



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

VIEW FROM THE BENCH

By Presiding Judge Kenneth Peterson and Referee Carol Chrisman

The Court Appointed Special Advocates are the light of hope to children in our dependency courts. Abused and neglected children enter our dependency system at an average rate of 200 children per month. These children—once so full of hope and promise—suffer from a loss of trust in adults and have despair for their future. For these children, the future is fraught with doubt, confusion and anxiety about who will care for them, will they have food, what school will they attend, and what will happen to their siblings and parents.

The Court counts on CASA to help resolve those worries. We realize it is difficult for anyone to connect with these children and re-ignite that sense of hope for the future. But we know it can be achieved slowly, over time, as the CASA proves trustworthy and committed. The CASA is often the one stable, trustworthy adult in the dependent child's life who can answer the tough questions about court and their parents, who will make sure sibling visits occur, and see that education needs are addressed. Most importantly, it is the CASA who helps restore the joy of childhood, whether it is by taking the child for a walk in the park, helping them to learn to ride a bicycle or opening their eyes to the wonders of the science museum.

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The last year has been truly wonderful for Sacramento CASA. Our CASA volunteers increased by 52 in 2008, we served 168 children AND raised more funds for the program through new events and sponsorships. The quality of our advocacy continues to improve through programs targeting the educational needs of children and the issues facing teens nearing emancipation. For me, it has been great to work alongside such a fantastic group of CASA volunteers, board members and staff.

Last fall, together with the local chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (Eta Gamma Omega) we began a pilot project focused on CASA volunteers serving African American children of incarcerated or paroled parents. Eight members for EGO went through the training and became CASA volunteers, committing themselves to the service of being CASAs and engaging in tutoring, life skills training and

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Katie Sherlock – *Case Manager
and Training Coordinator*

Lupe Grimaldi – *Case Manager
and Volunteer Recruiter*

Elizabeth Crothers –
Development Director

Kathy Stone-Takai –
Graduate Intern

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (CONT.)

cultural activities for their assigned children. The members of this pilot will also be working together with our community partners to serve the families of these youth and lay the groundwork for more successful and supported family reunification. Our thanks to the United Way Capital Region for sponsoring the project.

In December we received expansion funding from the National CASA Association for our work in an urban high need area which will allow us to recruit and train an additional 50-60 CASA volunteers and serve an additional 60-75 children by the end of 2009. I'm excited to report our staff has expanded to include an additional case manager and a development director.

In 2008 The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (HR6893) became law and will help hundreds of thousands of children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. Additionally, it will extend federal support for youth to age 21 and will offer many American Indian children important federal protections and support. We look forward to seeing this legislation improve the lives of children in foster care and truly support opportunities for success in educational outcomes and family engagement.

All these good things happen because people care and show up to do the hard work. CASA volunteers serving children at the local level, Judges and Referees tackling thousands of cases, attorneys representing children and parents, and County Social Workers serving thousands of families every month- all play a role in successful outcomes for our youth.

Additionally, our board members, corporate, individual and foundational donors offer tremendous program support and expertise. The National and State CASA Associations and other community partners lobbying for laws benefiting our children make major contributions in these efforts. It's gratifying that that we are all part of a network making real change and a positive difference in the lives of our children in foster care.

Thank you for being a part of the team!



– Carol

Sacramento CASA Wish List

- ✓ Sponsor the cost of an entire training class of 20-25 new CASAs (\$2,500)
- ✓ Give a child a CASA volunteer for a year (\$1,500)
- ✓ Items for Children/Youth:
 - Gift Cards for teens
 - Movie Passes
 - Bowling Passes
 - Fast Food Certificates
 - Tickets to local Sporting Events

If you would like to donate any of these items, please call us at (916) 875-6460

We Can Still Afford to be Courageous

By Elizabeth Crothers

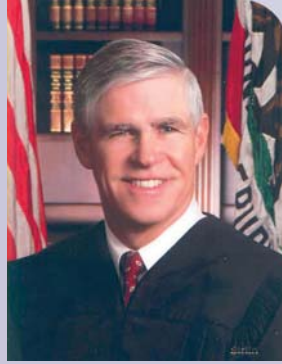
Each day, we hear about the recession we are in and how long it might last, and we try to plan our lives accordingly. But children in the foster care system have already lost their homes and their families.

While it is certain that the severely overburdened foster care system will remain too poorly funded in the short term, you can give foster children an exceedingly valuable and powerful resource: a court appointed special advocate (CASA).

A CASA will not only make sure that his or her child's physical needs are met but will devote one-on-one time and attention to him or her. Often times, the CASA is the only person who has the time to make sure a child is getting medical care and his or her needs met in school. The CASA may be the only one who cares enough to celebrate a child's birthday or the only person who recognizes an award the child receives in school. He or she will be the only person who has enough information to advise the court on the best interests of the child.

In times of recession, many CASA contributors and potential contributors may be inclined to say "not this year" or to reduce the amount of money that they give to help abused and neglected children in the foster care system.

VIEW FROM THE BENCH (CONT.)

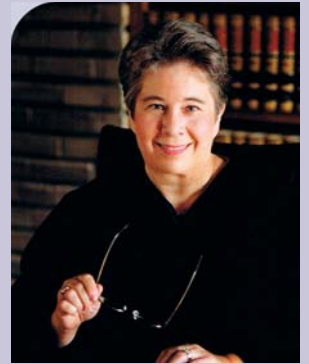


^ Judge Peterson

The Court is aware that an advocate's duties are varied and complex. One outing may be focused on fun and developing trust in the relationship with the child. The next week the CASA may be challenged to use every ounce of diplomacy he or she possesses to navigate the flood of professionals, rules, and complexities that the juvenile dependency system entails, in order to get a simple answer to a child's question. Then, there are the child's tough questions about when they can go home, will they ever see their dad or mom again, or what happened to their dog.

Just like the situation the court often faces, sometimes the CASA doesn't have any good answers to give the child. But, at least, the CASA is there to give hope and a steadfast commitment to stand beside the child and advocate for him or her in a legal world that truly no child should ever have to enter, and certainly can't really understand.

The Court's only concern about the CASA program is that there aren't enough of you. Due to the limited number of CASA advocates, only about 100 children at a time can receive this light of hope. There are hundreds more who need your help. We all have a duty and privilege to raise awareness in the community and encourage more advocates to join your mission. But we can't just "try" to do that. As that wise philosopher, Yoda, once said: "There is no try; there is just do or don't do."



^ Referee Chrisman

But because it is more difficult does not mean that it cannot be done. It means the opposite: that times are so tough, perhaps you might give more than you would otherwise. And here's why: because many others aren't going to be giving at all, even those that can afford to. They will be retrenching, hiding until the economic outlook is brighter. But these kids are struggling now; hiding and waiting will be disastrous for them.

Please consider donating to Sacramento CASA today: an economic downturn is the worst time to pull back. There are many children in desperate need of an advocate in the courtroom, a permanent home, and someone to remember their birthday.

Thank you. Our staff, advocates, and the children greatly appreciate your financial support.

Welcome to the new members of the Sacramento CASA Staff



Katie Sherlock, Case Manager and Training Coordinator

Since joining Sacramento CASA six months ago, I have gotten to experience the legal system in a whole new light. Previously, I utilized my law degree to work in the criminal field, so the transition into Juvenile Dependency law has been a truly educational one. While my original passion to work to improve our communities remains, my dedication to children and their needs has only strengthened.

Every day I feel so blessed to work side-by-side with advocates who share my commitment and passion for children's issues. I am continually encouraged by the amazing individuals involved in this transformative program and I look forward to getting to know more of the CASA family in the future.



Lupe Grimaldi, Case Manager and Volunteer Recruiter

I am thrilled and delighted to have been selected as the new Case Manager/Volunteer Recruiter for Sacramento CASA! I feel very privileged to be a part of this organization, and I look forward to working with all our wonderful advocates.

I am originally from El Salvador and have lived in the U.S. for over 27 years. I hold a B.A. degree in Ethnic Studies with a minor in Spanish and am Bilingual. My past and recent volunteer and work experience has primarily centered on helping high risk youth and providing needed services in the community.

I have served as a mentor, educator, speaker, facilitator, Board Member, advocate, activist, outreach coordinator, and Project Director. I am excited to be able to continue in this path as I am dedicated to improving the lives of our youth. I am also a mother, and I have an amazing four-year-old son named Mykah!



Elizabeth Crothers, Development Director

After more than a decade of working in politics and public relations, I am ecstatic to be working with Sacramento CASA. In addition to fundraising, my political consulting work has included opposition research and analysis, writing, and media training. I have also been the Director of the Speakers Bureau on three statewide initiative campaigns.

Prior to coming to Sacramento in 2004, I lived in New York where I worked in the public and private sectors, first as chief of staff to a state legislator then senior account manager at a public relations firm. I do not volunteer easily, but I have been a CASA for two years now, and it has been time wisely spent. I plan to continue being an advocate while working to increase the funding and expand the reach of Sacramento CASA, one of the most effective, successful, and efficiently run programs I have ever encountered.



**Astrid Boehm
Senior Case Manager**

Astrid is back! After four months of retirement, Astrid came back as a part-time case manager and works again with many of her previous CASAs. (We are glad to have her back on the Sacramento CASA Team!)

Thank you to Our CASA Volunteers (January 1, 2008 to January 31, 2009)

Rita Abel *
Spina Abhat
Joseph Ancell *
Krystle Andrews *
Carol Aubrey
Tammy Battistessa *
Kimio Bazett
Keely Bosler
Suzie Brakensiek
Simone Brinkmann-
Robinson
Richard Burrows *
Kimberly Bushard
Colleen Calia *
Lisa Carion
Nola Castle *
David Coburn
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Donvan Croyle *
Catherine Culver *
Seanna Curler *
James Curran *
Karen Dace *
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Phyllis Deats
Brandi Denecochea
Janelle Dent
AJ Dodd *
Corina Dragan *
David Dyba *
Gary Eberly *
Erica Edwards
Alan Eisenson
Kathy Engelsen
Carolina Estrada *
Martin Farber
John Faux *
Linda Ferrari
Sheris Fine *
Rebecca Fong
Diane Fournier *
Stefanie Fricano
Greg Geeting *
Melinda Gibson



CJ Good *
Arte Greene
Anjanette Grossman *
Karen Hahn
Nancy Hasdovic
Julie Hubbs
Tom Hubbs
Katherine Hudson
Sharon Jackson *
Jaime Jensen *
Carolee Johnstone
Fran Jones
La Sonya Jones
Tiffani Jones
Abbey Kaufman
Donna Kemp
Jessica Kemp
Melanie Khosroshahi
Shirley Kim
Kristin Kinner *
Sarah Kollman
Rhonda Kopelli *
Sheree Kruckenberg
Helen Kwon
Emily Larson *
Kymberly Loya
Gance Ly
Ernest Lynch
Marianna Lyulchenko
Maria Maher *

Dennis Mahoney *
Gini Maulfair
Tessa Mayer
Carolyn McGill *
Faye McGirr
Amanda McKechnie *
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Claire Mortenson *
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Thao Phuong Nguyen
Karen O'Connell *
Debra Ortiz
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Yvette Page *
Sheryll Parsons
Pam Petterle *
Heather Phillips
Dee Pisani
Laurie Ramirez *
Marie Reale
Lisa Renfro
Kathi Rhodes
Leslie Robertson
Christina Robinson *
Kerri Ruzicka
Janet Ryan *
Carlos Sanchez

Anna Sandoval
Nancy Seley
Elizabeth Stein
Julie Stevens
Lee Stoltmack
Kathy Stone-Takai *
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Devaney Sullivan *
Judith Thewanger
Teresa Tillseth
Elnor Tillson *
Nghia Truong *
Linda Tucker *
Sue Ann Tucker
Sharon Usher
Jan Van Brussel
Susan Von Siegman
Elizabeth Varin
Cindy Voss
Glennis Weatherall
Irene West *
Tianna Williams
Jenny Williamson
Alicia Wilson *
Xai Yang
Jan Yarnot
Betty Zapata
Melanie Ziegler

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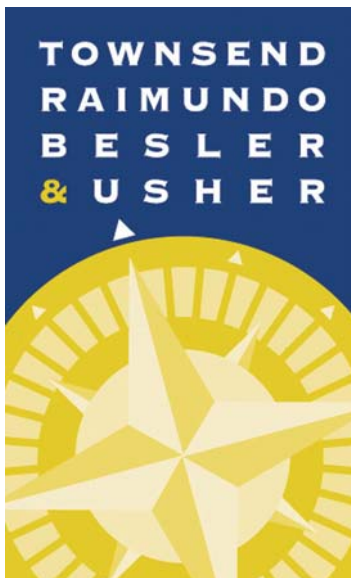
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A Wonderful Array of Events for Sacramento CASA 2008-2009

We kicked-off the summer of 2008 right with an **old-fashioned picnic** in the June. Held at Gibson Park in Carmichael, the day was planned and hosted by our fantastic team of event volunteers: **Julie and Tom Hubbs, Lisa Renfro, Faye McGirr, Cindy Voss, and Kymberly Loya.** Many of our kids and their CASAs enjoyed fantastic BBQ, various games, crafts and face painting by CASA **Carol Aubrey.**



^ The White Orchid Salon and Spa

On September 22nd we were honored by the stylists of **The White Orchid Salon and Spa, Nava's Hair Studio, Artisan Salon, and Salon Cuvee and Day Spa,** who rallied together to donate their talents and energies to “untangle the lives of foster children” and raise funds for Sacramento CASA. Working on their day off, these amazing stylists raised over \$18,000 for our program through haircuts and fabulous raffle prizes. Many thanks to **Lauren Buchanan** and **Kristin Kobayashi** of **The White Orchid Salon and Spa** for spearheading the event bringing much needed awareness and



^ Tom and Julie Hubbs, Leslie, Lisa Renfro, and Cindy Voss

Leslie Beltran – A HERO OF HUMAN SERVICES

On November 4, 2008, Leslie Beltran, Sacramento CASA's Lead Case Manager and Educational Advocacy Coordinator received a Hero of Human Services Award from the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and The Human Services Council for her tremendous efforts in supporting our volunteer advocates and our youth in foster care.

Leslie was nominated by CASA volunteers Lisa Renfro, Julie and Tom Hubbs, Faye McGirr and Cindy Voss because, “... *she makes herself so available to the advocates in providing support and guidance which, in turn, enables the advocates to provide better support and guidance to their assigned foster youth.*”

Leslie was also selected for her successful collaboration with our community partners, assistance with CASA training, program fundraising and her steadfast advocacy for our youth. Our sincere congratulations to Leslie, she is a wonderful person and a tireless advocate for our children and volunteers. We are proud to have her as a key member of the Sacramento CASA Program.

support to our effort to improve the lives of local children in foster care. We are thrilled that they are planning an even bigger stylist event for 2009.

Stay tuned and we'll keep you posted on an opportunity to participate.

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A Wonderful Array of Events for Sacramento CASA 2008-2009 (cont.)



< Celebrating at the Barton Gallery.

Deloitte, the Barton Gallery and Michelangelo's Italian Art Restaurant hosted the second annual Cocktails and Art for Sacramento CASA on October 2nd. It was a wonderful evening of fabulous food, wine and an art auction. **Dr. A. Aguirre Watts** (author) and **Deborah Blue Earth Petersen** (illustrator) were on hand

our program. Special thanks to Sacramento CASA Board Member **Benush Venugopal** and Sacramento CASA Advisory Council Member **Lauren Barton** for hosting this lovely evening.

Sacramento CASA was also one of the beneficiaries of the **Deloitte Fall Classic** at the Valley-Hi Country Club in Elk Grove. Many thanks to our friends at Deloitte for their support of our program and their commitment to the needs of local children in foster care.

On October 7th, our **46th class of CASA volunteers** completed their training and took their oaths of service. A wonderful event was held at the William Ridgeway Family courthouse where the Honorable Kenneth Peterson, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court swore in 28 new CASA volunteers. This is our largest class to date as you can tell from the photograph of the ceremony below.

Welcome to all our new CASA volunteers: **Rita Abel, Joe Ancel, Krystal Andrews, Richard Burrows, Donovan Croyle, Karen Dace, Greg Darah, AJ Dodd, Corina Dragos, Carolina Estrada, John Faux, Diane Fournier, Sharon Jackman, Jamie Jensen, Kristin Kinner, Rhonda Kopelli, Dennis Mahoney, Amanda McKechnie, Carolyn Monson, Shannon Motley, Yvette Page, Christina Robinson, Katie Sherlock, Kathy Stone-Takai, Elnor Tillson, Linda Tucker, Irene West and Alicia Wilson.**



to sign their book "Lil' Gnome Finds A Home." Written by Dr. Watts, a CASA volunteer, "Lil' Gnome" brings attention to the plight of youth aging out of foster care and supports the Sacramento CASA Program's efforts to work with older youth and prepare them for emancipation and life after foster care. **The Undulations** provided hip and snazzy post-modern swing to round out the evenings festivities which raised over \$15,000 for



On November 12th, Executive Director **Carol Noreen** participated in a panel discussion on the Blue Ribbon Commission's recommendations on foster care and current funding challenges with **Laura Coulthard**, Director of CPS, **Bob Wilson**, Executive Director

of Sacramento Child Advocates, **Marlene Hertoghe**, Dependency Court Referee and **John Wagner**, Director of the California Dept. of Social Services. The discussion was held at the Sutter Club, moderated by **Lynsey Paulo**, TV reporter with **KCRA**, and hosted by

To give a child a CASA is to give them a voice. To give them a voice is to give them hope.

the **Sacramento Children's Home**. As a result of the panel discussion, **Lynsey Paulo** did a follow up story on KCRA about Sacramento CASA and interviewed our CASA **Sonja Strong** and a former CASA youth, **Randy Koen** who successfully emancipated and is now a computer science student at CSUS.

On December 13th, **The Sutter Health Foundation** hosted the Sacramento CASA Children's Holiday party for the second year in a row. The theme was "Holidays Around the World" and the children enjoyed games, Dance Dance Revolution, Wii, card making, photo taking, passport making and trips to tables from Japan, Italy, Sweden, Africa and Nicaragua which shared the special ways each culture celebrates the holidays. Lunch was styled after a Paris Café and gift bags of full of gifts for the children were generously donated by **LexisNexis-Examen, United Healthcare** and the members of **Omega Nu Sorority**. Many thanks to our business supporters **Kellie O'Brien** at **Showmasters** and **Tom** at **Party Concierge** as well as the wonderful volunteers who helped make this special event a reality for our kids: Event chairs **Sheryll Parsons, Tammy Battistessa,** and **Gary Eberly**, as well as CASA volunteers **Lisa Renfro, Carolina Estrada, Julie Hubbs, Cindy Voss, Abdon Manaloto, Brent Boothby** and **Jason Sherlock**. Thanks to our friends at Sutter Health Foundation for working to get the event activities and location ready: **Sue Clay, Karyn Kiger, Kathleen Ahrens, Andrea Rosier, Laura Henry, Holly Elizarraras, Liz Romero, Maria Emami, Peggy O'Connor, Raphael, Kandi Zuccala, Phil Romer, Ed Brooks, Justin Arthur, Paul Donohoe,** and **Jon Manis**. Special thanks to **individual donors** and the **Sacramento CASA**

Board of Directors for sponsoring event costs and the **Sacramento CASA Staff** for their help as well.

The plans for Sacramento CASA's 2009 Holiday Party are already under way and we look forward to sending out notices in the near future!

Well, it goes without saying that **Sacramento CASA's 16th Annual Crab Feed was a fantastic success!!!!** On January 24, 2009 approximately 300 people joined us for "A Night on The Town" an elegant evening with a Broadway theme, fabulous décor, as well as great food and drinks.



Proceeds from the event exceeded \$24,000! Highlights of the evening were the silent auction and raffle, treasure box, dancing and the rockin' tunes of **DJ Dale Chessey** from **All Star Entertainment**. Everyone had a blast, with many regular attendees commenting that this was the best year ever! Photography was generously donated by **Greyhorse Photography** (see more event pictures on our website).



Special thanks to our sponsors: **Townsend Raimundo, Besler & Usher, PantherLines, La Bou, Newman's Own, Perry Creek Winery, AllStar Entertainment, Ferrari Color** and the **Law Offices of Dale S. Wilson**. A huge round applause and thanks go to our wonderful event chair **CASA Kimberly Loya** who spearheaded the theme, décor, auction, raffle and treasure box with her wonderful team: **Carol Haughin, Kristi O'Neill, Jenny Allen, Inger Hard, Elizabeth Kim, JJ Reaties** and **Melissa Regoli**. CASA Board Member **Mary Bellefleur** and past Board Member **Yvette Woolfolk** did a fantastic job with the kitchen and bar. We had so many GREAT volunteers to round out the event team: CASAs **Anna Sandoval, Nola Castle, Pam Petterlee, Carolyn McGill, Greg Geeting, Anjanette Grossman, Sheris Fine, Maria Maher, Batty Zapata, John Faux,** and **Suzie Brakensiek**. Volunteers **Gregg Campbell, Traci** and **Ed Reed, James** and **Mindy King, Malia Arnold, Jerry Wong, Randy Henry, Lorraine Herbon, Colleen McDonough, Claire King, Jeff** and **Elizabeth Henderson**, and the entire **Sacramento CASA Board of Directors**.

Save the Date:

1/23/2010 is the 17th Annual Crab Feed — "Welcome to CASArityville" — A beach-themed event sure to satisfy your cravings for crab and fun!

Sacramento CASA Program, Inc.

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SACRAMENTO CASA UPCOMING CALENDAR OF 2009 EVENTS

MAR 5	5:30-7:30 PM	Lawyers Helping Kids – An Event Honoring Kenneth Peterson, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court	Tsakopoulos Galleria
MAR 10	6:00-9:00 PM	In-Service: Teen Issues	CASA Office
APR 1	6:00-9:00 PM	CASA Spring Training Begins	CASA Office
APR 20		CASA Golf Tournament	Woodcreek Golf Course, Roseville, CA
APR 21		Kids Day at the Capitol	West Steps of State Capitol
APR 25-28		National CASA Conference	Denver, Co
MAY 12		Foster Care Month	North Steps of State Capitol



CASA Volunteers Needed!!!

*Become a CASA Volunteer and a
Powerful Voice in a Child's Life.*

The number of children in dependency continues to increase and with over 4,500 children in foster care in Sacramento County, we need your help. We are looking for caring and committed adults in our community to become advocates for these children. Male, multicultural, bilingual and couples are especially needed.

We have three training classes scheduled in 2009. Please contact our Training Coordinator (916) 875-6606 for information about upcoming orientations and to request a volunteer information packet.

Please see our website for more information: www.sacramentocasa.org