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All children
deserve to
grow up
in a safe,
permanent
home.

the CONNECTION

News and Information from the National Court Appointed Special Advocate Association



David Bartlett (center), the 2003 G. F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year, stands with his wife Kay (right) and Juanita Mara-Malerva (left) the Santa Cruz, CA, CASA case supervisor.

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CASA

A POWERFUL VOICE
IN A CHILD'S LIFE.™

2003 National CASA Awards of Excellence Presented in Boston

The CASA and GAL network is defined by extraordinary people working hard to provide hope to abused and neglected children in communities across the country. Each year at the annual CASA conference, the National CASA Association salutes and recognizes the dedication, tenacity and passion of an advocate; acknowledges the achievements of a CASA/GAL program director; and honors the commitment to children by a judge and board member. Award winners are nominated by National CASA member programs.

Dave Bartlett
CASA of Santa Cruz County, CA
G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year

When you meet Dave Bartlett simply ask him about his CASA advocacy and a witty, sensitive and endearing man emerges. Within minutes, Dave Bartlett will have your ear and your heart as he tells you about his CASA kids: tirelessly trying to involve a noncommunicative CASA child, being "blessed" by one of his CASA kids to become a Mighty Morphin Power Ranger (the blue one), losing sleep thinking about a foster/adoptive situation that wasn't working for a child, helping to orchestrate a gathering for 6 siblings living independently of each other, and indulging the 5-year old child with a fascination for maps. Accepting his award as the 2003 Child Advocate of the Year, Bartlett was quick to recognize volunteers working on "more complicated" cases and added, "There are people out there [in the network] stretching and pushing and I'd like to accept this award on behalf of all CASAs."

A therapist who works with Bartlett acknowledges his unique ability to navigate "the complex relationship between his



2003 National CASA Association Award Recipients. (L to R) Garrett R. Hegel, NCASAA Board Member of the Year; Suzanne K. Smith, Kappa Alpha Theta Program Director of the Year; Judge John W. Larson, NCASAA Judge of the Year; and Dave Bartlett, G.F. Bettineski Child Advocate of the Year.

CASA children and everyone involved in the child's life. He understood the value of the therapists' and other professional opinions and he balanced our information with his legal role as a CASA. He spent time with biological, foster and adoptive families with equal fairness and honesty. Diligent in his efforts to spend time and know each factor of the case, his curiosity is incredible. He never once shirked from saying the hard truths in a gentle and constructive way."

The most compelling theme running through Dave Bartlett's advocacy is his tireless and diligent efforts to keep siblings together. Dave has also provided continuity and emotional support throughout the proceedings for his various CASA cases. When one of his CASA kids was moved from place to place, Dave helped him deal with the change by being there to support the young boy. While the boy's life seemed to fall apart, the two spent time together building a car and doing small projects like fixing a toaster; his time with the boy was finely tuned to

the child's place in the world and emotional needs. His constancy and support represented incalculable benefits to that child.

Although he has always been assigned to young children, he is also concerned with teens, especially those with no permanence and home. Weekly, he visits child welfare offices and listens to the

plight of teens without permanent plans. He agreed to join an administrative review panel as a CASA representative and makes recommendations and promotes problem solving in the review process. Through his efforts, he ensures the system is doing the best it can for the youth it serves.

Garrett R. Hegel
Alabama CASA Network, Inc.
National CASA Association
Board Member of the Year

Noting the nearly 1500 people attending the annual conference, Gary Hegel said he felt others in the room at the annual CASA conference were far more worthy of recognition. But Liz McCormick, Alabama CASA Network Executive Director, is quick to praise his efforts to build Alabama CASA into the organization it is today. McCormick says of Hegel, "Gary is always dependable and supportive. He never leaves a board meeting or ends a telephone conversation without telling me to call if I need anything. In my opinion, that is the ideal board member!"