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## Millie's Message...

As April was Child Abuse Prevention Month, we were busy spreading the CASA story and sharing the issues as to the plight of abused and neglected children. We continue this work by sharing our stories and information enclosed in this newsletter. We celebrate over 1,000 children having been serviced by Sonoma CASA; equally, we celebrate over 700 CASA volunteers who have so proudly stepped forward to advocate and support these children since our inception in 1996.

For some of you, it might be surprising that the history of child abuse prevention and treatment in the United States is relatively recent. The need to better ensure the safety and well-being of children led the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) in 1974; the first child protection legislation to be enacted.

Since the passage of CAPTA, Congress, at the urging of its constituents, has undertaken efforts to promote the identification, treatment, and mitigation of child abuse in the United States. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives marked the week of June 6-12, 1982, as the first National Abuse Prevention Week. In 1983, April was then selected as National Child Abuse Prevention Month and since then April has marked the month to bring attention to the cause to protect children.

Within the Children's Bureau of the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, the Office on Child Abuse and Neglect, uses the month of April to rally attention and action for the cause at the national level. Furthermore, the Blue Ribbon Campaign raises awareness by honoring deceased victims of child abuse and neglect.

Although April is a time to draw recognition, I urge you all to remember... to always remember, that for each detected abused child there are many still hidden and in pain. Our vision is that every child has a safe, loving home, and that all children be given the opportunity to thrive.

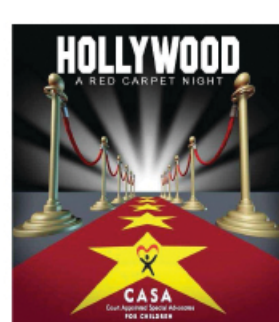
## Hearts for Children 2013 Fundraising Dinner

This year's Gala dinner was a great success!  
This year's fund-raiser exceeded our  
expectations by raising \$98,000!!

Volunteer support from participating CASAs  
contributed to an organized and efficiently  
run event, allowing our guests to see the true  
meaning behind our mission.

The highlight of the event was a sincere and emotional  
presentation by Cazzie Palacios Brown, one of the youths who was  
directly impacted by one of our volunteer CASAs.

We wish to sincerely thank our local sponsors for their continued  
support of CASA.



**\$98,000 Raised! THANK YOU!**

## Recognition from Commissioner Anthony Wheeldin

As the Judicial Officer responsible for the Dependency calendar, I want to express my sincere appreciation for a job well done to all your volunteers. It is therefore my pleasure to write this letter of recognition to the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program volunteers who so diligently support the success of the Sonoma County CASA program...

See the Commissioner's full letter below.

## Message from our Executive Director Millie Gilson



"It is with great pleasure that we are able to present this letter from Commissioner Anthony Wheeldin. His appreciation and acknowledgement of the work we do goes to show how we impact this community and our children."

## Cazzie's Story

Cazzie came into the CASA office with a big smile, she walked up to me and asked, "so tell me about this program called CASA!" I began my explanation of the program, while being interrupted almost every step of the way. "Why CASA? Who would be my CASA? Can I pick my own CASA? How do you recruit these volunteers? Do they like teenagers?"

With each question I became more and more impressed by this young woman. We talked for quite awhile. A handful maybe... yet I could see her quest was to become more than her past had been.

I knew from the minute I met Cazzie she was going to go far in life. If we could match her with a CASA, a special friend, mentor, and adult to join her on her journey to adulthood... I felt she would someday rule her world. Well, I was right. Cazzie was an exchange student (something few foster youth do), the first in her family to graduate from high school, and she didn't stop there...she became a graduate of the University of Redlands, and is now working full time. She has recently married "the man of her life!" Her happiness radiates. She has taken all she has been through and became a woman in her own right.

Cazzie has been very supportive of the Sonoma CASA program and has shared her story with other foster youth. She most recently stood proudly at our April fundraiser and told us of all her accomplishments. She spoke respectfully of her CASA, Leslie Fritch, who is still very active in her life now some 18 years later, whom actually officiated her wedding this past fall. I was extremely impressed by how confident she stood, how proud she was of herself, and how appreciative she was of all the people who have helped her along the way. Her story is one to be shared. But mostly, I cannot be more impressed or more proud of a CASA youth than Cazzie.

Executive Summary by Millie Gilson



## Fun Summer Activities for Our Youth

| Human Race 2013                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Beach Boardwalk                                                                                                                                               | Fishing Derby                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Support CASA in our goal to raise \$5,000!<br>Please show your team spirit to our very own Amanda Mason by contributing towards her goal of running the full 10k!<br>May 11, 2013<br>Registration: 6:30am<br>Run: 8:00am<br>Rain or Shine | Infineon Raceway and the Santa Cruz Boardwalk have come together to donate complimentary tickets to our youth!<br>Enjoy some fun in the sun on the boardwalk! | Come and enjoy a day filled with trout fishing at Hagemann's Trout Farm!<br><br>Includes:<br>Fishing, gear, lunch, prizes<br><br>May 19, 2013<br>Starts at 9:00am<br>Highway 1<br>Bodega Bay, CA |

Human Race: <http://www.humanracenow.org/>  
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk: <http://www.beachboardwalk.com/>  
Fishing Derby: <http://www.hagemannranch.com/>  
Voices Youth Center: <http://www.voicesyouthcenter.org/programs/sonoma>  
SRJC Foster & Kinship Care Education Program: <http://www.voicesyouthcenter.org/programs/sonoma>  
Prom Closet: <http://www.promcloset.org/>  
Threads for Teens: <http://www.threadsforteens.org/>

**Please contact our office at 707-565-6375 to make arrangements for these activities.**

ANTHONY WHEELDIN  
COMMISSIONER

## Superior Court State of California

COUNTY OF SONOMA  
HALL OF JUSTICE  
600 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE  
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403



March 18, 2013

Mrs. Millie Gilson  
Executive Director of CASA  
P.O. Box 1418  
Kenwood, CA 95452

Dear Mrs. Gilson:

As the Judicial Officer responsible for the Dependency calendar, I want to express my sincere appreciation for a job well done to all your volunteers. It is therefore my pleasure to write this letter of recognition to the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program volunteers who so diligently support the success of the Sonoma County CASA program. Each volunteer plays a significant role in the overall goals of the agency, which significantly impact the lives of the children coming before our courts. Program Executive Director, Millie Gilson advises that there are many roles that volunteers fill in the program such as board members, consultants, trainers, office administration, interns and of course our steadfast child advocates. Collectively there are over 200 volunteers that support over 220 children annually. These numbers are significant and place CASA as one of the most respected volunteer based not-for-profits in Sonoma County.

Because April is volunteer recognition month, the court would like to go on record as having recognized the importance of our volunteers' diligence and dedication to our local CASA program. As a volunteer, you are changing lives through offering your talents, time, and services. You have earned the Court's respect and appreciation.

On behalf of the Sonoma County Superior Court, and more specially the Juvenile Court, I applaud your work and thank you for assisting us in our efforts for our children.

Sincerely,

*Anthony Wheeldin*  
Anthony Wheeldin  
Superior Court Commissioner

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