

CASA of Sonoma County
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Speak up
for
a child.



Making a difference...One child at a time!

♥ **From the Director's Desk:**

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA). It is important that you review the information we have provided in this packet to orient yourself to the steps in becoming a CASA. I also ask that you carefully think through your decision to become involved us. This is a meaningful and very important step you are about to take. Reliability and commitment are of the utmost importance in this extraordinary journey. We offer quarterly training sessions. We start your process with a pre-training orientation interview where I will meet you personally to assist in your decision making process.

Included you will find a job description of the role of a child advocate, and the CASA program responsibilities to the juvenile court and to the children it serves. Please, also examine the qualification requirements for CASA volunteers.

Training includes 30 hours of classroom study as described in the enclosed training schedule. Additional hours are required, including courtroom and case review observations. You will also participate in post-training site visits to other organizations assisting our youth.

Because CASA is involved with children dependents of the Juvenile Court, we must ask that you participate in a complete security clearance. A list of those requirements is also included in this packet (DMV, Child abuse registry and DOJ/FBI).

The CASA program is a proud organization embracing all people of our community. We encourage individuals of diverse backgrounds to apply.

Thank you for your interest in CASA and for your cooperation in our screening process. I especially look forward to meeting you and each of the volunteers that are interested in the CASA Program.

Millie Gilson

♥ **Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things:**

When a child is a victim of abuse or neglect and becomes dependent of the juvenile court system, he enters a world of bewildering mazes. The child is at the mercy of the court system which must decide where to place him and what services to provide for his family.

The court will hear from parents, social workers, and lawyers, each with their own bias, but the court often does not hear from the child.

Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sonoma County (CASA) was founded to be the voice for such children. CASA is a non-profit, volunteer program dedicated to improving the lives of abused and neglected children. The trained CASA volunteer is a sworn officer of the court, appointed by the judge to assess the circumstances, report the findings and speak on the child's behalf.

The CASA volunteer becomes a friend to the child, explaining what is happening and why, listening to the child's fears and helping to resolve any feelings. Through frequent visits, the CASA volunteer monitors the case and makes sure everything that can be done is being done. The CASA volunteer serves as an advocate, role model and as the child emancipates and leaves the system, become a lifelong connection.

The CASA volunteer works closely with social workers, therapists, attorneys, and others to make certain the child's needs are met. The CASA's ultimate goal is to ensure that authorities provide a safe, permanent, loving family for the child as quickly as possible.

"The CASA volunteers humanize the Juvenile Court System for children during what is probably the most traumatic period in their lives."

**Arnold Rosenfield
Founding Sonoma County Superior Court Judge**

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