

Growth & Grateful Hearts

February 2018 Quarterly Newsletter



CASA of Ventura County Quarterly Newsletter

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Ventura County will be sending a quarterly newsletter to friends and volunteers to keep you updated, feature a CASA Spotlight to exemplify first-hand the amazing work of our Advocates, share how your generous support is being utilized, and preview upcoming events.

This quarter, our hearts are overflowing with love! We emphasize how grateful we are for your support that has given us the opportunity for continued **growth**. In particular, we want to acknowledge those who supported our Annual Appeal and Giving Tuesday campaigns. Because of you, we are able to help more foster children.



Letter from our Executive Director

Happy New Year! The last few months have been a trying time for Ventura County. My thoughts are with all who have experienced loss in the Thomas Fire and its aftermath. We

serve all of Ventura County and are committed to helping our foster youth by advocating for their needs and being that one consistent adult in their lives. Over the last several years we have strived to eventually grow the organization to serve all foster youth in the county who need an Advocate, about 750 out of approximately 1,000 children. We strategically look at how we grow and how we use our donated funds to honor these children and respect those who give to our organization. Our Advocates come from all walks of life and give of their time and heart to see these children weekly, write a court report every six months, and see that their need for services, educational plans, and opportunities for other important programs and activities, are secured. National CASA says that children who have an Advocate spend eight months less time in the system than those children who do not. I invite you to attend one of our Information Sessions and learn about our volunteer opportunities.

Thank you,
Teresa Romney

CASA Updates



Photo from blog.payjunction.com

CASA has Gone Paperless!

We've said farewell and good riddance to our giant silver filing cabinets as of January 2018! We are now (almost) entirely paperless. From now on, CASA Volunteers will be able to access their Appointee's files, view all interactions with the CASA organization, and access important documents through their CASA email account and our website.

[Visit Our Website](#)



Staff Growth

Towards the end of 2017, the CASA staff grew by two! Jason Maser, left, is our newest Case Supervisor and already has the biggest case load! Alexis Minie, right, is our first Marketing Communications and Recruitment Manager. The CASA staff is now at a total of ten!



In-Services Open to the Public

You are invited to attend our In-Services and Continuing Education Opportunities (unless otherwise stated). [Click here](#) to view the schedule of all 2018 In-Services hosted by CASA of Ventura County on various topics that pertain to the youth community we serve.

CASA Spotlight - Cindy Hughes

I have been interested in working with foster children for a very long time. As a young child, my sister and I lived for several years in a foster home with a very dedicated foster family. That experience helped shape my interest in working with children professionally as a nurse, a PNP [Pediatric Nurse Practitioner], and as a nurse educator. I didn't know I would become a CASA volunteer until I discovered the organization at a site near my office a few years before my retirement.



I am in my third year of being a CASA volunteer. My first experience introduced me to a 9-year-old boy who was hard to get to know verbally, so we "talked" through sports (luckily, I am a sports fan). He and his sister were entering a trial-home phase with their biological mom. Both children had medical and psychological diagnoses. I had the pleasure of working closely with a CASA colleague who was assigned to his sister. Together we learned and supported one another. This experience covered the paths of homelessness, health concerns, intergenerational transmission of values, culture, extended families, and building relationships. Today, the siblings are in a permanent home with their biological mom.

I have been with my second child, an energetic fun-to-be-with girl who is 10 years old, for over a year and a half. Very recently the team and I entered a critical phase with this child. After thinking for the past year that she would be finding a permanent home through adoption by a family who is not related to her, the caregivers' adoption commitment appears to be dissolving. The team is coping with their feelings, suspending judgement, and struggling to find the best solution.

My experiences as a CASA volunteer have been eye opening. I thought I knew a lot and had seen a lot, but I am finding that I have much more to learn. I have had CASA children in two very different situations. Both experiences have had their wonderful peaks and troubling valleys, and I have learned to appreciate the simple times that I spend with my child when everything seems to go just right. This is a day by day approach, since I have learned that it is difficult to control all the issues that contribute to parenting, and that predicting the future outcomes are very challenging.

Because of Your Support..

... we are able to keep growing!

We are now responsible for serving the entire Ventura County foster system, which consists of approximately 1,000 children and non-minor dependents at any given time. Of the 1,000 children assigned to CASA, we are currently serving only 46% of the children who need us. Naturally, our ultimate goal is for every foster child who needs an Advocate to have one, and we know we can reach this goal with the continued support of our friends, service clubs, local businesses and foundations. Our ambitious 3 year plan is to recruit 60 new advocates per year and serve roughly 500 children by 2020. 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.

[Donate Now](#)



Upcoming Events

- Partnership for Safe Families 5k
 - April 21, 2018 in Camarillo
- Hope4Kids Festival and Run
 - April 28, 2018 at Lake Sherwood in Thousand Oaks
- The Magic of CASA
 - June 14, 2018 at 6 pm at Tower Club in Oxnard
- View CASA Informational Sessions and In-Services [schedule here](#)



Quarterly Fun Fact

In 2017, CASA of Ventura County Volunteers donated a total of
31,213.70 hours



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