

People's forum

CASA Auction hailed a success

Cass County CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates for children) hosted its 11th annual dinner and auction Friday, June 23, at Our Lady of the Lake Parish in Edwardsburg, Michigan.

Auction chairs this year were Denise Wierman and Beth Cripes with assistance from the CASA board, volunteer advocates, and staff. Over 150 supporters attended this year's event. A Friends of CASA reception hosted by the Honorable Susan L. Dobrich preceded the dinner and auction and was held in the church's reception area. Beer and wine selections were again donated by KB Village Express, Phillips 66 in Cassopolis. Following a brief presentation, including recognition of the retirement of Jim Ward, CASA Program Director for the past nine years.

Attendees moved into the church's social hall where a delicious prime rib and broasted chicken dinner was provided by Faulkner's Catering.

Following dinner, Giovan Bazan spoke about his experience in the foster care system and emphasized the importance of loving and caring adults such as the CASA volunteers who provide non-judgmental support to foster children as they move through the system.

After the presentation, Jim Miller, auctioneer began the bidding on a total of 10 items, encourage the Auction attendees' participation in the "call to the heart" donations and ended the evening with the drawing of the winning raffle ticket for one of three luxury trips. This year's fundraiser was deemed a success with net income in excess of \$55,000.

The CASA Board would like to thank everyone who participated in this successful event. We appreciate the generosity of our community and their willingness to support such a worthy cause. Cass County CASA was started by the Honorable Susan Dobrich of the Cass County Family Court in 1995. CASA is a notfor-profit agency of trained volunteers from the community who are appointed by the judge to advocate for abused and neglected children in foster care.

If you are interested in learning more about being a volunteer advocate or a board member, contact Director, Ella Ryder, at 269-445-4431,

Kentucky Raid--A Documentary."

Visitors to Vandalia on Saturday and Sunday enjoyed guided tours of the Kentucky Raid sites, UGRR presentations, period crafters and entertainment all day at the Ramptown Cabin in the park. The 102nd US Colored Troops held everyone enthralled with their stories and descriptions of life in the Union army. The Bonine House and newly opened first floor of the Carriage House were packed.

The soul food dinner got rave reviews. And the outdoor church service on Sunday morning on the Vandalia Village green, was overflowing with worshippers.

The weather was glorious and visitors were happy to learn the history of this area. Underground Railroad Days is a unique festival that celebrates a history we all should be proud of.

This was a community that did what was right when the risk was great, and danger was real. URSCC thanks the Village of Vandalia and the many volunteers involved in Underground Railroad Days.

We look forward to our 9th annual festival the second weekend in July, 2018.

Cathy LaPointe, URSCC, Vandalia, Michigan

A solution to revitalize Indiana's 'Left Behind' communities

Many Americans remain concerned about the economy. Our research shows these anxieties are not misplaced. The U.S. economy has become less dynamic since the Great Recession—more businesses have closed than opened, the rate of new business formation remains low, and workers are finding it difficult to change jobs, move, and earn higher wages.

The economy has grown, but this growth is concentrated in major metro areas, largely bypassing the 50 million Americans living in economically distressed communities.

Thankfully, Rep. Jackie Walorski (IN-02) is leading the charge to reverse these trends by co-sponsoring the Investing in Opportunity Act. This bipartisan legislation is designed to inject new life into America's economic engine through an innovative approach that connects "left behind" communities with long-term

casscocasa1@yahoo.com, or visit our website at www.casscocasa.org.

Ella Ryder, Director, Cass County CASA

Historic tradition lives on

Underground Railroad Days, the 8th annual collaboration between the Village of Vandalia and the Underground Railroad Society of Cass County celebrating the history and legacy of the Underground Railroad in the area, was a great success with thousands of visitors from all over the region.

Over 250 packed Ross Beatty auditorium Friday evening for the premier of Vandalia's Sally Jo Conner's "The

Opinion

investments. This legislation will be particularly helpful for Indiana, where 16 percent of the population lives in distressed zip codes and continues to face economic headwinds despite years of national recovery.

At a time when the American Dream seems in doubt for many, Rep. Walorski is working to give every Indiana community the chance to thrive.

Steve Glickman and John Lettieri, Washington, D.C.

Editors Note: Glickman and Lettieri are co-founders of the Economic Innovation Group, a bipartisan research, policy, and advocacy organization.