

**ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM**

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501 (c)(3) Nonprofit Organization  
**Federal Tax ID#:**  
94-3309728

We are on the Web:  
[www.casaofalamedacounty.org](http://www.casaofalamedacounty.org)

**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

**Special Thanks**

- Washington Mutual
- State Street
- Alameda County Social Services Community Enrichment Program



**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  
*Joseph James*, District Attorney

**Friends of CASA Members**

*Chet Hewitt*, Chair  
*Atisa Payvarpour*, Charles Schwab  
*Donna Robinson*  
*Yvette Leung*, Alameda County Health Care Services  
*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

**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 134, which were located at 600 Washington Street in Oakland, have relocated to 400 Broadway in Oakland.**

**February Court Hearings**

**Chi-Kwan Shea:** Wed., Feb. 6 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Mailee Wang:** Thurs., Feb. 7 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504  
**Delilah Duenas:** Wed., Feb. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Penny Winters:** Wed., Feb. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Alicia Fenrick:** Fri., Feb. 22 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Cheryl Stewart:** Fri., Feb. 22 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Bobby Meyer:** Tues., Feb. 26 @ 8:45 in Dept. 150

**March Court Hearings**

**Linda Mason:** Mon., Mar. 3 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Ana Escobar:** Wed., Mar. 5 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Elizabeth Candelario:** Wed., Mar. 5 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Kitty Harvey:** Thurs., Mar. 6 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Brenda Nelson:** Thurs., Mar. 6 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Lois Brubeck:** Thurs., Mar. 13 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150  
**Alexandria May:** Mon., Mar. 17 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Gwendolyn Tzannes:** Tues., Mar. 18 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**James Pinnock:** Tues., Mar. 18 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Deanna Christmas:** Thurs., Mar. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504  
**Adela Rodarte-Hernandez:** Thurs., Mar. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Pamela Hatayama:** Thurs., Mar. 20 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150  
**Mailee Wang:** Fri., Mar. 21 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Dana Kirby:** Fri., Mar. 21 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Eileen Parker:** Tues., Mar. 25 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150

**Jacqueline Lee:** Tues., Mar. 25 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503  
**Kelly Robertson:** Thurs., Mar. 27 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504

**April Court Hearings**

**Katy Chatel:** Thurs., April 3 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504  
**Becky Kirby:** Thurs., April 3 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Erica Hooper:** Tues., April 8 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150  
**Patricia Fitzpatrick:** Thurs., April 10 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504  
**Lisa Bashnick:** Mon., April 14 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Nancy Vachani:** Tues., April 15 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Patrica Ames:** Fri., April 18 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151  
**Alyse Cox:** Mon., April 21 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150  
**Janel Brown:** Mon., April 21 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150  
**Richard Carter:** Thurs., April 24 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504  
**Serena Fang:** Fri., April 25 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150

**ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM**

**Special points of interest:**

- Foster Care Legislation
- Volunteer Recognition
- Continuing Education

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**Voices for Children**

Volume 2, Issue 1

January 1, 2008-March 31, 2008

**Washington Mutual Staff and State Street Make Generous Donations for CASA Holiday Party**

CASA would like to give a big "thank you" to the employees of Washington Mutual Card Services in Pleasanton for making the holidays much brighter for CASA children and youth. Each CASA was asked to submit a "wishlist" of their CASA child's gift wishes. Those wish-



Washington Mutual's "Giving Tree"

lists were transferred over to ornament tags and placed on the "Giving Tree" in the WaMu lobby. The employees at WaMu selected ornaments off the tree and purchased items from the wishlist. The gifts were wrapped and placed back under the tree until CASA staff picked them up before the holiday party.

Once the gifts were picked up at WaMu, CASA staff sorted and accounted for them to ensure that each CASA child would receive a gift. Each of the case supervisors were touched by the generosity of our friends at WaMu.

The gifts were distributed at the holiday party that was held at the CASA offices on December 19<sup>th</sup>. We were pleased to see the kids receive their gifts, spend time with their CASAs and watch the children and youth laugh

and socialize with each other. It's always rewarding for CASA staff to be able to spend a little time with our kids and youth that our CASA volunteers serve.

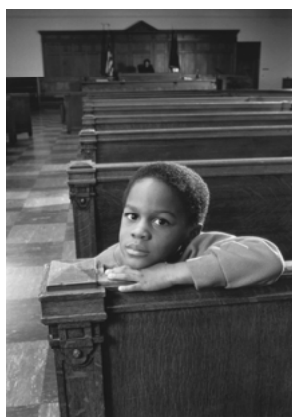
Angel Steinbeck from WaMu was the lead organizer of the Washington Mutual "Giving Tree" program. She is dedicated and passionate about enriching the lives of Alameda County foster children. Her thoughtfulness and attention to the CASA program is truly appreciated. Each of us at CASA would like to thank her and the employees at WaMu for their compassion and dedication to brightening the lives of the children we serve.

CASA also thanks State Street Foundation Inc. for providing the funding used for the food and beverages served at the holiday festivities. What kind of party would it be without a

delicious meal to gather around? State Street's Charitable Asset Mgmt. Program has generously provided funding to CASA for many years. We would like to acknowledge State Street's Kim Cano, V.P. Human Resources for her commitment in making a difference in the lives of Alameda County foster children. We are grateful year after year for their continued support. Thank you State Street.

Thank you to Alameda County Social Services Community Enrichment Program for donating funds for the holiday party as well. We appreciate the collaboration that exists between the CASA Program and the Department of Social Services.

We would also like to thank the CASAs for all the work they do year round with the kids and youth that we serve. While it's important to celebrate the holiday season, we know that our volunteers are celebrating each milestone, achievement and success with the CASA child(ren) throughout the year. Our volunteers' work doesn't go unnoticed or unappreciated.



Volunteers who familiarize themselves with current foster care legislation can help to improve foster youth outcomes and ensure appropriate recommendations are made on behalf of their assigned child.

### Great Continuing Education Opportunity for CASAs on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 6-8 pm Brothers on the Rise: Raising Boys Into Men

In this interactive workshop, Jon Gilgoff, M.S.W., Director of *Brothers on the Rise*, first leads participants through an exploration of man-hood, a person-in-environment approach to understanding boys within families, neighborhoods, and the other systems that surround them. He then provides concrete tools to help you help boys make their way along this challenging path and move towards a responsible, peaceful, strong, and successful manhood.

Jon Gilgoff is the founder and Director of *Brothers on the Rise*. A social worker by profession with extensive experience in youth development and public education, he has engaged male youth, families and youth workers with violence prevention and responsible empowerment programming for eight years. He is published in *Newsday*, *After School Matters* and the *New Social Worker*, and claims membership on the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network's Advisory Board and with the Progressive Jewish Alliance as a Jeremiah Fellow.

## California Child Welfare News

CalCASA sponsored Assembly Bill (AB) 369 in 2007. This bill, which was authored by Assemblyman Jose Solorio (D-Orange County), allows California CASA programs to request a search of the Child Abuse Index (CACI) to screen prospective staff members and volunteers (as of 1/1/08). This is a critical change because CACI includes information about substantiated or inconclusive allegations of child abuse or neglect (as opposed to only criminal convictions, which are comparatively rare). Please note that prior to these changes, the law did NOT allow CASA programs to access this information (even if obtained from another entity that was allowed access to the information).

### Legislative Update: 2008-2009 Proposed California State Budget

•Reduce County Medi-Cal Mental Health Managed Care Funding: A 10 percent reduction to county mental health plans for managing the Medi-Cal Speciality Mental Health Managed Care Program in both the cur-

rent and budget years. This totals \$8.2 million in General Fund in the current year and \$23.8 million General Fund in the budget year.

•Foster Care Rate Reductions: The budget proposes a 10 percent rate reduction for foster family homes and group homes to take effect June 1, 2008, as part of the deficit reductions. This reduction impacts the basic rate, specialized care, clothing allowance, seriously emotionally disturbed children, KinGAP and AAP payments. The budget proposes a 5 percent rate reduction for foster family agencies.

•Transitional Housing for Foster Youth: The budget maintains current-year funding and provides an additional \$5.2 million GF for 2008-09 to fund counties currently implementing THP Plus in the current year. This assumes no increases to the number of implementing counties or increases in the number of beds. The Transitional Housing Program for youth still in care remains level-funded in the current and

budget year. The budget year includes the same amounts as the revised current year and will be updated in the May Revise. The department indicates that it is the intent of the budget to fully fund all currently approved county THP Plus plans.

•Across-the-Board-Cut: The Administration proposes a reduction in the child welfare services allocation of 11.4 percent, or \$129.6 million (\$83.7 million GF) for 2008-09 as part of its deficit package. This cut will impact all counties including the two Title IV-E Waiver counties. The reductions are derived from CWS basic and all premise items, with the exception of Adoptions, CWS/CMS, and OCAP. CDSS has indicated its intent to work with CWDA to develop an allocation methodology to reflect the change in budgeting for the program. Since the Adoptions program is not included in the cut, the budget proposal will result in reduction in services to Emergency Response, Family Maintenance, Family Reunification, and Permanency Planning functions.

## Volunteer Recognition

### Maria Mann-Gagné, Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor

Over the course of 5.5 years, Bruce Wile has advocated for five different siblings. The case took many turns over the years, but he remained a consistent figure throughout. Bruce even began working with one of the children while the boy was placed in a rural area of Marin County. The final hearing took place recently; all of the children are back at home and dependency was dismissed. We appreciate Bruce's dedication to the CASA mission and look forward to his future involvement

with our program.

### Jaime Dadej, Adolescent Case Supervisor

Opal Harper has been appointed to her youth since March of 2006. Opal and her youth enjoy yoga and cardio exercise classes that they take together. Opal has been an anchor for her youth, advocating for her educational, placement and mental health needs. Thank you Opal for your hard work!

### Tara Beckman, Deputy Director

Lisa Bereny has been a CASA volunteer since September

2005 and advocates for two foster youth. Lisa has supported both of her youth through their emancipation process. She understands the commitment it takes to prepare youth for adulthood and has been patient and understanding in helping her youth through this process. She has worked diligently to ensure a successful emancipation by continuously sending gentle reminders to her youth to follow through on tasks. Lisa has established a relationship with her youth that will most definitely last a lifetime. Thank you Lisa, you're an amazing advocate!

## Resources for Foster Youth

CASAs are always looking for enrichment activities to participate in with their youth. If you're running short on ideas, check out <http://www.bayareakidfun.org>. The site includes information on many types of activities and places of interest, all around the Bay Area. Don't let the name fool you--there are definitely things on there that would appeal to teenagers, and adults alike.

2008 has just begun, but now is the time for CASAs to begin researching camps, team sports and other summer programs for their assigned youth. Camps with financial aid benefits often have early application deadlines and aid is generally awarded on a first-come, first-served basis so there is no time to waste. Summer camps can help youth gain leadership skills, social skills and help them learn the importance of working as a team.

The YMCA (<http://www.ymcaeastbay.org>) offers many summer programs including: Day

camps, sports, leadership, health/fitness, and sleep-away camps for various age groups. Scholarships are available and allotted on a first-come, first-served basis.

Boys & Girls Clubs have several locations; you can search for one in the appropriate city or go to <http://www.bgca.org> for more information. Membership fees are relatively low at around \$20 a year and they have offerings in many areas including: leadership, education & career, health, life skills, arts, sports and recreation. Additionally, college scholarships may be available for youth who qualify and apply; check with individual branches for requirements.

Youth Uprising's 2008 summer schedule is not online at the time of this writing, but they offer a variety of programs (educational, recreational and employment-oriented) for youth 13-24 years old. The center is located in East Oakland; please go to <http://www.youthuprising.org> for more

information and to check back for the summer schedule.

Camp Mendocino, affiliated with Boys & Girls Clubs, is a sleep-away camp for ages 8-14. Foster children/youth are usually able to attend at little or no cost. Five sessions are offered in July and August. Registration opens February 14th and registering before April 15th will entitle you to a further discount. There are also special programs for teens ages 15-17 that are free to attend for those who pass the selection process & complete all paperwork. Go to <http://www.campmendocino.org> for more information.

The Regional Parks Foundation offers "camperships" in the form of \$200 worth of coupons which may be used at qualifying day camps. Go to <http://www.ebparks.org/activities/daycamps> for more information and to download a Day Camp Directory.

## Volunteer Meetings and Continuing Education

### Volunteer Support Groups

#### Maria Mann-Gagné's Meetings

Mon., Feb. 25 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group

Mon., Mar. 31 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group and Continuing Education: Brothers on the Rise: Raising Boys into Men

Mon., April 28 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group

#### Jaime Dadej's Meetings

Mon., Feb. 25 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group

Mon., Mar. 31 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group and Continuing Education: Brothers on the Rise: Raising Boys into Men

Mon., April 28 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group

### Tara Beckman's Meetings

Mon., Feb. 25 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group

Mon., Mar. 31 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group and Continuing Education: Brothers on the Rise: Raising Boys into Men

Mon., April 28 @ 6:00 pm:

Volunteer Support Group

### Upcoming Continuing Education Trainings

Location: Seneca Center

(Registration required: To sign up, please register on Seneca's web site, [www.senecacenter.org](http://www.senecacenter.org))

Mon. Feb. 11, 6-9 pm: Foster Child Treatment Planning and the Role of the Treatment Plan

Sat., Feb. 16, 9 am-5 pm: Helping Youth With Emotional and Behavioral Challenges

Wed., Feb. 20, 6-9 pm: Cul-

tural Competency in Work with Youth

Mon., Feb. 25, 6-9 pm: Disciplinary Techniques for Special Needs Children

Location: ILSP office, 2647 International Blvd., Ste. 312, Oakland.

(To register, contact Melinda Clemmons at 510.550.8583 Ext. 302 or [mcllemmons@acfya.org](mailto:mcllemmons@acfya.org))

Tues., Feb. 12, 9:30 am-

12:30 pm: Common Psychotropic Medications Prescribed to Adolescents

Tues., Mar. 11, 9:30 am-

12:30 pm: Permanent Connections with Kevin Campbell

Tues., April 8, 9:30 am-

12:30 pm: Grief and Loss

Tues., May 13, 9:30 am-

12:30 pm: Pregnancy Prevention/Talking with Adolescents about Human Sexuality

Tues., June 10, 9:30-12:30 pm: Recognizing Learning Disabilities in Older Youth

CASA would like to thank Kappa Alpha Theta for hosting a holiday party at their sorority house for CASA youth and children. The members of KAΘ provided crafts and holiday activities for party attendees. Kappa Alpha Theta, an international women's sorority, was founded in 1870.

Kappa Alpha Theta has supported CASA Programs nationwide since 1989. Each year UC Berkeley's chapter organizes the Mr. CASAnova fundraiser for the Alameda County CASA program. Please stay tuned for information regarding the Mr. CASAnova fundraiser in the future.



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](http://www.casaofalamedacounty.org). Click on "Online Resource Center" and then "Calendar."