



KID Connect Newsletter

July 2020

Announcements, Upcoming Events, and Support for Advocates

Quick Note: The Pierce County CASA/GAL Program is now called the "Child Advocate Program of Pierce County." CASA Kids is now called "KID Connect."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KID Connect is pleased to announce that we are still able to assist with the following needs:

- Rent and/or utility deposits, as well as household items, when needed to secure or maintain safe housing for a dependent child. This could be available to a potential relative placement or to a parent needing suitable housing in order to reunite.
- Court fees, certification costs, and other miscellaneous expenses to secure permanence for a child in either a relative placement or in-home dependency.
- Advocates who advocate for a child placed out of state may apply for airfare to visit the child.

Here are some things KID Connect recently approved:

- Camp fees for a special needs child to attend a therapeutic summer camp.
- Household items to help support a family in an in-home dependency.

- Team fees and uniform costs so a foster child could play on an AAU basketball team.
- Earbuds for a child so he could hear and participate better during his school meetings on Zoom.

*Please Note: KID Connect is flexible and we can approve and pay for requests quickly, but **our funds are limited so please explore other options for funding before applying.** While we can't promise to honor every request, don't hesitate to ask. If you have questions, feel free to reach out to any of our board members.*

Guidelines and the request form for applying for this assistance are posted at www.kidconnect-pierce.org

ATTENTION: ADVOCATES STILL NEEDED



Covid-19 has not stopped us from training new advocates! In April, Ryan Murray, with the Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs, recognized that programs still need volunteers, but that individual programs might not have the capacity to continue to offer trainings with the stay home/stay safe orders in place. In response, Ryan, along with the assistance of programs from around the state, put on the first virtual Zoom Advocate Core Training during the month of May. It was a great success, and we are in the middle of our second Zoom training cycle with another one scheduled in the fall. This has demanded a big commitment from our future advocates and staff, as the training runs two hours per day, Monday through Thursday, for four weeks.

The other notable aspect of this training is that advocates are trained on the brand new Washington State Advocate Curriculum, which Ryan developed with the assistance of other state programs, including Pierce County's. The training remains an interactive/engaging training but is now more tailored to our local programming versus a national curriculum. While the new training has many of the same topics from the prior Core Training, it includes more robust instruction and dialogue around the GAL Rules, bias, disproportionality, best interest advocacy, child safety framework, transition planning, and working a case.

If you know anyone who might be a great advocate please send them our way!

WELCOME NEW ADVOCATES



A warm welcome to our inaugural virtual training class graduates:

Antonia Salas
Ryan Barrett
Tonetta Harris
Jordan Richardson
Kim SeEVERS

We appreciate you!



Recently, one of our Office Assistants entered each Advocate's hours into our data system and got curious. So she ran a report and found something very cool.

We have six advocates who have logged **OVER 2,000 hours** in their time with us (at least as far back as 1990) and two advocates who have logged **OVER 4,500 HRS!**

Sue Braaten – 5,273.15 hrs

Lindsay Czerwinski – 4,663.26 hrs

Debbie Carter – 2,839.00 hrs

Barney Koenig – 2,391.40 hrs

Cindy McClelland – 2,164.16 hrs

Denise Harvey – 2,102.24 hrs

You All Are True Inspirations!

Thank You for Your Work on Behalf of Kids in our Community!

Do you know someone who'd make a great Advocate? They can start the process of becoming an Advocate by leaving a message at (253) 798-3837. An Advocate Supervisor will get back to them within one-two business days.



Morgan's Legal Corner

Appellate Courts Make Two Notable Dependency Rulings

Divisions I and II of the Washington State Court of Appeals made two important rulings in February 2020:

In *In re S.M.M.*, the Court found that it is critical for a child to be appointed an advocate or guardian ad litem, absent good cause, and that both the Courts and DCYF should “guard against overlooking the [advocate] requirement.” In *S.M.M.*, two girls were appointed a GAL, but the GAL withdrew after the children were successfully returned home. When the children were removed from their parents’ home approximately 8 months later, the Court did not appoint a new GAL or make a good cause finding that a GAL was unnecessary. RCW 13.34.100(1) requires the Court to appoint a GAL “for a child who is the subject of an action under this chapter” unless the Court finds good cause to not appoint an advocate. The Court found that the children were prejudiced in that they did not have an advocate at the hearing to amend placement from in-home and remanded the case back to the trial court. Of note, the Court found that “a general designation of the CASA program that does not result in any actual representation of the children’s interest” does not satisfy RCW 13.34.100. “The court must either appoint a specific GAL or make a finding of good cause.” The Pierce County Child Advocate Program does not appoint the *program* as an advocate for a child, but rather names the specific Court Appointed Advocate or Guardian ad Litem in the Order Appointing Advocate/GAL. Our practice of doing so is consistent with the Court’s ruling.

In *In re T.P.*, the Court addressed RCW 13.34.065(1)(a), which requires that a shelter care hearing be held within 72 hours of a child being removed from their home, absent weekends and holidays. In this case, which originated in Pierce County, the children were removed from their parents on 12/11. A shelter care hearing was set on 12/13, at which time parents requested a contested hearing. The Court's earliest availability was 1/2; both parents objected to waiting until January for the contested shelter care hearing. The Appellate Court found that the juvenile court violated the statute when the shelter care hearing was continued to January, 22 days after the child was removed from her home. The Court indicated that a shelter care hearing could be continued only if the parents had requested a continuance beyond the initial 72 hours required by the statute and if the parent (not the parent's attorney) was unavailable for the originally scheduled date. Pierce County Juvenile Court has been working to handle contested shelter cares on the initial shelter care date or to otherwise minimize continuances. Our program has observed judicial officers taking special care to speak with parents to understand their support for a continuance beyond the 72-hour requirement.

As always, if you have any questions about how the above-identified decisions affect your child advocacy work, please contact your Advocate Supervisor or the Pierce County Child Advocate Program attorney, Morgan Chaput.

[Race Equity Webinar Series: Psychosocial Tools to Advance Race Equity for Children of Color](#)



Marva L. Lewis mlewis@tulane.edu

Please join us at a series of webinars hosted by Professor Marva L. Lewis. Offered to Infant Toddler Court Teams and community partners to advance racial equity in child welfare systems, each webinar addresses *race-based relational trauma* that may shape the quality of parent/child attachment, implicit bias, the parent's perception of the quality of working relationships with ITCT helpers, and the level of family engagement.

About Dr. Lewis:

Dr. Lewis earned a PhD in sociocultural psychology, and associate professor at Tulane University School of Social Work with a clinical appointment in the Institute of Infant & Early Childhood Mental

Health. Her research studies emotional attunement during African American mother-daughter hair combing interaction. She developed culturally valid, community-based interventions to strengthen attachment and address intergenerational legacies of the historical trauma of slavery, and acceptance or rejection of children based on skin color. Her book, *Therapeutic Cultural Routines to Build Family Relationships: Talk, Touch & Listen While Combing Hair*® will be released in 2021. She serves on the National Zero to Three Advisory Board and as a consultant with Safe Baby Court Teams on reducing racial disparities bias in child welfare systems. In 2020 she will present a webinar series titled, *Psychosocial Tools to Advance Race Equity for Families of Color in the Child Welfare Systems*.

Her full Curriculum Vitae is available at <http://tssw.tulane.edu/>

Webinar Schedule:

Webinar #1: How race hurts children of color – The Trauma of racial disparities, 7/22 at 12pm

Webinar #2: Breaking down barriers for Engagement with Families of Color to achieve Racial Equity Build Working Relationships Across Racial Divides, August TBD

Webinar #3: Routines, rituals and celebrations to foster multicultural identities in young children a Webinar for Foster parents, 9/23 at 12pm

Webinar #4 – Where do we go from here? Implementing the SBCT Race Equity Tool, 10/28 at 12pm



*The Wishing Well is excited to announce that their **Furniture Assist Program** is ready to help provide essential items to foster youth placed in kinship care, extended foster care, and in-home dependencies.*

How it Works: Advocates can ask a social worker to request a voucher to pay for the needed furniture items. There's a \$25 yearly access fee per foster child, which allows three shopping trips per year. Licensed foster parents are expected to pay the fee with the foster care reimbursement. DCYF can also issue a voucher for children placed with Kinship Caregivers. In-home dependencies can shop one time.

The fee structure is as follows:

Crib/Toddler Bed - \$50

Twin, Full, or Queen beds - \$50

Dresser - \$50

Couch - \$50

Table w/chairs - \$50

Bunk Bed - \$125

*Maximum will be \$200 per household

*Additional Delivery fee \$50

The **Furniture Assist Program** also has additional items on hand (depending on donations) including bedding, kitchenware, tv's, nightstands, etc.

Wishing Well continues to provide new and gently used clothing, shoes, books, and other essential and fun items to our kids. They also have baby equipment such as cribs pack and plays and strollers on hand.

Hours of Operation: The Wishing Well is located at 12716 Pacific Avenue S, Tacoma. They're open by appointment on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays from 10-2.

Questions? Contact Erika Thompson 206.406.2398, visit their website www.thewishingwellwa.org, or check them out on Facebook

Thanks, Erika for all you and The Wishing Well do for our kids!

COVID -19 Program Updates

Currently there are no changes to our COVID-19 visit policy. We should **not be visiting children or families in person** at this time. If you have a case that has special circumstances and you believe an in-person visit is warranted, please reach out to your advocate supervisor to get approval.

We understand this is hard and hope that you are **maintaining good virtual communication** with your families, service providers, social workers and other collateral contacts to ensure we are continuing to advocate.

DAY OF DATA REPORTS – March 2020 Attached

Each year the Washington Association of Child Advocate Programs collects a snapshot in time data. The data collected for this report illustrate a point in time snapshot of the youth that child advocates serve in Washington State. The data can and should be used as a discussion point to explore outcomes for children served by child advocate. It is important to note that the data collected and the findings in this report cannot show any causal relationship to having a child advocate. That is, you cannot say that child advocates caused outcomes in the youth. Rather, this data provides some descriptive measures of what the youth who are served by child advocate look like, in terms of their placement, general well-being, and education. The survey is a good starting point to begin collecting data on children in care and allow child advocates an opportunity to reflect both on their practice and the youth that they serve. As discussions of the findings evolve, it is important to consider what other useful information could be gained from a reflective survey such as this and how the data may be used to look for trends in current practice.

Advocate Spotlight



MARY ANNE

5 Fun Facts :

- 1) I have 5 cats.
- 2) I was a special education teacher for 38 years.
- 3) I drive a Mini Cooper
- 4) I rode my bike from Gig Harbor to the California border in one week.
- 5) I was born in the northwest and have lived in the northwest my entire life.

Why did you become a Child Advocate?

I became an Advocate to give support to kids in a system that often cannot provide what they need and give a voice to the little ones who often are not heard.

What would you tell someone who was considering becoming a Child Advocate?

If you are considering becoming an Advocate imagine the feeling of accomplishment and compassion you get when you have made a difference in a child's life and the possibilities you open up for that child.

Advocate Spotlight



ALLYSON

5 Fun facts:

- 1) I'm a firefighter for Tacoma
- 2) Avid animal lover and vegan
- 3) I have two dogs, Charlie (Cane Corso) and Zoie (Chocolate Labrador).
- 4) I love to cook.
- 5) I am a Tacoma native, born and raised.

Why did you become a Child Advocate?

Originally, I had wanted to volunteer with the diversion program. However, at that time there was huge need for advocates due to the number of cases coming into the system each month. When I learned about the dependency process and the impact the system has on children I knew I wanted to do whatever I could to help give these children a voice in the system.

What would you tell someone who is considering becoming a Child Advocate?

Anyone can be an advocate as long as your heart is in the right place, you are willing to work hard and you come into every case with an unbiased, open mind. It may seem overwhelming at first but you have a lot of support and resources available between your supervisor and other advocates.

Advocate Spotlight



AMY

5 Fun facts:

- 1) I have been Married for 17 years .
- 2) I have 2 children.
- 3) I am pretty competitive and during the stay at home order realize this applies even to puzzles.
- 4) I have an engineering degree from the University of Washington, but only used it for about a year.
- 5) I have worked as a stand-up comedian and comedy writer for 20 years.

Why did you become a Child Advocate?

My Advocacy journey began as a desire to serve hurting kids and families in our community. My husband and I wanted to foster but were not able to take that step because of my work schedule. This program offered me a way to be involved right away. I am thankful for all that I have learned about children and families moving through the system and ways beyond Advocacy that I can be a help to them.

What would you tell someone who is considering becoming a Child Advocate?

If you are considering becoming an advocate, take the next step. It may seem overwhelming standing on one side looking over the fence, but once you are on the other side and begin the work you will wonder why you waited so long.

Advocate Spotlight



SANDY

5 Fun facts:

- 1) Loves crime and police shows on TV.
- 2) Obsessed with becoming fluent in French.
- 3) Hosted 5 foreign exchange students for a year each from around the world.
- 4) Have remained close friends with 15 women with whom I went to college 23 years ago (and who now live around the world).
- 5) Taught logic and philosophy for 26 years.

Why did you become a Child Advocate?

I recognized that kids in these situations really need someone (court appointed) who is truly on their side and looking out for their welfare.

What would you tell someone who is considering becoming a Child Advocate?

This job is genuinely meaningful and rewarding but it requires patience and flexibility.

Upcoming Trainings

You can RSVP to any trainings with the following email address. Once RSVPed a Zoom link will be emailed.

juv_CAPtrainings@piercecounywa.gov

The Spirit Behind ICWA | Tuesday 7/14 | 5:30 – 7:30

Information Gathering/Monitoring | Tuesday 8/18 | 5:30 – 7:30

Permanency Planning | Wednesday 9/23 | 5:30 - 7:30

GAL Rules | Saturday 9/26 | 9:00 – 11:00

Report Writing | Wednesday 10/14 | 5:30-7:30

Look forward to other virtual training opportunities emailed to you from the program. If you attend a virtual training that is not presented by our program, email juv_CAPtrainings@piercecounywa.gov with the date, name and length of training attended.

Board of Directors & Committees

Kathy Bertram: President | Mary Bartley: Vice President; Children's Programs; Compliance; Recruitment & Retention | Jenny Kenyon Gentry: Recruitment & Retention; Community Relations & Social Media | Dan Casey: Treasurer, Children's Program | Buffy Via: Registered Agent; Advocate Liaison | Lauren Stasiak: Secretary & Newsletter | Mike McCowan: Fundraising | Starr Mayer: Newsletter; Recruitment & Retention | Emily Hall: Fundraising | Dorothy Gorder: Community Relations & Social Media |

KID Connect meets on the 2nd Wednesday, every other month, from 5:30 - 7:30 via Zoom. Meetings are open to all. Email buffy.via@piercecounywa.gov for link. Next meeting is September 9th at 5:30pm.

January | March | May | July | September | November