



## Summer Smiles

*July 2019 Quarterly Newsletter*

Not only do CASA volunteers provide vital information to the Court to facilitate better-informed decisions for the foster child, they also take the child on fun outings to have new experiences, help them enjoy the season, and make new memories. This summer, we invite our neighbors to help a child in our community by becoming a CASA volunteer or making a donation to CASA of Ventura County.

[Learn More](#)

## CASA ROCKS!

**Saturday, August 4, 2019**

**Begins at 4 pm**

**Santa Rosa Valley** (address will be provided upon reservation)



\$25 per person  
Tickets go on sale July 8th at  
[www.casaofventuracounty.org](http://www.casaofventuracounty.org).

As seen in Camarillo, Thousand Oaks, and throughout Ventura County: Mini Driver Band - playing your favorite hits from the 1970s, 80s, and 90s!

And...there will be an opportunity to win a certificate for up to 4 guests to visit the exclusive & world-famous **Magic Castle!**

Bring your own chairs and favorite food and refreshments. Dance the night away!

Limited number of tickets available. Proceeds support CASA of Ventura County.

## Our New Employees!

Introducing the newest members of our CASA Team: Eddie Perez and Letty Ramirez!

Eddie is joining our team as a Case Supervisor working alongside Jason, Shannon and Chelsie in supporting all our active CASAs in their advocacy work.

As our Data Analyst and Program Assistant, Letty will be partnering with all members of the team to support a variety of functions and administrative duties for the organization.

Additionally, both Eddie and Letty are bilingual in Spanish so we provide translation for the children and families we serve.

[Click here to read Eddie Perez's bio.](#)

[Click here to read Letty Ramirez's bio.](#)



## Foster Care Facts

The stats are harrowing. In 2017, **nine out of every 1,000** U.S. children were determined to be victims of abuse or neglect.

The children we serve have experienced **significant trauma**. The vast majority of children who are victims of maltreatment have suffered from neglect. Physical abuse accounted for 18 percent of child maltreatment victims in 2017. Some children are subjected to both physical abuse and neglect.



Physical abuse and neglect are two of a number of highly stressful, potentially traumatic experiences known as “adverse childhood experiences,” or ACEs. Among other ACEs children who have experienced abuse or neglect may have been subjected to are:

- witnessing violence,
- sexual or emotional abuse,
- having mental illness in the household, and
- incarceration of a household member.

One in ten children in the U.S. has experienced three or more ACEs.

For children who are removed from their families, that removal and life in foster care can add to the trauma. **The impacts of this trauma can last a lifetime.** Experiencing abuse, neglect and other ACEs can cause feelings of helplessness and intense fear in children.

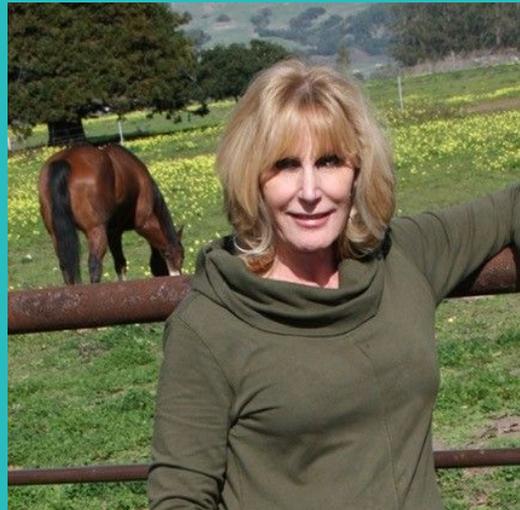
Trauma can mark children’s health and ability to thrive immediately, and as they age, including negatively impacting:

- brain development
- physical health
- mental health
- educational
- achievement
- behavior
- income

## CASA Spotlight

My name is Anne Peaks. I have been a CASA for 3 years. During my time as a CASA I have had two cases – both very different from the other. My first case was for approximately a year and 1/4 with sisters, 4 and 6. They were placed with a wonderful Foster Family when I first met them. The youngest was quick to trust me but the oldest was leery of yet another unfamiliar adult in her life.

Over time, after seeing them each week and doing fun activities, such as pottery painting, going to the library, making necklaces and bracelets, going to the park together, visiting the Tall Ships and attending the Nutcracker and The Little Mermaid, the oldest began to believe that I was there for them and would not disappear. We developed a strong bond that continues to this day. As the girls went through the process of reunification, I came to know their parents well. I was so comforted that they had taken all of their parenting classes, therapy and services to heart and were on the path to leading a more positive life for themselves and their incredible girls. The girls were so proud when their Mom became a Parent Partner and mentored others who were in the system and experiencing adversity. A true success story for all involved.



I have been working with my current appointee, a now 7 year old boy since he was 5. He is extremely bright and has an incredible memory which is a wonder but also a bane as he remembers all that has happened to him over his young life...

Her story continues... [read it here.](#)

## June: National Reunification Month



June is National Reunification Month. Most families that have their children removed due to abuse or neglect are offered services such as parenting classes, therapy, or addiction treatment so that ultimately the children may be returned to them, or reunified. If the family successfully addresses the problems that caused the children to be removed, the children can return home. Studies show that children who live with family have much better outcomes than children raised in foster care.

One support that can help families reunify is a CASA or Court Appointed Special Advocate. These highly trained volunteers are assigned to one child or sibling group in foster care, and stay with the child or children until the case is resolved. CASAs are appointed by the judge and report to the judge on the best interests of the child. They are able to monitor and report on progress made by the family, and the needs and wishes of the child or children they serve.

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### Upcoming Informationals, Trainings, and In-Services

#### Informational Session:

- Thursday, July 25 from 6:00-7:30 pm in Thousand Oaks
- Thursday, August 29 from 6:00-7:30 pm in Simi Valley
- Wednesday, September 18 from 6:00-7:30 pm in Camarillo
- Wednesday, October 16 from 6:00-7:30 pm in Simi Valley
- Thursday, November 14 from 6:00-7:30 pm in Camarillo

#### Training Sessions:

- Fall Flex Training: August 28-October 2
- Fall Traditional Training: October 15-November 12

#### In-Service Schedule:

- July 15 from 12:00-2:00 pm: Vicarious Trauma and Self Care
- August 20 from 6:00-8:00 pm: Suicide Prevention
- September 19 from 6:00-8:00 pm: Juvenile Dependency Team Panel Discussion
- September 26 from 5:30-9:00 pm: Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)
- October 29 from 9:00 am-12:30 pm: Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)
- November 7 from 6:00-8:00: Juvenile Dependency Team Panel Discussion
- November 13 from 6:00-8:00: Supporting Foster Youth Through the Holidays
- December 11 from 6:00-8:00 pm: Trust-Based Relational Intervention

[Go to Events Calendar](#)

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### How to Help

#### Make a Donation

Because of your support, we have been able to continue to serve the foster youth in our

county! Of the more than 700 children assigned to CASA of Ventura County, we are currently serving 46% of the children who need us. Naturally, our ultimate goal is for every foster child who needs an Advocate to have one. We know we can reach this goal with the continued support of our friends, service clubs, local businesses and foundations.

It costs about \$2,400 a year to support an advocate + child relationship, including recruiting, screening, training, and 24/7 support from staff. Your support leads directly to sending trained and compassionate volunteers into the community to effectively advocate for these children.



## Make a Donation



### Become an Advocate

A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Volunteer is a trained community member who becomes a sworn officer of the court by the Juvenile Court Judges to represent the best interests of a court-dependent child. CASAs ensure children involved with dependency or delinquency courts have a voice in their proceedings. Requirements are: be at least 21 years old, pass a thorough background check and screening process, and complete a 40 hour training course. [Click here to learn more.](#)



### Become a Friend of CASA and/or Join Outreach & Communications Committee

The mission of Friends of CASA is to raise funds through events, programs and projects that enhance the public's understanding and support of CASA. Contact [pam@casaofventuracounty.org](mailto:pam@casaofventuracounty.org). As an Outreach and Communications Committee member, you can speak at local events or to local service groups about CASA and host CASA informational booths at community events all over the county. Contact [alexis@casaofventuracounty.org](mailto:alexis@casaofventuracounty.org).

## AmazonSmile

### Prime Day deals start July 15

Amazon donates when you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

amazonsmile

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop on AmazonSmile, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization.

How to support CASA of Ventura County through shopping on Amazon:

1. Go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.
2. Select CASA of Ventura County Inc to receive donations from eligible purchases before

- you begin shopping.
3. Shop exactly as you normally would! (Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation” on their product detail pages.)

[Go to AmazonSmile](#)

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