



Giving Thanks

Fall 2019 Quarterly Newsletter

As we approach the holiday season, we look forward to spending time celebrating with those who are closest to us: our family and friends. This busy time is filled with our holiday traditions and rituals.

This is a time to be filled with gratitude for all that we have, and to share with others in our community who may have less than us. At CASA of Ventura County, we work all year long to make sure that children in foster care have all the resources they need. We are enormously grateful for our dedicated, hardworking volunteers who are advocating for foster youth in our community. Holidays can be a challenging time for foster youth as they may not be with family, and may not be able to celebrate the traditions they love. It can be difficult for them to build relationships with the new people in their lives and adopt others' holiday traditions. Their CASA volunteers often are a crucial support during the holidays.

Additionally, we are incredibly grateful for our staff, Board of Directors, and community supporters. Thank you for all you do in support of our foster youth, CASA volunteers, and community. You are making a difference.

GivingTuesday
December 3, 2019



#GIVINGTUESDAY December 3, 2019

GivingTuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media and collaboration.

Please consider donating to CASA of Ventura County this year. We will be giving **100% of the #GivingTuesday proceeds to our Kids' Enrichment Fund**, which provides monetary gifts to local foster children at the holidays, funds special opportunities like art lessons or sports activities and supports specific needs like

dental work or new shoes.

Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving (in the U.S.) and the widely recognized shopping events Black Friday and Cyber Monday, GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, when many focus on their holiday and end-of-year giving.

Learn more about [GivingTuesday](#) by clicking [here](#).

[Visit our website](#)

CASA Spotlights

Valerie Salazar: *Youth Justice Leadership Institute (YJLI) Fellow*

Gerry Rubey: *Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) Angels in Adoption[®] Honoree*

Valerie Salazar

Congratulations to Valerie, who has been named a **Youth Justice Leadership Institute (YJLI) Fellow with National Juvenile Justice Network!** YJLI promotes leaders of color within the #youthjustice reform movement, and we are proud that Valerie is one of only 9 fellows chosen for this years cohort!

Utilizing her personal narrative, Valerie wants to speak with youth and help individuals feel hope who are currently in the system (Juvenile Facility) or are in a high-risk community; provide awareness to those who make life changing decisions for youth for policy change; continue implementing more restorative justice in her community; and advocate for youth to have unbroken care from facilities to placement to home.



Each year, NJJN welcomes a diverse class of advocates and organizers of color, with

demonstrated leadership acumen, to continue their advocacy efforts to bring broad, positive change to juvenile justice systems as Youth Justice Leadership Institute fellows.

During the year-long fellowship, fellows gain deeper knowledge about juvenile justice system structures and trends, learn about effective advocacy and organizing techniques, and are mentored by advocates who are advancing meaningful system reforms.

You can learn more about [YJLI and the National Juvenile Justice Network](#) by [clicking here](#).



Gerry Rubey

We would like to congratulate Gerry, who was nominated by Representative Julia Brownley and has been chosen as a **2019 Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI) Angels in Adoption® Honoree**.

Gerry, having just celebrated her 20th anniversary with CASA of Ventura County, is an exemplary advocate. She was appointed to her 20th case in 2018. She also serves as a Senior Peer Coordinator, managing a range of 25-50 CASAs at a time and upwards of 400 different CASAs with their appointees thus far. When CASA of Ventura County became an independent

501(c)3 in June 2011, Gerry and others donated the seed money which helped the non-profit become financially stable.

As an enduring testament to her commitment, she and her husband were also foster parents for more than 10 years when she realized how the shortage of foster families impacted youth in dependency. Her contributions to foster children in Ventura County have made a positive and transformative impact for individuals and organizations.

Being selected as an Angels in Adoption® Honoree and celebrated by your Member of Congress is a very high honor. For the past 20 years, CCAI has hosted the Angels in Adoption® Program on Capitol Hill. The CCAI Angels in Adoption® Program is designed to celebrate individuals, couples, families, and organizations from across the nation who have made an extraordinary contribution on behalf of children in need of families.

Since the program's inception in 1999, more than 2,600 Angels have received this honor. Past recipients of this award include: Muhammad Ali, First Lady Laura Bush, Kristin Chenoweth, Scott Fujita, Deborra-lee Furness, Al Roker, and more.

You can learn more about [CCAI and the Angels program](#) by [clicking here](#).



DID YOU KNOW?

It costs about **\$2,400** per year to support an Advocate + Appointee relationship.

[Make a Donation](#)

Recent Past Event: CASA Witches Tea



The winners of the Witches Tea costume contest.



A couple of the Friends of CASA members who helped plan the Witches Tea.

Friends of CASA hosted a Witches Tea recently in Westlake Village. Everyone came outfitted in their favorite witch attire, and several guests went the “extra mile” in creating elaborate witch costumes. It was a fun afternoon of snacking on tasty treats, visiting a tarot card reader and bidding on some fabulous auction items.

In addition, several Friends of CASA members performed a terrific “witches dance” which they learned and practiced in the weeks leading up to the event. All proceeds went to support CASA of Ventura County.

Mental Health Advocacy

Many children within the juvenile dependency system have experienced trauma during their childhood which affects their overall mental health and well-being.

The Mental Health Advocacy Program seeks to highlight the mental health of a child in dependency by taking a closer look at the traumatic events the child has experienced, the many placement changes the child has undergone, familial history of the child, as well as with many other factors. These aspects will be researched strictly through reviewing the child’s case file and the findings will be shared with the court, our public health nurses and Ventura County Behavioral Health providers.

During this training, advocates will learn about psychotropic medications, mental illness and stigmas related, how to ‘mine’ a child’s file, and overall how to successfully advocate for a child’s mental health in the dependency system. Volunteers participating in the Mental Health Advocacy program must be sworn in CASA volunteers.



**“To make a difference
in someone’s life
you don’t have to be
brilliant, rich, or perfect.
You just have to care.”**

- Mandy Hale



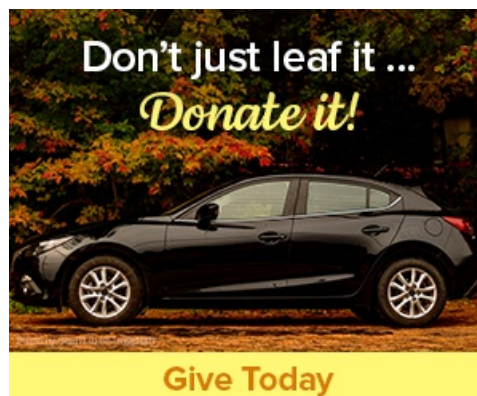
In memory of our Advocates who have recently passed: CASA of Ventura County is eternally grateful for their generous and invaluable service to their Appointees and contribution to helping our society become stronger.

Michelle Harmala

CASA volunteer from 2007-2016

Bert Sanders

CASA volunteer from 2010-2017



CASA of Ventura County is now on the Nextdoor app! This app, available on both mobile and desktop, allows communities to facilitate communication among neighbors and build stronger neighborhoods.

You can recommend CASA of Ventura County to all your neighbors, friends, and family to spread awareness! [Click here](#) to sign in or create your Nextdoor account!

We have created sample recommendation posts. View them by [clicking here](#). They are only meant to be suggestions.

Help CASA of Ventura County this season by donating any unwanted vehicles! You'll get a tax deduction and we'll take care of the rest! Instead of just taking up space, your unwanted car, boat, motorcycle, truck or even plane can help foster children in Ventura County get the support they need.

Click here to donate through the secure online donation form by [clicking here](#).

We are partnered with CARS (Charitable Adult Rides & Services) to help run our vehicle donation program.

Support us while you shop this season with AmazonSmile!

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[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 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.)



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