I am for the child whose name no one can remember.

I am for the child who has attended eight schools in four years. Because she’s in foster care. Because her birthmother, debilitated by mental illness, neglected her. That is the child I am for. And because I am, she will be half as likely to languish in foster care, and that much more likely to find a safe, permanent home. I am a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer.

I am you.

Lift up a child’s voice. A child’s life.

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Annual Report FY 2012
mission

The mission of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Santa Barbara County is to assure a safe, permanent, nurturing home for every abused and/or neglected child by providing a highly-trained volunteer to advocate for them in the court system.

topics

OVERVIEW
FISCAL YEAR HIGHLIGHTS
THANKING VOLUNTEERS
HONORING DONORS

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

Editor’s Note: The images in this publication are not of children we serve. These kids are happy smiling representatives that inspire us as we help the hurting kids we do serve to have their own happy endings.
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Lift up a child’s voice; a child’s life.

It is more than just a campaign slogan... it is the description of what hundreds of volunteers are doing every year for the benefit of abused and neglected children in our community. Our volunteer advocates served 283 children this year, more than any prior fiscal year. We remain focused on the goal of serving every child that needs us.

In the five years that I have been with CASA of Santa Barbara County, I have become acutely aware of all the work done by those who have come before me. Those who, in the beginning, brought passion and determination to the challenge of starting a new agency to advocate for the needs and rights of vulnerable children. To all those executive directors, CASA volunteers, staff, board members, attorneys, judges, and agency partners, as well as the many individual, foundation, and corporate sponsors over the years, thank you for believing that CASA of Santa Barbara County deserves your tireless efforts and financial support.

We are honored to present this report, summarizing key accomplishments and financial information from our agency’s fiscal year ending June 30, 2012. CASA not only served a record number of children, we achieved goals that strengthen our ability to serve even more children. We provided specialized training and implemented Educational Advocacy. Increasing our diversity, we tripled the number of bilingual CASA staff, and focused on recruiting more advocates to serve bilingual children and families.

There is still more work to be done. We need supporters to help us spread the word about what we do. We must find even more impassioned people to become directly involved with our mission either as CASA volunteers or as part of our leadership team. Finally, we need your ongoing financial support. With your involvement, we can ultimately give every child what he or she deserves – a safe, permanent home, and hope for a happy childhood.
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Lorena Chavarria
Advocate Supervisor

Monica Gomez
Advocate Supervisor

Tristin Sherman
Advocate Supervisor

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED IN FY 2012:

• 17,682 volunteer hours were served to benefit children, providing $414,131 in value to the community.

• 85 of our existing volunteers participated in a specialized training to prepare them to serve as Educational Representatives should their case child require advocacy for their educational rights.

• Thanks to a generous contribution to our kids fund in June of 2011, we were able to provide nearly 200 children with back to school clothing in August and warm winter shoes and coats in November. The kids fund also provided many children opportunities to participate in sports or other hobbies, enjoy outings with their CASA volunteer and attend summer camps.

• In the past three years, CASA of Santa Barbara County grew 23% countywide. In the same period, we increased the number of children we served in Northern Santa Barbara County by 62%.
REPORT CARD

The following are recruitment and service highlights for fiscal year 2012

- 192 Volunteer Advocates spoke up for 283 children in Santa Barbara County
- 136 new children came off our wait list and were served by CASA’s during the fiscal year
- 91 children had their cases successfully resolved and closed with the help of their CASA Volunteers
- 74 members of our community were trained and sworn in as new CASA volunteers, and were assigned to their first case
CASA is central to fulfilling one of society’s most fundamental obligations by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will fight for and protect a child’s right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to learn and grow in the safe embrace of a loving family.
This graph shows the abuse and neglect that the children in our community are suffering.

Source: kids data.org

- 5.7% Sexual Abuse
- 10.9% Physical Abuse
- 22.8% Severe Neglect
- 1.7% General Neglect
- 50.2% Emotional Abuse
- Caretaker Absence/Incapacity

“You taught me how to see the world in every different ways. I know I could count on you... I thank God for letting me meet someone like you... my biggest fear is to lose you but no matter what I’ll manage to go through this. You taught me how to be strong. I am a survivor, you showed me that. You taught me that opening up is not hard and that people will understand your pain.”

Excerpt from a letter written by a child to her CASA volunteer, Sabrina
our CASA volunteers who served during FY 2012:

Xiomara Abayari  
Ron Adler  
Edward Alcasas  
Laurel Anderson  
Lucero Anguiano  
Patricia Aptaker  
April Araujo  
Michelle Arconti  
Michelle Arntz  
Amy Asman  
Dennis Axelrod  
Edward Baeza  
Terri Barroca  
Teri Beach  
Don Becker  
Doris Becker  
Becky Bingham  
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Martha Gloria  
Yolanda Gonzalez  
Greg Goodman  
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Sally Green  
Laura Gregory  
Shari Gulfoyle  
Patty Guilkison  
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Donna Hanning  
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thank you!

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I am for the child.
finding happy endings...

Our volunteers and staff step into the lives of children and families in crisis and advocate for positive change. The work is often long and hard - and the results incredibly rewarding...

When Anna was only 3 years old, she was abandoned by her mother and placed in a foster home. Anna showed signs of severe neglect and physical abuse—she had scars on her body, was not toilet trained, and her speech was extremely limited.

Anna’s social worker immediately requested a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for the child’s case, knowing that an advocate would ensure her urgent needs were would be met.

On the outside, Anna was an adorable, friendly little girl. But her history of abuse had caused serious emotional damage. When she became frustrated, Anna sometimes reacted violently. This challenging behavior was difficult for foster parents. Within seven months Anna was moved three times.

The CASA volunteer knew that the constant changes were further traumatizing Anna. Her advocate fought to keep the child from being moved again. When a
young couple became interested in adopting Anna, her advocate spoke to them weekly and kept them informed on her progress in school and in the foster home. From a distance, they fell in love with Anna.

Anna’s advocate was with her when she first met her adoptive parents. Her CASA helped her throughout the transition to her new home. The day she was adopted, Anna sat on her new mother’s lap while the Judge talked first to Anna and then to her adoptive parents. Without hesitation, they confirmed their commitment to take care of this little girl. Anna’s CASA was there to celebrate, holding back tears of joy. Anna had found a safe, permanent home at last.

Anna continues to thrive. She is making excellent progress in special education classes. Most importantly, she is a happy little girl. Anna and her CASA are still in touch. —the experiences they shared have forged a bond that will last forever.
honoring our donors

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thank you to our community partners
fundraising highlights

Because our services are provided free of charge to abused and neglected children and our training for volunteers is also free, CASA of Santa Barbara County must raise every dollar needed to secure advocacy for our children. And because only about 5% of our funding comes from the State of California, nearly all of the contributions must come from private individuals, community and family foundations, and from corporations, all of whom we call community partners.

Better than expected support from grants, community and family foundations, and a strong commitment from National CASA for Children helped us position the agency for further expansion. This year we will be able to serve more children in areas of the county with the greatest need.

We continue to host two major fundraising events. In the spring, the annual event brought guests to Birnam Wood Golf Club for an elegant evening of fine dining combined with our own “Casino.” In the fall, nearly 300 supporters from all over the county joined us at “CASA at the Vineyard.” A lovely young lady, Candace Kaimuloa, told our guests at both events how her life was changed by the support and confidence she gained from having a CASA. We are so grateful to all of the many CASA supporters who helped to make both of these events an important part of our annual fundraising plan.
our financials

Revenue By Source

- Individual Donations & Special Events: 54%
- Foundation Grants: 5%
- Judicial Council: 5%

FY12 Expenses

- Program: 60%
- Operating: 14%
- Fund Development: 8%
- Special Events: 18%