

ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM

1000 San Leandro Blvd.
Suite 300
San Leandro, CA 94577

Phone: 510.618.1950
Fax: 510.618.1966
E-mail: rjones@acgov.org
or tbeckman@acgov.org

501 (c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

We are on the Web:
www.casaofalamedacounty.org

Foundation Support

- Children's Support League of the Bay Area
- Five Bridges
- Foss Foundation
- Hilton Hotels
- Honeywell
- In-N-Out Burger
- John Burton Foundation
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kappa Alpha Theta, UC Berkeley
- The Morris Stulsaft Foundation
- Pottruck Family Foundation
- The San Francisco Foundation
- State Street
- van Löben Se Is/RembeRock

Special Thanks

- Washington Mutual



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.

Volunteer Meetings and Continuing Education

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."

Volunteer Support Groups

Support Groups count as two hours of CE. Please RSVP to your case supervisor at least two business days prior to the meeting.

Maria Mann-Gagné's Meetings
Wed., May 27, 6-8 pm:

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

Volunteer Support Group
Mon., June 29, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group for ALL volunteers

Jaime Dadej's Meetings
Tues., May 26, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Mon., June 29, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group for ALL volunteers

Tara Beckman's Meetings
Tues., May 26, 6-8 pm: WestCoast Children's Clinic Continuing Ed.
Mon., June 29, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group for ALL volunteers

Upcoming Continuing Education Trainings
Location: Seneca Center
(Registration required: To sign

Advisory Board Members

Gary Thompson, *Chair*
Chet Hewitt, *Chair of FOACASA*
Ann Garnier, *CASA Volunteer*
Nancy Vachani, *CASA Volunteer*
Yvette Leung, *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 Judge*
Sylvia Soublet, *FOACASA Member*
Geoff Douvel, *Clear Channel*
Regena Jones, *CASA Executive Director*

up, please register on Seneca's web site, www.senecacenter.org)
April Trainings
Mon., Apr. 27, 6:00 pm-9:00 pm: Working with Sexually Exploited Minors

May Trainings
Mon., May 4, 9:30 am-5:30 pm: Introduction to Safety and Communication
Fri., May 8, 9:30 am-12:30 pm: Introduction to Suicide Prevention with Youth and Self-Care
Thurs., May 28, 10 am-4 pm: Working with LGBT Youth

June Trainings
Mon., June 8, 9:30 am-5:30 pm: Introduction to Safety and Communication
Sat., June 20, 9:30 am-1:00 pm: Youth Depression and the African American Culture

Friends of CASA Members

Chet Hewitt, *Chair*
Donna Robinson, *Social Worker, Sojourner Truth Senior Housing*
Yvette Leung, *Alameda County Health Care Services Agency*
Kendra Roberts, *Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.*
Cindy Burnett, *California Consulting Assn.*
Sylvia Soublet, *Alameda County Social Services*

Ex-Officio Members
Regena Jones, *CASA Executive Director*
Vana Chavez, *HCSA Finance Manager*

ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM

Special points of interest:

- National Volunteer Month
- East Bay Children's Law Offices
- AB 12

Inside this issue:

April is National Volunteer Month	1
AB 12: California Fostering Connections Success Act	2
East Bay Children's Law Offices	2
Volunteer Recognition	2
Resources for Foster Youth	3
Congratulations to Judge Paul Seeman	3
Welcome Judge David Matthew Krashna	3
Volunteer Meetings and Continuing Education	4
CASA Staff, Advisory and Fundraising Board Members	4
Foundation Support and Special Thanks	4



Voices for Children

Volume 3, Issue 2

April 1, 2009-June 30, 2009

April is National Volunteer Month

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others."
Mahatma Gandhi

April is Volunteer Recognition Month and while we appreciate our volunteers every day, we would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge our CASAs for their dedication and support to the CASA program and their assigned children. We understand that your role as an advocate is not always easy, yet you remain diligent and committed to advocating for the best interests of your assigned child (ren). We are very thankful to have so many wonderful CASAs for our foster children, and we are equally grateful that we have the pleasure of working with so many kind and caring volunteers.
~CASA Staff



system having that "special friend", the CASA worker, to tell the court, independently, what is going on in their young lives, and often to make unique recommendations to the court. I am impressed during my brief tenure as a Juvenile Court judge in Alameda County with the quality of the CASA workers that I have encountered to date, and am mindful of one youngster who declared that their CASA worker was "the most important person" in their life.
~Judge David Krashna, Alameda County Juvenile Dependency Court

I continue to be amazed at the outstanding work of our CASA volunteers in helping our foster children. Every week I hear heartwarming stories of how our foster youth have had their lives enriched by their CASA volunteer. Our CASA volunteers are helping our foster youth to achieve goals that were only a distant dream in the past. It is also clear to me that the lives of our CASA volunteers are also enriched by their ability to improve the lives of our foster youth. My sincere thanks and appreciation to all our CASA volunteers! If only there were more of you.
~ Judge Stephen Pulido, Alameda County Juvenile Dependency Court

In an ancient age, I was a planner of the CASA program in Contra Costa County. I realized then, and now, the importance of youngsters in our juvenile dependency

I have worked with so many volunteers who have given so much of themselves to make a difference in a kid's life. And though it may not always seem like your presence is changing the situation in that very moment, know that it is forever impacting the way our kids see the world.

They learn that complete strangers can come into their lives and care so much about them and allow them opportunities they might otherwise not have had. Thank you CASAs for everything you do."
~Kristin Mateer, Alameda County Public Defender's Office

I personally love my CASA volunteers. They're all wonderful staff. They provide ongoing support and aren't too annoying. I appreciate all the time and effort the CASA organization has provided to me because it really comes in handy.

They are very patient with CASA youth and understand us in all our unique ways, especially me. I also enjoy all the extracurricular activities and events that CASA provides to foster children and love the snacks they give me, even if they are just a bit too healthy.

But overall, I believe that the CASA organization was the best thing that happened for the foster care system. CASA has supported me during a very challenging time and it's the best thing that happened to me.
~CASA Youth

~Commissioner Thomas Surh, Alameda County Juvenile Dependency Court

Volunteer Recognition

Maria Mann-Gagné, Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor
Iris Winogron's CASA youth has had six hearings over the past seven months. Not only did Iris attend a majority of the hearings, she wrote additional reports to keep the judge, attorneys, CWW and other parties informed of the youth's situation. We here at CASA appreciate Iris for going above and beyond her duties as a volunteer for our organization.

Jaime Dadej, Adolescent Case Supervisor

I would like to recognize all three of our UC Berkeley MSW interns. The CASA program has had the pleasure of hosting Carolyn, Rachel and Jessica for their first-year graduate internship. Collectively they served nine children and contributed close to 300 hours! Initially, the plan was for the interns to serve transition-age youth, but as their experience unfolded, they were able to serve children as young as 11-years-old. In addition, Jessica was able to serve pregnant and parenting teens. The interns were a warm addition to our team and certainly lifted the spirits in our office. We are grateful for the work they have done and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

Tara Beckman, Deputy Director

Kitty Harvey has been a volunteer for three years and advocated for three CASA youth. Recently, Kitty has been very involved with supporting her youth during his emancipation process. Her CASA youth has obtained housing and employment and is graduating high school in June. He intends to enroll in community college this Fall. Kitty recently applied for a grant to allow her youth to participate in a senior graduation event. The grant was approved and we are delighted that her youth will have the opportunity to celebrate this momentous occasion with all of his classmates.

AB 12: California Fostering Connections to Success Act Introduced by Assembly Member Beall & Speaker Bass

(Principal Co-author: Sen. Liu; Co-authors: Asm Members Ammiano, Block, Chesbro, Coto, Davis, De La Torre, De Leon, Eng, Evans, Galgiani, Gilmore, Hall, Huffman, Jones, Krekorian, Ma, Monning, John A. Pérez, Portantino, Salas, Saldana, Skinner, Solorio, Swanson, Torlakson, Torrico, Yamada & Senators DeSaulnier, Ducheny, Wiggins)

When children in California are removed from their homes and placed in foster care because of abuse and neglect, the state assumes the responsibility of a parent. "This responsibility continues until youth leave the foster care system, either by reuniting with their parents, adoption, or legal guardianship or by 'emancipation' (reaching the age at which foster care benefits and services are no longer provided)."

"In 1998, California enacted SB 1901 (McPherson) which established the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (Kin-GAP). Kin-GAP has been extremely successful. In 2007-8, the program assisted 14,000 former foster children living with relative guardians. Unlike foster care or adoption however, there have been no federal funds available

until now for relative guardianship; all Kin-GAP costs have been borne by California."

"Annually, around 5,000 young people emancipate from California's foster care system. Research shows that youth who age out of foster care on their own have lower educational achievement and are more likely to experience homelessness, unemployment, unplanned pregnancies, and involvement with the legal system. Although evidence from other states demonstrates that providing an option for foster care until age 21 dramatically improves these outcomes, federal and California foster care assistance now discontinue at age 18 or 19."

"In October 2008, the federal government enacted the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Public Law 110-351). This new law gives states the ability to establish relative guardianship programs with federal financial participation in the costs. PL 110-351 also makes federal funds available for foster care, kinship-guardianship, and adoption assistance benefits to youth who meet certain condi-

tions (e.g., employment and education related requirements) until age 21. PL 110-351 provides California with an unprecedented opportunity to access federal funding to improve the lives of our state's most vulnerable youth."

"AB 12 would ensure that California opts into these essential federal funding opportunities. AB 12 would: 1) re-enact our existing Kin-GAP program to align it with new federal requirements and 2) provide transitional support to qualifying foster youth until age 21. These changes represent both fiscally and socially responsible improvements to California's foster care system. As a result, California would utilize federal funds to meet costs currently borne by the state and counties, and would realize proven savings from declines in unemployment, homelessness, teen pregnancy, public assistance, and the other costly outcomes for young adults who 'age out' of foster care."

(Fact Sheet information obtained from: Office of Assembly Member Jim Beall, Jr.)

East Bay Children's Law Offices

As many of you may know, the Dependency Division of the Alameda County Public Defender's Office will be closing this summer. Fortunately, a new organization has been formed that will continue to employ almost all of the attorneys from the current office. East Bay Children's Law Offices will officially open its doors on July 1, 2009. Roger Chan, who previously served as an Alameda County Public Defender, will take on the role as Executive Director of the new nonprofit.

East Bay Children's Law Offices will absorb the existing attorneys from the Public Defender's Of-

fice and will hire approximately four new attorneys. Additionally, the agency will be hiring social workers and legal assistants for additional support. There will also be a clinical director to oversee the MSW and legal assistant staff who will assist the attorneys with gathering information to ensure that the team makes the best possible recommendations for each child served.

The current attorneys will maintain their existing caseloads and continue working with their clients. "We are working towards keeping the same attorney for the child from the time they

enter care, until they are dismissed," said Kristin Mateer, Supervising Attorney for East Bay Children's Law Offices. With so little continuity typically existing in dependency cases, this consistency is highly desirable and will help smooth this stressful process for both children and their families.

Unfortunately, due to being a vested County employee, Kathy Siegel, Supervising Attorney for the Alameda County PD's Dependency Division, will not be joining the new organization. CASA would like to acknowledge Ms. Siegel for her hard

Continued on Page 3

East Bay Children's Law Offices Continued

Continued from Page 2
work and commitment to serving our foster children and providing them with quality legal representation. Ms. Siegel has also conducted trainings for new CASA volunteers over the past several years, which has provided them with valuable information to prepare them for their role as a court appointed special advocate. Ms. Siegel has truly been a pleasure to work with, and on behalf of the CASA program, we wish her the best in her future endeavors.

Alameda County CASA looks forward to collaborating with East Bay Children's Law Offices to help ensure that Alameda County's foster children and youth have their interests represented and receive the best care possible during their time in the dependency system.

Resources for Foster Youth



Summertime is quickly approaching and it is crucial to keep our CASA children/youth busy during the time they are out of school. Ensuring youth are engaged in activities not only widens their life experience, it keeps them occupied and moving in a positive direction rather than being left to their own devices and more prone to making poor choices. Volunteers who have not accessed a PVF grant for their assigned child for the past 12 months may apply for up to \$250 to be used for camp

registration or other positive summer activities.

Camp Mendocino has been run by the Boys and Girls Clubs of San Francisco for over 75 years and provides an optimal opportunity for the traditional "sleep-away" camp experience for children 8-14 years old. Additionally, they offer a leadership program for youth 15-17 years old. Camp physicals may be arranged for free and scholarships are available—foster youth are generally able to attend this camp for free. Please visit <http://www.campmendocino.org/> for session and registration information.

Camp Ravencliff is another longstanding camp that is run by the YMCA; it is located in the redwoods of southern Humboldt County and offers

sessions for 7-13 year olds as well as Teen Camp for 13-15 year olds. Camperships are available for those needing additional financial assistance. Visit the website at <http://ravencliff.ymcaeastbay.org/> for further information.

East Bay Regional Parks offers Park'n It Summer Day Camps for 5-12 year olds at Contra Loma (Antioch) and Ardenwood Historic Farm in Fremont. Camperships are available—please call 510.482.6023 with questions or email jsaito@ebparks.org. There are also Park'n It Leader in Training positions for youth ages 13-16.

Many additional Bay Area day camps may be found at <http://www.bayareakidfun.com/pages/campsgeneral.html>.

Congratulations to Judge Paul Seeman

CASA would like to offer our sincere congratulations to Paul Seeman, who was recently appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to serve as a judge for the Alameda County Superior Court. Judge Seeman has been an integral part of the CASA program for more than 25 years and serves as a member of the CASA Advisory Board. He participates regularly in CASA graduation ceremonies to swear in volunteers and has always been responsive to the needs of the CASA program.



Judge Paul Seeman

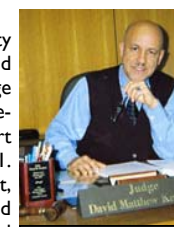
Homes Program was created and since its inception, CASA has increased older youth served by 50 percent. We are grateful to Judge Seeman for his participation in this project and for the ongoing support he provided to make this project successful.

We hope that Judge Seeman's new appointment will allow him to remain actively involved with the CASA program and thankfully the feeling is mutual: "The CASA program has been a significant part of my professional involvement with the juvenile courts from the beginning, and I hope to continue to stay involved wherever my new assignment as a judge takes me," stated Judge Seeman.

CASA would like to extend our appreciation to Judge Seeman for his dedication and support to the CASA program. We wish you the best!

Welcome Judge David Matthew Krashna

Alameda County CASA would like to welcome Judge David Krashna to Juvenile Dependency Court in Oakland, Dept. 151. Since his assignment, CASA volunteers and staff have recognized Judge Krashna's appreciation and acknowledgement of CASA volunteers. We would like to thank Judge Krashna for his support of our program and the exceptional work he is doing for foster children in Alameda County.



Judge David Krashna

Judge David Krashna was elected to the Superior Court, County of Alameda, California in November 2000. He previously served as a Commissioner of that court from 1992 to his election. He practiced law for 17 years as a Legal Services Attorney and private attorney specializing in criminal defense, personal injury and civil rights. He earned his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame - where he was elected the 1st

(and still only) African-American Student Body President - and his J.D. from Boalt Hall School of Law, University of California at Berkeley. Judge Krashna teaches various courses at the California Center for Judicial Education and Research, B.E. Witkin Judicial College of California, the National Judicial College, and is an Adjunct Professor of Law at John F. Kennedy University School of Law, Pleasant Hill, CA.

Judge Krashna serves as a member of the Alameda County Superior Court ACCESS and Judicial Education Committees, has presided in the Oakland, CA Drug Courts, including Proposition 36, and currently has a juvenile court dependency assignment. He is also a member of the Judicial Council Court Interpreter Advisory Panel.

We welcome Judge Krashna and look forward to our continued work with him.