

Volunteer Spotlight – Lisa Delasotta



Lisa Delasotta has what many might consider an ideal background for a volunteer on FFCR's Citizen Review Panel – she has a bachelor degree in Early Education and Psychology, a Masters in Special Ed, and a JD. While in law school, she interned at the District Attorney's office in Philadelphia in the family violence department. But Lisa did not particularly enjoy law school or the law, and decided against a career in that field. Instead, after teaching elementary school, she became a small business owner. But her interest in children's health and safety continued, and so she decided to volunteer.

In early 2015, Lisa found FFCR online and signed up for a pre-service training to prepare her to conduct reviews of dependency court cases as part of the Citizen Review Panel (CRP). For the better part of her first year as a volunteer, she has served once per month on her assigned panel and has also filled in two to three times monthly on other panels when a regular panel member could not attend.

As required of all potential volunteers, Lisa observed several CRP hearings before beginning to serve on panels:

"Our training was intense," Lisa explained. "I was really nervous. But then the first time I served on a panel, I realized that everyone helps each other out. I realized that together, we make sure every detail is covered. It's a great support system."

Lisa is motivated by the fact that as a panel member she can help many children reunify with their parents or find a safe, stable home. Although in a limited role as a CRP volunteer, Lisa explained that by making recommendations to the court, she knows she is helping the judges decide what would ultimately be best for the children who come before the CRP.

"When you see a judge actually take the CRP's recommendations into consideration, you realize you're making a difference in a child's life," Lisa emphasized.

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FFCR's Monthly Newsletter – 2.29.16

As one of FFCR's newer volunteers, Lisa enjoys working with more experienced volunteers:

"Everyone is a professional and comes from different backgrounds. I honestly think being a panelist is a really rewarding position. I tell people about it all the time."

Lisa is definitely setting an example. In addition to serving as a regular and substitute panel member, she purchased backpacks and school supplies as part of a drive to make sure children in foster care were equipped for the new school year.

"I always had everything I needed growing up. For me, giving back is part of what my parents taught me. I know not everyone grew up that way; I think some people just don't know you can do this, that you can help someone out like this. When they see it, they want to get involved too." Lisa said.

Lisa noted that as a volunteer, she feels very supported by FFCR's staff members, especially the Review Specialists. The FFCR team is grateful to Lisa for her time and her willingness to go the extra mile to improve children's lives.