



CASA Feedback

Summer 2009

Millie's Message

We as CASA staff, volunteers and advisors know that not all CASA youth are able to achieve to their fullest potential, for a lot of reasons, but none so concerning as a youths education and goals to become self-sufficient. History shows us that an abused and neglected child's family have often placed academics in the background of their priorities.

Past abuse, emotional stress, unresolved related family issues make it difficult for the child to focus on his or her studies. Once entering the child welfare system they usually arrive in their new school without any advance warning and without any former school records. It takes awhile to determine their strengths and weaknesses and to plug them into the correct academic setting. But... what we do know is that in most cases the children are usually far, far below many academic benchmarks."

With this said I therefore encourage you to read through this newsletter and review the web sight and educational materials we reference within. This news letter is written to raise your awareness and to compel upon all of you to keep educational advocacy a high priority in your role. The most useful tool we have in the parade of changes



going by our youth is their ability to achieve academically. I have often said that one of our major roles is to assist youth into growing up as smart as they can. I believe CASAs are the best tool we have in rebuilding a child's life and their ability to be successful. I have seen the CASA role more often than not change a youth's attitude about academics hence their attitude about life.

I am so pleased to be a part of the CASA program and to have the opportunity everyday to meet so many community people who want to help youth succeed. I hope to see you all at case review and encourage you to ask questions and assist us in helping you help kids.

With my deepest respect,
Millie Gilson



CASA advocates are keenly aware of the fact that the child welfare system is complex with policies and procedures created to protect youth. Understandably, the demands of legal issues, emotional issues, court reports, court appearances, service plans, foster and group home rules all exhaust us and the other professionals trying to help.....

As a result, the youth's educational needs are often layered down under many other emotional needs and can be often overlooked. CASA volunteers are in an ideal position to offer insight and direction for our foster care youth's educational stability.

In Sonoma County the typical CASA youth will spend 3.5–5 years in the system over all. Our youth will have not only experienced multiple school placements prior to their entry into the system, but once having entered, this issue in many cases, appears to continue and the number of school placements only increases.

Thus, a need exists for consistent educational advocacy from the onset of the youth's placement in the system and until reunification or emancipation occurs. Identifying, assessing, securing and supporting educational opportunities for our youth requires all CASAs to also be aware of the connection between child abuse/neglect and academic and behavioral issues.

We at CASA want to make sure you recognize that it is incorrect to assume that all our youth require special education services or other similar interventions. Our youth may have histories of abuse and often times educational issues are overlooked for emotional issues.

What we do know, is that over 75% of our CASA youth typically need educational advocacy while addressing both academic and behavioral problems.

We know that on the CASA case-load our children typically enter foster care after months and even years of neglect, emotional detachment, malnourishment, physical and sexual abuse. Our youth manifest deficit skills in the core academic areas of reading, writing and math. Approximately 75% of our children perform below grade level and 50% of these students have repeated or been held back a grade.

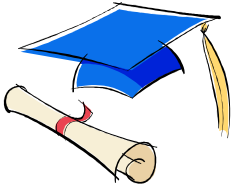
We also know that our children may have been exposed to alcohol and drugs, often while in-utero. They have had constant shelter changes and therefore school placement changes. Most of our youth have had 3 to 4 different social workers and as many therapeutic changes.

We recognize that our teenagers typically begin their independent lives with many risks such as poverty, joblessness, homelessness, drug and alcohol experimentation and often with no dream or goal for post-high school educational or vocational plans.

The youth may also begin to lean against family members and even develop similar behaviors as observed in their parents, other siblings and/or extended family. What we also know at CASA is that education serves as a positive passage for our youth into independence and therefore less reliance on the other resources which may be the very people we tried so hard to protect them from.

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The educational picture we paint is a sad one for youth who enter the child welfare system. As well intended as we all are, we are still fighting a battle of past struggles and current failures.

What CASA can do to assist you is to integrate into our trainings continuing education sessions and one on one consultation. Many of you have met Jeanne Bowman. She has been a faculty member for 8 years. She is available to assist you and if she does not know the answers, she has a full team of support people at her place of employment to help.

Your first step in assessing and understanding your observations of the youth you serve is to come to case review.

Know we are here to help you as we can assist in asserting your youth's rights with the county department of education and with your social worker.

Work as a team with the social worker and if you need help in developing this relationship, let your supervisor know.

We want to know your educational advocacy needs so we might develop case reviews that will focus on academic needs. We as CASA volunteers are in a unique role to become steadfast academic advocates for our youth.

Don't hesitate to tutor your youth or ask for tutoring services.

Summer is here and it is important that you know not only the education plan now but for the upcoming school year.

Please see the attached document which asks the questions that ensure the educational needs of foster youth are being addressed.



Let us know what your plans are for summer activities with your CASA kids. We want to share ideas and expand our existing activities list.

Remember, contacting your local Parks and Recreation programs, libraries, community centers and even the junior colleges can generate ideas for summer fun.

We are already getting requests for summer camp scholarships and other activities such as swim classes and sports programs. Remember to let us know if you need help with out of county travel requests.

Summer Camp provides an opportunity to build social skills and develop competence in many areas. Many camps provide a sliding scale or offer scholarships. This may be discussed at Case Review or you may call the office directly.

Summer is Here! Check out our Activity Ideas.....

Summer Camp Contacts:

www.campitup.org;

www.acacamps.org;

www.ymcacamps.org;

Bay Area Parent Magazine: 415-893.1875

www.parentsjournal.com/camp

Family Works Magazine: 415-492-1022

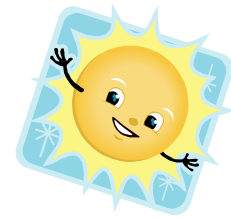
www.familyworks.org

Campfire USA: 707-643-4573

Big Brothers Big Sisters: 584-2780



- ♥ Ride bikes
- ♥ Hike
- ♥ Library
- ♥ Card/Board games
- ♥ [Humane Society](#)
- ♥ Tour of fire station. The [Santa Rosa Fire Department](#) fire station tours are given the first Tuesday of each month at the SRFD Headquarters Station. If a group wishes to tour the station, it is necessary to schedule ahead of time by calling the Fire Department's Business Office at 543-3500. If you don't have a whole group, maybe you can tag along to a group already booked.
- ♥ Fishing
- ♥ Karate
- ♥ Roller Rink [Cal Skate Blading & Skating Center](#)
(707- 585-0494 Rohnert Park)
- ♥ Ice Skating Rink
[Charles M. Schultz Redwood Empire Ice Arena](#)
707-546-7147



- ♥ [Exploratorium](#)
- ♥ [Luther Burbank Gardens:](#)
707-524-5445
- ♥ Picnic
- ♥ Pick Fruit/ Vegetables
- ♥ Go to the [Santa Rosa Symphony:](#) 707-546-7097
- ♥ Crafts / Art
- ♥ Local School Productions/ Fairs Skate park
- ♥ [Skunk Train](#) 800-866-1690
- ♥ Sports
- ♥ Summer Day Camp
- ♥ [Old Adobe Park](#) in Petaluma
- ♥ Farm Trails <http://www.farmtrails.org/>
- ♥ Jesse Peter Native American Museum
(1501 Mendocino Ave., SRJC (707) 527-4479)
- ♥ Grace Hudson Museum (431 South Main St., Ukiah, (707) 467-2836; Open Wed-Sat 10:00.4:30; Sun 12:00.4:30; Contact White Wolf.Native American Educator)
- ♥ Hallberg Butterfly Gardens (Sebastopol)
707 823-3420
- ♥ Volunteer together. You can make an appointment at the [Sonoma County Volunteer Center](#) and find some great and fun activities for both you the CASA and your child.

"Last year my child and I did some face painting at the Christmas Holiday for the Gospel Mission at the Fairgrounds. There are lots of one time positions or ongoing [positions], such as: visiting [the] elderly at rest homes, or [being] a cat petter at the Humane Society, etc."
- ♥ Go to cultural events. Many of the children have never been introduced to anything musical, cultural, theatrical, or anything in the arts. Try the [Wells Fargo Center for the Arts](#) or [Spreckels Performing Arts Center](#).

[Informal Discovery Rehearsal Series:](#) Saturday Afternoon Open Rehearsals with the Santa Rosa Symphony. Witness how music is made and enjoy the unique interaction between conductor and orchestra in their final concert rehearsal. Saturdays at 2:00. Tickets required. Call 707-546-8742.

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...Activity Ideas Continued

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♥ Ceramic stores are creative ways to have fun making a project together.

♥ The Santa Rosa Junior College [Planetarium](#) offers shows year round, open to the public. The Planetarium is in Lark Hall, Room 2001, Santa Rosa Campus. Shows are on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:00 PM and 8:30 PM and Sundays at 1:30 PM and 3:00 PM during the regular Fall and Spring semesters. No shows in the Summer. Admission is \$5 General & \$3 Students and Seniors. Tickets are sold at the door only beginning 30 minutes before show time. No children under five, please. A parking permit is now required at SRJC and is included in the Planetarium show admission price. Pick up a parking permit at the planetarium, when you pay admission. Please arrive early enough to place your permit on your vehicle's dashboard before the show starts. For information phone Community Education at 707-527-4372 or 707-527-4465. Please call Planetarium for most current information.

- ♥ Fly a kite [Sonoma County Parks Site](#).
- ♥ Take a walk around [Spring Lake](#).
- ♥ Visit the [Tule Elk at Pt. Reyes National Seas shore](#).
- ♥ Go to the [Sonoma County Fair](#) during the summer.
- ♥ [Young Eagles](#) Flying Program
- ♥ "Me & My CASA Days": Check the [events](#) calendar to see the latest activity scheduled.
- ♥ [Sonoma-Marin Fair](#) in Petaluma (typically in June)

Some other helpful phone numbers:

Parks & Recreation Department ([Santa Rosa](#)):
(707) 543-3282 (Call to get their "Adventure Guide")

Boys & Girls Clubs:

- Boys & Girls Club of Santa Rosa :
(707) 542-3249
- Boys & Girls Club Valley of The Moon:
(707) 938-8544
- Boys & Girls Club Of Cloverdale:
(707) 894-5063
- Boys & Girls Club Of Windsor :
(707) 838-1959
- Boys & Girls Club Of Healdsburg:
(707) 433-4479
- Boys & Girls Club of Rohnert Park: (
707) 769-4750
- Boys & Girls Club Petaluma -Lucchesi Park
Branch: (707) 769-5322

- ♥ [Sonoma County Family YMCA](#): 707-544-1829
- ♥ [CHOP'S Teen Center](#): 509 Adams Street, Santa Rosa 707-284-CHOPS
- ♥ SRJC College for Kids: 707-527-4372
(for kids grade 3-9; fun classes held in June.)
- ♥ Rohnert Park Gymnastics: 707-585-9377

Note: Water sports and water-related activities are one of the most risky recreational activities in which we can engage our children. It is very important that all activities around water obtain prior approval and the activity must be in approved areas where life guards are on duty. **No exceptions please.**

"TUTORS NEEDED"

- ♥ *CASAs who have Math and/or English skills who would be willing to do tutoring on the side are needed. Please call the office for more details*

We Say Goodbye to Kristine...

She has completed her internship with CASA and is moving on to the next step on her career path.



We say Hello to Joel....:):):)

Attend Case Review and help us to welcome him beginning July 22nd

Lavender Harvest Time



Ideas for helping with CASA Lavender Sales

- ♥ Give as holiday gifts for your foster parent, social worker, CASA child's teacher, family and friends.
- ♥ Put a sign up, take orders at your desk at work or in the break room.
- ♥ Call the office to set up a Lavender Booth at your favorite location.
- ♥ Make lavender products for us. (Crafts, soaps...)

Call Us At: 565-6375 or info@sonomacasa.org

Help Support the CASA Lavender Program by Volunteering at one of our booths this summer. Call the office for details and dates!

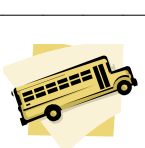
The children of Sonoma CASA desperately need your help. Why not give a tax deductible donation right now. Your support helps keep the Sonoma CASA program running so that we might help serve the abused and neglected children of Sonoma County.



Thank you for your generosity.

Visit us at our Lavender Booth Locations this Summer:

July 18 Oliver's on Montecito in Santa Rosa and
August 16th at the Lions Club Fair



Continuing Education Opportunity

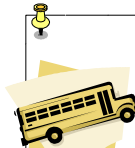
Lifebooks

Wednesday, August 5, 2009

12:00 OR 6:00pm

Presenter is Dr. Gloria Speicher

....please see attached flyer



Continuing Education Opportunity

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder & Anxiety

Wednesday, September 30, 2009

Presenter is Dr. Megan Burns

.....more details to come

.....More Events

NO BOYS ALLOWED!!

Was a great success!

All who attended had a great day enjoying chair massages, a sumptuous feast prepared just for the ladies by Chef Katherine Couture and all left feeling relaxed and rejuvenated.

*Special thanks to our gracious host:
Kathy Perotti*



Guest Speaker was Linda Watanabe McFerrin. Poet, travel writer, and novelist, Linda is a contributor to numerous magazines and anthologies. She is the author of two poetry collections, past editor of a popular Northern California guidebook and a winner of the Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction.

**CASA SUMMER 2009
TRAINING:**

TUESDAY, JULY 21

WEDNESDAY, JULY 22

THURSDAY, JULY 23

8:30—5:00

**NEED A REFRESHER?
CALL AND RESERVE A SEAT
TODAY!**

707 565-6375

CASA has boy's and girl's bikes available at the office for our CASA youth, free of charge.

They can be taken to Russ at Rincon Cyclery to be looked over and fixed if necessary. Some have loose cables etc.....

Rincon Cyclery
4927 Sonoma Highway
Santa Rosa, CA 95409

707 538-0868



Lavender Days! If you've ever purchased our lavender products before, then you know these are of the highest quality. Produced with locally grown lavender, our products are created just for us by local shops. Whether you purchase our lavender through our **online boutique: (www.sonomacasa.org)**, mail or fax your order, stop by our offices, or visit us at one of our many locations this Summer-- be sure not to miss out on this season's harvest. We also offer **fresh lavender bunches** in June each year, and our lavender products are available all year 'round. Our lavender products not only make great gifts for family and friends (or yourself!)—it's a wonderful way to support CASA! The CASA program's goal is to support all children who are abused and neglected and living away from their parents for protection. Over the last 11 years CASA has served over 1,000 children. Yet, with all we do there is much work still to do. **Your purchase helps sustain this program.** *Thank you.*



Lavender Products Available:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Lavender Bath Gel | \$15.00 |
| Lavender Lotion | \$15.00 |
| Lavender Hydrosol | \$15.00 |
| Lavender Sachet (color fabric) | \$15.00 |
| Lavender Sachet (white fabric) | \$15.00 |
| Lavender Soap | \$15.00 |
| Lavender Bundle Fresh Lg. | \$45.00 |
| Lavender Bundle Fresh Med. | \$15.00 |

CASA has a donor who will match dollar for dollar all lavender sales from this years harvest. Your purchase of \$15 turns into \$30, Your purchase of \$30 turns into \$60 and so on. What a great way to buy our wonderful products, enjoy fresh lavender bouquets and help support the CASA Lavender Program all at the same time!

All of our lavender is graciously donated by Bob and Sharon Huntley Kahn, Julia Rowe and Anton Hoffman



Phone: 707-565-6375
 Fax: 707-565-6379
 Web site: www.sonomacasa.org
 E-mail: info@sonomacasa.org

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