would effect child welfare and GAL/CASA. Judge Campbell recently testified on the funding limitations to be considered for GAL at the local level. Judge Gruett echoed the same concern. Judge Harvey also mentioned keeping an eye on HB 1407 that may threaten the civil immunity of GAL/CASA volunteers.

### *State Director Report*

Rae Feller reported to the Commission regarding her recent attendance at a State Director's Meeting in Austin, Texas. She stated that the concerns we have regarding staff turnover and lower numbers of volunteers appears to be a "national crisis" among other states as well. Our office may be considering a State Office driven volunteer recruitment campaign to help address the crisis in Indiana. She also reported that Annual Financial Reports are due from all programs by February 24, 2023. The State Office will be looking more closely at the amount of money programs are carrying over into 2024 vs the needs of the individual programs. Additionally, Rae mentioned that it is still to be determined if Wellness Grants will be offered again in 2024. The data is being reviewed to determine whether programs that received the funds in June of 2023 have been following the terms of the grant. A decision will be made later this Spring after the review has been completed. It was reported that face-to-face meetings were held with Rae Feller and Stan Piercefield facilitating the meetings in each of the four GAL/CASA regions to discuss concerns regarding data, and how it is kept and updated in Optima.

As programs are being reviewed for quality assurance, it is becoming increasingly evident that programs are becoming more staff-based in terms of providing advocacy to children vs the Core Model of volunteer-based programs. We are, however, still serving 92% of the children assigned to our programs. We will be working with our programs regarding the importance of maintaining the Core Model standard of a higher percentage of volunteer-based advocacy for children.

### *Program Coordinator Report*

Teresa Lyles reported that there have been new Program Directors named in Tippecanoe County (Christina Thomas) and Gibson County (Brandi Steelman). She reported on the sessions that have been held through the CASA Training Academy since the last meeting, and those scheduled for the near future: November 2022—The Ethical Impact of CASA; December 2022—Empathy for Respondent Parents; January 2023—Neurodevelopment Diagnosis in Children; February 2023—Innocence Lost: The Trafficking of Indiana's Children; March 2023—Understanding Addiction: Filling the Void. A Directors' Refresher Cohort will also be held on February 24 and March 10, 2023.

### *Adjournment*

Katie Hall moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Coleen Connor seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

The next meeting of the GAL/CASA Advisory Commission will tentatively be face-to-face, and will be held on Friday, May 19, 2023, from 10:00 AM-12:00 PM (Eastern Time) at the Capital City Center, 251 North Illinois Street; Suite 800, Indianapolis, Indiana.

May 19, 2023

Roll Call

*Members Present*

Judge Gara Lee, Magistrate Shawn Webster, Brenda Matuszkiewicz, Katie Hall, Leslie Hendricks, Annette Craycraft, Kurt Kiefer, Joann Price, Rich Kosmala, Leslie Hendricks,

*Ex Officio Members Present*

Rae Feller, Leslie Dunn, Teresa Lyles, Tara Rochford, Stan Piercefield

*Members Absent*

Judge Stephanie Campbell, Magistrate Matthew Gruett, Judge Holly Harvey, Karen Bowen, Lee Ann Owens, Therese Miller, Emily Angel-Shaw, Kristin Bishay

*Guests/Committee Chairs Present*

Rachael Stark (State Office Intern)

Welcome and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Commission Chair Leslie Hendricks called the in-person meeting to order at 10:00 AM (Eastern). After introductions members were asked if they had reviewed the minutes from the February 2023 meeting that had previously been emailed. Annette Craycraft motioned that the February minutes be approved as written, and Katie Hall seconded the motion. Having no further discussion, all members present voted in favor of accepting the February minutes.

Chair's Items for Discussion

Commission Chair Leslie Hendricks introduced the following items for discussion:

*Support for Directors/Executive Directors*

The Chair indicated that there was a theme of burnout noticed among colleagues at the recent Spring Meeting. She brought this to Rae's attention, and she thought it would be helpful to have an outside person lead an optional discussion (possibly someone from JLAP).

*Professional Development Opportunities*

As our network has expanded and grown professionally, so have expectations from our programs and the need for professional development for our program directors. Rae mentioned the possibility of offering scholarships to directors who may want to attend professional development training outside of what is offered by the network.

*Optima Training*

There have been requests for more intensive training on Optima from the network. An Optima Workgroup is being assembled to investigate training, Standards, and general questions that come from the network. Tara Rochford mentioned that she was working on a "Deeper Dive" pilot training for directors and staff who manage Optima at the county level and will be preparing a professional development session with Stan Piercefield for the upcoming 2023 fall conference.

*Continued Regional Meetings*

It was noted that programs enjoy having the State Office conduct regional meetings around the state as they did earlier this year and would like to see that happen potentially one per region per quarter.

## Leslie Dunn—Office of Court Services Updates

### *YJOC*

Leslie gave an update on her work with the Youth Justice Oversight Committee. Their report will be coming out on July 1. Potential changes for juvenile probation standards will go to the Judge's Board for approval (under HB1359). Other items include the possibility of assigning a CASA for youth as a mentorship when they are released from DOC.

### *GAL Oversight for Custody Cases*

Guidelines and requirements are being developed for GAL serving in custody cases. The guidelines will be posted for public comment from June 1-June 30, 2023. A GAL Oversight Committee is being created, as well as a GAL registry.

## Committee Reports

### *State Conference/Training Committee*

Chair Katie Hall gave a summary of the recent Spring Director's Meeting, as well as reminding everyone of the upcoming Annual GAL/CASA Conference on September 7-9 at the Marriott East in Indianapolis.

### *Public Relations and Legislative Committee*

Chair Annette Craycraft had no updates to report.

### *Certification Standards and Best Practices*

Rae Feller reported that the Committee met in April and has planned another meeting on June 5 where current members are encouraged to invite other directors who may be interested in joining this Committee in FY 2024.

## Other Reports

### *Judge Reports*

Judge Lee reported that proposed legislation for contract DCS attorneys did not pass.

### *State Director Report*

Rae Feller referred to Teresa Lyles reported that the State Office is working toward assisting programs with volunteer recruitment and strategic planning. The State Office is currently in communication with several marketing firms to request proposals for a digital statewide volunteer recruitment campaign. The State Office was also approached by Every Child Indiana, an initiative to work together with allied professionals to recruit members of the committee to become either foster parents or volunteers to work with children and families involved in child welfare cases. Additionally, Rae reported that Coleen Connor has become a contractor with our office and will be spending the next several months working one-on-one with programs to create strategic plans for volunteer recruitment and retention.

Rae reported that it has been decided that Wellness Grants will be ending as of December 31, 2023. Those programs already receiving Wellness Grants and desiring to continue grant activities past the current June 30, 2023, ending date will be awarded 50% of their original grant amount to use through the end of this calendar year. Matching and Capacity Grant applications will be going out a bit earlier this year with a slight refresh to the application.

Rae recently met with Katie Collins who is the new legislative contact for DCS. She will be working with her more on education for legislators on juvenile law matters.

### *Program Coordinator Report*

Teresa Lyles reported that Bianca Alvarez has been named the new Executive Director of Northeastern Indiana CASA, Inc. (Region 2) and Lindy Coleman will be leaving her position as the Program Director in Harrison County (Region 3). Teresa also reported on the CASA Training Academy sessions held during the last quarter:

- February—Innocence Lost...The Trafficking of Indiana's Children (485 registered)
- March—A Review of the Life of a CHINS Case (500+ registered)
- April—Filling the Gap...Understanding Addiction (500+ registered)
- May—The Power of Grief (353 registered)

### *Adjournment*

Kurt Kiefer moved that the meeting be adjourned, and Katie Hall seconded the motion; all voted in favor.

Next Meeting: August 18, 2023