

ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM

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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 Sels/ RembeRock



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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

CASA Staff
Regena Jones,
Executive Director

Di Roberts,
Program Assistant

Maria Mann-Gagné,
Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor

Jaime Dadej,
Adolescent Case Supervisor

Tara Beckman,
Case Supervisor

Mon., Aug 3, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Mon., Sept. 14, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Mon., Oct. 5, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group

Jaime Dadej's Meetings
Tues., Aug. 25, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Mon., Sept. 28, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Tues., Oct. 27, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group

Tara Beckman's Meetings
Tues., Aug. 25, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Mon., Sept. 28, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group
Tues., Oct. 27, 6-8 pm: Volunteer Support Group

Upcoming Continuing Education Trainings

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*

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

August Trainings
Tues., Aug. 4, 9:30 am-5:30 pm: Introduction to Behavior Basics and Attachment
Fri., Aug. 14, 9:30 am-12:30 pm: Introduction to Suicide Prevention and Self-Care
Mon., Aug. 31, 9:30-5:30 pm: Introduction to Safety and Communication

September Trainings
Tues., Sept. 1, 9:30-5:30 pm: Introduction to Life Space Interviews and Multiculturalism

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*

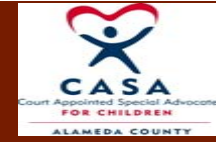
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Special points of interest:

- CATS Brings Outings and Events to CASA
- Volunteer Recognition

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Voices for Children

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Self-Care in Uncertain Times

At this point, we can hardly turn around without hearing about layoffs, the economic crisis, or other sorts of bad news. All of these things can add up leading us to feel



overwhelmed and even depressed. Being a CASA is no easy task on its own, but when combined with all the other cumulative difficulties, "burnout" sometimes occurs. Avoiding burnout is an ongoing process of taking care of oneself, which in no small part includes setting up personal boundaries and avoiding taking on more tasks than may be handled comfortably. Some of the keys to self-care are to be able to say "no" without feeling guilty, having a positive support system, getting exercise and enough sleep.

Here are some other tips for self-care:

- Avoid watching the news and over-stimulating, negative media. If you must watch the news, try to watch only in the morning when it tends to be more

help get you out of a funk.

- Know, and be okay with the fact that you can't fix everyone's problems.
- Be aware of who you are internally. If there are things you aren't so proud of, try

positive. Otherwise, check out headlines online and read only articles you are interested in.

- It's not always a good thing, but it can be helpful to compartmentalize areas of your life. When you're at home trying to relax, you should avoid thinking about what you have to do at work, school, or with your CASA child. Try to be mindful and live in the moment, focusing fully on the task at hand before letting it go and moving on—this will also help you be more productive.
- Try not to worry and never worry about things you have no control over. This takes practice, but it's worth it!
- Be grateful for what you have and count your blessings on a daily basis; even if you can think of only one thing, being positive can

to work on those things, but don't beat yourself up over not being "perfect." Remember, perfection is all an illusion anyway.

Spend time outside and in nature—don't forget to wear sunscreen!

And don't forget, chances are that no one else is making sure you are okay. You have to be your own advocate and protector; if you don't take care of yourself, it will be difficult for your to help take care of others. The World needs you to be at your best!

Remember to BREATHE, and breathe deeply, letting the air push your belly out. Have fun, spend time with friends and know that whatever issue is bothering you, it will resolve itself in time.

Volunteer Recognition

Maria Mann-Gagné, Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor

I would like to give a big thank you and shout out to all the volunteers from June's graduating class who were so easy to match with cases. It helped me so much to be able to match you with kids "case unseen." Extra thanks to Jim, A'sonda, Pei & Chris for advocating on behalf of kids who are placed out-of-county.

Jaime Dadej, Adolescent Case Supervisor

Jenn Cambra graduated the CASA training in March 2009. After choosing a case, we immediately scheduled a time to meet with the youth. The youth she was appointed to meet with had a guest at her home, another young woman, during our initial meeting. As it turns out, that other youth is also a foster youth and asked if Jenn could be her CASA as well. Unfortunately, the youth was AWOL from her placement and I could not appoint a CASA to her until she turned herself in. Very soon thereafter, the youth turned herself in and Jenn was appointed to be her CASA as well. Both cases are very complex and Jenn has been able to wend her way through each of the cases to help ensure positive outcomes. She has encountered some very challenging situations with both girls and has handled them like a pro. Thanks Jenn!

Tara Beckman, Case Supervisor

Diane Hernek has been a volunteer since February 2005. She was assigned to two youth at once, and regardless of the challenges along the way, she remained committed to both youth until they were dismissed from dependency. Both cases proved to be quite challenging so I was concerned Diane would resign. Instead, she took a break, but said she would be back. She kept her promise and took on another difficult case. After only ten months, her youth was moved two hours away. Diane has continued her work, despite the distance she has to travel to visit with her youth. Thank you for your dedication Diane!

CATS Brings Outings and Events to CASAs

Alameda County CASA pays a yearly fee to Community Access Ticket Service (CATS) in order for our volunteers and their CASA children/youth to gain en-



trance into a variety of venues and events. While the yearly fee is only a few hundred dollars, on a yearly basis, our volunteers are able to utilize tickets valued up to several thousand dollars.

Occasionally tickets may be requested for volunteers' family members or their own children, but these tickets are primarily to be used by volunteers and their assigned youth. When requesting tickets for any additional people, volunteers should be sure to include their relationship to other potential receivers of tickets at the time of their request.

CATS is the only organization of its kind committed to:

- Creating a more inclusive community through shared cultural experiences
- Reducing the rate of recidivism with those clients currently involved with CATS partner agencies
- Creating a fan base of

future patrons for cultural events throughout the Bay Area

CATS has rules set in place to help prevent tickets offered through their organization from being misappropriated. Additionally, ACCASA's access to individual events may be affected negatively if we have groups no-show for venues or events they have received confirmation for.

How It Works

Event/venue listings are emailed to CASA's CATS Coordinator, Maria Mann-Gagné. Maria then emails appropriate event listings to her volunteers as well as supervisors Tara Beckman and Jaime Dadej, who in turn forward listings to their assigned volunteers. Guidelines are provided within the announcements regarding the deadline for request submission.

Volunteers may request tickets from Maria Mann-Gagné directly, or through their supervisor. Maria then submits requests to the

CATS program office on the deadline date for each particular event. Sometimes it takes a few days for CATS to get back to her—event attendance is not confirmed until a confirmation form

is received via email from Maria Mann-Gagné. Volunteers who do not use email must state that at the time of their request so an alternate form of confirmation may be utilized. Once the confirmation form is received, instructions are provided regarding cancellation, though that should only be done in true emergencies; before requesting tickets, volunteers must be reasonably certain that they and their child/youth will be able to attend. Meeting places and times vary by event, so volunteers should read the confirmation form carefully to ensure they do not go to the wrong place in hopes of collecting their tickets.

ACCASA enjoys providing this service to our volunteers and hope that CASAs and their youth enjoy the unique opportunities afforded through our CATS membership. For additional information on CATS, please visit them on their web at <http://www.communitytickets.org/index.html>.

Resources for Foster Youth

As most of our volunteers know, being a CASA can cause a great impact—both in your life and on your wallet! Fortunately, we live in one of the most amazing places, where there's always a bargain to be hunted. Many of our kids have never even been to San Francisco. Check out <http://sf.funcheap.com/> for free or low-cost activities on the other side of the Bay. Libraries possess a world full of information in books, but they also have com-



puters for use and movies that may be checked out. Borrowing materials is an exciting thing for kids to be able to do and it helps build their responsibility as well.

Often, CASA kids would love to check

things out from libraries, but haven't had anyone help them apply for a library card. CASAs can also help their kids learn how to use the internet safely and ask librarians for help researching a variety of topics.

Visit <http://eastbay.parenthood.com/> and click on their calendar to find activities, some of which are free. Though some events listed will appeal to a younger crowd, there are others that will be great for all ages.

1st Annual CASA Fashion Drive

Help give CASA teens a chance to have an authentic back-to-school shopping experience. We need new or slightly-used clothing, shoes and accessories, male and female, all sizes.

The event is August 11th and 12th and we're accepting donations until August 9th. A donation bin is located at Eleven, a boutique, located at 3309 Grand Avenue in Oakland. For more info please contact:

simplyfabulousones@gmail.com

Honoring Emancipated Youth (HEY) Publishes Housing Guide for Transitional Age Youth

The "HEY Guide: Housing" is now available to Bay Area foster youth. This guide is designed to help transitional age foster youth find safe, affordable housing in the Bay Area, as they make the difficult transition to independence. The Guide is also a resource for other "disconnected" youth, who lack traditional family supports as they transition to adulthood.

The Guide was researched and written by three youth who have experience in the foster care and homeless systems. Within



18 months of leaving the foster care system, nearly half of emancipated youth are homeless because they lack the resources and support to find safe, affordable places to live. The guide is intended to give them a wealth of re-

sources and information and addresses the most common challenges that youth face when trying to find a place to live.

The free guide can be downloaded at: www.heysf.org.

It includes practical advice about searching for, keeping and paying for various types of housing, as well as sample rental applications and leases, and interactive games to help youth evaluate a housing option's suitability.

The "HEY Guide: Housing" is the first in a series of guides that HEY plans to produce. Future guides will focus on other issues relevant to youth who age out of care and other disconnected, transitional-age youth in the Bay Area.