



Fall 2018

Dear friend,

Exciting things are happening at CASA of Ventura County! We have stepped-up our volunteer Advocate recruitment efforts and hold monthly Information Sessions in different parts of Ventura County. We have implemented a new 40-hour volunteer training curriculum that has up-to-date information and resources, and we provide these Advocate trainings six times a year, with a variety of options, like Flex-Training, which is split between the classroom and online activities. The reason for all this is simple, because the more Volunteer Advocates there are, the more kids we can help. Your donation will help make this possible.

Each day our Advocates make a difference in the lives of some of Ventura County's most vulnerable foster children, all of whom have been abandoned, neglected or abused. These dedicated Court appointed volunteers know the importance of "showing up" – whether it is to advocate for a child in Court, to meet with a social worker, to take a child to the dentist, or to be in the stands during a youth football game. A CASA volunteer is that one person who a foster child can consistently count on for guidance, comfort and support.

CASA has also started a new initiative called the Mental Health Advocacy Program. Research has shown that foster youths' Health & Education Passports - which follow them through the system - are frequently not up to date, and important information is missing. In fact, mental health providers don't always have complete child trauma and developmental histories, which can lead to inaccurate assessment and treatment plans. We are advocating for foster youth regarding the administration and use of psychotropic medications and recommended therapeutic services by ensuring that trauma and developmental histories are clearly identified and recorded. Essentially, this creates a comprehensive medical & mental health history. And, while a file is being reviewed, a Family Finding Worksheet is also completed so that links to family members, friends, teachers or other important people in the child's life can be identified and brought into their circle of support.

As you can see, CASA is continuing to expand its efforts to ensure that foster children are receiving the best services available, and it is our hope that these new initiatives can improve their lives even more. Every child in foster care deserves the support and advocacy of a CASA volunteer, but right now, we are serving only 46% of the children who need us. Will you please consider a year-end gift to CASA of Ventura County? **Even better, all gifts made through December 31, 2018 will be matched – up to \$10,000 – by Rick and Marcie Sexauer!** You can double the impact of your donation, and help change the life of a child who needs us! Thank you, and best wishes for a happy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Teresa Romney
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