

CASA of Lancaster County

Introduction

In 2005 President Judge Farina began to explore the value of adding a CASA program to the court services in Lancaster County. After an initial meeting with PA CASA and a handful of interested citizens, Judge Farina and numerous county staff met with their counterparts from Cumberland County(operating a County funded CASA program) led by Judge Edward Guido. Judge Farina was sufficiently impressed with the merits of CASA and wanted to learn still more about the various models of program governance, scheduling a visit with Judge Arthur Grim and the key staff of Berks County who work closely with a CASA program operating under the umbrella of the United Way.

Soon thereafter, Lancaster County Judge Leslie Gorbey was named to spearhead the development of CASA in Lancaster County favoring a CASA model of a private nonprofit organization. In the summer of 2006 Judge Gorbey, working closely with PA CASA established a steering committee of county citizens to begin the work of developing a program.

Nearly 20 invitees ultimately resulted in steering committee meetings involving approximately 15 county citizens representing key stakeholders from the court and child welfare, education and the business community, After two initial meetings at the Reidenbach elementary school in Manheim, meetings were then moved to the Central Pennsylvania College Facility in the city of Lancaster. It is the hope of the steering committee that the college will become the home of CASA of Lancaster County as a result of a corporate partnership between the two entities.

Much of work of the steering committee is completed. In the weeks ahead two primary focuses of the committee are the selection of a board of directors for the new entity and public awareness/funding as dollars must be identified and secured. Below is a list of some of the steering committees work highlights.

- Two subcommittees were established to focus the work of the steering committee on two primary areas: 1. Governance 2. External relations
- NCASA has received the “Statement of Intent” to establish a program from the steering committee.
- The incorporation papers are filed.
- A start up contribution of \$6000 has been pledged.
- *CASA of Lancaster County* is now the chosen name of the new program under development.
- Draft documents including By-laws, job descriptions, board candidates, and a Memorandum of Understanding are being finalized for review.
- The 501©3 package will be filed in conjunction with the official naming of the board of directors scheduled for late May.
- The provisional membership application for National CASA is being prepared for submission at the end of May.

- Professional drafts of the program letterhead and business cards are developed in compliance with standards required by the National CASA Association.
- A database of potential supporters is completed and a modest list of strategic targets is evolving.