



Navajo County Friends of CASA®, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1774  
Show Low, AZ 85902

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## **ANNUAL REPORT (March 2017)**

Hello Friends. This message is our first attempt to electronically communicate with the various constituencies which support Navajo County Friends of CASA (donors, volunteers, retail supporters, CASA's and other interested Community members) with the information normally shared during our Annual Public Meeting. Our By-Laws require our organization to report annually to the public on our accomplishments, future plans, officerships, operating budget and other pertinent news concerning our organization.

In the past few years, actual attendance at our open Annual Public Meeting has been very low probably due to several factors. In addition, our recent success as an Arizona Qualified State Tax Credit organization has attracted several new folks that typically do not live year-round in Navajo County, but are very likely to be interested in the activities of Friends of CASA. So this year we have chosen to use the electronic/postal medium to get our news out to you. Feel free to share any of this information with friends or family, and please visit our website at [www.navajocountyfriendsofcasa.com](http://www.navajocountyfriendsofcasa.com) for the most recent news.

But first let me thank each and every one of you for your support as you “help us help the disadvantaged kids” of Navajo County!

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Unfortunately, the number of abused, neglected or abandoned kids that enter the State dependent care system continues to grow at an alarming rate. There are now over 19,000 kids in dependent care (foster homes, group homes, or with court-approved relatives) in Arizona. In addition, the number of licensed foster and group homes in Arizona continues to decline as State funding for dependent care, which was significantly reduced during the Great Recession, has never been restored. And current socio-economic conditions tend to exacerbate this situation rather than improve it. In Navajo County we often find that a new child placement ends up being outside of our County (Kingman, Flagstaff, even the Valley) due to the lack of local available licensed space. This places an additional burden on our CASA volunteers and DCS Caseworkers as they now must travel longer distances to make required home visits.

On the bright side, there are now several Qualified Foster Care Tax Credit organizations (such as ours) around the State, and the public is assuming a greater share of the responsibility to help these disadvantaged kids.

All this serves to reinforce our dedication to our mission of helping these displaced kids and their new caregivers.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Recognizing the physical and emotional toll that abuse and/or neglect takes on children, **Navajo County Friends of CASA, Inc.**, a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization, is committed to providing some of the basic material necessities and enrichment experiences that can help heal these children who are under the jurisdiction of the Navajo County Juvenile Court system. In conjunction with these goals, we support the CASA Agency of Navajo County.

## 2016 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It was a very good year for Friends of CASA as we generated record revenue and reinvested a record amount of those revenues in support of our kids through (a) direct grants for specific needs, (b) general programs which benefit all the kids in dependent care, and (c) special events to celebrate life and promote family bonding.

Specifically;

- (1) Raised almost **\$65,000** through Corporate and Personal grants and Trusts (\$9,000), qualified State tax credit donations (\$47,731), and other general donations (\$8,102).
- (2) Spent almost **\$27,000** on direct grant requests from individual kids and their caregivers (\$11,283), our Back-to-School clothing and new Winter Coat programs (\$15,619), and Scholarship/Enrichment programs (\$800).
- (3) Spent just over **\$1000** for our Annual Family Fun Picnic and our Christmas Gift Tree program which benefited all families with dependent care kids.
- (4) Invested over **\$2000** in our local CASA Volunteers for advanced training programs and travel reimbursements.
- (5) Spent only **\$2,031** on Administrative expense, mostly promotions, publicity, postage/ mailing costs and storage rental. This equates to about **6%** of total expenses.
- (6) Increased our working capital by over **\$25,000** which is held in either an interest-bearing Money Market account or our normal operating checking account.

In summary, with your help, it was a very rewarding year where we bolstered our financial situation while serving more kids in Navajo County than ever before!

**Success Story #1:** *The caregivers of a young boy with very severe speech and hearing problems approached Friends of CASA with a request for a special iPad version that specifically addresses these issues and helps give confidence, especially in a school setting, to kids like this. We responded by providing this unique device and service, and after three months of use this young boy is making amazing progress with his communications skills.*

## 2017 PLANS and GOALS

As we have improved our long term financial position, the Board looked to finding ways to invest even more money in our kids. Options include (a) expanding the size and scope of our current activities, (b) creation of whole new “programs” into

areas not historically served, and/or (c) expanding the scope of the “types” of financial help we could potentially deliver. It was decided to clearly expand our existing programs, but move a bit more cautiously into new areas.

Specifically;

- (1) Increase the target for money spent in support of individual grant requests for specific needs from \$12,000 annually to at least **\$15,000**.
- (2) Expand the budget for the Back-to-School clothing program from \$125/150 per child to **\$200 per child**, and invest in more and higher quality winter coats.
- (3) Institute a “pilot program” to emphasize **Summer Camp** attendance by making it very easy for a family to request and receive reimbursement for local, vetted summer camps (Scouting, sports, music, etc.) and budget an initial amount of **\$10,000** per year.
- (4) Create a fund to honor and assist **High School graduates and new adoption families**. We will help with the extra costs usually associated with these events, and have budgeted **\$5,000** for these new activities.
- (5) Given that our CASA volunteers spend a considerable amount of their own money in support of their kids, we will be instituting a program to help defer the **transportation costs** that CASAs experience while serving these kids.
- (6) Navajo County Friends of CASA has participated in a Statewide **“CASA Support Council”** from its inception. This group, with representatives from each county, consists of organizations with the mission of serving CASA volunteers and/or dependent care kids. The Council meets bi-annually to share information, discuss common issues, and share successes and programs. This is a very worthwhile endeavor and we intend to remain an active member of this Council.
- (7) During 2015/2016, we helped start and fund a **CASA Support group for Apache County**. We will continue to help and support them as needed.

We are excited about increasing the amount of support we can give our local kids through our existing programs as well as venturing into some new areas to help not only the kids and their caregivers, but also our hard-working CASA volunteers.

**Success Story #2:** *Although the primary mission of Friends of CASA is to provide for the unmet needs of dependent care kids with items that are reasonably portable so that they can move with the child as he or she moves placements, we were approached with a request from a CASA Volunteer to help a woman complete the State licensing requirements in order for her home to become a foster care facility. She was already providing kinship placement to two young kids and wanted to do more. Due to inadequacies of several windows in her modular home, she could not receive full licensed status without complete replacement of these windows. We responded with a grant to replace the windows and are happy to report that her home is now a fully licensed foster care facility.*

## **BOARD MEMBERSHIP and OFFICERS**

Due to some Board members leaving the Mountain, and some unfortunate health concerns, we currently have only 8 active Board members. Our By-Laws allow for up to 20 Board members, but we have historically operated most efficiently with 11-13 members. We are therefore actively soliciting interest from some local people to join our Board. If you have interest in the things we do, have a passion for kids, and can devote a minimal amount of time each month, please contact us with your details.

### **Current Board Members:**

George Turner, President  
Ildi Ervin, Treasurer  
Linda Croteau, Secretary, Grant Co-ordinator  
Len Croteau  
Mike Ervin  
Irene Klim  
Kathy Oberholtzer  
Jennifer Talley

Non-voting members;  
Alysia Heward, Navajo County CASA Co-ordinator  
Andy Brecht, Show Low DCS Office Manager

## **2017 OPERATING BUDGET**

The Board formally adopted the 2017 Operating Budget at our March meeting. A copy of the budget, including 2016 actuals for comparison, is attached. In summary, we chose a conservative revenue projection, a liberal expense projection, but will likely still generate a net gain in year-end assets.

**Success Story #3:** *Local DCS (Department of Child Safety) offices often host "visitations" allowing the natural parents of a foster care child to meet and visit with their child in a safe and supervised atmosphere as part of the reunification process. We recently had the opportunity to assist in this important process by fully furnishing, equipping and decorating the visitation room at the new Winslow DCS office complex. This included furniture, TV, game tables, artwork and supplies.*

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The situation in Arizona with respect to the support of abused, neglected or abandoned children is not getting significantly better. Therefore, the mission of Friends of CASA is even more critical. We had a great year in 2016 generating record revenue and spending record amounts in support of the kids. Our financial situation is sound allowing us to expand our existing programs and

experiment with some new ones in 2017. As a result of being one of the first foster care support organizations in Arizona to receive certification as a Qualified Tax Credit entity, we have expanded the scope and number of our donors, volunteers, and interested community members. We remain dedicated to our quest to do all we can to improve the lives of these great kids who unfortunately have found themselves in the State's dependent care system.

But most of all, THANK YOU for your continued support, encouragement and interest in our quest. Obviously, we couldn't do any of this without your generous support. Please contact us directly with any questions, comments, suggestions or criticisms . . . and Help Us Help the Kids!

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