

CASA Corner



One CASA's Summer Project

"Wanted to share that my CASA kid and I have a summer photo project of collecting "Charlie Browns." Our goal is to get a photo of every Charlie Brown in Santa Rosa. There are 55 Charlie Browns, so that is quite a project! My kid is so excited about filling up her photo album and has become a walking "authority" on the various Charlie Browns and where they are located.... we are about half way to our goal, so last weekend we did the Snoopy (Schulz) Museum as part of a visit...

And the cutest part of this summer project is that my CASA kid (who is 9 years old) gives each Charlie Brown a big hug and a kiss on the cheek before we leave. It doesn't get any cuter than that.

If any other CASA's want to do this also (and many may already be doing it, it is a popular sport this summer), they will be on display until the 3rd week of September. Details at the Visitor's Center at Railroad Square, the Snoopy Museum, or at www.northbay.com.

PS- Charlie Brown #54 is in a secret location, and is not given on the brochures and maps. For CASA's only... the "secret" location is the lobby of the Schulz Museum."

Facts About Transitioning Youth



Each year, approximately 5,000 youth emancipate from the foster care system in California; many leave without the resources, skills or abilities to find safe housing and support. These youth are at a critical juncture where they can either wind up homeless, out of school, unemployed, and a burden on society or, with housing and other support, become healthy and productive citizens.

- ◆ Nearly a third of foster youth will become homeless at some time within the first year after they leave the system at age 18 and 65% of California youth graduating from foster care in FY2000-2001, were in need of safe and affordable housing at the time of graduation.
- ◆ Fewer than 10% of foster youth enroll in college and only 1% actually graduate.
- ◆ Unemployment rates for emancipated youth are estimated at 50%.
- ◆ Emancipated foster youth earn an average of \$6,000 per year—a number well below the national poverty level of \$7,890.
- ◆ About one fourth of former foster youth will be incarcerated within the first two years after they leave the system and approximately one third of former foster youth will be on public assistance shortly after aging out of the system.
- ◆ It is estimated that 10% of the young women emancipating from foster care in California are parents and that existing services for teen mothers are woefully inadequate.
- ◆ 67% of females emancipated from the child welfare system in California had at least one birth within five years of leaving care.
- ◆ 40% of emancipated foster youth with one child reported having special needs due to pregnancy or parenting which interfered with independent living.

CASA Corner

When Children Begin Preparing to Leave the Dependency System



The CASA program believes that emancipation begins as early as 13-14 years of age. At this age the minor should be encouraged to look at their interests and think about what they might want to do and/or be when they grow up. You can begin to explore, in a fun way, a number of career choices at this time with your youth. This exploration will be conducted more assertively when the youth turns 16. At that time, the Independent Living Program (ILP) social workers will make contact with the youth and encourage them to enroll in the ILP classes. These classes are offered by the Department of Human Services and are located on the Santa Rosa Junior College campus.

The classes are a series of workshops designed to teach foster youth the life skills they will need to successfully move out of the juvenile court into an independent life. As an extra bonus each youth that successfully completes the series receives \$100. ILP also sponsors other fun and skill building events throughout the year. CASA is convinced that early motivational exercises, hobbies and esteem building experiences can assist these youth in approaching the emancipation process with more confidence. CASA also encourages experiential activities such as summer camps, exchange programs and extracurricular activities. We want our youth to view leaving the system as a time for them to make their individuality known and respected.

It is my pleasure to introduce to you Eleanor Davis. Eleanor has been with us for close to a year and has worked to educate herself and to begin to develop connections, resources and materials that can help you on your journey with your CASA youth.

The following websites are just a few resources we feel will help. Please take time to look through the materials and get acquainted with these resources. Also call the office and ask for a planning session with Eleanor, our Successful Transitions Supervisor, to map out your youth's emancipation timeline. This will help you get oriented to the steps your youth is about to take. Also watch for more materials and ideas coming to you via your email.

Resources for Transitioning Youth

Educational and Resource Materials

Improving Outcomes for Older Youth: What Lawyers and Judges Need to Know.

McNaught, Kathleen and Lauren Onkeles.

Resource Center on Youth Development and ABA Center on Children and the Law, 2004. Download version at

www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/publications

August 2005 release: book on Adolescent Permanency from the ABA Center on Children and the Law with funding from the Dave Thomas and Freddie Mac Foundations and the Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues. National Resource Center on Legal & Judicial Issues. ABA Center on Children and the Law

202-662-1730

khourya@staff.abanet.org

Edi Winkle

National Child Welfare Resource Center on Youth Development

918-660-3708

ewinkle@ou.edu

CASA Corner

Resources for Transitioning Youth

Practical Skills Development Materials

California I.D.

http://www.dmv.ca.gov/dl/dl_info.htm

(scroll to: 'How to apply for or renew an identification (ID) card')

Social Security Number

<http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/>

Medicaid

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid/state.asp?state=CA>

Bank Account

Talk about budgeting (<http://mapping-your-future.org/features/budgetcalc.htm>)

Savings (<http://www.mapping-your-future.org/features/dmsavings.htm#calc>)

Job and Career Skills Materials

Scholarships

<http://www.santarosa.edu/app/paying-for-college/scholarship-office/>

<http://www.scholarships.com/>

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>

www.chafee.csac.ca.gov

<http://fastweb.monster.com/>

www.finaid.org/scholarships

Resume

Talk about job choices (<http://www.bls.gov/k12/>)

Write a resume (<http://www.mapping-your-future.org/planning/resume.htm>)

Visit Job Link (www.socojoblink.org)

Sonoma County Regional Occupation Program (ROP) for Career Development

<http://www.rop.scoe.org/>

Job Links

Job Seeker Center
2245 Challenger Way
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

(707) 565-5550 fax# (707) 565-5555

Events Calendar (job fairs, speakers, hiring events, etc)

<http://my.calendars.net/testerforsc>

Job Corp

Education, training and support services are provided to students at Job Corps center campuses located throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Job Corps centers are operated for the Department of Labor by private companies through competitive contracting processes, and by other Federal Agencies through inter-agency agreements.

<http://jobcorps.doleta.gov/>

General References and Recommended Reading

www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/publications

www.nrcys.ou.edu

Independent Living Program (ILP)

Sonoma County Human Services

1747 Copperhill Road

Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Greg Begin 565-5674 or Alicia Tusso- 565-5655

Redwood Children's Services

Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) -

1280 N. Bush St. Ukiah CA 95482

(707) 468-5536

Tamayo House

(707) 528-7500

Homeless Shelters

Catholic Charities

707-542-5426

Family Support Center, S.R.

146 beds, 6 cribs

Catholic Charities

707-542-5426

Brookwood Center, S.R.

20 beds 20 beds

COTS

707-765-6530

Center for Children and their

Families, Petaluma

35 beds

COTS

707-765-6530

Petaluma Temp Winter Shelter,

54 beds

COTS / EARTH

707-765-6530

Faith-based shelters, Petaluma

12 beds (school year only)

Interfaith Shelter Net

707-546-7906

Armory Winter Shelter, S.R.

170 beds (Nov. - Mar. only)

Transitioning Youth

Resources Con't.

Homeless Shelters

N. County Comm. Serv. Wallace House, Healdsburg
707-894-2727 8 beds
Spare Room, Cloverdale
4 beds

Redwood Gospel Mission Women's Shelter, S. R.
12 beds 2 cribs (*women/children*)

Redwood Gospel Mission Men's Shelter, S.R.
707-573-0490 45 beds

Sonoma County People for Economic Opp. Chanate Shelter,
707-544-6911 13 beds (*women*)

Social Advocates for Youth Ripley Street, Santa Rosa
707-546-3432 6 beds (*youth*)

Mental Health Services

24 Hour Services:

3322 Chanate Road
Santa Rosa, 95404

Acting Section Manager: Denise Hunt, RN (707) 565-6911

Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES)

EMERGENCY - (707) 576-8181 or 1 (800) 746-8181

Emergency mental health counseling and referrals. Screening for all psychiatric inpatient admissions to Sutter Medical Center Psychiatric Unit. Extended stabilization services up to 23 hours. Staffed 24 hours a day. Medi-Cal/Medicare/Insurance/Sliding scale fees.

Empowering Our Youth

Our youth need to be empowered, need to be educated about their rights and the services available to them. We as CASAs must also thoroughly understand these rights and services to ensure our youth are eligible and in a position to receive all that they are entitled to.

We must help our youth put a plan together. Here's how to get started.

Empowering Our Youth



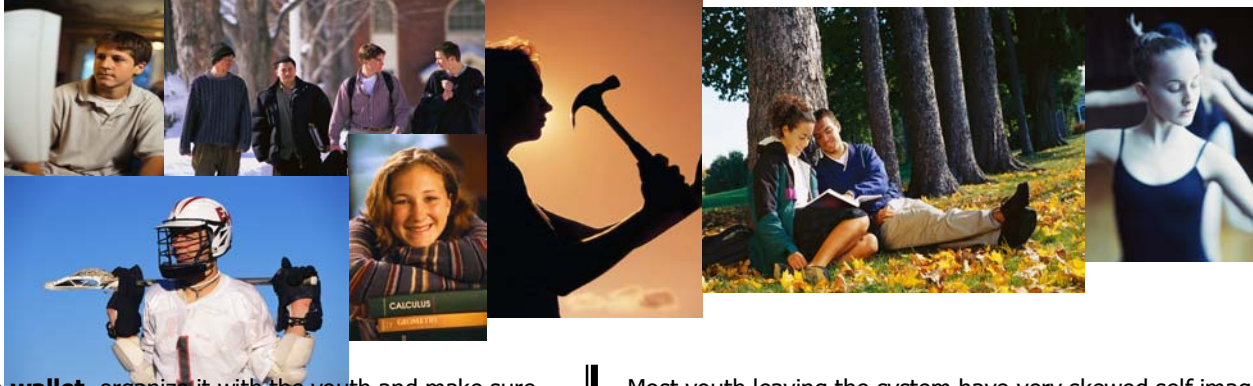
Create a Life Plan. Why not? Sounds a little crazy but let's do it. Organizations have strategic plans. Why not help a child figure out a Life Plan. Prepare your youth. And if they don't want to do the plan with you, do it for yourself. You (CASA) need to be ready and you need to plan ahead for the wellbeing and success of your CASA youth.

Start by putting a time-line together. Begin with the time the youth will leave the system. This is usually around the date of their high school graduation or on their 18th birthday. From this date back track filling in important dates. Keep backing this time-line up until all dates are documented (birthdays, holidays, medical/dental checkups, testing dates, preparations for graduation etc...) Schedule in talks with the ILP/Social Worker about transitional living and make an appointment to go to the orientation at Job Links which your youth needs to attend before they can take advantage of the classes and job search facilities. Pencil in a visit to the school counselor to make sure the youth will have all of the necessary units of credit to graduate. Set a date to open a bank account and to apply for a California ID. Remember to schedule in Drivers Ed and dates to go apartment hunting. Be creative and have fun with this. Dream a little.

Now add in the financial plan. How much will it take to complete these tasks? This can be a real eye opener and provide some motivation for your youth to see exactly how much it will take for them to accomplish their goals. It is estimated that one has to make \$15-18 an hour to live on their own in Sonoma County.

Talk with youth Social worker and Independent Living Program (IPL) worker about what is his/her plan for this youth's emancipation process. How can the worker support the youth? After you have done this set up a date to have you and the youth talk with the Social Worker together.

Transitioning Youth



Get a wallet, organize it with the youth and make sure everything this youth needs is in it. SS#, important phone numbers, IDs and any medical alert information. Make sure they get used to it as a place where all important things are kept. Practice responsibility and organization with your youth.

Set up an emancipation file at CASA office and make sure we have everything they might need copies of later (SS#, birth certificates, lists of medications, phone #'s etc...)

Get a calendar or a day runner. Help the youth start understanding the importance of time management. Many of our youth do not have good organizational skills and find multi-tasking difficult. Outlining the next few weeks, months, or years can feel empowering. Teach your youth to use a calendar and a date book. Use your plan (as previously discussed) to add things to the calendar that are more short term.

Educate youth on availability of grants, scholarships, and tuition waiver programs and then discuss future dreams for financial independence. Include both educational and vocational options in your discussions. All foster youth are granted a waiver allowing them to attend the Junior College. They are also eligible for Doyle scholarship funding (and much more). We need to help our youth know all of this is available to them. Let's help them dream a little.

Ensure health records are in order and begin to help the youth develop a transitional health plan. It is particularly important to make sure your youth has a complete understanding of their medications and family medical history. Make sure to include any tests or evaluations that are available. Help them develop a positive image of their bodies.

Most youth leaving the system have very skewed self images. Helping them track their health conditions, medications, birth control/protection and personal hygiene are all important.

Ensure mental health services and transitional health plans are set up to provide a youth aging out of care with a safety net. Work with the youth on establishing a "medical home" where all health care can be provided and all related information saved.

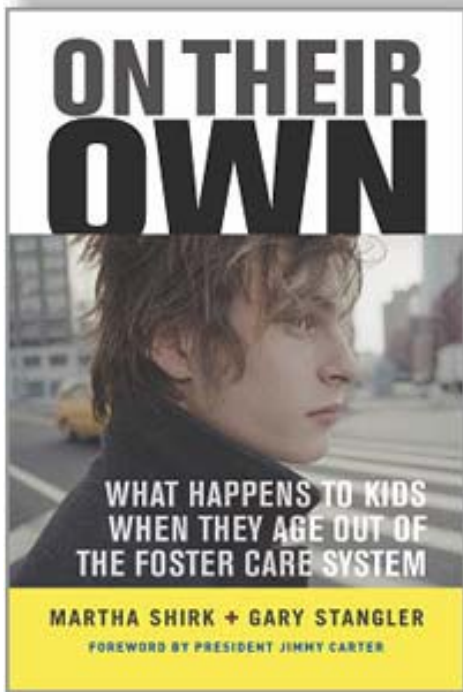
Review all employment options with your youth.

Advocate for your youth to be enrolled in appropriate job training programs. Job Corps has educational job training and other residential programs administered by government to assist at risk youth ages 16 to 24.

Know what **housing options** exist for youth over 16 that are still in the system as well as those youth 18 and over. We have a great transitional housing program that allows youth to live in a more independent environment while still in foster care. The Redwood Children's Services also operates a great program. Call them and set up an interview to learn more. After the youth leaves the system then what? Does the youth have friends or family? Do they need a roommate or need to apply for Section 8 housing? And when all other avenues have been exhausted know the homeless shelter phone numbers and what they each provide. Make a plan and work with the ILP staff and your social worker to do this.

Who are the **significant adults** in this child's life? We know the CASA is one but these youth need many other adults. Make a list and gather them all around the table to talk about what they can do to help this child transition. You might be surprised at what they may have to offer—sometimes they simply need to be asked.

Book Review



From the Front/Back Flaps of the Book

For most young people, crossing the threshold from adolescence into adulthood is an angst filled journey that can take years to complete, and requires the guidance and support of caring adults.

But for some children, there is a deadline past which no guidance, support, or supervision is available. Each year, as many as 25,000 teenagers "age out" of foster care, usually when they turn eighteen. For most of their lives, a government agency had made every important decision for them. Suddenly they are entirely alone, with no one to count on.

What does it mean to be eighteen and on your own, without the family support and personal connections that most young people rely on? For many youth it means largely unhappy endings, including sudden homelessness, unemployment, dead-end jobs, loneliness and despair, *On Their Own* tells the compelling stories of ten young people whose lives are full of promise, but who face economic and social barriers stemming from the disruptions of foster care. For other youth, proper preparation for adulthood and support from caring adults helps them develop the resiliency and skills needed for success.

Reporter Martha Shirk and long-time children's advocate Gary Stangler do more than document the struggles of these young men and women. They call for action to provide youth in foster care the same opportunities on the road to adulthood that most of our youth take for granted — access to higher education, vocational training, medical care, housing, and relationships within their communities. As President Jimmy Carter writes in his Foreword: "The question we should ask ourselves is this: if we willingly give our own children the benefit of our support as they struggle to become independent, productive adults, why do we tolerate the abrupt withdrawal of support for youth who are aging out of care?"

Martha Stark spent twenty-three years as a reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, where she wrote extensively about children's issues. She lives in Palo Alto, California.

Gary Stangler is executive director of the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative and served as director of the Missouri Department of Social Services from 1989 to 2000. He lives near Columbia, Missouri.

★★★★★ [Please read this book!](#)

Reviewed by Raquel T.

I hope that you take time out to read this book. It focuses on the lives of youth who are in foster care and the challenges that we face when we emancipate from the foster care system. This book is great for people who work in the social services field, who work directly with foster youth, as well as the foster youth themselves. I am in it as well, please read my story... pg. 109

Marcia Robinson Lowry

Executive Director, Children's Rights

"The resiliency and determination to succeed shown by the young people Shirk and Stangler profile is incredible. This book is more than a portrait of unimaginable struggle, however; it is noteworthy because of its clear and specific recommendations for how we can do better for these young people. If our government and society do not follow the authors' advice, the lives of thousands of young people are at terrible risk. There is no excuse not to do better."