

20 Under 40: CASA thriving under Robison's direction



STEVE DAVIS/The Register-Mail
Sara Robison is executive director of CASA of Knox County. She is a recipient of the 20 Under 40 award.

county,” according to her nomination.

“She has been in her position for just over a year now and the organization is thriving where it was once struggling ... because of her efforts,” her nomination states.

Here’s more about Robison in her own words:

Q. What do you do in your current position?

A. CASA of Knox County provides advocacy to abused and neglected children in Knox County by recruiting and training community members to serve as child advocates. As the executive director, I am responsible for the daily agency operations including the business and fiscal management, the supervision of staff and volunteers, volunteer recruitment and training, providing advocacy to unassigned children and working in the community to further the mission of the organization.

Q. How are you involved in the community?

A. I am active with Galesburg Noon Lions Club, PEO Chapter W and the NAACP. I am an ESL tutor with the CSC Literacy Coalition. This fall, I have been helping my brother coach my son’s YMCA Pre-K Soccer Team. Through my work with CASA, I am involved with United Way of Knox County, the Blue Ribbon Task Force, Knox County Human Services Council, and the Teen Leadership Conference Planning Committee. As part of CASA’s community outreach projects, we served meals with the Knox Prairie Community Kitchen, collected holiday gifts for CASA children and during Child Abuse Prevention Month, we collected suitcases for children in foster care to provide a more suitable means of travel. This fall, we are teaming up with our colleagues at the Center for Youth and Family Solutions and Northwoods Community Church to bring Thanksgiving holiday meals to 20 of our most needy families.

Q. Of what achievement are you most proud?

A. Personally, my greatest achievement has been the pursuit of my education. Professionally speaking, the further development of the volunteer care and retention program at CASA, building relationships within the organization and in the community, as well as bringing my own vision to the existing organizational culture are amongst the things of which I am most proud.

Q. What advice do you have for other young professionals?

A. What I can offer from my life experience is this: Be open to plan B. A career, much like life, doesn’t always follow that path you planned. Find the work that you are most passionate about and pursue it. Being passionate about your work will lend itself to your success.

Q. What’s the most important thing people should know about your community?

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GALESBURG — This week’s recipient of the Young Professionals of Galesburg and the Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce’s “20 Under 40” award to be profiled is Sara Robison, executive director of CASA of Knox County.

In the position for just a year, Robison has achieved much, according to the nomination application.

“Sara has trained 13 volunteers, organized two fund raisers, held a 20-year anniversary for CASA and volunteer recognition, writes grants, holds and runs monthly trainings for CASA advocates, spoke to 12 different community organizations, and is working on expanding our CASA program to benefit more children in a nearby

A. There is a wealth of people that are invested in our community, committed to its success and willing to lend a hand. I have to give props to my hometown of Abingdon as well. When I returned to the Knox County community as a professional, some of my greatest support has been found at home.

Sara Robison Age: 34 Residence: Galesburg Profession: Executive Director, CASA of Knox County Education: M.A., Sociology, University of Missouri; B.S., Criminology, Missouri State University Family: Husband, Trent Cox; two sons, Lincoln, 4, and Hudson, 2.

About the award The Young Professionals of Galesburg and the Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce have launched the "20 Under 40" award. This award honors 20 individuals under the age of 40 considered to be "movers and shakers" in the community. Honorees will be profiled each week through Jan. 31, 2016, in The Register-Mail. They will be included in a special supplement in February 2016, in addition to being recognized at the chamber's annual dinner to be held in February 2016. The 20 honorees are judged on their outstanding career achievements and community impact. A panel of judges evaluated each nomination on information provided in the following categories: Reason for nomination, career achievements/special awards and recognition, community involvement, volunteerism and community service leadership skills.