

**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF SOMERSET, HUNTERDON  
AND WARREN COUNTIES

## Court Appointed Special Advocates of Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties, Inc.

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July 20, 2017

Thomas Dilts, Esq.  
Children's Hope Initiative  
P.O. Box 8063  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Dear Judge Dilts,

As per your request, here is our report of the children served by Traveling Tutors during the months of January-June 2017. The children's names have been changed to protect their confidentiality. I am very happy to report that all of the children served by tutors passed all of their classes and were promoted to the next grade level.

### **Susan Diana (1 child)**

Ms. Diana and Lisa have applied the reading strategies she has learned to the NJ Driver's Manual in preparation for her driving test. The test contains challenging words and detailed information that demand strong comprehension skills. While Lisa will be able to have the exam read to her during actual testing, they are proceeding as though she will be reading the test on her. She will take the test in December, after she completes the Driver's Education class.

Preparing for the test has also provided the opportunity to practice effective test-studying strategies. Brain research supports fewer, shorter test-studying sessions for deeper learning than cramming or fewer, longer studying sessions. Lisa has been impressively recalling such detailed information as "A motorist with a valid out of state license must apply for a New Jersey license within how long of moving to the state?" Answer: 30 days. One strategy that works effectively for Lisa is to have her teach Ms. Diana the information - speaking a fact out loud as opposed to reading it silently helps her (as well as most students) to retain the information.

**GREAT NEWS:** Along with Lisa's increased involvement in school (dance team and cheerleading), her most recent report card showed all As and an 87 in physics). According her 2017 IEP meeting, her Lexile reading level increased this year from 345 to 420. Comments from her teachers also showed her to be a positive student who self-advocates when she is struggling. Her teachers described her as "an asset in class who completes all her homework assigned"; "a joy to teach this year who helps other students"; and "always participates and tries her best."

\*Note: Just a reminder that Lisa was tested at a third grade reading level when Ms. Diana started working with her three years ago. Now she's taking – and passing - physics!

### **Carol Dvoor (7 children)**

Ms. Dvoor reports that Anita is doing very well. She continues to use the strategy of breaking large tasks into chunks, which has helped her to learn more effectively. One of Anita's recent assignments was to memorize the preamble to the Constitution, which she struggled with doing, even in chunks. Ms. Dvoor tried a different strategy and encouraged Anita to "add a beat to it." The musical strategy helped, and Anita was able to memorize it. One of the barriers that Anita has had is the lack of a working computer at home, so Ms. Dvoor sometimes works with her at the library. Anita passed all of her classes this school year.

Joseph and John had been doing well, but their grades dropped during the third quarter. In researching why, we found that there was a lot going on with them personally in regards to permanency – there was a lot of uncertainty of whether they would stay in foster care or be returned to their parents. Joseph has struggled more than his brother – I have attached his second quarter report card that shows the drop in most of his classes – while John reengaged and brought his scores up before the end of the school year.

The children were recently reunified with their parents, and it is doubtful that the family will be receptive to tutoring moving forward. Ms. Dvoor notes that both were promoted to the next grade level and is of the opinion that while their grades might not reflect it, tutoring was a support for them that gave them new tools moving forward. It was a good experience for both of them, and their academic struggles over the past six months are likely related to the upheaval in their personal lives.

Ms. Dvoor has been working with Larry and Anthony, meeting them at the library weekly. Anthony has had a difficult time with self-regulation, so Ms. Dvoor has had to come up with strategies to help engage and focus him. She found that he enjoyed learning games on the computer, and she found that Larry, who struggles with reading and comprehension, very much enjoys making paper airplanes and origami. She got a book on making paper airplanes for him and covered up the diagram. He had to go through the written instructions in order to make it correctly, and when it didn't work out he had to go back and redo it. Because he likes this kind of activity, he was able to remain patient and re-read, finally mastering the task. Anthony saw his brother's new toy and wanted to make one too, further strengthening his reading and comprehension skills as well. Both boys continue to have behavioral issues, but their academic progress is slow and steady.

Earlier this year, Ms. Dvoor began working with Nathan and Isaac, who were recently reunified with their mother. With all of the disruption in their lives, both were struggling in school, Isaac more with academics and Nathan with significant behavior problems. Isaac was in danger of failing Science, and with Ms. Dvoor's help he made up missing assignments and passed the class for the year. As she had done with Larry, she looked for what Isaac enjoyed, which is football. She got books on that for him to read to her, strengthening his reading and comprehension skills. For Nathan, he has difficulties with fine motor skills and writing legibly. Ms. Dvoor brought him thicker pencils and grips, which made a real difference for him. One challenge has been that their mom doesn't seem to be engaged in their education and is content for others to teach and tutor them; she does not ensure that homework gets done. Having Ms. Dvoor help with homework and follow up with the teacher as to outstanding assignments models its importance for the boys.

**Elisabeth Fuccello (1 child)**

Ms. Fuccello was appointed to young Jacob in April, who is struggling with reading. She has been focused on helping him with vowel sounds and blended consonants to help his reading fluency. A very important breakthrough came when he brought in his prior knowledge from the classroom teacher and applied it in his tutoring sessions. Ms. Fuccello reports that Jacob recently read three “easy reader” books to her. His self-confidence soars with these accomplishments. She has also been reviewing his “sight words” with him, and he subsequently completed two word searches using these words. While Jacob is sometimes fidgety and it is a challenge to get him back on task, he does want to learn and is a cooperative student.

**Andrew Kozlowski (2 children)**

Mr. Kozlowski was very recently appointed as a tutor to two sisters, Alice and Amy. Alice has had struggles with reading, so Mr. Kozlowski has been focused on reviewing “sight words.” He reports that it is a slow go but she gets about  $\frac{1}{2}$  without help,  $\frac{3}{4}$  more with help and  $\frac{1}{8}$  not at all. She does well if he gives her a definition like, “it’s a color.” He also worked on recognizing geometric shapes, writing 0-9, identifying colors, etc. He has found that doing learning activities on his iPad is viewed as a game. He has been playing War with her to teach the concept of “higher and lower” numbers.

Amy has some challenges in math but approaches her work methodically. She takes direction and correction well and is receptive to learning. Mr. Kozlowski reports that they did a reading comprehension exercise that she also did well in. She has very good printing, but her spelling has some problems. She seems to know when she has made a mistake but does not know the correct it. Her reading is quick but that sometime causes her to misread by assuming what the next words will say rather than reading them. They are working on slowing down and being deliberate in reading and spelling.

**Marsha Sepesi (2 children)**

Ms. Sepesi was appointed to two siblings, David and Adelaide, in April. It turned out that Adelaide didn’t need as much help as David, so Ms. Sepesi’s sessions have largely focused on building David’s foundational math and reading needs. They review his “sight words” from school, vowels sounds, and blended sounds. Ms. Sepesi coaches David while he reads to her. She has also had him write/draw stories for her and review numbers from 1 to 100 and subtraction number facts to 5.

Adelaide is working close to grade level but needed some additional help with Math. Her grade had slipped due to a failing grade on a quiz but she was able to get a B on her end of chapter test.

**Rhonda Simoff (1 child)**

Ms. Simoff was assigned to a Hunterdon County child per Judge Marino’s request, but the family was not engaged in the process and didn’t really want a tutor. Since that time, Ms. Simoff has not taken another tutoring case.

**Challenges:** Our previously identified challenge remains the same: limited engagement in the educational process by resource/biological parents and older youth. How to address this as the tutors transition out is a key yet unanswered question.

**Achievements:** Fourteen children had tutors so far this year, and all of them maintained passing grades and were promoted to the next grade level. Some, like Anita, have made exceptional progress. If she were the only one to benefit from this program, it would be worth every dollar spent.

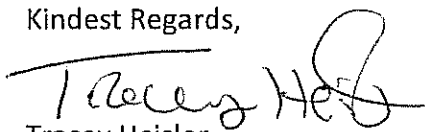
I think the biggest achievement that the tutors have demonstrated is that these children are learning the value of incremental progress. They are building, session after session, on their successes from the week before. In addition, having a caring and engaged adult who is there to help, week after week, is crucial to their academic progression, their sense of stability, and their accountability for their own progress.

The tutors have also met the children where they are, and when traditional teaching methods haven't done the job, they have turned to more creative methods of teaching concepts. Whether it's playing War, building paper airplanes or origami figures, or learning about football, the tutors have shown these children that learning can be fun, that they can succeed, even if it's not in the same way that other children succeed, and they are worth the effort.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide these services. We are incredibly grateful to Children's Hope, Fin Pro, and the Dombal Vogel Foundation for your collective support of this initiative. An anonymous donor has provided an additional \$10,000, so we will continue to provide these services for at least another year. Its continuation after that will depend on funding.

Thank you for taking the chance on this pilot project and helping us to develop a truly valuable and needed tool in support of our children.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracey Heisler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "T".

Tracey Heisler  
Executive Director

Grades 5 & 6

**REPORT CARD**

Phone #

732-873-2800

Student No.	Student Name	Phone	Grade	Date Printed	Year
		732-848-3248	05	03/02/2017	2016-17

#	Comments	#	Comments
2	101 Pleasure to teach	27	126 Unprepared for class
3	102 Respectful to self/others	30	129 Missing assignments
4	103 Follows Directions		
6	105 Satisfactory performance		
11	110 Must increase time on task		
15	114 Must follow class/school rules		
19	118 Must prepare for tests/quizzes		

Subject	Course	Instructor	Per	1 <sup>st</sup> MP	2 <sup>nd</sup> MP	3 <sup>rd</sup> MP	4 <sup>th</sup> MP	Comments
Band Lessons	7200-7	Vitello, Deborah	0	85	81			6 27
Language Arts Literacy 5	3500-11	Alston, Asha	1	89	73			3 11
Science 5	5500-11	Calhoun, Kristin S	5	73	66			11 15 19
Mathematics 5	4500-11	Calhoun, Kristin S	8	70	66			15 30 19
Dance 5	1510-11	Strand, Cheryl	8	91	85			
Vocal Music 5	1520-11	Piercy, Noel	8	87	79			
Art 5	1530-11	Cyran, Michela	8	90	94			
Physical Education 5	2500-11	Cox, Sean B	8	83	96			
Spanish 5	7500-11	Mullings, Althea	8	100	76			19 27
Social Studies 5	6500-11	Alston, Asha	9	71	75			2 4

Grading System Key:				School Attendance					Marking Periods	
100 - 93 = A+	79 - 78 = C+	I = Incomplete		MP	1	2	3	4	Total	1st MP = 09/01/16 - 11/09/16 (45 days)
97 - 93 = A	77 - 73 = C	P = Passing course while in ESL		Abs	1	0			1	2nd MP = 11/10/16 - 01/30/17 (46 days)
92 - 90 = A-	72 - 70 = C-	F = Failed course while in ESL		Tdy	7	8			15	3rd MP = 02/10/17 - 04/06/17 (47 days)
89 - 88 = B+	69 - 66 = D	ESL = ESL Services    BL = Bilingual Math								4th MP = 04/07/17 - 06/18/17 (49 days)
87 - 83 = B	65 and below = F	PG = Passing with Guidance								
82 - 80 = B-										

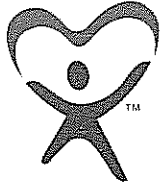
<b>Honor Roll</b>	<b>Gold Honor Roll:</b> Numeric grade of 90 and above in ALL subject areas including specials
	<b>Silver Honor Roll:</b> Numeric grade of 80 or above in ALL subject areas including specials
<b>School Attendance</b>	Attendance is necessary for success in school. Poor attendance will affect grades. Please review the Parent-Student Handbook for our attendance policy.

School Website: [www.franklinboe.org/sgs](http://www.franklinboe.org/sgs)

Phone: 732 873 2800

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



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7/21/2017

Nancy Newton  
Friends of Somerset County Youth, Inc.  
The Children's Hope Initiative  
P.O. Box 8063  
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Dear Nancy,

As per our executed MOU pertaining to funding from the Children's Hope Initiative in support of our "Traveling Tutor" initiative, I would like to request the remaining \$6000 in support of tutors currently serving fourteen children in Somerset, Hunterdon, and Warren Counties. The dates of service for this \$6000 were 1/1/17-7/21/17. I have enclosed our QuickBooks reports showing that the full \$6000 have been expended.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions, and thank you.

Kindest Regards,

Tracey Heisler  
Executive Director  
CASA SHaW

**CASA of SHAW**  
**Transaction Detail By Account**  
**January through June 2017**

	<u>Date</u>	<u>Num</u>	<u>Memo</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Traveling Tutor	01/04/2017	3764	Traveling Tutor, 11/15/16-12/15/16	200.00
	01/04/2017	3765	Traveling Tutor, 12/15/16-12/31/16	300.00
	01/26/2017	3782	Traveling Tutor expenses	368.75
	02/03/2017	3789	1099s for tutors in 2016	250.00
	02/28/2017	3805	Traveling Tutor January/February 2017	343.75
	02/28/2017	3806	Traveling Tutor 2/1/17-2/14/17	406.25
	03/06/2017	3811	Traveling Tutor, 2/15/17-2/28/17	331.25
	04/03/2017	3838	Traveling Tutor	375.00
	04/03/2017	3839	Traveling Tutor	225.00
	04/11/2017	3847	Traveling Tutor	100.00
	04/26/2017	3863	Traveling Tutor	112.50
	05/11/2017	3873	Traveling Tutor 3/23/17-5/4/17	306.25
	05/11/2017	3874	Traveling Tutor	0.00
	05/11/2017	3878	Traveling Tutor	200.00
	05/11/2017	3884	Traveling Tutor	100.00
	05/18/2017	3889	Traveling Tutor	287.50
	05/18/2017	3890	Traveling Tutor	200.00
	05/22/2017	3891	Traveling Tutor	550.00
	06/07/2017	3905	5/22-6/4	150.00
	06/07/2017	3906	5/11-5/18	162.50
	06/07/2017	3907	Tutoring 5/16-5/31	487.50
	06/21/2017	3931	Tutoring services from 5/11-6/14 2017	237.50
	06/21/2017	3932	Tutoring 5/5/16-6/20/17	87.50
	06/21/2017	3933	Tutoring 6/8-6/12 2017	100.00
Total Traveling Tutor				<u>5,881.25</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<u><b>5,881.25</b></u>

1:33 PM  
07/21/17  
Accrual Basis

**CASA of SHaW**  
**Profit & Loss by Job**  
July 1 - 21, 2017

	<u>Friends of SC Youth</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Expense		
Traveling Tutor	118.75	118.75
Total Expense	<u>118.75</u>	<u>118.75</u>
Net Ordinary Income	<u>-118.75</u>	<u>-118.75</u>
Net Income	<u><u>-118.75</u></u>	<u><u>-118.75</u></u>