

Cass County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program's Third Annual "Kids Day Out" event

The Cass County Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program provided a fun packed "Kids Day Out" event, August 6, 2016, for school aged children within our CASA program. A total of 14 children from ages 7-16 years old and 10 adults took part in this event. A special thank you to Johanna Boston from the Nebraska Crossing Management Office in Gretna, NE., as she gifted each child with a Columbia backpack, clothing apparel, agendas and many other items from various retail stores.

The day began with the group being transported to Nebraska Crossing at Gretna. Each child received \$150 gift card to spend on their school clothing and accessories. The children dashed in and out of stores spying their perfect clothing, trying it on and beaming as they showed the clothing off to their CASA advocate whom was their shopping chaperone. After spending a couple hours shopping, our volunteers had their hands full, as they corralled the children and headed to our next activity at Leopard Lanes in Bellevue. After eating lunch, our bowling adventure began. For many of the children this was their first time bowling. As they threw their bowling balls down the lane, their bodies moved and wiggled to the pattern of their bowling ball. We saw many strikes, spares and gutter balls, however that didn't matter as this day was filled with joyous giggles while getting to spend time with their siblings and other child in the same situation and to be "just a kid" without any worries or problems. It brought so much joy and touched the hearts of all who took part in our event, seeing the kids' broad smiles and hearing their infectious laughter to know they were part of this day that helped create some positive memories as the kids were one step closer to going back to school. Only seven children live within Cass County and will be attending local schools. The remainder of the children's foster or group homes are located outside of our county. Unfortunately we do not have enough foster homes in our county available to our CASA children.

Our program received an anonymous donation of \$5000 to fund our "Kids Day Out" event and our school supplies for each child and other children's activities throughout the year.

Angie Neumiller, the Executive Director for CASA, extends thanks "to all the volunteers who made this event a success". The following CASA advocates were Darla Blevins, Brian Coffman, Debbie Green, Ed James, Lee Jameson, Karen Muhvic and Nikki Biesterfeld (board member). Three other volunteers whom are not CASA advocates were Linda James, Michelle Meyer and Scott Neumiller.

Our program will continue "Kids Day Out" as an annual event as it allows the kids to have fun and be with other kids in their situation while decreasing the financial burden on parents and foster parents.

As of August 1, 2016, 34 children are being served by 16 CASA volunteers and two staff members. The CASA children are under the jurisdiction of the court because of abuse and/or neglect. Many of the children live unsettled lives waiting for their parents to solve the problems that brought the children to the attention of the authorities, and under the court's jurisdiction.

If you would like more information on how you can become a CASA advocate, a board member or help our CASA program, please view our website at www.casscasa.org; or e-mail, Angie

Neumiller, Executive Director, director@casscasa.org or call 402-296-9521. Like us on Facebook: **Cass County (NE) CASA Program**

More information can be found at www.nebraskacasa.org or www.casaforchildren.org.