Please Give a Warm Welcome.

We are pleased to announce that Michelle Martinez has joined the CASA team as the new VOCA CASA Coordinator.

Michelle’s name may be a familiar one to those who have been in our department and/or lived in Florence for a number of years. She was a probation officer for 2 years back in 1994, having implemented the first Teen Court in Pinal County under the direction of her then supervisor, Denise Smith.

Michelle left our department to start her 20-year career in education with Florence Unified Schools and then with the Central Arizona Valley Institute of Technology (CAVIT). She finished up her last assignment at Magma Ranch K-8 before starting with our department on Monday, June 4, 2018.

Michelle has a Master’s Degree in Educational Leadership from NAU and a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Education from ASU. Her experience in mentoring, coaching and training will be an excellent asset to our growing CASA Unit. Michelle will be assigned to the Florence office.

Are you a Veteran? CASA of Pinal County and the State CASA Office have been interested in reaching out to veterans for several years. In fact, the State Office has reached out to the American Legion as has National CASA, forming a partnership as both organizations have common ground - supporting children.

CASA of Pinal County has recently reached out to local American Legion Posts to do presentations about our program and the situation of many children here in Pinal and surrounding counties, living in foster care. We will be doing a CASA presentation in June at the Maricopa American Legion and will be reaching out to other veterans groups in the county to help spread the word and ask for more veterans to serve our Superior Court and children in foster care as CASA volunteers.

CASA of Pinal County already has several veterans within our ranks. It was suggested that we form a Pinal County CASA veterans group to get to know each other, support each other and our cases. If you are a veteran and a CASA and would like to know more, please contact Greg Clark at 520-866-7078 or email greg.clark@pinalcountyaz.gov.
Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation

With summer coming up day camps, activities, and sport events can be very costly for placements.

Arizona Friends of Foster Children Foundation has several scholarship awards with which they can assist families. The goal of the AFFCF is to give children in foster care back their childhood. Tomorrow a child could wake up with a stranger. They may have never ridden a bicycle or sat down for a family meal. AFFCF strives to promote the children’s self-esteem and enrich their lives by funding activities and other needs that give them a quality experience as they live through a very difficult circumstance.

Some of the items they can help cost are the following:

- Activities classes / lessons / camps
- Graduation expenses
- Sport equipment / sport registration
- High school program fees/ summer school
- State ID
- Music instrument purchase
- Bicycles, scooters, skates, and skateboards
- Books/tutoring
- Special event clothing
- Theme park admission out of state/Arizona
- Optical / orthodontic expenses
- School pictures

Please go to this website for a detailed list of things that are covered and for the application. CASA or placement can complete the application. AFFCF will contact DCS to confirm the child is a Ward of Court. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the CASA Staff. Or visit the website at https://www.affcf.org.

2018 National CASA Conference Rewind!!

We now have a recap from the National Conference in Boston. We hope you will find the conference rewind page of interest.

Visit the page to find:

- A summary article about the conference
- A PDF of the conference program
- Videos of select speeches

“The following presenters for our keynote addresses gave permission to place a recording of their session on our password-protected member portal. The videos may not be distributed, shared on social media or duplicated. (Please note the videos may include opening remarks before keynote speakers.)”

We encourage you to visit the website to watch the keynote speakers! Then you can log them as training hours. Enjoy the rewind!

http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPlsE/b.9545917/k.EF00/2018_National_Conference_Rewind.htm?

Bags of Love for Foster Children

This group keeps a number of bags for foster children made that include beautifully hand made quilts, toys, supplies and other miscellaneous items. There are a variety of bags available for each age group. Twila Perucci (CASA) doesn’t mind meeting other CASAs to deliver, but she needs to know the age and sex of the child or children. Each bag is about the size of a pillow case.

If you’re in the area and are able stop by and pick up a bag or bags, you can find them at the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Apache Junction off Ironwood and 16th. The group is there every Monday from 9:30 - 3:00 PM with the exception of holidays.

If you would like more information please contact CASA Twila Perucci at twilaperucci@outlook.com or at tperucci@casaaz.gov.
Nicolette came aboard CASA in March of 2017. Nicolette’s first case ended in adoption in April. One of my favorite things Nicolette did with the child, child’s sibling, and placement is they all watched Hocus Pocus around Halloween because, growing up, at Halloween that is just something kids do!

Nicolette is currently also volunteering for the Maricopa County Medical Examiner and has a full-time job. Nicolette also recruited her twin sister Simone.

Simone came on board with CASA in August of 2017 and very quickly took her first case. Very soon after being assigned, the case DCS case manager asked Simone if she would take the child’s two siblings as well. Simone and Nicolette were able to take all three children and work this case as a team!

This has been a blessing because currently all three children are placed in different homes. Simone and Nicolette have been the most consistent and constant thing these three children have had. One of the activities they have done with the children is take them to the park for a picnic!

Simone is currently working full time and is also volunteering with ASU.

These ladies continue to inspire and impress us! What impressed me the most, as their coordinator, is in their interviews to become a CASA they both stated growing up they had a foster sibling in their home who made a difference in their life and impacted them.

A special shout out to CASA advocates Bety Dar and Cheryl Stein.

As all of our advocates are very dedicated and hard working to serve Pinal County Superior Court and children in foster care.

We are proud to have Bety. Some may not know, but Bety has been a CASA Advocate in three states now and has just helped a very difficult case finalize into a beautiful adoption with a very happy family. Before the adoption was finalized, Bety had already approached her coordinator and stated “you better start looking, I will be needing a new case”!

Cheryl Stein was a CASA Advocate with Pinal County CASA for several years and took on some very difficult cases.

Life took Cheryl on a different road—to California for a year or two. Imagine our thrill when an email came to our office that she was moving back to Arizona and wanted to know how to reapply to be a Pinal CASA again!

True to her prior history of taking on hard cases, immediately after attending her second CASA academy, Cheryl is off and running with another tough case, trying to help a young lady find a permanent solution to a difficult foster care situation!

Thank you both for being on our CASA team!
Sometimes we just roll with the hiccups and work as a team to ensure we are truly advocating for the child. Recently one of our CASA volunteers informed the child’s attorney that the child would like to meet with the judge in chambers. The child’s attorney was able to schedule it, however, after a busy day forgot to notify the team. At midnight, the attorney woke up and realized his mistake. He immediately emailed the team asking if anyone would be able to get the child to the court house the following afternoon to meet with the judge.

The downside was the child was placed in a group home in Phoenix and, for the CASA, it took 2 hours one-way to get to the child’s placement location. On top of that, the CASA was in the process of moving. The CASA coordinator was able to contact the DCS case manager immediately. They were in a trial that same day and were already at the court house prepping for the trial. The case manager provided the coordinator with her supervisor’s contact information which resulted in her being able to get in touch with the DCS supervisor and inform her of the situation. The DCS supervisor was able to secure last-minute transportation and the child was able to meet with the judge in person. The CASA had previously submitted a photo with a court report for the judge, but as we all know, for a child, an in-person meeting with the judge makes for a more lasting impression. The child’s attorney subsequently apologized for his error and thanked the team for all working together. We thank the Department of Child Safety for their quick assistance and ensuring the child was able to meet with the judge. Sometimes things just happen and it is great when we can all work as a team!

— Erin Avilez

Welcome to CASA!

We are happy to announce some changes to the CASA of Arizona staff!

Deidre Calcoate began as the new State Program Manager on March 12. Deidre has over 25 years of service to Arizona’s children and families involved in child welfare, developmental disabilities and behavioral health. She is very passionate about the health, safety and well-being of our children and families. She has held a vast number of positions in her tenure including case manager, licensing worker, adoptions manager, trainer and administrator.

Deidre is an adoptee and adopter, she has 3 grandchildren. She is looking forward to working with the CASA program staff and volunteers and will work hard to further expand Arizona’s program.

CASA of Pinal County is excited to have you aboard Deidre!

In April, CASA of Pinal County held our very first CASA Academy! We had a total of about 10 new advocates with a few attendees coming from our neighbor, Gila County!

We hope to get enough new applicants to hold another Academy by the end of 2018.

Special thanks to
Deidre Calcoate (State Program Coordinator)
Krissa Ericson (State Trainer)
CASA of Pinal County Advocates:
Dan Danser, Kelley Kimble, Marian Feeney
for sharing their experiences

Special kudos to Coordinator Greg Clark working with our state office to make the academy happen!
Welcome to CASA of Pinal County!!

Bob Doobovsky
Apache Junction, AZ

Sherran Doobovsky
Apache Junction AZ

Hilario Pulido
San Tan Valley, AZ
TRAINING HOURS!

Congrats to the following advocates who have completed all 12 hours of training for the year! If you are not on the list and would like to check your training hours for 2018, please contact your coordinator.

- Georgene Carruthers
- Beth Chism
- Dan Danser
- Sherran Doobovsky
- Robert Doobovsky
- Mary Gallas
- Sande Hamberg
- Paul Hoefs
- Deborah Hollman
- Christine Holloway
- Kelly Homal
- Dana Johanson
- Donna Kilfoyle
- Jack Kukkola
- Anne Lewis
- Karen Malek
- Jena Miller
- Gary Moran
- Kathy Musick
- Susan Osłowski
- Twila Perucci
- Stephen Prickett
- Hilario Pulido
- Ann Sayler
- Bobbi Seabolt
- Dan Spellman
- Cheryl Stein
- Patricia Wheeler

VOCA Information

In compliance with the VOCA Grant, please see “How” to File a Discrimination Complaint

Any employees, program participants/ beneficiaries, or potential program participants/beneficiaries of CASA of Pinal County who wish to file a discrimination complaint has a right to do so, in writing, to:

Pinal County Juvenile Court Services
Denise Smith, Director
971 N. Jason Lopez Circle
Building D, Suite 500
Florence, Arizona 85132

You also have the right to file directly with the following agencies:

Office for Civil Rights
Office of Justice Programs
U.S. Dept. of Justice
810 7th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20531

To file with the federal Office for Civil Rights, two forms must be downloaded from the internet and submitted in writing to OCR. The forms can be found at www.ojp.gov/about/ocr/complaint.htm.

Arizona Department of Public Safety
VOCA Administration, MD3915
Civil Rights Coordinator
P.O. Box 6638
Phoenix, AZ 85005-6638
(602) 223-2491
www.azdps.gov/services/government/crime-victims

Office of the Arizona Attorney General
Civil Rights Division
1275 W Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 542-5263
https://www.azag.gov/complaints

On public display at:

Florence Office
971 N. Jason Lopez Circle
Building D, Suite 500
Florence, AZ. 85132

Youth Justice Center
1410 E Division Dam Rd.
Florence, AZ 85132

Casa Grande Office
820 E. Cottonwood Lane
Building F-2
Casa Grande, AZ. 85122