20 YEARS

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
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.
20 YEARS . . . AND TAKING IT FURTHER

Every one of us has experienced a time when everything changes—turning points in life that distinguish everything that came before from everything that came after. Whether tragic or triumphant, these moments are so profound that we often mark the passage of time against them and tell our life stories through them.

For children in the dependency court system, losing a parent, suffering abuse, or being removed from their home easily becomes just such a moment. And for hundreds of these children each year, they also have a far more positive point in time.

It’s the day when they’re paired with a champion of their own, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).

This, after all, is when they acquire a voice—one that speaks to their interests . . . and their interests alone. From that voice, the court and the community gain a better understanding of these young people, from their steepest challenges to their most cherished ambitions.

Advocacy sets in motion all sorts of life changes, from medical and mental health treatment to special education to the loving embrace of permanent homes.

Since 1995, CASA of Santa Barbara County has been the only local agency with volunteers appointed by the dependency court to do this. And in that time, it has enjoyed countless periods of growth and success.

Several years ago, the CASA board and staff considered where we were, and where we wanted to be. We committed to the vision of serving every child. We recognized that if we were to not just survive but also further the CASA mission and meet our obligation to serve every child, we would have to become rooted in, driven by, and, in no small way, owned by the community itself.

Throughout our twenty years of service to abused and neglected children, the community—from individuals to corporations to community partners—has responded passionately to this call to action, so we set our goals of expanding to meet the needs of the
children. And once again, the community responded. By fiscal year end 2014, more volunteers and more donors than ever are involved with and invested in the organization. And with that boost in commitment, CASA of Santa Barbara County—no less than an instrument of the community—provided intensive advocacy to 375 children, a record for our program and 56 more children than just a year before.

But the greatest part of this story of evolution is that the best of CASA of Santa Barbara County is yet to come.

Thanks to your support, the vision of providing a CASA to every child who needs one now seems within reach. Because besides being a microcosm of the community, CASA of Santa Barbara County is now an outright expression of the community’s will to care for its children. This year could be our turning point, the year when children are no longer put on a waiting list for months, in hopes of being paired with their champion.

Only our collective commitment to that vision limits how far we can take it.

Let’s take it further.

—KIM COLBY DAVIS
Executive Director

—TONY PAPA
President, Board of Directors
OUR 2014 SUCCESSES

CHILDREN

- 375 children received the powerful voice of a volunteer advocate
- We were able to move 190 children from our waitlist to assignment with a CASA volunteer
- 103 children had their cases successfully resolved with the help of CASA volunteers

VOLUNTEERS

- 254 Court Appointed Special Advocates dedicated their time to help abused and neglected children
- CASA volunteers donated 25,221 hours of service, providing $624,219 in value to our community
- Of our total volunteer force, 84 are new volunteers to the CASA team, having completed one of the 8 training sessions we provided.
OUR CHILDREN

Demographics of the children we served this year

GENDER

- GIRLS 207
- BOYS 168

ETHNICITY

- CAUCASIAN 99
- LATINO 226
- NATIVE AMERICAN 4
- AFRICAN-AMERICAN 27
- ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER 10
- MULTIRACIAL 9
NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED

AGE

AGE 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
OUR CASA VOLUNTEERS WHO SERVED IN 2014

Xiomara Abaya
Suzanne Allen de Sanchez
Tiffany Allen
Catherine Alsup
James “Chris” Ames
Fatima Amezua
Jacqueline Anker
Patricia Aptaker
Michelle Arconti
Edward Baeza
Pamela Baltz
Shawn “Rico” Banks
Lee Barnby
Clare Barrios-Knox
Teri Beach
Doris Becker
Maria Bellefeuille
Alexandra Bernal
Kalie Bickham
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George Dubois
Alice Duckett
Jill Dumain
Jean Eaton
Vaughan Edwards
Vickie Edwards
Darlene Eisele
Cecia “Sally” Ellis
Anthony Escobar
Barbra Espinoza
Jane Fehrenbacher
Judy Fessenden
Micha Fireman
Susan Freebourn
Marcia Friedlein
Anne Gagne
Maureen Gallen
Volunteer Demographics:

**Gender**
- F = 79%
- M = 21%

**Ages**
- < 30 = 17%
- 30-50 = 25%
- 50-70 = 48%
- > 70 = 9%
WHAT DO CASA VOLUNTEERS DO?

● They donate their time to act as the independent eyes and ears of the court, investigate to learn what is in the best interest of the child, and speak solely in the interest of the child.

● They undergo special training and become sworn officers of the court.

● They work with the most severe cases of abuse and neglect.

● They monitor kids’ health and education.

● They identify the unmet needs of children.

● They advocate for a child or siblings and make objective recommendations to judges insuring that the welfare of the children is the number one priority in decision-making.

Geraldine (Geri) Nunes
Eilene Okerblom
Renée O’Neill
Katherine (Katie) Oriskovich
Haniel Ortiz
Eileen Ortiz-Martinez
Kelly Owen
J’Aimee Oxton
Lori Christine Palte
Aaron “Riley” Parker

Wendy Raffetto
María Ramírez
Judy Rarick
Sheridan (Sheri) Rawlins
Kristi Reyes
Elena Ricci

June Parr
Carol Patterson
Sally Payne
Maria Paz (Camacho)
Robert Penaflor
Martin Perez
Kayla Perry
Rich Phelps
Cheryl Pimienta
Sandra Pineda
Steven Pinsker
Lisa Plaxco
Chrystine Polizzi
Maguire Powell
Maria Prado
Scheryn Pratt

Rick Richard
David Richardson
Misty Richardson
Sandra Rios
Frank Ritenour
Lori Rojas
Richard Rojas

Jennifer Rose
Dorothea Rosen
Beth Ruben
Teresa Ruffoni
Martin Perez
Martha Rugg
Melissa Ruiz
Lindsay Salzman
Teresa Sat
Doris Schaffer
Mary Lou Schroeder
Heidi Schultz
Roxanne Schuyler

Jenade Scott
Karen Scott
Nancy Shafer
Kathy Sherwood
David Sibley
Linda Sibley
Janet Silveria
Jessica Sinclair
Christine Smigel
Scott Smigel
Carla Spain
Rebekah Sparks
Donald Stephens
Brian Stevenson
Ellen Stewart
Erika Stewart
Kathy Tabios
Staci Teter
Ra Tracie Thea

Marie Thorne-Thomsen
Jack Tiethof
Jillian (Jill) Torene
Yesenia Torres
Stephen Traxler
Cathy Trevino
Alexandra Turner
Connie Turnier
Jacqueline Tyler
Kathryn Valentino
Richard Varela
Maria Velasco
Daniel Vordale
Lindsay Wanek
John Warnock

Lea Ybarra
Cynthia Zamora
Dawn Ziegler

Dianne Welch
Jim West
Susie West
Janet Wheeler
Dana Whitted
Nina Williams
Gloria Willis
April Wilson
Maggie Wilson
Sharon Wittmann
Kenneth Wolf
Joseph “Joe” Yates
Amelia* is a young lady who never really had the chance to be a child. It’s difficult to say that she was removed from her home, since Amelia and her younger sister never had a place to call home in the first place. When she entered foster care, Amelia was a 12-year-old who had endured a lifetime of abuse and instability. With each of her mother’s new boyfriends came a move to a new home, each progressively worse than the previous, all riddled with the nightmare of domestic violence and substance abuse.

Amelia told her volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) that with each move her mother would promise a new beginning. Unfortunately, each was just another chapter in her mother’s book of alcoholism and mental illness.

Amelia thought she was the cause of the fighting, and tried her best to always be good, but she never could really be “good enough.” As time

*Name and photograph are fictitious.
went on, Amelia became the caretaker of her baby sister and the target of the boyfriend’s rage. Finally, a neighbor called to report concern for the children during another loud and angry argument. When the police responded to her home, they found a desperate Amelia hiding with her sister under a filthy trailer as her mother ranted around the yard in psychiatric despair. Amelia did not cry as she was taken away to live in a home with strangers—until she was separated from her little sister.

Amelia was bright and insightful beyond her years, but she bore the scars of her past. She was distant and distrustful of everyone. Amelia told her CASA that while she knew she was safe in foster care, she didn’t like living with people who really didn’t know or care about her.

Slowly, Amelia began to look forward to her CASA’s visits, which were the first consistent thing in Amelia’s life. Her CASA was interested in Amelia; they went places together, they talked about school, friends, and plans for the future. Her CASA took Amelia to court and told the judge about how she felt about her mother, about living in a foster home that was not right for her, how much she missed her little sister, and about her plans to go to college. Amelia told her CASA that she was the first person to ever really get to know her.

Because you support CASA of Santa Barbara County, Amelia’s Court Appointed Special Advocate was able to fight to change Amelia’s life. Her CASA worked with Social Services to find the right family for Amelia. Now Amelia has a family who is not only committed to her, but to maintaining her connection to her sister.

Amelia is in high school now, and continues to plan for college. She and her CASA meet every week—and it’s a visit Amelia looks forward to, because they are connected. Amelia is now 15 years old with a bright future ahead of her—one that would not have been possible without her CASA, and supporters like you.

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thank you!

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thank you!

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OUR FINANCIALS

FY14 REVENUES

- FY14 EXPENSES
  - PROGRAM 83%
  - FUNDRAISING 6%
  - MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL 11%

FY14 VENUE

- CONTRIBUTIONS 17%
- GRANTS 30%
- GOVT CONTRACT 4%
- EVENTS 6%
- VOLUNTEER HOURS 36%
- IN-KIND DONATIONS 7%
CASA BY THE NUMBERS

VISITS WITH KIDS
18,750

COURT REPORTS
750

CHILDREN SERVED
375

NEW CASA VOLUNTEERS
84

NEW VOLUNTEER TRAININGS
8

COURT APPEARANCES
825

KIDS ON OUR WAITLIST
126

254 VOLUNTEERS

DONATIONS
910

VOLUNTEER HOURS
25,221

250 VOLUNTEER MEETINGS

# OF MILES
TOO MANY TO COUNT!
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Dawne Gilchrist
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Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

2601 Skyway Drive
Suite A3
Santa Maria, CA 93454

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