



Friends of CASA of Franklin County, Ohio May News Update

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There are two national observances this month that are of significance to Friends and CASA – and to the volunteer Guardians ad Litem (GALs) who work one-on-one with children in Franklin County who have been abused and neglected.

May is **National Mental Health Awareness Month** – and news reports continue to indicate a strong correlation between the pandemic and an increase in mental health issues impacting children and adolescents now more than ever. A recent [news article](#) stated “three decades ago, the gravest public health threats to teenagers in the United States came from **binge drinking, drunken driving, teenage pregnancy and smoking**. These have since fallen sharply, replaced by a new public health concern: **soaring rates of mental health disorders**.”

Reports show that abused and neglected children often face additional stressors from [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\)](#) – and now because of the pandemic, they may also face additional emotional turmoil from the sudden onset and somewhat lengthy duration of the coronavirus:

- The pandemic is classified as a “natural disaster,” according to an [agency within the National Institutes of Health](#). As a natural disaster, Covid can be a causative factor to additional harmful effects on these children.
- “Young people are especially vulnerable to the negative effects of natural disasters, and those who are involved in the child welfare system are at particularly high risk for experiencing disaster-related traumatic stress and other mental health and behavioral challenges,” states [Child Trends](#), a national research organization focused on improving lives of children and youth.

In a news post *Mental Health Awareness: An Empowered Wellbeing* shared online at ADAMH, it is stated, “The pandemic increased our awareness about mental health and the importance of overall wellbeing. We have all learned a lot over the last two years and we have had our resiliency – that ability to recover from difficult situations – tested.” It was also stated that “awareness is the first step towards an empowered wellbeing” – and new specialty training programs offered to CASA GALs enable them to more readily identify a child that may be manifesting additional signs of emotional stress – including thoughts of suicide – and work with that child accordingly to handle and overcome the effects of such stressors. You can read the full [news post](#) and find other resources on help for addiction and mental health services online at [ADAMH](#).

May is also National Foster Care Month – and according to [Franklin County Children’s Services](#), there are still children waiting for YOU – to **Foster Hope, Foster Love and Foster Franklin County**.

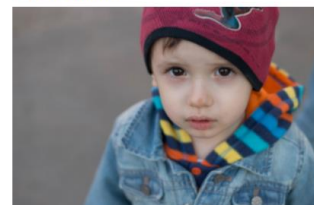
Did you know: A child is likely to move three or more times during the average 21 months they spend in foster care?

CASA GALs help ease this process for the children they serve.

Let’s recognize those foster families committed to helping children who have been removed from the home due to abuse and neglect – and those volunteer GALs who advocate for the child in the parental home, in kinship or foster care, or any other environment.

Learn more about volunteering as a [CASA GAL here](#). The next virtual training session begins in August, with national flex training (which is required) starting on July 24. There is no cost for volunteer training.

Meet Johnnie



“ While in county protective care, Johnnie was moved 15 times in two years. A child used to no rules was forced into strange houses, three hospitals, emergency care facilities and residential treatment centers in five different cities. And then CASA found him.