

I am for the **child.**

A new initiative to fight for the rights of
neglected and abused children.



YOLO COUNTY CASA
REPORT ON PROGRESS SINCE JANUARY, 2011



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From Our Executive Director

It is my pleasure to share this report on Yolo County CASA's accomplishments in the past year and a half. It has been an honor for me to lead such a vital organization, with highly committed volunteer advocates and a dedicated board of directors. The success we have enjoyed in the recent past comes from a true team effort between board, staff and volunteers, committed to advocating for our county's most vulnerable children.

We have narrowed the focus of our activities to doing what we do best – focusing on each individual child who has been appointed a CASA, and increasing the numbers of our CASAs so that we may serve more children. We have joined the National CASA “I Am For the Child” campaign, dedicated to providing a CASA advocate to every child in foster care who needs one by 2020. The National CASA campaign has become Yolo County's campaign for our own 2020 goal.

Thank you for taking the time to review this information. We look forward to exploring partnerships with the entire Yolo County community in order to continue to serve more children in foster care. Our advocates help the children thrive, grow and become healthy, engaged adults in our community as the CASA is often the one positive influence in their lives.

Tracy L. Fauver, MSSA

❖ HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Served a total of 86 foster children, with 76 advocates from the Yolo County community
- ❖ Trained 29 new CASA advocates who are now equipped with the necessary skills and information to serve as a voice for the child advocating for their safety and well being.
- ❖ Began a partnership with AmeriCorps National Service project providing additional support to CASAs and their children in helping foster youth develop independent living skills
- ❖ Our board of directors raised over \$125,000 through board led outreach activities and personal contributions
- ❖ Secured grant funding from the City of Davis CDBG program, The In-N-Out Burger Foundation and The Teichert Foundation
- ❖ Raised nearly \$20,000 in donations from the community through our annual direct mail appeal
- ❖ Through cost reductions, we have been able to increase our reserve fund to the level of seven months of expenses (in keeping with non-profit best practice standards) and invest in recruiting, screening and training more advocates to serve more children



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OUR MISSION AND VISION

Yolo CASA is central to fulfilling society's most fundamental obligation by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will fight for and protect a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect and to learn and grow in the safe embrace of a loving family.

Board of Directors:

Ginni Davis, President
Mila Spengler, Vice President
Mary Patricia Whelan-Miille, Vice President
Diana Glick, Secretary
Vickie Rafter, Treasurer
Georgia Corbett, Director
Joyce Halle, Director
Susan Lovenburg, Director
Beverley Maul, Director
Peter Pascoe, Director

STAFF:

Tracy L. Fauver, MSSA, Executive Director
Jennifer Merritt, Advocate Supervisor
Karen Boyd, AmeriCorps Member/Advocate Support Specialist

MISSION:

Our mission is to advocate for abused and neglected children in the Juvenile Court System with a CASA volunteer so their voices are heard and their needs are met.

VISION:

The vision of Yolo County CASA is to ensure that every child from our county lives within a safe and loving family.



A CALL TO ACTION

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PARTNERING WITH NATIONAL CASA in the “I am for the child” CAMPAIGN

NATIONAL CASA is an association of nearly 1000 programs across the country. Yolo County CASA has partnered with them and is committed to some vitally necessary goals we are working to achieve by 2020. **One goal being to provide a CASA for every child.**

The why in this goal is simple and real. In our society providing for a child's rights rest primarily with the family. But many families are in crisis and children get neglected or abused and then get lost in the process and the child welfare system. Over the course of any year 700,000 children nationwide go through the child welfare system. Currently in Yolo County there are approximately 250 children in the foster care system.

CASA organizations are the only organizations in the country that provide our most vulnerable children with what they need at the most consequential time in their lives - a volunteer who will fight for and help assure their safe passage through childhood and into adulthood. More than a mentor or a special buddy, this volunteer is a Court Appointed Special Advocate, a “CASA volunteer” who will fight for this child, against all odds, against power, against bureaucracy to find them the best placement. We believe it is our moral obligation to provide this service to give these children the best opportunity for success as adults.

Yolo County CASA has the team, donors and partnerships, with plans to add more individuals and business leaders to help us achieve our mission, our vision and our goals:

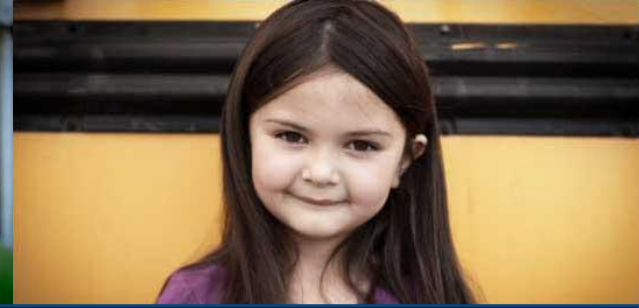
- *We want every child brought to us to thrive in the safe embrace of a loving family.
- *We want our volunteer base to reflect the diversity and cultural makeup of children in our system.
- *We want to add donors who understand the importance of our mission, vision and goals and partner with us financially.
- *By 2020, we want to have a CASA for every referred child.**

We are heeding the call to act. We stand up and pledge “I am for the child.” CASA volunteers stand up and say, “I am for the child” and together we all will fight on behalf of America's children in need.

We invite you to stand with us and take the “I am for the child” pledge.



I am for the child.



THE CHILDREN

NOBODY LONGS FOR A SAFE AND LOVING FAMILY MORE THAN A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE.

Who Are They?

*A six year old girl rescued from an abusive father only to be bounced around to eight foster homes and six different schools over the course of two years.

*Four siblings separated and placed in different locations after their mother is jailed.

*A young boy prescribed 12 different medicines by healthcare professionals who do not have access to his medical records or ability to follow-up on his care.

These are not isolated stories but everyday realities for children in the welfare system. And these children may languish for years without finding a stable home, only to ultimately “age out” without the tools to make it on their own.

Our solution is a CASA. A volunteer that will see to it that the child will thrive in the safety and love of a family throughout their childhood into adulthood.

CASA VOLUNTEERS

What Do CASA Volunteers Do?

Simply, CASA Volunteers listen first. Then they act. Volunteers build a trusting relationship with the child by spending time with them regularly. They may help with homework, go on a picnic, go bike riding or share a mutually liked activity to build trust so that the child knows their CASA volunteer is there for only them.

Volunteers get to know that child by talking to everyone in that child’s life; parents, relatives, foster parents, teachers, medical professionals, attorneys and social workers. Volunteers use gathered information to write reports and attend court to inform judges of what the child needs and what will be the best permanent home for them.

Who Can Be A CASA Volunteer?

Anyone who deeply cares about children can be a CASA. Volunteers are thoroughly trained and well supported by professional staff to help them with their case. Volunteers must pass a background check, complete a 30-hour pre-service training course and agree to stay with a child for eighteen months. The last step is being appointed by a judge as a Court Appointed Special Advocate.



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ONE ADVOCATE'S STORY

CELEBRATION!

The child appointed to me, who has been in foster care, has been adopted after five years in the child welfare system.

Let me start at the beginning. I became an advocate for a five year old little girl who lived with her parents and an older sibling. Child Protective Services had been called a half a dozen times over the course of a year and finally a case was opened. The parents were court ordered to attend parenting and anger management classes if they wanted to keep their children in the home. Unfortunately, courses and the threat of losing their children were not enough to prevent one sibling from being sexually abused. That abuse resulted in the siblings placement in several foster care homes, at times being separated.

Over the span of those five years, I spent time with this little girl going to the park, sharing a meal, visiting the college I attended, exposing her to my love of tennis and sometimes having joint visits with her sibling and that sibling's advocate. I also visited her classroom when her school performance began to decline and her teacher and I developed a reward system to get her back on track. There were times when I spoke with her social worker and therapist to discuss her progress and share with them what I was seeing and hearing from her. At least twice a year I wrote reports and attended court to be a part of the proceedings to discuss the parents' progress, the needs of the child and the best placement for her at the time.

When it became evident that the parents were not able to complete court ordered programs to have their children returned to them, the permanent placement of these children took on paramount importance. Fortunately, we were able to contact other family that showed interest in having these siblings visit them. That first visit led to subsequent extended visits over holidays that resulted in this family wanting to adopt these children. As an advocate I was allowed to keep in touch with this little girl when she and her sibling were on these visits and also enlist the help of advocates in the county where this family resided to ensure that adoption was also the wish of this little girl. On my last visit with this little girl before she went to live with her new family, she shared with me how much she loved being with her aunt and uncle and how much fun it was to have other siblings to play with. She liked her new school and she was making friends. The case was closed. These siblings were with a safe family that heeded the call to stand up and provide these children with the love, nurturing and guidance they so desperately needed.

SUCCESS!



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WHAT IT TAKES TO FIND, SUPPORT AND KEEP OUR ADVOCATES

Recruitment:

- Outreach by speaking to service clubs, social clubs, neighborhood groups, UC Davis, etc.
- Develop online presence and network through website and Facebook
- Hold periodic orientation meetings in the office and at various sites in community
- Maintain waitlist of interested community members and communicate updates periodically

Training:

- Hold 30+ hour comprehensive training for potential advocates, three times per year. Training conducted by CASA staff, usually in evenings or on weekends.
- Comprehensive training provides advocates a clear view of their roles and responsibilities in advocating for the child's best interests
- Engage professionals in the child welfare system to participate in our training (on a volunteer basis) to provide our advocates knowledge from the front lines.

Screening:

- All trainees are Live Scan fingerprinted at the start of training and screened through CA Department of Justice, FBI, and Child Abuse Central Index databases
- Collect references from three persons known to trainee
- Register each trainee with Department of Motor Vehicles Pull Program (providing notification of motor vehicle violations or accidents)
- Collect proof of current motor vehicle insurance
- Conduct pre- and post- training interviews

Support:

- Maintain at least monthly contact with every advocate, through email, phone or face to face
- Staff attends every court hearing involving a foster child with a CASA
- Provide continuing education opportunities
- Provide professional case consultation to every advocate on a regular basis
- Maintain positive professional relationships with collaborative partners (i.e. social workers, attorneys, educators, therapists, psychiatrists, etc.)

Retention:

- Provide high quality, professional guidance and support that empowers advocates and their child
- Ensure that advocates are supported, recognized for their efforts, appreciated and taken care of to prevent burn out
- Provide short term service opportunities for advocates whose case ends, to keep them engaged until they are ready to work with another child
- Utilize collective data over many cases to advocate for systemic changes

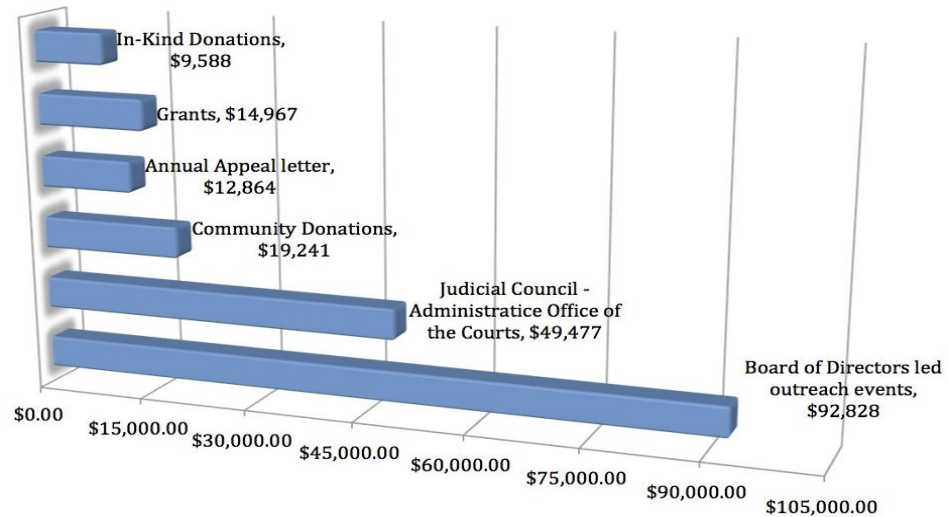


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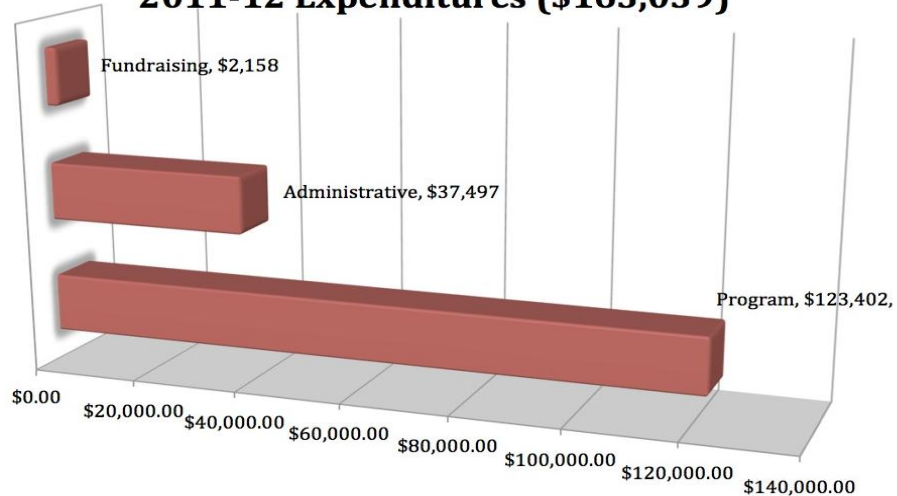
2011-12 Income and Expense report

See annual audit for notes and additional information.

2011-12 Revenues (\$198,965)



2011-12 Expenditures (\$163,039)



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THANK YOU !!

Yolo County CASA thanks every individual, family, business and organization that supported our work in the past 18 months.

Our platinum level supporters (\$5,001 & up):

Mohini Jain	UC Davis' Kappa Alpha Theta
Teichert Foundation	First Northern Bank
Judicial Council of CA	

Our gold level supporters (\$5,000 - \$2,501):

City of Davis	John Lescroart & Lisa Sawyer
Woodland Joint Unified School District	Hallmark Inn
Kent & Susan Calfee	

Our silver level supporters: (\$2,500 - \$1,000):

In-N-Out Burger Foundation	Wayne & JoAnn English
Soroptimist International of Davis	Michelle Hahn
Crossfit West Sacramento	Cesar & Margarida Lamonega
The Lorber Family Foundation Fund	Salad Cosmo Corp.
Masahiro & Isaura Nakada	CA Statewide Certified
Henry & Kathy Thornhill	Development Corporation
John & Pamela Eisele	Aileen Whelan
David & Anne Ewing	P. J. & Lauren Go
Asheesh and Sameera Malik	Donald & Barbara Moulin
Jennifer Anderson	Catholic Healthcare West
Diana & Richard Abinante	

Ways to give:

- ❖ **Become a volunteer**
- ❖ **Become a Friend of CASA**
- ❖ **Sponsor or attend our annual event**
- ❖ **Click on the "donate" button on our webpage**

We express our gratitude and acknowledge our donors' and supporters in various ways, such as through our web page at yolocasa.org, press releases, news letters and our annual report. Additionally, our donors are always invited to attend our special events.

On this page we recognize those whose gifts or grants of \$1,000 or more were received by Yolo County CASA between January 2011 & June 2012. If your name has been omitted or misspelled please call Tracy Fauver at (530) 661-4344.

Please visit our web page at www.yolocasa.org.

