

ALAMEDA COUNTY COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATES PROGRAM

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

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

501 (c)(3) Non-profit Organization
Federal Tax ID#:
94-3309728

We are on the Web:
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

Special Thanks

- Elaine Beale
- Karina Moreno
- Kamal Nair, JJDC member
- Dr. Japra/India Post
- Jeff Douvel



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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.

CASA Staff

Regena Jones, Executive Director
Tara Beckman, Deputy Director
Dianna Roberts, Program Assistant
Minnette Simmons, Infant/Toddler Case Supervisor
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
Tiffany Edwards, Chair of FOACASA
Ann Garnier, CASA Volunteer
Nancy Vachani, CASA Volunteer
Alex Briscoe, Alameda County Health Care Services
Calvin James, County Counsel
Lori Jones, 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

Tiffany Edwards, Chair
Atisa Payvarpour, Charles Schwab
Donna Robinson, Alameda County Social Services
Yvette Leung, Alameda County Health Care Services
Kendra Roberts, Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.
Elizabeth Douglas, Alameda County Probation
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 August-October 2007. Your report must be submitted to your Case Supervisor 10 days prior to the court hearing.

August Court Hearings

Rashon Seldon: Thurs., Aug. 9 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Brian Kirking: Mon., Aug. 13 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150
Suzanne Haendel: Mon., Aug. 13 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150
Susan Seiler: Thurs., Aug. 16 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Gail Lillian: Thurs., Aug. 16 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Chi-Kwan Shea: Wed., Aug. 22 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Alicia Schoenfeld: Thurs., Aug. 23 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Margaret Prinzing: Thurs., Aug. 23 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
John Boston: Mon., Aug. 27 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150
Precious Owens: Mon., Aug. 27 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150
Lois Brubeck: Wed., Aug. 29 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 401
Patricia Fitzpatrick: Thurs., Aug. 30 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Bobbie Meyer: Thurs., Aug. 30 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150

September Court Hearings

Lisa Bereny: Wed., Sept. 5 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Penny Winters: Wed., Sept. 5 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Delilah Duenas: Wed., Sept. 5 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Eudora Brown: Thurs., Sept. 6 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Connie Bridgeforth: Thurs., Sept. 6 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Alicia Fenrick: Thurs., Sept. 6 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Ann Garnier: Fri., Sept. 7 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Michele Walton: Tues., Sept. 11 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150
Bobbie Meyer: Tues., Sept. 11 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 133
Elizabeth Candelario: Mon., Sept. 17 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Brenda Nelson: Mon., Sept. 17 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 151
Abiola Afolayan: Mon., Sept. 17 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Kitty Harvey: Wed., Sept. 19 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
James Pinnock: Thurs., Sept. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Gwendolyn Tzannes: Thurs., Sept. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Carl Ann Wylie: Thurs., Sept. 20 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Gwendolyn Tzannes: Tues., Sept. 25 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150

October Court Hearings

Mara Veneman: Tues., Oct. 2 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Adela Hernandez-Rodarte: Thurs., Oct. 4 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Eileen Parker: Tues., Oct. 9 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150
Jacqueline Lee: Tues., Oct. 9 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 503
DeAnna Christmas: Thurs., Oct. 11 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Lois Brubeck: Thurs., Oct. 11 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150
Luz Gonzalez: Mon., Oct. 15 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Becky Kirby: Tues., Oct. 16 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150
Kelly Robertson: Thurs., Oct. 18 @ 1:30 pm in Dept. 504
Christopher Roduit: Tues., Oct. 23 @ 8:45 am in Dept. 150
Katy Chatel: Thurs., Oct. 25 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 504
Erica Hooper: Thurs., Oct. 25 @ 8:30 am in Dept. 150
Linda Mason: Tues., Oct. 30 @ 9:00 am in Dept. 150

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Special points of interest:

- Group Homes Report
- Volunteer recognition
- CASA welcomes new staff member

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Voices for Children

Volume 1, Issue 3

July 1, 2007-September 30, 2007

Alameda County CASA Publishes Group Homes Report

Alameda County CASA hosted our Group Homes Presentation at Piedmont Veterans' Memorial Building on Thurs., June 21st. CASA invited a number of panelists, which included: State CASA, Alameda County Courts, Social Services Agency, Alameda County Public Health Department, JJDC members, California Youth Connection (CYC), California State Foster Care Ombudsperson, Community Care Licensing (CCL), CASA volunteers, and CASA youth to speak at the presentation. CASA also distributed our 51-page Group Homes Report at the event.

Alameda County has the largest number of children in foster care in the San Francisco Bay Area (3,602 children in 2006). Currently, almost all older youth in care, ages 14-18, are placed in group homes, possibly because of the lack of available foster home placements in the County. Without a supportive family environment and limited access to existing resources, these young people often lack the necessary skills and guidance to prepare them for emancipation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the poor emancipation outcomes documented nationwide.

We believe these outcomes are directly related to the Group Homes Project and the positive impact volunteers make to ensure that the emancipation checklist is completed and to offer their support to youth after emancipation, helping to ensure that youth transition successfully into adulthood. Post-emancipation outcomes tracking is now a permanent part of our program.

The Group Homes Project has made a difference in the lives of many group home youth. Volunteers are serving more youth and impacting the lives of many undergoing the emancipation transition, extending youths' time in the dependency system and enabling many to obtain their high school diplomas or GEDs. Volunteers have helped youth to complete college and employment applications, and to enroll the children of our youth in daycare. Our volunteers have also maintained youths' placements by meeting with group home directors and youth to identify the areas in need of improvement.

Our CASA volunteers have made a tremendous impact in improving group home youths' outcomes. We look forward to strengthening and enhancing CASA and serving many more group home youth in the years to come as we continue to work with group home directors, the courts, policymakers, Children and Family Services and others to improve the best practices in group homes and the outcomes for emancipating foster youth.

CASA would like to express our sincere appreciation to Kamal Nair, JJDC member, Dr. Japra and the India Post for all their support with the Group Homes Presentation. If you would like copies of the Group Homes Report, please contact Regena Jones, Executive Director at 510.618.1960 or Tara Beckman, Deputy Director at 510.618.1957.

The Group Homes Report was written based on information gathered over the course of a three-year project called the Group Homes Pilot Project. The report includes recommendations regarding improving outcomes for emancipating foster youth and creating best practices in group homes.

In 2003, ACCASA determined that it was imperative to advocate for and address the needs of group home youth and improve emancipation outcomes. A grant from The California Endowment and Zellerbach Family Foundation funded the conception and implementation of the Group Homes Project. As a result of this project, Alameda County CASA became the first County in the nation to formally appoint volunteers to group homes, rather than to individual children. By assigning volunteers to group homes, they can advocate for all Alameda County youth residing in the group homes, even those not on the CASA waitlist, which allows CASA to serve a greater number of youth. The Group Homes Project assigns volunteers to group homes to improve emancipation outcomes for group home youth, help create best practices in group homes, increase youths' access to valuable resources and ensure that group home youths' needs are being met.

Alameda County CASA is certain that CASA volunteers can improve these poor emancipation outcomes by providing intensive advocacy during the youths' emancipation process. During the Group Homes Project, 25 youth emancipated from foster care with CASA support. We collected data on these youth at two intervals: at emancipation and again one year later. While the sample is small, we have impressive outcomes to report. *Ninety-nine percent of the youth were in stable housing and employed, and 40 percent were enrolled in community college.*



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.

California Child Welfare News

Addressing the needs of foster children through legislation has been an important aspect for advocates working to improve outcomes for foster children. In order to effectively advocate for their assigned child(ren), volunteers should familiarize themselves with current and pending California Foster Care Legislation. Below are a few pieces of pending foster care legislation. More California Bill information, can be accessed through: www.leginfo.ca.gov and <http://www.calyouthconn.org/site/cyc/section.php?id=6>

Governor Schwarzenegger is proposing over \$200 million be allocated for addressing foster care and child welfare issues including assistance for emancipating foster youth and permanence for older foster youth. The following bills are currently in the appropriations phase where funding sources are designated. **AB 2489:** Makes college a possibility for more foster youth as it expands Foster Youth Services, increases the Cal-Grant and Chafee grant programs, expands the Guardian Scholars program so more former foster youth receive on-campus support and creates housing preferences and

year-round housing on college campuses. **AB 1983:** Creates a fund which will allow former foster youth to receive immediate assistance in times of crisis. There will be more services for former foster youth ages 21-25 and an outreach plan will be created. **SB 1289:** Allows youth to choose to stay in foster care until the age of 21 while in high school, college or working. Counties will also be required to provide every foster youth with 1:1 independent living case management services to help prepare them for adulthood.

Throughout the first six months of 2007, Patty volunteered a whopping 240.5 hours for CASA.

Volunteer Recognition

The CASA Newsletter will be distributed on a quarterly basis. Each quarter, Case Supervisors will recognize a volunteer for their dedication and commitment to the CASA program.

Minnette Simmons, Infant Toddler Case Supervisor

Minnette was not able to recognize a volunteer for this Newsletter because she is currently out of the office.

Maria Mann-Gagné, Pre-Adolescent Case Supervisor

Patty Ames has been working with her CASA child for almost four years. She recently took the initia-

tive to take him to Sylvan Center for tutoring that will help him catch up with his peers. Throughout the first six months of 2007, Patty volunteered a whopping 240.5 hours for CASA. Thank you, Patty!

Jaime Dadej, Adolescent Case Supervisor

I would like to thank Robert Joseph for his dedication to his CASA youth. Robert has been working with his 12-year-old youth since April of 2006. The road for the two of them hasn't always been easy but Robert has persevered. Many issues have surfaced for the youth over the past couple months that Robert has been able to handle

with delicate and sincere professionalism.

Tara Beckman, Deputy Director

Alyse Cox has been a CASA volunteer since April 2006. She has done an amazing job of advocating for her youth. Alyse has been consistent and dedicated to her youth, even after her youth moved four hours away. She continued to visit her youth and talked to her on a regular basis. During a meeting, a professional asked the youth, "Why do you want to go back to Alameda County?" She replied, "Because my CASA is there and she makes me want to do better."

CASA welcomes new staff member, Shannon Brooks

Greetings! My name is Shannon Brooks and I am extremely excited to work with Alameda County CASA as the Recruitment and Training Specialist. I am a Bay Area native; however, I have lived in Atlanta, Georgia and Sacramento. Somehow, I've managed to find my way back to the Bay Area--I couldn't imagine residing anywhere else!

Prior to working with Alameda County CASA, I've worked in the public and private sectors; gaining experience and expertise in

teaching, curriculum and program development, criminal, family, medical malpractice and personal injury law, human resources and nonprofit management.

My educational background in criminal justice, political science and legal studies has increased my passion for social and juvenile justice. My future goal is to complete law school and become a family law attorney. I am confident my experience working with CASA will equip me with the knowledge, skills and abilities

needed for practice.

I am a member of the Alameda County Bar Association and a devoted member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. I am active in many community service projects, as well as a devoted youth ministry director, event planner and community based project consultant.

I look forward to the relationships we will build and the lasting impressions we will make in the lives of CASA children.

Resources for Foster Youth

Youth Law Center

The Youth Law Center is a public interest law firm that works to protect children in the nation's foster care and juvenile justice systems from abuse and neglect, and to ensure that they receive the necessary support and services to become healthy and productive adults. Please visit them at:

<http://www.ylc.org/>
Youth Employment Partnership

Has provided employment training to Oakland youth since 1973.

2300 International Blvd
Oakland, Ca 94606
510.533.3447

<http://www.yep.org/>
UC Berkeley Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)
2150 Kittredge Street, Suite 3A
#1060
Berkeley, CA 94720

510.643.6959
<http://students.berkeley.edu/apa/apa%20home/eaop/>
Seeks to increase the UC admission eligibility rates of low-income, first generation college bound youth through school site visits, academic planning and career advising, study skills improvement, workshops on college admissions, scholarships and financial aid, PSAT/SAT preparation and UC campus tours.



Connecting youth with appropriate resources is instrumental in helping them learn to create healthy relationships and gain valuable skills.

Recent and Upcoming Events

• Alameda CASA hosted our **Group Homes Presentation** on Thurs., June 21st at the Piedmont Veterans' Memorial Building in Piedmont. For more information about the event, please refer to the article on Page One.

• **Annual CASA BBQ** will be held on Sunday, September 16th, 2007. CASA is excited to be hosting our annual BBQ at the San Leandro Marina. This is a great event for volunteers to come with their youth and bring their family to meet and mingle with other CASAs and CASA youth. We will be serving chicken, hamburgers, hotdogs, sausages and steak. We look forward to seeing each of you

and all of the amazing kids you're working with. Please RSVP to your Case Supervisor by Monday, September 3rd.

• **Beyond the Bench** will be held December 12-14th, 2007 in San Diego, CA. Beyond the Bench is an annual, multidisciplinary conference that brings together juvenile dependency and delinquency professionals, including judicial officers, court administrators, child welfare professionals, public defenders, district attorneys, probation officers, educators, mental health professionals, and service providers from many of California's counties to learn about the latest research and best practices with regard to

improving juvenile justice and child abuse and neglect proceedings. It allows counties to share both the successes of child welfare and juvenile justice programs and the perspectives of children and youth who have been involved with the juvenile courts. Pre- or Post-conference symposia are offered each year, on topics such as: family violence, language and competency issues in questioning children, and basic dependency law for new practitioners in the field. Contact your Case Supervisor if you are interested in attending. Registration for this event will open in the fall.



Duran Jefferson, CASA youth and Tara Beckman, CASA Deputy Director at Group Homes Presentation on June 21st, 2007.

Volunteer Meetings and Continuing Education

Minnette Simmons' Meetings TBA

Maria Mann-Gagné's Meetings

Mon., Aug. 27 @ 6:00 pm: Volunteer support group
Tues., Sept. 25 @ 6:00 pm: Continuing education (TBA) and Volunteer support group
Tues., Oct. 30: Volunteer support group

Jaime Dadej's Meetings

Mon., Aug. 27 @ 6:00 pm: Volunteer support group
Tues., Sept. 25 @ 6:00 pm: Continuing education (TBA) and Volunteer support group

Tues., Oct. 30: Volunteer support group

Tara Beckman's Meetings

Mon., Aug. 27 @ 6:00 pm: Volunteer support group
Tues., Sept. 25 @ 6:00 pm: Continuing education (TBA) and Volunteer support group
Tues., Oct. 30: Volunteer support group

Upcoming Continuing Education:

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

Tues., Aug. 14 from 6pm-9pm: Fostering Physically and Sexually Abused Children/Understanding Child Abuse (San Leandro)
Sat., Aug. 18 from 9:30am-1pm: Youth Depression and the African American Culture (San Leandro)
Thurs., Aug. 23 from 6pm-9pm: Cultural Competency in Work with Youth (San Leandro)
Sat., Sept. 29 from 9am-5pm: Helping Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Challenges (Bay Point)
Thurs., Oct 4 from 6pm-9pm: Understanding and Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth (Bay Point)



CASA volunteers have the opportunity to attend monthly support groups and are required to complete 12 hours of continuing education each year.