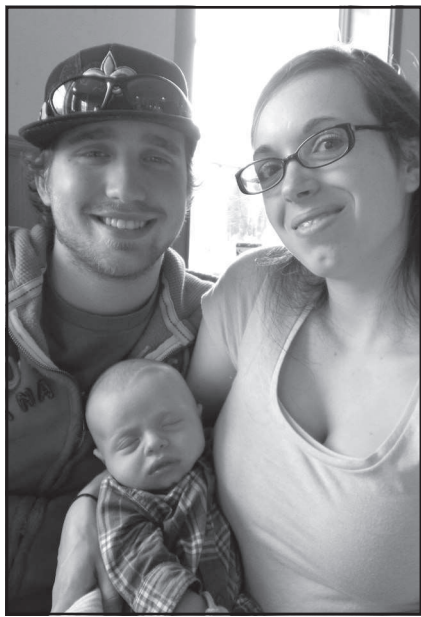


Welcome to the World...

Carter Dwayne Murray



John and Amber Murray are proud to announce the birth of their first child, Carter Dwayne Murray. Carter was born at Legacy Meridian Park in Tualatin on December 17th, 2011 at 7:23 AM. He weighed in at 8lbs 3oz and was 20 1/2 inches long. Carter joins three, very excited cousins on John's side and is the first grandbaby to be born on Amber's side of the family. "We feel extremely blessed and thankful to have our healthy baby boy!" say John and Amber. Proud grandparents are Karla and Barney Eastlick of Vernonia, and Pastor John Murray and his wife Kellie, also of Vernonia. Welcome to the world Carter Dwayne!

In Memory of...

Michael O. "Mike" Richter

May 30, 1956 to February 22, 2012

Michael O. "Mike" Richter, 51, a former resident of the Gaston community, late of Scappoose, Oregon, died Wednesday evening, February 22, 2012 at his home.

Funeral arrangements are pending through the Fuiten, Rose & Hoyt Funeral Home in Forest Grove, which will release a complete obituary in the next issue.

Vernonian Becoming CASA Volunteer *continued from page 5*

and training them and asking them to help this one kid. Not all of them, not everybody, but just one."

Right now in Columbia County there are only twenty-two trained CASA volunteers serving fifty-seven of those 253 children. "We have 200 kids out there in our county—kids in our town who could use our help, who don't have anybody to walk into court with them and advocate for them," says Seibert.

CASA volunteers are everyday citizens who stand up for children and can help change their lives. Nationwide, CASA volunteers have helped more than two million children find safe, permanent homes.

Leslie Seibert has decided to become one of them.

Seibert says that she volunteered many years ago with a social worker in California to help teach parenting classes to people who had lost their children into the foster care system. "That's where my interest first started," says Seibert. But Seibert became busy raising her own family and was unable to volunteer any more. Now her children are grown and she feels she has the time to offer her help.

Seibert will attend about twenty-five hours of class room training

over the course of two weeks, beginning at the end of February. "It's structured so that working people can do it—with several Saturdays and then evenings for the training," says Seibert.

Seibert says she has talked with other people who have expressed interest in becoming a CASA volunteer but are afraid they couldn't do it for one reason or another. "You don't have to have a college degree," says Seibert. "And CASA provides all kinds of support—they don't just throw you out there. If you have some life experience, you can do this."

A CASA volunteer spends time on weekends and in the evening visiting with a child. They may have to attend a court proceeding three or four times a year. Seibert says a CASA volunteer is never required to take a case they are not comfortable with and have some choice in which children they are assigned to.

"I know some people are cautious about getting involved with an abused child because they imagine they will be working with a child who has been badly beaten or sexually abused," says CASA for Kids Director, Bourn. "The reality, however, is that half the children in foster care are there because of their parents' alcohol or drug abuse

and a third are there because of domestic violence in the home."

Seibert also believes that the boundaries that are established for CASA volunteers and the children they work with will be helpful. "You are a facilitator for the child, there to help make sure that the courts take care of their needs. That is all."

And CASA volunteers have been proven to be helpful. Children who have a CASA volunteer spend an average of seven and a half months less time in foster care than children who don't have a CASA. Last year CASA for Kids helped close 1,424 cases.

For Seibert, she sees great value in the possibility of being a role model for children and helping them learn how to be responsible, to follow through, and to mean what you say. "If we can connect with these kids, and show them that some people don't do things the same way they happen at their house," says Seibert, "that would be great."

Training for new CASA Volunteers starts February 28 in St. Helens or February 29 in Rainier. For more information about becoming a CASA volunteer contact : info@casaforkidsinc.org and 503-366-4133.

Vernonia's Voice is published twice each month on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday. Look for our next issue March 13th.

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Upper Nehalem Watershed Council is looking for (on call, part time, seasonal) tree planters. Must have reliable transportation, valid driver's license and car insurance. Contact Steve Sorbets: stevansorbets@yahoo.com for an application.

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