

CASA Connection

Summer 2014

"Connecting our Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program to our community"



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Millie's Message:

Since our inception in 1977, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Programs have become one of the most significant services of its kind, collaborating with community partners to assure the well-being of children. CASA programs are cost-effective and many run as independent, private nonprofit organizations. Today, there are almost 1,000 CASA programs around the country. We are a unique blend of private support, public need and the kind of people power that comes from 70,000 volunteers, who are committed to the rights of every child in the Juvenile Court and Child Welfare System.

Sonoma County CASA is one of 44 programs in the state of California. We were the 32nd program founded by the Presiding Juvenile Court at the time, honorable Judge Arnold Rosenfield, in 1997. We serve an average of 220 youths a year via the dedication of over 160 Sonoma County CASA volunteers, who dedicate over 20,000 hours of volunteer time annually. What is significant about these hours is that they focus on the youth, overseeing their strengths and weaknesses, while keeping long-term vision alive. CASA volunteers are assigned to their youths to help them succeed, to help them stand proudly on their conviction to become independent, self sufficient members of our community. The journey can be long, there

Interns

Veranika Savitskaya
Gerard McCarthy

will be rewards as well as struggles, and CASA volunteers often provide the support necessary for a successful transition into adulthood.

Office Advocates

Carol White
Sarah Cobb
Jade Dang



With the Children at Heart

Millie Gilson

Founding Executive Director

**Mission Statement**

The Sonoma County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Program is committed to serving abused and neglected children coming before the Juvenile Court for protection and rehabilitation services.

The purpose of the CASA program is to humanize the complex child welfare system for the child victim by providing a trained volunteer who will act as a consistent role model, advocate, and potential life connection.

[Read more about how Sonoma CASA fits in nationally.](#)





How Do CASA Volunteers Help Children?

CASA volunteers work with One Child at a time building meaningful long term relationships. How? CASA volunteers are appointed by judges to watch over and advocate for

abused and neglected children. CASA volunteers bring more assurance that the child has an advocate watching over needs while offering support to the partners we work with in the legal child welfare.

Volunteers stay with each case until it is closed and the child is placed or has created a safe, permanent home. For many abused children, their CASA volunteer will be the one constant adult presence in their lives long after the child moves out in to the world on their own.

Independent research has demonstrated that children with a CASA volunteer are making a difference.

Who are CASA Volunteers?

Last year 120 Sonoma County CASA volunteers helped 140 abused and neglected children. Nationally, nearly 75,000 CASA volunteers helped 238,000 abused and neglected children. CASA volunteers are everyday citizens who have undergone screening and training and are highly supervised to be provided with guidance and resources to perform their work.



Who Are the Children CASA Volunteers Help?

Judges appoint CASA volunteers to represent the best interests of children who have been removed from

their homes due to abuse or neglect. Each year, more than 600 children experience foster care in this county.

[Read more about statistics of child abuse in Sonoma County.](https://ui.constantcontact.com/visualeditor/visual_editor_preview.jsp?agent.uid=1118116610403&format=html&print=true)

How did the CASA Movement Begin?

In 1977, a Seattle juvenile court judge concerned about making drastic decisions with insufficient information conceived the idea of citizen volunteers speaking up for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courtroom. From that first program CASA has grown a network of more than 951 CASA programs that are recruiting, training and supporting volunteers in 49 states and the District of Columbia.



[Read more about the history of the CASA movement.](#)

Sonoma County CASA was started in 1996 by the honorable Arnold Rosenfield the proceeding juvenile court Judge at the time. Presiding and making referrals to the program today are Judges Virginia Marcoida, Allen Hardcastle and James Bertoli.

Sonoma County CASA was the 32 program founded in the State of California in 1996. We are current one of 44 programs in California and one of 950 CASA programs in the United States.



How is Sonoma County CASA Funded?

CASA has an annual operating budget for 2014-15 is \$499,000. The primary source of CASA's funding is through foundations and corporate grants. We hold an annual fundraiser. We are also proud of our private and individual donors.

****Summer Fun****

SRJC Inspiration Day

CASAs and their youth had a fun-filled day on July 2nd. They spent the day at the Santa Rosa Junior College learning about career opportunities and to dream about their future.

They started their day at the Career Center, learned about the Welding Program,

****Community Connections:****

Redwood Region Porsche Club

On a beautiful Sunday morning, 47 exquisite Porsches arrived in Sonoma where they were arranged for public viewing on the Plaza Square.

The even, though free to the public, was a fundraiser for CASA. Each car owner donated an entry fee earmarked for the charity. At the end of the day,

toured the Automotive Technology area, learned about the options for certification through the Culinary Arts Program and ended their day at Shone Farm to discover what the Agriculture and Natural Resources Dept. has to offer.



Toyota/Save Mart 350

Through a generous donation brought to us by Sonoma Raceway and the Speedway Children's Charities, CASAs and their youth were able to enjoy all the excitement of the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series.

The kick off was in June and were thrilled to offer this opportunity to our CASAs and their youth.

Big THANK YOU to our ongoing supporters at Sonoma Raceway and Speedway Children's Charities!



No Boys Allowed...When Women Gather Great Things Happen

When women gather for CASA it is a

we had collected \$1,390 (and two awesome pairs of shoes given by a club member for a CASA youth).

Spectator attendance by the general public was excellent; also many PCA members who did not display their cars came to look and socialize. CASA's good work was spread around and we had a great day to share the CASA story.

CASA appreciates and applauds the PCA Club for their support. As a long-term donor to the CASA program, they have raised over \$33,000 in good deeds for our youth, both by these types of events, but also private donors from the club.



Summer Rep Theatre

Summer Rep Theatre & SRT Cares has recognized CASA for our contribution to the community. During their Thursday, August 7th performance of "A Chorus Line", we will set up an info table in the Burbank Auditorium lobby.

The community can see this show at a discounted price of \$10 and the proceeds will benefit our program.

SRT has a remarkable repertoire of plays throughout the Summer.

good day. No Boys Allowed was a great day and a way to say CASA is important. On June 26th, the group of women gather at the home of Tara for a spa day. Speaker Amie Breeze gave a meaningful presentation while the attendees enjoyed a catered lunch by our very own chef, CASA volunteer Hildred Powers.

It was a fun day for raising awareness and fund for the CASA Rewards Program. Through this program, our youth can apply for scholarships - from new clothing to starting a job to funds for school books or independent living needs.



We Gotta havem... the kids needem!

Each CASA youth deserves to start school with a new backpack full of fun and needed supplies. Special THANKS are extend to the Fireman's Fund Insurance Company for sponsoring the backpacks that make our youth feel ready to learn.

We want all our youth to have the items and clothing to start the school year feeling proud and ready to go...you know, just like all the other kids. It means a



CASA Fair Day Fun!

Summer just isn't complete unless you attend the Sonoma County Fair!

We extend a special thanks to the Fairgrounds who donated lots and lots of tickets for the CASA day at the fair.

You can't beat a smiling child who no matter how many times she passes you on the merry go round, waves yet again and again...This is a day we look forward each year.

Thank you Sonoma County Fairgrounds Association for giving CASA youth a reason to smile and wave their hands.



CASA Wine Club Launched!

CASA of Sonoma County and Michel-Schlumberger Winery are proud to introduce the CASA Wine Club.

*The goal of the club is simple: to make a meaningful contribution to

great deal to us to have yet again the Fireman's Fund supporting our Back to School Program.



the success of the CASA Program.

*Our objective: to recruit 100 club members.

* To raise: \$10,000 annually.

[Learn more about our CASA Wine Club.](#)



CASA - Court Appointed Special Advocates of Sonoma County

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