

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

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.

Date of Meeting: November 17, 2023

Roll Call

Members Present

Katie Hall, Rich Kosmala, Joann Price, Lee Anne Owens, Emily Shaw, Kurt Kiefer, Therese Miller, Brenda Matuszkiewicz, Kristen Bishay, Karen Bowen, Judge Stephanie Campbell, Magistrate Virginia Lawrence, Judge Holly Harvey, Annette Craycraft

Ex Officio Members Present

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

Members Absent

Leslie Hendricks (Chair), Judge Ryan King, Magistrate Shawna Webster, Magistrate Matt Gruett

Guests/Committee Chairs Present

Nancy Springer (Guest), Certification, Best Practice, Code of Ethics, and Standards Committee; Annette Craycraft, Public Relations, and Legislative Committee; Katie Hall, State Conference and Training Committee

Welcome and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Alternate Chair Katie Hall called the virtual meeting to order at 10:00 AM (Eastern). Minutes from the August 2023 meeting were brought before the members for review. Annette Craycraft motioned that the minutes be accepted as written, and Lee Anne Owens seconded the motion. All members voted in favor and the minutes were approved.

Chair's Items for Discussion

There were no items from the Chair for discussion.

Committee Reports

State Conference/Training Committee

Chair Katie Hall recapped the annual conference that was held September 7-9, 2023, at the Marriott East in Indianapolis. The Conference Committee met after the conference to review conference evaluations and discuss the sessions and meetings. The 2024 annual conference will be held on September 12-14 at the Grand Wayne Convention Center in Fort Wayne.

Public Relations and Legislative Committee

Chair Annette Craycraft stated that CASA Day 2024 will probably be held during the last week of February due to a short session. The Committee will be meeting soon to make plans for the annual event.

Certification, Standards, and Best Practices Committee

Nancy Springer reported that the Committee met in October to review a local program currently undergoing a Quality Review by the State Office. Suggestions were made by the Committee as to improvement plans for the program. The Committee will be reviewing four Best Practice policies at their next meeting.

Other Reports

Judge Reports

There were no new reports from judicial members.

State Director Report

Rae Feller shared that the review of all 2024 Matching and Capacity Grant applications was complete, and she is preparing a memo for approval of grant recommendations. The first distribution of 2024 grant funds will occur in January with the first 50% of the funds being distributed to counties. Rae also provided a State Office staffing update for the Commission. Kelly Bray has been hired to serve as an OPTIMA Project Manager, and will be starting in her position in December 2023.

An update was also provided regarding the Statewide Volunteer Recruitment and Engagement Campaign. Staff have been meeting weekly with the marketing team from C2 Strategic as we work toward launching the statewide effort in January of 2024. A testimonial video shoot has been scheduled for December 8 with volunteers and staff from local programs that will be used in the campaign. The State Office has also purchased a video from the New York State Office of GAL/CASA with a focus on recruiting veterans that we will customize for use in Indiana. Additionally, the Every Child Indiana Campaign is being launched on November 28, 2023. The State Office is a collaborative partner in the project that is focused on recruiting both foster parents and volunteers who are willing to serve children in various capacities statewide.

DCS Director Eric Miller reached out to Rae to ask for assistance from the State Office on the Strategic Plan for DCS for 2024. Child Safety and Expedited Permanency were the topics that were requested for review. Rae met with a group of local program directors on November 16 to discuss the topics. The group broke into two sub-groups, and each group is taking a topic. They will be meeting again on November 30, and Rae will be providing a summary to Director Miller.

Ms. Feller briefly discussed the local program that is under review by the Best Practice and Certification Committee. Contractor Stan Piercefield is assisting with follow-up and support for this program, as well as working with other programs that were previously being helped by former contractor Coleen Connor. When Ms. Connor left for the Peace Corps in early September 2023, Stan began following up with the nine local programs she had been supporting; he has been meeting with them every 2 weeks. He provided an update on the program of the Volunteer Recruitment Plans that are in place with those programs—there are currently three new volunteers in training, five new applications have been received, two former volunteers have returned to service, there have been eight new inquiries, and four new volunteers have been sworn in.

Rae will be in Atlanta December 4-6, where she will be meeting with other State Directors from across the country where they will be discussing sustainability of local programs in light of the funding issues National CASA/GAL is currently facing.

OPTIMA Update

Tara Rochford reported that the OPTIMA Working Group has been meeting in two sub-groups to review the State Program Standards as they relate to OPTIMA, and will be making recommendations for updates to the Standards.

Program Coordinator Report

Program Coordinator Teresa Lyles reported that Hilary Laughner has been named as the new Program Director in Tippecanoe County. She also reported that interest has been indicated regarding the possibility of starting a new program in Martin County. She and Rae have a meeting with the Judge in January 2024 to discuss the matter.

Adjournment

Kristin Bishay motioned that the meeting be adjourned, and Brenda Matuszkiewicz seconded the motion; all members voted in favor. Meetings for the upcoming year are:

- February 16
- May 17
- August 16
- November 15