



Bryan's CASA Story

Bryan, a bi-racial boy with disabling Cerebral Palsy, was five years old when Ellyn became his CASA volunteer. He had been removed six months earlier from a substance-abusing teenage mother, and was in his third foster home. While it was a good home, the family was unable to adopt Bryan. Bryan's mother had been kicked out of three substance abuse programs and DYFS made a decision to cease all efforts to reunify mother and son. Accordingly, DYFS prepared to start the process to terminate parental rights and put Bryan up for adoption, despite the fact that it would be difficult to find a family able and willing to adopt him due to his special needs. As a last chance, Bryan's mother entered a faith-based program. She became determined to make it and be able to raise her son. Having experienced the strong, loving bond between Bryan and his mother, and in light of his mother's newfound determination to care for her son, Ellyn advocated strongly for reunification (and against moving toward termination of parental rights). Unfortunately, after nine months working with Bryan, Ellyn found out that, the night before the Court hearing was scheduled to occur, DYFS informed Bryan's foster mother to pack his belongings as he was to move to his fourth foster home the next day. In Court that day, however, Ellyn advocated strongly for return of Bryan to his mother; she also assisted his mother in pleading her case to the Court. The Court ruled that Bryan be sent home with his mother that day. Today, Bryan lives very happily with his mother who is clean, works full time, and has become quite an advocate for her son. Bryan has recently (through his mother's research and perseverance) had surgery on his legs and is doing better physically. The last time Ellyn spoke with her, Bryan's mother told her how excited he is to be a Cub Scout.

Rationale for Cost Savings: Had CASA not been appointed and Ellyn not been on the case, Bryan would have been in foster care for at least two more years before any adoption could have taken place (assuming – in a best case scenario -- that a family would have stepped forward to adopt a bi-racial seven to nine year old with disabling Cerebral Palsy). In addition, any adoptive home would have received an Adoption Subsidy of at least \$8,498 per year for at least 9 years. Thus, at a minimum, the CASA volunteer saved the state the cost of foster care placement for two years, which costs \$27,706 (hard costs only), and nine years of adoption subsidies totaling \$76,482, for a total hard cost savings of \$104,188.¹

**Transition from Foster Care to Reunification with Mother
Total Cost Savings: \$104,188**

¹ FY2010 Proposed State Budget, p. D-35 shows annual cost per client for Foster or Resource Home Placements (\$13,853) and Adoption Subsidies (\$8,498).