

Barbara Bedell: New CASA volunteers ready to take assignments

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Orange County's newest Court Appointed Special Assistants (CASA) were sworn in on Valentine's Day by three Family Court Judges: **Carol S. Klein, Christine P. Krahulik** and **Victoria B. Campbell.**

The CASA training began in December at the Dispute Resolution Center, a nonprofit agency under which CASA in Orange and Sullivan counties operate.

The judges assign CASA volunteers to children who have been placed in foster care due to abuse or neglect. The volunteers support what is in the best interest of the child by monitoring court orders and reporting on the progress of the child to the judges in Family Court proceedings.

New volunteers are **Vincent Crescenzo, Tammy Eckert, Gwendolyn Frenzel, Christina Gilot, Klana Hambric, RoseMarie Mastrocola, Ann McGuinness, Jessica Sherwood** and **Jami Waite.**

Also attending the ceremony were supervisors in the CASA program: **Chelsea Paterson**, CASA program director; **Manny Sepulveda**, CASA coordinator of Orange County, and **Alyssa Freeman**, CASA of Sullivan County.

To volunteer or for information, contact **Donna Ramlow** at 372-8771, ext. 5003, or visit drcservices.org.

Coming up

- The West Point Band Jazz Ensemble will be in concert at 7 p.m. Feb. 27 in Eisenhower Hall. Jazz trumpeter **Etienne Charles** is the featured guest. Etienne is a Guggenheim Fellow in the Creative Arts, Associate Professor of Jazz Trumpet and teacher-scholar at Michigan State University. He has been written in the U.S. Congressional Record for his musical contributions to Trinidad and Tobago and the world.

The concert is free; tickets are not necessary, but allow extra time for a full vehicle security check at the gates.

This and that

• On a recent day, **Logan Eisenberg**, 11, and his mother, **Danielle**, visited with Orange County Executive **Steve Neuhaus** at HONOR, formerly known as Emergency Housing in Middletown. Logan, a student in the sixth grade at Monhagen Middle School, having received a gift of \$100 from his grandparents at Christmas, was encouraged by his parents to use it to start a sock drive for the homeless. By using social media he collected 3,687 pairs of socks, a number that far outnumbered his goal of 1,000. His thoughtful and very appreciated gift pushed him in the spotlight when he was named Orange County Citizen of the Month by County Executive Neuhaus.

• **Yasmine Kalkstein**, an associate professor of psychology at Mount Saint Mary College, received a Fulbright Senior Scholar grant from the U.S. State Department. The grant sponsors her ongoing research into women’s medical decision-making regarding childbirth.

She has been working with **Tayla Miron-Shatz**, director of the Center for Medical Decision Making at Ono Academic College in Israel. She had dreamed of a chance to work with Miron-Shatz, and the Fulbright award made it possible. She and her husband rented their house, packed up the two young children and moved to Rehovot, Israel, nearly 6,000 miles away. She’s spending her sabbatical year working in Israel instead of working at home.

“This has been unlike anything I’ve ever experienced,” she said. “As a Jewish person, I’m in my homeland with my people, so there’s a meaningful, emotional and historical connection.”

She’ll be returning to the Mount and her class in the fall.

Barbara Bedell’s column appears daily. She can be reached at 346-3125 or by email: bbedell@the-record.com.

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