**February 2021 Update**

**Program update:**

* Class began online on January 25th and in-person on February 1st.  It was a somewhat unusual class because 4 of the 14 participants were men.  Unfortunately, two dropped out in the first week-one because Covid illnesses made work too busy for him and the other hasn't given a reason, he just hasn't done any of the work.  Regardless, we're hopeful that the remaining 12 will be solid volunteers to add to our team.
* After this class, we will be at a point where we will need to look at filling Julie's position before beginning the next class (projected for April)
* We will be having a 'remote site visit' from VOCA on February 23rd.  I'm working on all the prep for that right now and hope to have a good outcome.
* Christina received the very upsetting news that her husband has been diagnosed with a pervasive cancer of the liver and bowel.  They were initially told that it was advanced, fast moving and inoperable.  Since then, they've been lucky to find a surgeon who has offered a small amount of hope and is willing to at least try to offer treatment but he's not covered by their insurance so they're working on that.  Christina was extremely hesitant to share that information even with the staff and then the board but she realizes now that she needs the support and positive thoughts. She was concerned about losing her job which I've assured her is not an issue to be focused on right now.  She has been very diligent and has not shirked her duties in any way.  Please keep her in your thoughts and hope that they find some success with getting treatment.

**Financials:**

* The January financial statement is attached.  It will be approved at the next board meeting but please feel free to let me know if you have any questions that I can answer in advance.
* I'm sending a separate email about our billboards and renewing our contract.

**VOCA update:**

* MOCASA met with the VOCA leadership and they assured MOCASA that they value the work CASA programs do.
* The next funding notice is expected out this month with an opportunity for questions in March-no idea when it will be due.
* They expect to make changes in how the applications are evaluated because the last time was highly criticized.
* The next cycle is expected to be a one-year cycle with the possibility but not guarantee of renewal because they know the amount allocated for 2020 is considerably lower than in the past and they have no idea what the 2021 allocation amount will be.
* Because the amount allocated for FY 2020 (they have very strange FY cycles) is so low, approved programs should expect lower awards-up to 50% lower (YIKES!).

**Rental Space Update:**

* Brandon has the new and existing leases and hopes to approve moving forward with ending the current one and signing a new one this week.
* The entire staff has had the chance to meet with Linda again and everyone is very excited about the space and it's options for the program.
* Our target date for starting the new lease would be April 1st and ending the old one on April 15th so that we have time to make the move.

**Fundraising:**

* Attached is a draft of a letter for the Virtual Gala-please provide any feedback to improve the letter.
* We need to define a date or range of dates for the event-possibly a week or two to promote the raffles and then a Friday through Sunday for the event itself.  I've done a good amount of research with other CASA programs and other non-profit events. A few suggestions on how to make money on the event:
1. Have an event sponsor-target of $2500 to $5000 for the event
2. Ask for "Story Sponsors"-these would be recorded stories that we can post throughout the event.  Ideally, we could ask volunteers, caseworkers, people who have been in foster care, judges, etc to make a short recorded video about the system, why they got involved, why there is a need for CASA, success stories from being involved with CASA, etc.-target of 10 videos sponsored at $500-$1000 each.
3. Suggest a donation of $20-$25 to view the event and have that 'donation' enter them into a drawing for a cash prize.  This could be the first page they encounter on the event site and they can make a donation or bypass it by just entering their contact info.
4. Have large item raffles-certain donation levels enter them in one or more raffles or they can choose to just buy a ticket for specific raffles if we have a wide variation in prize values.
5. Possibly have small items as a silent auction-need to find an app to use for that to maximize bidding and exposure while minimizing the need for monitoring.
* Once we set a date for the Virtual Gala, we can define dates for the other events that have been proposed.  I can also create an event flyer and sponsor/raffle info to send out to anyone we know.
* Brandon has emailed the caterer to ask to move our deposit to March 26, 2022.  As soon as he confirms, I'll confirm with the hotel and communicate with everyone who was expected to go to the original or re-scheduled Galas.

**Action Items:**

* **Please review and respond to the billboard email**
* **Please give feedback on the Gala letter and any thoughts you have about how the event should work**
* **Please respond with any raffle items you may have secured or any leads you have on who to target for donations or sponsorships**
* **Let me know if you have any questions or concerns that I can answer**