
Sonoma Index-Tribune

CASA slates classes for new volunteers

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By Index-Tribune Report

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CASA, Court Appointed Special Advocates, will be hosting another training session in April.

Every day in Sonoma County, children are removed from their homes because they have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. Through no fault of their own, these children are made dependents of the Juvenile Court and enter a world where an overburdened legal system sometimes cannot hear their voices.

Millie Gilson, CASA's executive director, said, these youth need a CASA advocate to provide consistent and personal support as they go through months and sometimes years of legal procedures. All too often, the children are moved from one temporary placement to another, never knowing what it is to have the comfort of a permanent home.

"The CASA volunteer provides human contact that the youth need and the adult experience and savvy the court needs to make better decisions for them," she said. Being a CASA makes a difference in the lives of these youth."

Juvenile court officials have identified an additional 35 youth who need advocates and CASA is appealing to Sonoma County residents to volunteer. If you care and have about 10 hours a month to spend, being a CASA can be a very gratifying work. A CASA is a powerful voice in a child's life.

Gilson said there are approximately 155 volunteers, and she hopes to recruit another 25 with the next training.

The spring training, which takes place over three-and-a-half days, begins Thursday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., then runs from Tuesday, April 29, through Thursday, May 1, from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Classes are held at CASA's office at the Los Guilicos complex near Oakmont in Santa Rosa. For more information on how to get involved and to sign up for the CASA training, contact Gilson at 565-6375

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