



## CASA of Ventura County *January 2019 Quarterly Newsletter*

### Letter from our Executive Director

Happy New Year!! As I write this message I am reminded that last year we, as a County, were dealing with tragedy, as we are again this year. Our community is strong and supportive as we strive to lift up those who have been affected by the events of the last several months.

As Advocates for foster youth we work every day to lift up the children with the support and consistency offered by our volunteers. Each year we look to provide new services and improve how we Advocate. This year we have committed to support the children by training volunteers to mine the children's files and chronologically document their mental health and prescription drug history. A one -page summary documenting and highlighting these findings will be shared with Children and Family Services, the Court, Ventura County Behavioral Health, including the treating clinician and prescribing psychiatrist, to ensure that a child's trauma history and previous mental health services are at the forefront of case decision making. This new research driven volunteer opportunity provides flexibility and another way to advocate for the kids. CASA of Ventura County is also advocating for children in the Juvenile Delinquency system who have had an Advocate in Dependency, or who may be assigned by the Delinquency Court Judge. This is a time when the kids need help to ensure that they complete their plan and move forward in life on a positive note.

In the last few weeks we have had several very encouraging outcomes. One child, whose advocate has been with him for eight years, was adopted by his paternal grandmother allowing him the opportunity to remain part of his biological family unit. Another very successful outcome is an 18-year-old high school senior who has transitioned to an independent living apartment and is now taking charge of her own life; living on her own, going to school, working, and preparing for her future. Securing permanence is a very important event in the foster youth lives and the assistance they receive from their Advocate is pivotal in helping with reunification with their parents, placement with a relative, establishing a guardianship, placement in a stable foster home, adoption, or continuing into extended foster care.

We look forward to serving more children this year and thank you for your support and dedication to CASA of Ventura County. In 2018 CASA of Ventura County served 318 children with 223 Advocates. If you or someone you know wants to make a difference in the life of a child, contact us today. You can make 2019 better for a child in foster care. Become a CASA volunteer.

Thank you,  
Teresa Romney

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## Upcoming Events



### **CASA of Ventura County Ribbon Cutting Ceremony: January 31, 2019 4:45-6:00 pm**

Please join us in welcoming our organization into our new home:

Ventura County Community Foundation  
4001 Mission Oaks Blvd.  
Camarillo, CA 93012

A variety of finger foods and drinks  
Homemade baked goodies by Dawn Kemp  
Music by LuAnn Olson, Randell and Bryn Kirsch

### **Next Upcoming Informational Session:**

***February 20 from 6:00-7:30 pm at the CASA Office***

Spread the word! Attend this CASA Informational Session to learn more about how you can make a difference in the life of an abused or neglected foster child in our community. These are free informational presentations about our program and are not a pre-requisite for the training.

To RSVP or for more information, contact Rebecca at (805) 389-3120 or [Rebecca@casaofventuracounty.org](mailto:Rebecca@casaofventuracounty.org). Address will be provided upon registration.

[Click here to view the 2019 Informational Session schedule.](#)

### **Upcoming In-Services:**

***January 28 from 12:00-3:00 pm at the CASA office  
Advocating for Infants and Toddlers***

***January 31 from 5:30-9:00 pm at the CASA office***

## Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC)

**February 7 from 6:00-8:00 pm at the CASA office**  
**Juvenile Dependency Team Panel Discussion**

**February 20 from 12:00-2:00 pm at the CASA office**  
**Support Services for Foster Children and Youth**

[Click here to view the 2019 In-Service schedule.](#)

### Upcoming Training Classes:

#### **Winter Traditional Training February 26 - March 28**

This training course is in person Tuesdays and Thursdays from 5:30 - 9:00 pm.

#### **Spring Flex Training April 10 - May 16**

This training course is in person Tuesdays from 6:00 - 9:00 pm, and about 15 hours of online training.

With any questions, please email [janet@casaofventuracounty.org](mailto:janet@casaofventuracounty.org).

[Click here to view the 2019 Training Classes schedule.](#)

### CASA Booth at the Nun Run

**February 2, 2019 from 7:00-10:30 am at La Reina High School & Middle School in Thousand Oaks**

Join us for the 5th annual Sisters of Notre Dame Nun Run 5K, 1 Mile Fun Run and Community Service Fair! In the spirit of the Sisters of Notre Dame, representatives from non-profit service organizations (including CASA of Ventura County!) will be present to share information about their mission, programs and volunteer opportunities.

### SAVE THE DATE! Special CASA Event

**Sunday, May 19, 2019 beginning  
around 3 pm**

This will be an event unlike any other CASA event in the past! Many exciting surprises are in store for our event at Olivas Adobe in Ventura... you won't want to miss this!

Stay tuned for more details.



Photo by SchafPhoto via

<https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/648/Olivas-Adobe>

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## Ways to Get Involved



### **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.](#)

### **Join Friends of CASA or the Outreach and 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 at [pam@casaoventuracounty.org](mailto:pam@casaoventuracounty.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 at [alexis@casaoventuracounty.org](mailto:alexis@casaoventuracounty.org)

### **Make a Donation**

When you donate to CASA of Ventura County, you are investing in our children, our community, and ultimately, our future.

Our leveraging ability is unique. Your contributions allow CASA to recruit, screen, train and support volunteer Advocates. CASA's Board of Directors manages the 501c3 non-profit organization in a fiscally prudent and responsible manner.

[Donate online by clicking here](#) or make checks payable to: CASA of Ventura County  
P.O. Box 1135  
Camarillo, CA 93011-1135

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## **CASA Spotlight**

My name is Bob. My wife, Rita, and I and have been CASAs for about three years. Rita worked in special education and became interested in the CASA program as she was nearing retirement. She thought this volunteer organization would give her the opportunity to continue working with children while using the expertise and skills she gained during her career. She encouraged me to join her with the idea that we could collaborate on our cases.



Being CASAs for our first 3 appointees was a wonderful and rewarding experience. They included siblings -- a seven year old girl and a nine year old boy -- as well as another eight year old boy, all fostered by the same parents. We met with the children two to three times a month and activities included recreational sports such as soccer, tennis, miniature golf, library visits and lunch or dinner.

When the children were placed in legal guardianship our time as their CASAs ended. In the process of supporting the children and their foster parents during their transition to foster care, we formed a special bond with the family. Consequently, we still make time to see the children and are able to catch up with their lives.

Our current appointee is a 14 year old boy. We have been his CASA for one year. He is very polite and always treats us with respect. He enjoys joining us for dinner where he updates us on activities with his friends and family. He is able to express frustration over troubling events in his life and sometimes asks us advice regarding social situations. We were amazed at how quickly he was able to accept us in his life.

Working with a 14 year old boy has been a learning experience for Rita whose career centered around elementary school children. She has education rights for our appointee and is able to navigate the "system" fairly easily. She is learning how to include him in the decision-making process at school. We are both aware that he has to buy into decisions in order for them to be of benefit. We both see the wisdom of our choosing to work as a team as CASAs. Our collaboration has been necessary often resulting in positive outcomes with our teenage appointee.



## DID YOU KNOW?

It costs about \$2,400 a year to support an Advocate + child relationship.

[Make a Donation](#)

## 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 from the web browser on your computer or mobile device.
2. Select CASA of Ventura County Inc as your preferred charity 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.)

**Reduce Your Stress with One Less Vehicle. Donate It to CASA of Ventura County!**

## Give the Gift of a Car Donation

Help make a difference when you donate a car, boat, or RV.



From cars, trucks, RVs and more—we accept almost any type of vehicle donation that meets the following basic requirements:

1. Vehicle has a clean title.
2. Vehicle is in one piece but does not need to be running.
3. Vehicle is tow truck accessible.

Donating a vehicle is easy and tax-deductible! The proceeds help CASA continue our work and the work of our volunteers to advocate for foster youth in Ventura County. Call 805-389-3120 for more information. Donate your vehicle today!



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**CASA**

Court Appointed Special Advocates  
**FOR CHILDREN**

**CASA OF VENTURA COUNTY**

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