2015
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

20 YEARS

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

20
YEARS
CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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Santa Maria, CA 93454

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.

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

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.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

We just finished a great year. The organization served 438 children with 284 committed and caring CASA volunteers. These volunteers donated their time and their hearts advocating for the most vulnerable members of our community—children and youth who have endured abuse and neglect. We truly appreciate all the support these volunteers give.

We also appreciate the dedication and commitment of the staff, board of directors, individuals, foundations, corporations, and community groups and partners who support our work.

Last year was a pivotal year for us. We had a number of changes and began some amazing work. We completed a comprehensive strategic plan with all of our staff and board members involved in charting our path forward. Through the strategic planning process, we identified ways we could improve our efforts.

To strengthen our program operations, we created the new position of Associate Director and added Aaron Pankratz to our team. In addition to guiding program operations, Aaron provides pre-service and continuing education for our CASA volunteers. Crystal Moreno moved to the challenging role of Recruiting and Outreach Director, with incredible energy focused on the goal of adding 110 new volunteers to our team.

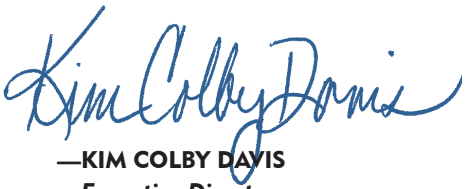
We also made significant progress on a truly ambitious goal: a CASA volunteer for every child in need. This is our vision and we hope that you share it, too. With more volunteers on our team serving more children than ever, we looked to a group of children that were underserved – the ones who were placed outside of our county due to a shortage of local foster homes. This created a challenge and an opportunity.

To achieve the goal of serving these children, we implemented an innovative internship model that will help us increase services with a modest increase in

resources. The Court Appointed Special Monitor (CASM) as it is called, was created in collaboration with Antioch University, and is designed specifically to serve these kids. We have already seen the difference it makes. By providing more children and youth with advocacy, they will receive more services, perform better in school, experience more stability while in care, and more will find permanent homes.

Thanks again to everyone who has helped us over the last year. You share in the success of every story in which a child was made safer by the effort of their CASA volunteer. As we close our 20th anniversary year, we reflect on all who have helped CASA of Santa Barbara County move toward the goal of serving every child. We are closer every day! This is an amazing milestone and many people have helped us along the way.

We are so grateful to everyone. Your support has made a difference.



—KIM COLBY DAVIS
Executive Director

—TONY PAPA
President, Board of Directors

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

2015 ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 284 Court Appointed Special Advocates stood up on behalf of 438 abused and neglected children.
- CASA volunteers had a total of 22,776 visits with their assigned case children.
- 876 court reports were submitted on behalf of the children served.
- 26,328 hours of service were donated by CASA volunteers, providing $681,659 in value to the community
- Volunteer Flex Training launched, giving new volunteers the opportunity to complete half of the training online.
- 74 new volunteers joined the CASA team, having completed one of the 8 training sessions we provided.

CASA
Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN
SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

CASA STAFF

Kim Colby Davis, *Executive Director*

Valerie Amador, *Lead Advocate Supervisor*

Joy Bat, *Office Manager*

Lorena Chavarria, *Bilingual Advocate Supervisor*

Monica Gomez, *Bilingual Advocate Supervisor*

Tara Gross, *Marketing and Development Coordinator*

Coco Landeros-Rico, *Bilingual Lead Advocate Supervisor*

Crystal Moreno, *Recruiting and Outreach Director*

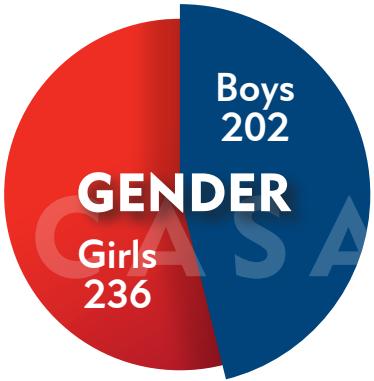
Aaron Pankratz, *Associate Director*

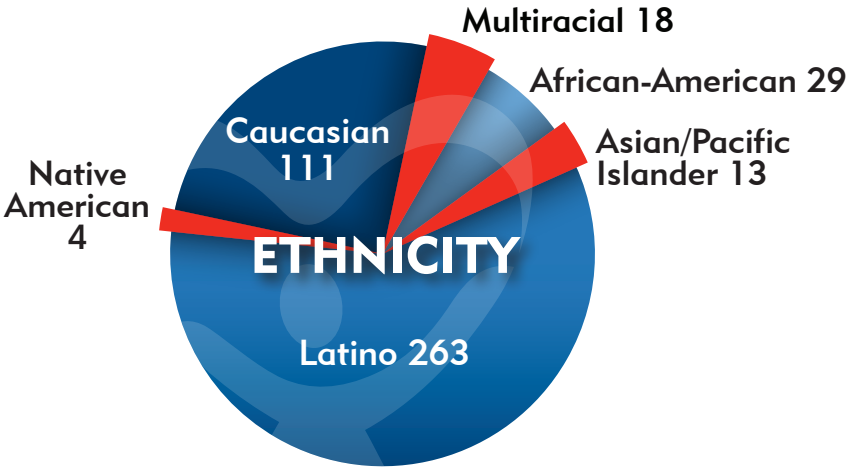
Gail Parr, *Advocate Supervisor*

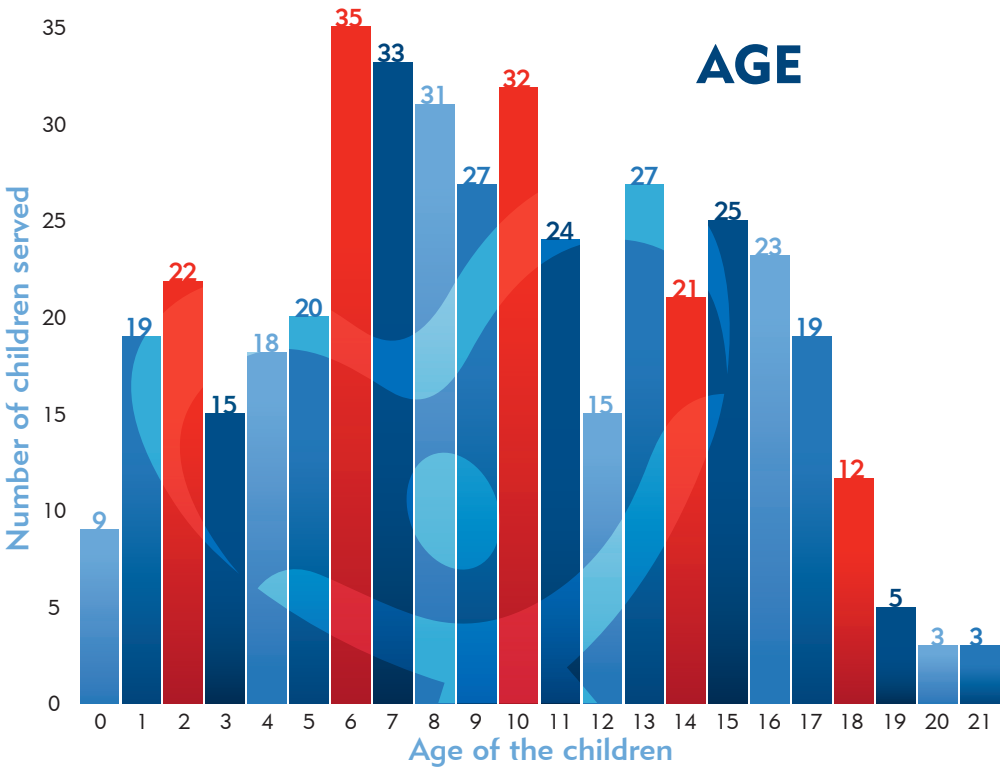
Tristin Sherman, *Lead Advocate Supervisor*

OUR CHILDREN

Demographics of the children we served this year






AGE
Number of children served
Age of the children
0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
9 19 22 15 18 20 35 33 31 27 32 24 15 27 21 25 23 19 12 5 3 3

OUR CASA VOLUNTEERS WHO SERVED IN 2015

Xiomara Abayari
Suzanne Allen de Sanchez
Tiffany Allen
Maggie Almada
Catherine Alsup
Chris Ames
Celina Andrade
Jacqueline Anker
Patricia Aptaker
Michelle Arconti
Eileen Armijo
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Carrie Corob
Michael Corob
Monique Cox
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Randi Cunningham
Judith Dal Porto
Linda Daniel

We make a living by what we do, but we make a life by what we give.
- Winston Churchill

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Vickie Edwards
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Ruben Espinoza
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Micha Fireman
Wendy Fisher
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Lauren Frias
Marcia Friedlein
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Ramona Ghan
Nita Gibson
Dawne Gilchrist
Kathy Gleason
Martha Gloria
Angela Gonzales
Leah Gonzales
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Dawn Jimenez
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Sara Lillard
Betsy Linane
Sandy Lipowski
Linda Liu
Sandra Logsdon
Raymond Lopez
Maria Esperanza Luis-Antonio
Jocelyn Mabery
Miguel Angel Magana
George Majoue
Yolanda Manfredonia
Judy Markline
Judy Martin
Frances Martinez
Debra Maushardt
Barbara McClain
April McElhenny

Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart.

- Elizabeth Andrew

Mike Gray
Shari Guilfoyle
Stacy Gurnee
Courtney Gutierrez
Cindy Hagerman
Sally Hankins
Chris Hansen
Linda Hogan
Jessica Holden
Diana Holmstrom
Kathy Holst
Gina Hong
Adriana Hopson
Jeff Hopson
Maxine Johnson
McKenna Jones
Maribel Juarez
Janeall Kirkland
Wendy Kosche-Gelinas
Marge Kozaki
Russ Lavergne

Volunteer Demographics

GENDER

F = 79%
M = 21%

AGES

< 30 = 15%
30-50 = 30%
50-70 = 46%
> 70 = 09%

CASA VOLUNTEERS CHANGE LIVES

- CASA volunteers provide a voice for the most vulnerable children in our community.
- A child with a CASA volunteer is more likely to find a safe, permanent home and less likely to spend three or more years in care.
- A child with a CASA volunteer if half as likely to re-enter the foster care system.
- And they are more likely to succeed in school.
- Most importantly, children themselves report that they know they can rely on their CASA volunteer.

Hildy Medina
Felicia Mejia
Alecia Merrell
Olga Mery
Kyra Miles
Amanda Milholland
Angela Milholland
Heather Moore
Maylin Moore
Barbie Morawski
Jeremy Moreno
Stephanie Moret
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Cynthia Morr
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Yoni Park
Riley Parker

Rebecca Petersen
Cheryl Pimienta
Steven Pinsker
Lisa Plaxco
Maguire Powell
Maria Prado
Scheryn Pratt
Herb Pregozen
Lorraine Pregozen
Wendy Raffetto
Maria Ramirez

Sloane Rhodes
Elena Ricci
Misty Richardson Cruz
David Richardson
Frank Ritenour
Lori Rojas
Richard Rojas
Jennifer Rose
Beth Ruben
Teresa Ruffoni

Unselfish and noble actions are the most radiant pages in the biography of souls.
-David Thomas

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Irma Velazquez
Daniel Vordale
Amy Walldren
Lindsay Wanek
Mike Wapner
Caribbean Wawrzyniak
Dianne Welch
Jim West
Susie West
Janet Wheeler
Dana Whitted
Gloria Willis
Marcus Wilson
Sharon Wittmann
Kenneth Wolf
LeAnne Woolever
Lindzey Worrell
Joe Yates
Dawn Ziegler

OUR CHILDREN

For many children, a CASA volunteer is the one constant during a frightening, uncertain time. These children have experienced terrible things. They have been physically abused, sexually abused, abandoned, or neglected

Children in the foster care system have lost everything familiar – home, family, friends, and school – through no fault of their own. They leave home with next to nothing: clothes their parents may have hurriedly packed, perhaps a favorite stuffed animal, their belongings often quickly shoved into a trash bag. Their stories are heartbreaking. Their hope for the future is grim.

While many well-intentioned people are assigned to help, there is no single person who will always be there, consistently watching over these children and ensuring that they end up in safe, permanent and loving homes… unless there is a CASA volunteer involved.

BECAUSE CASA WAS THERE

For the first 12 years of her life, Sophia knew only abuse and

**Name and photograph are fictitious.*

abandonment. But when Santa Barbara County CASA volunteer Anita took on Sophia's challenging and complex case, something changed for both of them.

Removed from their birth home by Child Welfare Services (CWS) due to sexual violence, physical abuse, neglect, and drug use in the home, Sophia and her younger sister were placed in foster care. Eventually, her sister was adopted. But Sophia, scarred by years of abuse, refused the adoption. She acted out with the family and experienced a psychological breakdown that resulted in repeated hospitalizations. With Anita working behind the scenes, Sophia was temporarily placed in a residential treatment center where she received counseling, guidance and the structure she needed in a safe environment.

For the first time in her life, Sophia found a dependable adult she could rely on. And Anita, an experienced advocate for infants and toddlers, discovered her gift for empowering teenagers to help themselves. As Sophia's CASA volunteer, Anita worked with the courts and CWS to find the best possible placement considering Sophia's unique needs. Much to everyone's delight, Sophia has blossomed at the treatment center, is earning good grades, running 5K races, tending to animals at the facility, and earning privileges such as trips to the beach. With counseling, she has begun to warm to the idea of letting go of her painful, abusive past and possibly being adopted. She now calls Anita, hungry for a connection to home and happy to share good news about the progress she's making in treatment. And Anita, like no one else Sophia has ever known, always answers.■

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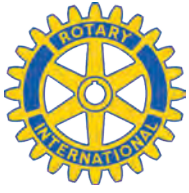
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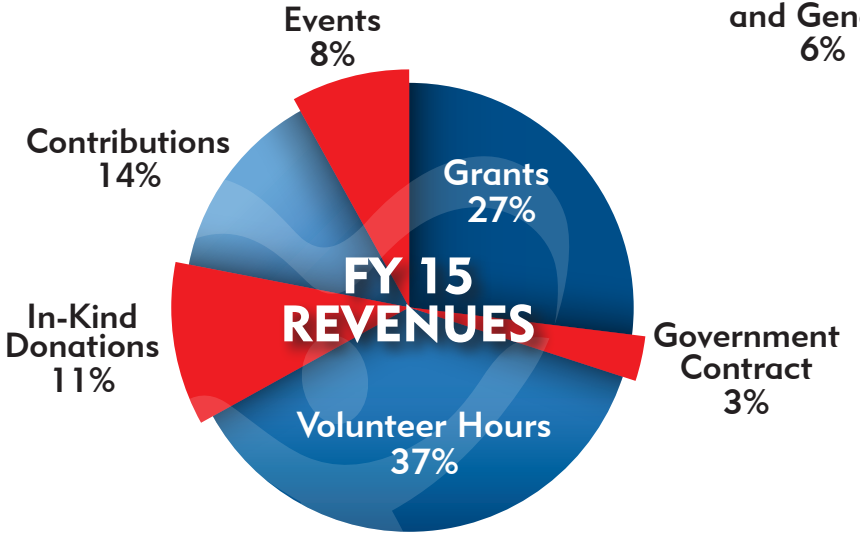

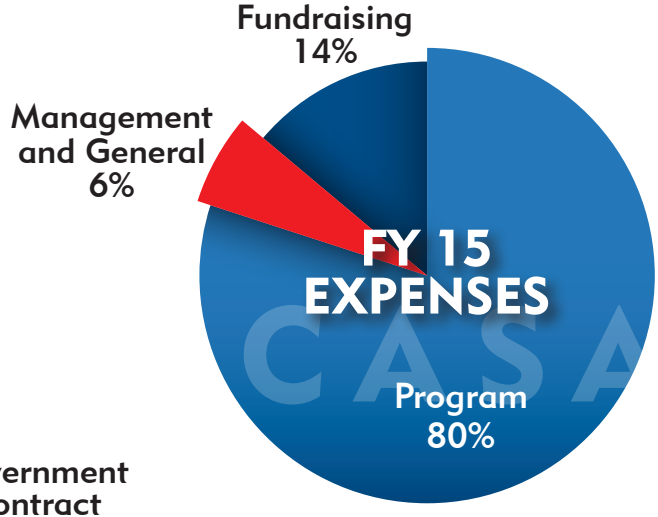

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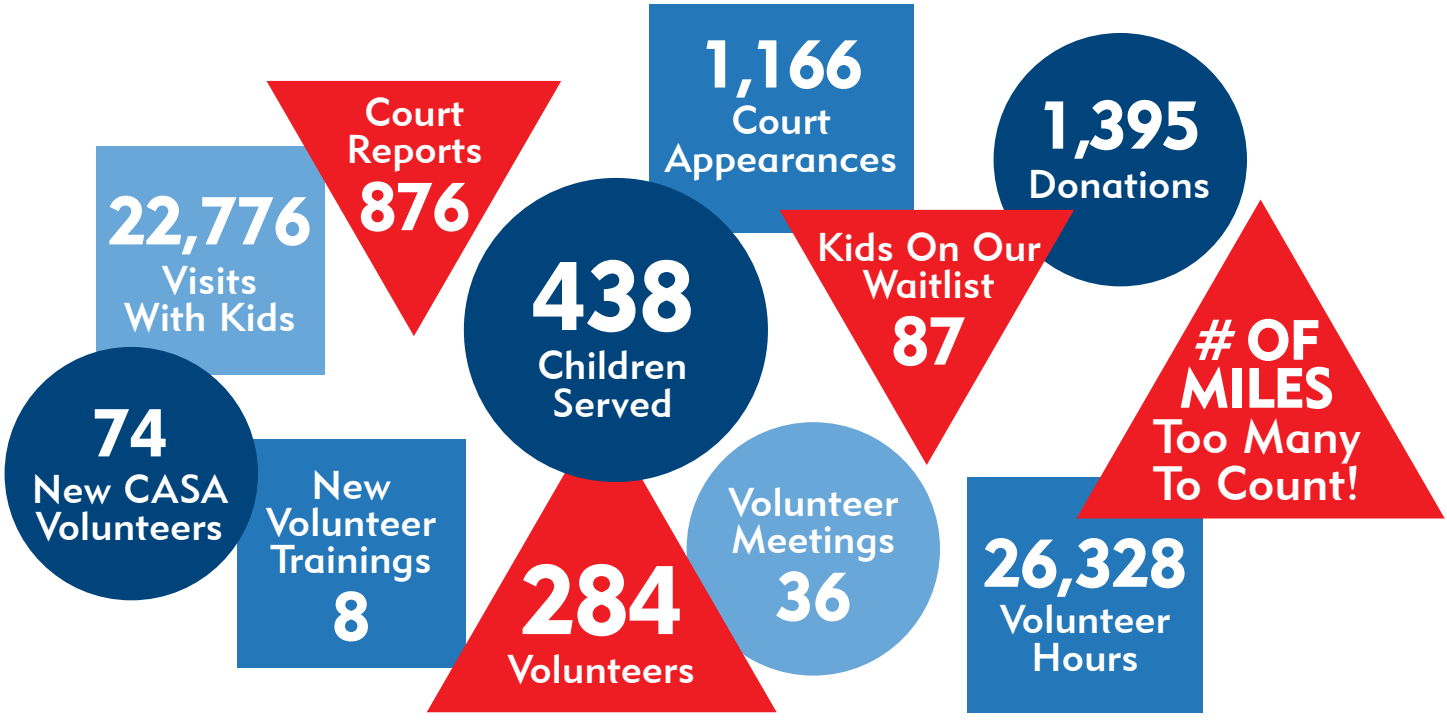

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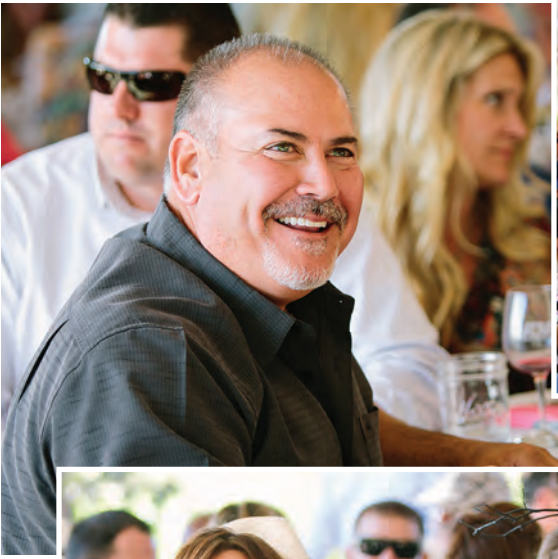
CASA at the Vineyard



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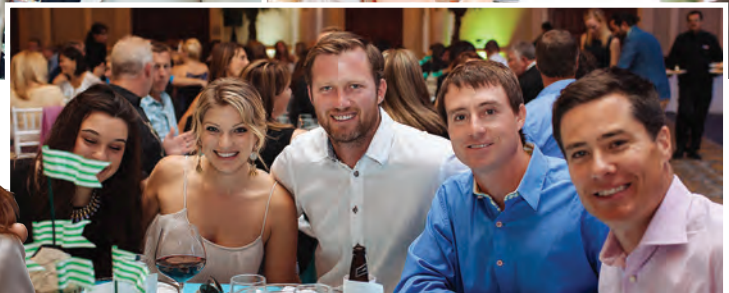

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