

**ALAMEDA COUNTY
COURT APPOINTED
SPECIAL
ADVOCATES
PROGRAM**

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501 (c)(3) Nonprofit
Organization

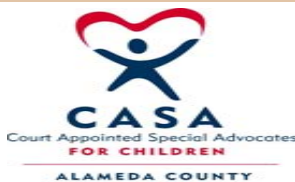


Foundation Support

- Kaiser Permanente
- State Street
- Honeywell
- In-N-Out Burger
- The Morris Stulsaft Foundation
- Hilton Hotels
- Five Bridges
- Children's Support League of the Bay Area
- Kappa Alpha Theta, UC Berkeley
- John Burton Foundation
- Costco
- Kamal Nair

Special Thanks

- Washington Mutual
- State Street



Alameda County Court Appointed Special Advocates Program

Mission Statement: Alameda County CASA promotes and supports quality volunteer advocates to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the dependency court system.

CASA Staff

Regena Jones, Executive Director
Tara Beckman, Deputy Director
Di Roberts, Program Assistant
Maria Mann-Gagné, Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor
Jaime Dadej, Adolescent Case Supervisor
Shannon Brooks, Recruitment and Training Specialist

Advisory Board Members

Gary Thompson, Chair of Advisory Board
Chet Hewitt, Chair of FOACASA
Ann Garnier, CASA Volunteer
Nancy Vachani, CASA Volunteer
Alex Briscoe, Alameda County Health Care Services
Calvin James, Assistant County Counsel
Michelle Love, Alameda County Social Services
Kathy Siegel, Public Defender's Office
Tony Crear, Probation
Paul Seeman, Alameda County Commissioner
Regena Jones, CASA Executive Director

Friends of CASA Members

Chet Hewitt, Chair
Atisa Payvarpour, Charles Schwab
Donna Robinson, Social Worker, Sojourner Truth Senior Housing
Yvette Leung, Alameda County Health Care Services
Kendra Roberts, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.
Cindy Burnett, California Consulting Assn.
Sylvia Soublet, Alameda County Social Services
Kamal Nair, JJJ/DPC Commissioner
Ex-Officio Members
Regena Jones, CASA Executive Director
Vana Chavez, HCSA Finance Manager

Upcoming Court Hearings

Below is a list of CASA volunteers whose CASA children are scheduled for court hearings for February-April. Your report must be submitted to your case supervisor 10 days prior to the court hearing.

Please note that Dept. 132 and 133, which were located at 600 Washington Street in Oakland, have relocated to 400 Broadway in Oakland. Dept. 132 has changed to Dept. 151. Dept. 133 has changed to Dept. 150.

May Court Hearings

Anthony Tennell: Fri., May 2 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Ann Garnier: Tues., May 13 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Mary Cain: Thurs., May 15 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Diane Hernek: Thurs., May 15 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151

Sara Webber: Thurs., May 22 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Barbara Malina: Wed., May 21 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Chris Martinez: Thurs., May 22 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Rashon Seldon: Thurs., May 22 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504

June Court Hearings

Sara Klein: Wed., June 11 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Nicole Carter: Wed., June 11 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Ronald Paige: Wed., June 11 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Clyde Nelson: Fri., June 13 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Lia Germain: Thurs., June 19 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Chris Roduit: Tues., June 24 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503
Linda Norton: Tues., June 24 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Jaime Dadej: Tues., June 24 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503

July Court Hearings

Susan Homer: Tues., July 1 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503
Mara Veneman: Tues., July 1 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503
Kimberly Wong: Tues., July 1 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Maeve Granzin: Wed., July 2 @ 8:30 am
Valerie Medina: Mon., July 7 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Lisa Bereny: Tues., July 8 @ am in Dept. 503
Alicia Schoenfeld: Thurs., July 10 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Lene Eckhoff: Tues., July 15 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503
Brian Kirking: Wed., July 16 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Mailee Wang: Thurs., July 17 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Margo Feeley: Wed., July 23 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Rhondee Epperson: Thurs., July 31 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504

ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM

Special points of interest:

- Why Be a CASA?
- Volunteer Recognition
- Continuing Education

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Voices for Children

Volume 2, Issue 2

April 1, 2008-June 30, 2008

Make a Difference in the Life of a Foster Child and Volunteer With CASA

Alameda County currently has approximately 2,300 foster children in care. Alameda County CASA serves 90 of those children. We currently have 70 children on our wait list, and some of those children have been eagerly awaiting a CASA volunteer for more than a year.



would also be willing to travel to your place of business to give a presentation about the CASA program.

Throughout our history, CASA volunteers have helped to meet the emotional and physical safety needs of thousands of abused and neglected children. Volunteers advocate on behalf of the children's educational, mental health, medical/dental, and family/sibling visitation needs, and work to increase the likelihood that the children are placed in homes and with families in which they will thrive.

In 2008, Alameda County CASA launched a recruitment campaign to create awareness about the CASA program and recruit additional volunteers. Alameda CASA recruits volunteers in many ways. We participate in service fairs, conduct presentations at universities and schools, businesses, organizations, churches, synagogues and other religious entities, and will give presentations to community-based organizations who are interested in learning more about the CASA program.

about the volunteer opportunities available at CASA and provide jurors with a CASA brochure and fact sheet. CASA posters will also be displayed in all six jury lounges at each court location. CASA is also posting articles and advertisements in community newspapers. We post flyers in businesses, universities, coffee shops, fitness centers, etc. CASA is always looking for opportunities to speak about the CASA program. If your place of business, organization or church has an interest in learning more about the CASA program, please call 510.618.1950.

CASA recently obtained approval from the presiding judge of Alameda County to conduct outreach opportunities in jury rooms. Each morning the jury coordinator will give a brief presentation

If you, a family member or friend would like to assist in outreach activities for CASA, we are looking for people to help us post flyers in universities, coffee shops, etc. We

Volunteer Recognition

Maria Mann-Gagné, Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor

For several years, Nancy Vachani has advocated strongly for the young man she is assigned to. She remained a consistent figure through placement changes which sent him to the far reaches of Solano and Contra Costa Counties. Nancy is the most important person in her youth's life and Alameda County CASA appreciates her commitment.

Jaime Dadej, Adolescent Case Supervisor

Suzanne Haendel has been a dedicated and incredibly supportive adult in her youth's life. She helped her enroll in college and has been a consistent and positive influence her youth's life. When she didn't connect with her youth in the beginning, she was willing to step back and figure out a way that she could connect with her. It took time and patience, but in the end, the relationship that has blossomed is one that will be cherished for a lifetime.

Tara Beckman, Deputy Director

Lois Brubeck has been a volunteer for 2.5 years and has been with her youth through transitions, crisis situations and joyous occasions. Whenever a situation arises, Lois is one of the first to respond. She focuses on how she can resolve issues, find ways to support her youth and be a member of the team. Thank you for your continued dedication!

The Gift of Being a CASA Volunteer

I first came to CASA after I heard a radio program about the problems related to children who age out of foster care. I was shocked to learn that so many of them end up on the streets, unemployed, on drugs or incarcerated once they have aged out of the foster care system, and how those who do manage to support themselves often never rise above the lowest strata of income earners. I thought about my own children who, if at the age of 18 were left to support themselves without the nurturing support of family, might also have faced similar challenges and failures. My heart broke as I continued to listen to the statistics and imagine the loneliness and isolation that this young population of kids must feel, especially those who cycled through many foster families, failing to bond with any who would continue to support them beyond their legal/financial obligation to do so.

I have been a CASA for nearly a year now and have been blessed to have in my life a beautiful, intelligent and remarkable young lady. She will be graduating from high school in June and attending Holy Names University. Between grants and scholarships, her tuition, books, room and board will likely be completely covered – at least for the first year, and hopefully, for the next three years to come. She is registering as a pre-law major with the intent to attend law

school upon graduation. This is truly a blessing considering that when I first approached my youth about her college plans, nearly one year ago, she indicated that she couldn't go to college because she didn't have any money. Mind you, she desired to go to college, but couldn't imagine how she could provide for her living needs upon emancipating from foster care, let alone raise funds needed to attend college. She did all the hard work to put herself in the position to attend such a college as HNU, and I was fortunate to be in a position to help her understand her options and guide her in the steps needed to apply for admission.

In the beginning of our relationship, I made many blunders with my youth because I was new at dealing with a foster youth. She had been disappointed by many adults in her life, but for some reason she gave me a chance. I started off by asking too many questions. She responded by shutting down. When she shared with me the names of authors she enjoyed reading, I suggested others to her, which she took as my implying hers were inferior; she was hurt. My heart broke each time I stumbled with her, but I progressed and we learned how to communicate with each other.

We had very little in common at first. We were from different generations, different cultural backgrounds,

different ethnicities and very different life experiences. There were many spans of silence between us in the beginning months as we were getting to know each other better. I was afraid to fill the silence with chatter because my doing so initially caused her to withdraw. I learned just to be present, allowing her to interact with me as she wished and in a timeframe comfortable for her. I found common ground on which to build a relationship with her by taking her to movies of her interest, listening to the radio station she likes, and just listening to her without judgment. We had many conversations over wonderful meals in restaurants. She began to ask my advice and consider opinions I shared with her. Our relationship has grown into a friendship, and it is my intent to remain in my youth's life for as long as she wishes, at the very least through her college years.

I've been blessed to be a mother and enjoy the experience of raising children to adulthood. As a result of my experience as a CASA, I now realize that sometimes the good Lord brings children to you through your womb, and sometimes he brings them to you through your heart. I cannot imagine my life without my youth in it any more than I can imagine life without either of my children. I am looking forward to meeting my next CASA youth, expecting a very different experience, but going in wiser from the first.

~Suzanne Haendel

Why Be a CASA?

Because all kids in foster care deserve to have someone in their lives who get what they need. Just being a steady presence in a foster child's life can mean a lot. Knowing that someone will be there for them when things go wrong—even when you can't fix it—can make a striking improvement in that child's sense of self-worth.

Because what you do will really matter in a child's life. If you can make sure the child you advocate for gets a needed visit to the dentist or more attention from a teacher, then you will have made a real, concrete improvement in that child's life. If you can help that child prepare to live independently after foster care or find a permanent home, then you will have made

a world of difference in that child's life.

Because you will be rewarded as you get to know the child you advocate for, you will learn that even as they are angry and grieving, foster children, like all children, are funny and interesting and talented and have many other wonderful qualities.

Because what happens to foster children matters to all of us. When we bring children into the child welfare system, we, the citizens of California, effectively become their parents and we owe them no less than what we would want for our own children. By volunteering as a CASA, you can help to fulfill the promise that the lives of these special children will be good ones.

Sara Webber ~ CASA

Resources for Foster Youth

We are quickly approaching the end of the school year which, for many youth, symbolizes their emancipation from the system, as well as high school. The State Bar of California has an excellent guide for youth entering the complex world of adult responsibilities. *When You Become 18: A Survival Guide for Teenagers* covers a wide variety of topics including: money management, employment, taxes, laws, domestic violence, drugs and alcohol, housing, etc. Go to <http://calbar.ca.gov> and search for "becoming 18" to locate the guide. Since there's so much information, CASAs may want to go through the guide piece by piece with their youth to

ensure that a maximum level of understanding is achieved.

May is National Foster Care Month and a great time to spread the word about the foster care system, and ways to help, like being a CASA! Learn more at <http://www.fostercaremonth.org>. The site also includes success stories of former foster youth who have gone on to be very successful adults. These stories will provide additional motivation for youth who are feeling hopeless about their future, and prove that it's possible to overcome a difficult beginning. In May, please take some time to appreciate those you know who are active within the foster care system and working to improve it.

Volunteer Meetings and Continuing Education

Volunteer Support Groups

Maria Mann-Gagné's Meetings
Tues., May 20, 6-8 pm: Volunteer support group
Tues., July 29, 6-9 pm: Continuing Education, TBD

Jaime Dadej's Meetings
Mon., June 2, 6-9 pm: Continuing Education, First Place Fund for Youth
Tues., July 29, 6-9 pm: Continuing Education, TBD

Tara Beckman's Meetings
Mon., June 2, 6-9 pm: First Place Fund for Youth
Tues., July 29, 6-9 pm: Continuing Education, TBD

Upcoming Continuing Education Trainings

Location: Seneca Center (Registration required: To sign up, please register on Seneca's web site, www.senecacenter.org)

May Trainings
Mon., May 12, 6-9 pm: Preventing Self-Injurious Behavior in Youth
Mon., May 19, 6-9 pm: Revolving Door: The Impact of Multiple Placements on Youth
Wed., May 28, 6-9 pm: Separation and Loss Issues with Youth

June Trainings
Mon., June 2, 6-9 pm: Helping Youth with Birth Family Connections
Sat., June 14, 9-5 pm: Attachment Issues: Impact of

Child Foster Placement on Families
Sat., June 14, 9:30-1 pm: Youth Depression and the African American Culture
Wed., June 18, 6-9 pm: Foster Child Treatment Planning/Role of the Treatment Team
Mon., June 23, 6-9 pm: Cultural Competency in Work with Youth
Sat., June 28, 9-5 pm: Helping Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Challenges

July Trainings
Wed., July 9, 6-9 pm: Understanding and Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth
Sat., July 12, 9-5 pm: Progressive Crisis Intervention
Sat., July 12, 9:30-1 pm: Youth Depression and the African American Culture



CASA volunteers have the opportunity to attend monthly support groups and are required to complete 12 hours of continuing education each year. CASA volunteers can access our continuing education calendar at our web site: www.casaofalamedacounty.org. Click on "Online Resource Center" and then "Calendar."