View from the Bench  
20 years of CASA

There are many distinct honors that come with serving on the bench of the Juvenile Court and one of those honors is the dynamic and valued relationship that the Court shares with Sacramento’s CASA volunteers. When a CASA volunteer is assigned to a case, the Court knows not only that it will receive reports that are current, complete and accurate but also that the children involved in those cases are benefited by dedicated and caring advocates and mentors whose focus is to see them through the complex process. The Sacramento Dependency Court applauds the tireless efforts of CASA and looks forward to the expansion of CASA as a trusted community resource serving our local youth. One of CASA’s long-time supporters on the bench is the Honorable Carol Chrisman who writes of her perspective on just what CASA means to our community:

Twenty years ago Sacramento CASA set out on a mission to become the voice of abused and neglected children in Sacramento’s juvenile dependency courts. As CASA celebrates its 20th anniversary, it is fitting to look back at the successes of this mission and to assess its future.
with children and teens who have been rescued from human trafficking and the continued development of services to children in middle school. We have learned so much from our volunteers and community partners during this time. It truly takes a village to raise a child and for our region to meet the needs of children in foster care.

Partnerships make all the difference...

We appreciate the support and collaboration of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc (Eta Gamma Omega Chapter), the Sacramento County Office of Education, Rescue and Restore/SECT, Sacramento Child Advocates, and now Children’s Law Center, the Department of Health and Human Services, The Child Abuse Prevention Center (AmeriCorps), Courage 2BU, local law enforcement, Lilliput Children’s Services, and the Sacramento Superior Court.

In addition to our local partnerships, we must also acknowledge the support and guidance we receive from the National CASA Association, the California CASA Association and the AOC/Judicial Council. These entities provide technical assistance, funding, as well as best practices and guidelines that help us maintain a strong and mission-focused program. Our board of directors is a mighty group of individuals who put in many hours to help maintain the integrity of our program, raise funds and ensure the sustainability of Sacramento CASA for years to come.

Our CASA volunteers show up and make a difference for children every day. We are overwhelmed by your generosity of time and spirit and endeavor to support you in this important work.

None of this work would have been accomplished but for the generosity and vision of many donors, supporters and foundations. The financial support provided has ensured that children have the opportunity to move beyond their pasts to better futures, breaking the cycle of abuse and creating brighter tomorrows.

Here’s looking to twenty more years of partnerships supporting our children!

Carol
CASA began humbly with only one employee and its office space was loaned by the Court. CASA’s mission was looked upon as a hopeful, but not fully tested idea. In the ensuing years, the Sacramento dependency court system has come to depend on CASA as an invaluable resource and the Court has referred to CASA as the light of hope to children in the dependency courts.

Looking back on 20 years of CASA, hope has flourished for those children who are fortunate enough to be assigned a CASA volunteer – children whose lives have been turned upside down through no fault of their own. What does hope look like for these children? There is the joyous face of an 8 year-old girl smiling broadly because her CASA volunteer remembered her birthday. We hear her little brother as he proudly announces that his CASA volunteer helped him learn to ride a bike! We see the beautiful transformation of a 13 year-old girl whose CASA volunteer arranged dental reconstruction to erase her embarrassment to smile. Hope gave birth to success for a 12 year-old boy when his CASA volunteer informed the Court that his previously failing grades were now A’s and B’s. His shy grin and erect posture said it all.

Hope also donned the robe of protection when a CASA volunteer in a severe abuse case sat with children as they recounted in court the pain suffered at their parents’ hands. CASA was still there 12 months later when the case was closing and the formerly angry parent smiled and said the CASA volunteer was welcome in his home anytime and thanked the CASA for being such a help to the family. CASA’s light of hope for a child is not always reflected in the outcome of a case. Rather, it is reflected in the enduring relationship a child establishes with a caring, consistent adult who expects nothing in return and offers a window to a future free from abuse or neglect and full of opportunity.

Today, CASA’s mission is in jeopardy and the light of hope dims for thousands of children. In 20 years, Sacramento CASA has grown strong with 200 volunteers but so many more are needed. Without more volunteers, over 2,000 abused or neglected children are denied the unique voice and special relationship that CASA volunteers are uniquely situated to provide. So please become a CASA volunteer! Enlist your friends and family. Children are waiting and they need your help and support in achieving a future free from their troubled past and full of exciting new opportunities.
Every Special Person  by Dawn Cooks, Case Supervisor/ESP Coordinator

The Sacramento CASA program has taken a leading role in addressing specific issues affecting our foster youth within the juvenile dependency system who have an incarcerated parent. “The Every Special Person” (ESP) Mentor Pilot Project was established in collaboration with the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. to help prevent the cycle of inter-generational incarceration of foster youth.

The ESP Pilot serves African American foster youth in middle school between the ages of 11 to 14 years old that have a parent in prison, jail or on parole. We currently serve 15 foster youth through the program. Our program’s impact is best described by the CASA’s and their youth who participate: One of our dedicated CASAs recently reported the impact the ESP Program has had on her youth...“this is an activity that became an integral part of her life, and she acknowledges that fact... This per se is precious to have something that represents regularity in the chaotic lives of our CASA kids.”

The program has brought together youth with a common thread—each has a parent that is separated due to incarceration. Our assigned advocates have worked tremendously hard with this population to offer support, hope and a friend along their journey in foster care.

On behalf of the CASA Organization; and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. We offer a special thank you to the Sierra Health Foundation who provided a generous grant to develop the ESP Pilot and to help support the work of our organization.

We are very excited about the Every Special Person Pilot and increasing the number of the foster youth we serve. While there is a disparate impact on families of color, CASA would like to expand our reach to continue to serve all foster youth who are directly impacted by a parent in prison or on parole. We believe this is a critical area that will continue to guide our advocacy work in the future.
2011 was a year of expansion in all areas of our advocacy: we have been asked to take on even more challenging cases, cases involving layers of issues that affect the best interest of the minors we serve. To better prepare our advocates in their roles, the CASA Staff brought in speakers and organizations to facilitate discussions and trainings in the area of teen dating, AB 12, educational advocacy, self-care, domestic sex trafficking of minors, working with middle school aged students, and mental health advocacy to name a few.

We have Case Supervisors taking the lead in developing protocol for Missing and Runaway Youth in collaboration with the Department. Other areas of emphasis involve our work with Pregnant and Parenting Teens; working with minors of incarcerated parents; emancipating youth and middle school students. The impact of the volunteers’ time in the lives of these minors is visible in the foster homes, the schools and in the courtroom proceedings. The statement, “CASAs are the consistent person in the lives of these children” resonate true with one very specific example of two CASAs who continue to maintain contact with their sex trafficked youth as the minors receive treatment in an out of state center.

The stories are numerous but witnessed firsthand by the CASA staff and other professionals in the lives of these minors. Thank you for your investment to this local CASA Program and our hope is to continue to give you solid support, more training so that your level of advocacy will continue to impact children in Dependency.

Family Finding and Engagement/Kinnnections 2

By Karlie Bennett, FFE Coordinator

CASA Sacramento is a proud partner in a newer collaborative program called Kinnnections 2. The Kinnnections 2 Program serves children, ages 0-17 years, initially placed in foster care. These youth will be connected with kin through the use of intensive family-finding efforts and family engagement work.

The Kinnnections 2 program utilizes specially trained CASA volunteers to meet with youth and learn as much as possible about the important people that are in the child’s life. The CASA volunteers meet with the child and create a Kinnectedness Map or family tree as part of the child identifying family members and other important people in their lives. The child’s information on the Kinnectedness Map is provided to the county Social Workers, Attorney for the child and Lilliput Workers to be included in the child’s case planning.

Each CASA on the Kinnnections 2 team bring a special set of talents and skills that are matched with the needs of the youth referred to the program. One shining example is a referral that was recently completed by an experienced CASA, Greg Geeting.

Greg met and assisted the youth in creating a long list of his important connections and relationships. The Kinnectedness Map was provided to the partnering agencies the next day and within two hours of receiving the connection information, Lilliput was able to contact two people identified by the youth.

CASA Sacramento received a referral for a male teenage youth with special needs. Since Greg Geeting has valuable experience working with youth with special needs he was seen as a great match on this referral. According to the placement caretaker, Greg was able to work with the referred youth on a level that has not been seen since he was placed into the system.

CASA is a valuable partner in the Kinnnections 2 Program because of the ability to match specially trained volunteers with youth to assist them in completing the Kinnnections Maps and connecting the youth with kin through the use of intensive family-finding and engagement work.
We are so happy and excited to announce the 2012 startup of the Sacramento CASA Teen Advisory Council!

Last year we met for several months and created a small core group of youth leaders who were very instrumental in establishing goals and voicing ideas for the Council. There are really so many exciting adventures such as: community volunteerism, participation in Run to Feed the Hungry, field trips for team building, involvement in CASA trainings, and participation in various community groups.

Last year, one of the members of the Teen Advisory Council volunteered to speak on behalf of youth at a monthly meeting for the CPS Runaway and Missing Persons Collaborative. She voiced her experience as a foster youth runaway, and she gave input when the Collaborative discussed best practices and solutions when working with AWOL youth. We are so very proud of her!

We will be meeting on February 28 from 6 to 8 p.m. and have already sent out invitations to some of our CASA volunteers and their youth. The goal is to have a minimum of seven youth on the Council and meet once a month.

We are so looking forward to working with our teens and creating a healthy and safe environment for them to freely discuss important issues. We found this was very much needed and the youth shared great interest for the group. If you are interested in learning more or helping, please call Lupe Grimaldi at 916.875.7057.

Sacramento CASA is actively participating in AmeriCorps through The Child Abuse Prevention Council of Sacramento (CAPC). At this time, Sacramento CASA has two AmeriCorps members and they are responsible for assessing a youth’s life skills, by utilizing an assessment that is produced by the Casey Foundation.

The life skill areas that are assessed are: communication, housing, money management, work life, social relationships, and self care. The assessed areas are very important life skills that each young adult should possess or be educated in, and we ensure this is done by offering workshops to improve their knowledge in these areas. Therefore, the AmeriCorps members work directly with the youth in order to prepare them for emancipation and help transition them into adulthood successfully.

Through CASA’s partnership with AmeriCorps, CASA has been afforded the opportunity to develop financial literacy skills in youth who are in high school, by enrolling them into the Individual Development Account (IDA) Program.
Orientation sessions are required for all applicants before attending a training session. Application and reference forms will be distributed at the orientation.

**Upcoming CASA orientation sessions:**

- Thursday, April 12, 6:00pm-7:00pm at the CASA office at 301 Bicentennial Circle, Suite 220
- Thursday, May 3, 6:00pm-7:00pm at the CASA office at 301 Bicentennial Circle, Suite 220

There are three CASA training sessions per year involving 30-35 hours each. The next training session is scheduled for June 2012, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

**RSVP if you wish to attend an orientation session to** kathy@sacramentocasa.org or call 916.875.6606.

**New Training Topics & Information**

We’ve added a Mentoring/Communication module to the CASA Volunteer training which provides the knowledge, skills and support needed to develop and maintain an effective relationship with your youth.

**Objectives of the training:**

- Understand the boundaries of the relationship with the youth
- Develop ways to communicate with youth and involved agencies
- Understand the role of a mentor
- Identify the stages of a relationship

**Additional Information to be made available at the Training Sessions**

- California CASA training materials
- In-depth Instruction sheet on court report writing
- Collecting Information And Reporting To The Court
“Bank of America is proud to recognize the wonderful work that Sacramento CASA contributes to the community. CASA’s visionary leadership and their commitment to ensuring the interests of Sacramento’s foster youth are protected has made them a very important cornerstone in our community and an organization that we are very pleased to be able to support”.

— Lori A. Rianda, SVP; Global Corporate Social Responsibility

Sacramento CASA is honored to have been selected as one of two Neighborhood Builders in the Sacramento Region for 2011 by Bank of America. This prestigious award is given out to only 2 nonprofits in each of 45 markets in the US and London. Selected by a panel of community leaders Sacramento CASA received $200K in financial support and Carol Noreen, Executive Director and Lupe Grimaldi, Senior Case Supervisor, will have the opportunity to meet leadership from other NEI winners from around the nation at several trainings over 2012. This incredible support will help us develop the infrastructure and staffing needed to support expanded services to local foster children. We are on our way to recruiting and training more CASA volunteers and serving more children and teens in foster care through focused and supportive advocacy.

Grants Make a Difference...
Sacramento CASA would like to thank the Kelly Foundation, American River Bankshares, Teichert Foundation, SD Deacon, In-N-Out Burger Foundation, Arata Brothers Trust, Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northern CA and Pacific Coast Builders, Morrison Foerster, Women Lawyers of Sacramento, Sac Region Community Foundation-GiveSmart and the Sierra Health Foundation for their support through grants to maintain and expanded services in educational advocacy, working with children of incarcerated parents and preparing older youth for a safe transition from foster care to employment and hiring learning. The work we do could not be done but for the generous support of local foundations. Thank you for all you do for our community.

Carol Noreen receiving a check from American River Bankshares
Lawyers Helping Kids – 2012

On April 25, 2012, Sacramento CASA is pleased to present the Honorable Carol S. Chrisman with the CASA IMPACT Award. Please join us as we honor Referee Chrisman’s 20 Years of outstanding service to the Sacramento Juvenile Court, Sacramento CASA and thousands of local children in foster care.

Wine tasting, hors d’oeuvres and live auction included.

**WHEN:** April 25, 2012
5:30-8:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Tsakopuolos Library Galleria
828 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Tickets:** $85/ each with sponsorships available.

**Contact:** info@sacramentocasa.org

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NATIONAL CASA EXPANSION GRANT - Working With Middle School Age Children

By Brenda Cerda. Case Supervisor

Children in the early teen ages between (11-14 y/o) are not only in a point of transition with schools, whether it is elementary to middle school or middle school to high school.

They are also undergoing physical, cognitive, emotional and social changes. At this age, youth undergo physical growth spurts while at the same time they are trying to self-identify, learn about their roles and gain social acceptance.

While these growth and transitions are normal for children in general, foster children at this age are dealing with their natural growth and transitions alongside dealing with the foster care system and all the many issues that come along with dependency.

With the National CASA Expansion Grant for Sacramento CASA, we believe that at this point in a foster youth’s life they are at particularly high-risk and are more likely to be responsive to intervention.

CASA is focusing on this particular age group as we believe that having a mentor, a friend, an advocate and a permanent positive role model will not only support and guide the youth, but will also help improve their educational outcomes by ensuring ongoing educational advocacy and the identification of needed services.

Thank you to National CASA and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for providing Sacramento CASA the funding to expand our advocacy to this group of children.
We must not, in trying to think about how we can make a big difference, ignore the small daily differences we can make which, over time, add up to big differences that we often cannot foresee.

—Marian Wright Edelman
President, Children’s Defense Fund

Thank you to the 198 CASA volunteers who served 221 children and youth from January 1, 2011 to February 29, 2012. Your dedication and commitment help make a difference in the lives of local children and teens. Every day you lift up children’s voices and lift up their lives.
New CASA Volunteers

Sacramento CASA recruited and trained 63 volunteers in 2011. Congratulations to all our new CASAs, we are glad to have your help as we endeavor to serve more children and teens.

**SPRING 2011**

Pablo Abreu, Kate Belmonte, Jan Boyd, Maria Bramlett, Tom Bramlett, Kelly Castro, Tess Collentine, Patricia Costa, Michael Davis, Karen Easling, Stacie Estrada, Crystal Fitch, Angelica Gardner, Bette Harvey, Sophia Jaggi, Wendy Johnson, Jan Krueger, Linda Marsh, David Mendez, Amy Moore, Caitlin Morgan, Julie Nguyen, Lisa Ohanesian, Chet Pelton, Amy Perri, Mary Pham, Susan Pollock, Connie Reeder, Jose Rosas, Kathy Troglia, Susan Utler, Mary Van Hoomissen, and Yvonne Wilson

**SUMMER 2011**

Linda Case, Barbara Cortland, Terry Farmer, Patricia Forehand, Conner Johnston, Hagar Liebermensch, Marilyn Loveridge, Diane Machen, Harry Machen, Kim Morgan, Marla Sandman, Lynda Strong, Dusica Vujacic-Richer, and Jennifer Whited

**FALL 2011**

Nina Bateyko, Karlie Bennett, Janice Brown, Mary Campa, Brenda Cerda, Lorrie Clark-Lowry, Jennifer Gann, Vernita Murray Gardner, Karen Graham, Amy Hutchinson, Michael M. McAtee, Kathy Paxton, Pam Phelps, Melinda Roles, Jessica Salas, Mihoa Stacy, Tara Stratton, Rebekah Turnbaugh, Rachel Weinreb, Joann D. Williams, Joann Williams, Sherrie M. Wise, and Paige L. Wittenbrook
Sacramento CASA Events

GOLF TOURNAMENT

On May 2, 2011 The Builders Fore Kids hosted their annual Golf Tournament at Granite Bay Golf Club. All together, Roebelen Construction, Woodruff Sawyer & Co and Pacific Coast Companies raised $78,000 for three charities. CASA was honored to receive their generous support.

LIGHT OF HOPE

October 13, 2011 our 5th Annual Light of Hope at the Barton Gallery was a smashing success.

We hosted over 100 guests who enjoyed tasty food and wine by Michelangelo’s Italian Art Restaurant and Moniz Family Vineyards.

A silent auction of children’s artwork, together with sponsorships and ticket sales helped us raise over $25,000 in one night. Thank you to the Benush Family and Lauren Barton for hosting the event.

WALK N ROCK

May 29, 2011 bought us to year two of Walk N Rock at Raley Field with the legendary band KISS. Sacramento CASA and our supporters did an amazing job raising over $43,000 to expand program services to more children in foster care.

OMEGA NU FALL LUNCHEON

In September Sacramento CASA was the beneficiary of the Omega Nu Fall Luncheon which raised $1,500 to support a child with a CASA volunteer for an entire year. We had a great time hearing from author Cindy Sample and doing lots of holiday shopping to benefit CASA.

Children’s performances by Moonlight Sisters, the Cooks Family and traditional Indian dancing by Adithi Benush and Nikita Mohapatra rounded out the night.

CCA ART EXHIBIT

During the month of December, the Center for Contemporary Art (CCA) Sacramento hosted an art exhibit of portraits and masks created by local children in foster care who are served by Sacramento CASA.
KFC CAMPAIGN
In the month of December, KFC and Sacramento CASA formed a partnership to help provide several formerly abused and neglected foster youth with a dedicated CASA volunteer. KFC offered to have 46 of their local stores adopt a child by displaying a story and generating donations by selling coupon cards to their dinning guests. 100% of each contribution raised was donated back to Sacramento CASA.

This partnership raised $11,198 in the month of December and allowed us to serve and additional 11 youth in 2012.

We greatly appreciate KFC’s continued support of our community and their partnership with Sacramento CASA to help our foster youth in need.

CASA KID’S HOLIDAY PARTY
Thank you to Arden Fair Mall and Merit Property Management. With a large population of teen-aged youth in foster care we have a great need during the holidays for gift card donations. In the Fall of 2011 the CASA office started a drive to collect gift card donations to Target and other stores. CASA presented our holiday needs at a United Way speaking engagement for Merit Property Management.

Following that presentation we were contacted by Matthew Jankowski who rallied his connections within the local Real Estate profession and the Broadstone Housing Development in Folsom to collect over 65 gift cards so our teens would have a perfect gift to enjoy the holidays.

Thanks to local craftswomen for sewing custom stockings for every child—they were a hit!

CASA Sacramento was honored to have been selected by Arden Fair Mall to be a recipient of its annual holiday today drive. We received a huge selection of toys and games for kids of all ages and thank Arden Fair Mall and the Sacramento community for such an amazing display of generosity. The kids loved their toys.

Continued on page 14>>
SACRAMENTO CASA’S 19TH ANNUAL CRAB FEED – CASA GRAS

What a great start to Sacramento CASA’s 20th anniversary year!!

This sold out event was packed with over 550 attendees and 100+ volunteers.

People enjoyed bidding on auction items and the cupcake raffle as live music played.

Many people dressed up for Mardi Gras and enjoyed the specialty drinks from the bar.

The live auction was entertaining as was the line dance lessons and games provided by the DJ.

It was an exceptionally fun evening here in Sacramento!!

In this one night, we raised the most we have ever raised with our annual crab feed coming in at over $70K.

THANK YOU so much to all who supported us through your attendance, purchases, donations, sponsorships and volunteering!!

Crab Feed Sponsors:

- SureWest Foundation
- eWomen Network Chapter
- River City Bank
- Sims Metal Management
- Mechanics Bank
- Allied Insurance
- Children’s Receiving Home of Sacramento
Community Support

Linda Bigler
Law Office of Dale S. Wilson
Community Support

Law Offices of Dale S. Wilson
Sacramento Superior Court Justice Foundation
Ueltzen & Company LLP
Thomas Advocacy

Women Lawyers of Sacramento
Our Sincere thanks to our Community Partners for their generous in-kind support.

Michelangelo's Italian Art Restaurant

The Barton Gallery

Grey Horse Photography

Lacey Taylor Design
lacey@laceytaylor.com

Orsia

NewsTalk 1530 KFBK

Southwest

Sacramento Black Chamber of Commerce

Whole Foods Market

alphagraphics

Center for Contemporary Art, Sacramento
**Sacramento CASA Program, Inc.**  
P.O. Box 278383  
Sacramento, CA  
95827-8383  
(916) 875-6460  
(916) 875-6879 fax  
www.sacramentocasa.org

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### SACRAMENTO CASA  
**Upcoming Calendar of 2012 Events**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APRIL 12</td>
<td>CASA Orientation</td>
<td>CASA Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>APRIL 25</td>
<td>Lawyers Helping Kids</td>
<td>Tsakopoulos Galleria</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAY 3</td>
<td>CASA Orientation</td>
<td>CASA Office</td>
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<td>JUNE</td>
<td>CASA Summer Training</td>
<td>CASA Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUNE 6-9</td>
<td>National CASA Conference</td>
<td>Washington DC</td>
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<tr>
<td>JULY</td>
<td>Sacramento CASA 20 Year Celebration &amp; Volunteer Appreciation</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCTOBER</td>
<td>Light of Hope</td>
<td>Barton Gallery</td>
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**CASA Volunteers Needed!!!**  
*Become a CASA Volunteer and a Powerful Voice in a Child’s Life.*  

The number of children in dependency in Sacramento County remains at over 3,500 and more CASAs are needed. 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 2012. 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](http://www.sacramentocasa.org)