

Dear Volunteers,

I moved from Ann Arbor to Traverse City in 1981. I hoped to find a job that would allow me to work and help people and to get involved in my new community. With my background as a secondary education teacher, I also wanted to use my teaching and communication skills.

Frances Rajkovich, Director of Volunteers, offered me an office assistant position, beginning June 1st, 1981, in the two person Volunteer Services Division, of what was then the Probate Court. Our offices were located separate from our Court at the Grand Traverse County Civic Center. I learned much from Frances during those eight years prior to her retirement in 1989, at which time, I was fortunate to be hired as her successor.

My greatest priority then and even now has been to maintain the high quality of work being done by volunteers, to support that work through training and in-service education and to continue to assess needs of our Court, to determine how volunteer resources might best be used by our juvenile justice system.

Over the years, I am grateful to have met and worked with many wonderful people, who as citizen volunteers, brought with them much life experience, expertise, and enthusiasm, resulting in new resources for our Volunteer Services.

January 30, 2015, will be my last day in the office. Our Volunteer Services has grown and evolved over the years as the needs of our Court and community have been identified. It seems fitting to be signing off in our *VIP* newsletter in what is my 25th year of writing most of it. I know that you will continue this important work. I appreciate all of your good works and your friendship.

With sincere thanks and best wishes,

Linda

Please see pg. 6 for Open House Invite -
Celebrating Linda's
Retirement!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Florence Morrison
Holli Ringgenberg
Nancy Bazemore
Benson Munger
Al Wilkins
Caroline Hirth
Katy Ramsdell
Dan Briggs
Henry Tenbrink
JoEllen Evans
Maswe Hennrick
Joann Carlson
Helen Knapp
Dorothy Grant
Caron Alpers
Renee Stout
Pat Wazny
Sandra Dwyer
Josh Sullivan
Jordan Ascione

Cathy Boissoneau
Nancy Ferrar
Betty Leden
Nancy Fraser
Val Doman
Donna Thoma
Lynn Troutman
John Roeser
Susan McMahon
Laura McVey
Marie Hanis
Joan Wigton
Suzetta Summers
Beth Rideout
Lynn Bryant
Susan Green
Matt Dohm
Ann Geht



We are saddened by the passing of **Carla Lamphere**. Carla volunteered her time with our Court as a guardian and a conservator. She was a warm, wise and faithful friend who served as a strong advocate for her ward, a developmentally disabled adult, who presented with many issues. Carla was up to the challenge and met each situation with research and an open heart. We miss her already!



Many thanks to, **Suzanne Cork** with GT County Health Dept. for putting together and donating to Volunteer Services; Blood Borne Pathogen Cleanup Kits, for our transport cars.

Thank you, Suzanne!



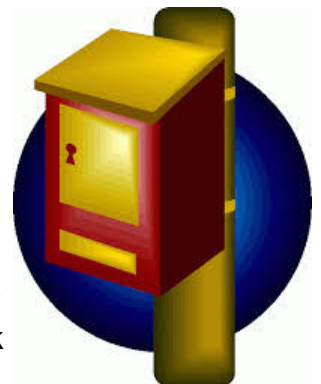
Many thanks to the following volunteers who were able to assist the Hall of Justice in conducting the SCAO (State Court Administrators Office) Survey.

Probate and Family Court volunteers handed out hundreds of questionnaires throughout the week of Nov. 17-21st for Probate, Family and District Courts. The survey's purpose was to poll individuals coming through the Hall of Justice on Court business, asking them what they would like to see changed and what they were happy with. Amanda Flowers, Probate Register, stated the surveys were generally favorable in their view of our courts.

Thank you!

Alexander Moore, Peg Gove, Julie Howe, Nancy Reddy, Harmony Odette, Mary Jo Zazueta, Judy Zrimec, Amy Richards, Nancy Winogrodzki, Ruth Bay and Barb Grewe.

Don't forget Volunteer Services has a drop box in front of the Governmental Center, next to the USPS boxes. Use this drop box when you don't want to take the time to come into the building. We check the box every week on Mondays and Thursdays. Feel free to give us a call if you drop something off any other day and we will run out and check it!





Learning Partners will be back on the ice at Howe Arena in January!

Students, their families and Learning Partner Volunteers will enjoy open-skate time followed by a pizza lunch at the Civic Center on January 23rd. It's a "no school day" for TCAPS, so the Friday timing works perfectly! For most students, this will be their first time on the ice. Look for photos of the fun and a report in the next newsletter.



We are seeing more school requests for Learning Partner assistance. If you are able to take on a second student, or willing to start with your first, please contact Laura at the office. You can do a lot of good with just a little time— come to the meeting on January 20th and you'll learn even more about how you can help!

The Learning Partner meeting in January will *not* be on the regular "first Tuesday" because it is combined with the CASA Volunteer meeting on January 20th. We will have a presentation about the connection between attendance in school and jail incarceration rates. —————→



Special thanks to Centre Ice for their donation of ice time and skate rentals that makes the Learning Partner Ice Skating activity possible.



On Tuesday,
January 20, 2015,
at 4 p.m., Learning
Partners will join

CASA volunteers, to hear from **Heather Prevo, Truancy Intervention Program Coordinator**. She will discuss the Michigan School-Justice Partnership and how truancy is being addressed in Grand Traverse County. Heather will discuss how this program works with the schools to monitor and respond to children who have lack of attendance issues at school.

Success for children is often linked to regular school attendance. Kids who are not in school are often linked to those who find themselves later in life, in jail. "Pipeline to Prison" is a phrase most recently used to describe this problem.

CASA volunteers and Learning Partners are directly involved with children who fall into these at-risk categories. Learning Partners are an early elementary intervention program established to prevent youth from becoming court involved. CASA volunteers advocate for children in foster care who have been removed from home due to neglect and or abuse. Statistics show that 25% children in foster care will find themselves, in jail, as older youth or adults.

Please join us for this important and timely meeting.

On Tues., **February 17th, 2015,**
Sue Greenfelder, DHS, Education Coordinator will be present to tell CASA volunteers how youth in foster care are supported during school and after high school graduation.

Story of Hope From a CASA Volunteer

Megan was a girl in foster care, when I decided to take her case as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. As her CASA volunteer, I would meet with her regularly to gain personal knowledge of her and her situation, understand her wishes, and look out for her best interests: a safe, permanent home, as soon as possible. Megan was living in a foster care home that had turned out to be a poor fit for a teenage girl. At 14, she was scared, and lived a pretty unstable life with a mom with severe mental health issues, and a father who was never in her life. After many visits, and much sushi, Megan began to trust me. Working with agency workers we were able to move her to a different foster care home.

Her parents released their rights to her and it turned out that the new foster care home was also interested in adopting her. Her new parents lived in town and Megan flourished in school, taking advantage of dual enrollment with NMC. During this time our relationship grew and a healthy, joyful, young lady began to emerge.

Upon closing of her case, she was accepted as an exchange student overseas. She has also spent time abroad attending the American University. After returning to Traverse City, we reconnected and she is now recognized in my household as, “part of the family”. She is full of confidence and has a smile that can light up a room. Her future is bright and she makes me very proud. As her CASA volunteer, I know I played a part in helping her become the young woman I see today.

There is hope out there—I am so glad I was around to help her in her journey.

**Thank you,
Sue Summers
CASA Volunteer**

Volunteer Services received a completed ‘exit interview’ questionnaire, from a youth and parent who took part in the Citizen Panel



Diversion Program. The purpose of the “exit”, is to find out how the program was helpful (or not) and what we might do to improve it.

The youth in this matter stated; *“I feel more confident and I feel proud of myself.”* Also, *“I feel I was allowed a second chance and now I have a clean slate. It was good for me, now its over and I’m very thankful”*. The parent in this case stated; *“This was a positive, reinforcing experience giving us all a positive outlook on the future. She understands that negative-unlawful behaviors have serious lasting consequences. I think this is a great program and opportunity for kids who deserve a second chance.”*

Thank You to all of our Citizen Volunteers who took part in panels during 2014;

**Donna Burnside, Sue Schmidt, Wes Nelson,
Dave Speirs, Katy Ramsdell, Marie Hanis,
Mary Jo Zazueta, Marco Pazienza,
Karen Grant, Parker Field, Maswe Hennrick,
Rachel Ottman, Henry Tenbrink,
Marilyn Vlach, Lee Storch,
Don Kuehlhorn**

Dealing with Grief:

This time of year can be a difficult time for those of us who have experienced the loss of a loved one. The following list are things to think about, to help guide you throughout the year.

- **Don’t ask too much of yourself.**
 - **Reshape traditions.**
- **Find ways to include the ones you have lost.**
 - **Take time for you.**
- **Allow yourself to be sad but also to experience joy.**



GRAND TRAVERSE AREA LITERACY COUNCIL



The Holidays have passed and all are recovering from the heightened pace of activities. Winter slows down everything and the long cold (hopefully snowy, sorry I am a XC skier) soaks deeply into the earth (and everything on it).

The Holidays and winter slow down GTALC's activity as well.

Some tutor/student sessions will have brief hiatuses; however, organizational activities pick up their pace.

Among the organizational activities is an operational transition, the Michigan Works!/GTALC referral project. The two organizations are putting what we hope will be finishing touches on a new set of processes designed to better serve the clients of Michigan Works!

Similarly the outreach program involving business partners in the search for those struggling with reading moves forward with an ad campaign in the Traverse City Chamber Newsletter.

GTALC is in the final stages of its annual support campaign with early responses indicating that there are those in our community who strongly support GTALC's mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Dick Thompson, President



Use the following link for updated information regarding health news in our community. Due to recent illness outbreaks in our local schools, we want to keep you informed with current information.

<http://www.co.grand-traverse.mi.us/departments/health.htm>

Many thanks to Kim Kierczynski, owner of Kim's Hallmark for her generous donation of Beanie Babies to Probate & Family Court. Judge Stanton presents children with this gift as part of their adoption hearing.

Thank you,
Kim!

thank
you!



**VOLUNTEERS IN
PREVENTION/PROBATION**

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE COURT

GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY PROBATE AND FAMILY COURT

MELANIE D. STANTON, PROBATE & FAMILY COURT JUDGE

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*All meetings are held at the Volunteer Services office
unless otherwise mentioned.

Learning Partners

1st Tuesday-4:00-5:00 pm

January 20th, 2015 (date change)

(see pg. 3)

Tuesday, Feb. 3rd, 2015



www.HappyNewYear-2015.com

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate)- See pg. 3

3rd Tuesday- 4:00-6:00 pm

Tuesday, Jan. 20th, 2015

Tuesday, Feb. 17th, 2015



Literacy Council

3rd Wednesday-6:00 pm
Traverse Area District Library

Wednesday, Jan. 21st, 2015



Save the Date:

You're Invited

RETIREMENT CELEBRATION FOR

LINDA!

OPEN HOUSE

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 30TH, 2015
1:30-4:00 P.M.**

**ROBERT P. GRIFFIN HALL OF
JUSTICE
LOWER LEVEL-MULTI PURPOSE
ROOM**