

Berliner Cohen LLP Donation



Berliner Cohen, CASA's former neighbors, have always gone above and beyond for CASA and the Foster Youth we serve. This year, they donated over 50 backpacks filled with school supplies for children of all ages.



We appreciate this gift to give CASA's youth a great start with all the school supplies they will need to jump right into the school year. We miss seeing our Berliner Cohen friends in the neighborhood.

Anonymous Backpack Donation

Prior to the start of school, an anonymous donor dropped off 10 backpacks filled with so many goodies! Inside we found notebooks, scissors, pencils, crayons, binders, and so many more brand new items packed especially for our CASA kiddos!



Bomba Sock Donation

Bombas Away! One of our most generous donors, Ticket to Dream, outdid themselves again. They partnered with Bomba socks and donated a huge amount of Sesame Street socks to our office. Our CASA kiddos will have some stylish and tasty toes.

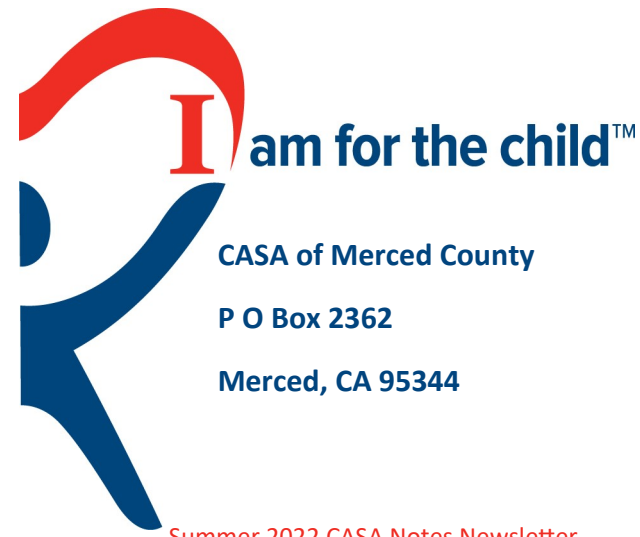


Who doesn't need a little Cookie Monster in their life?

Envy Clothing Donation



For the second year, CASA was given a generous donation of Envy clothing from Andrea Prelip. These brand new clothes have been separated by size and set out for our CASA kiddos to go "shopping". It is a treat for the kids to be able to pick out a new and trendy outfit. We look forward to seeing the joy on our CASA kiddos faces when they find something they want. Thank you Andrea Prelip for your continued support of our County's foster children. You are a hero!



CASA of Merced County

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Merced, CA 95344

Summer 2022 CASA Notes Newsletter

Follow us on Social Media!



@ MERCEDCASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Merced County advocate for the best interests of abused and neglected children within the court system.
VOLUNTEER. DONATE. GET INVOLVED.

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Upcoming CASA of Merced County Events:

- Saturday, 10/29/2022 Red Ribbon Event at Applegate Park
- Friday, 11/11/2022 CASA Office Closed for Veterans Day
- Thursday, 11/24/2022 CASA Office Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
- Friday, 11/25/2022 CASA Office Closed for Holiday



CASA Kiddos go shopping for Backpacks and School Supplies



CASA had a blast with our kiddos while they shopped for backpacks, school supplies, and new clothes! Thanks to all of the generous donations we received, we were able to give our kiddos SO MANY terrific, brand new items! Every Advocate who came was entered into a drawing for a gas card and the kiddos were entered for a chance to win Airpod Pros. We also had a special treat for our Advocates and kiddos when they were finished shopping—KONA ICE! The weather was beautiful and all of the kids left with smiles on their faces. We are grateful to all of the incredible organizations and individuals who donated items and made this special day possible!



Memorials & Honorariums

- In Memory of Bev Orr*
by Juan and Carmen Amparan
- In Memory of Mary Jane Vargas*
by Gloria Marchese
- In Memory of Sharon Mueller*
by Gloria Marchese
- In Memory of Clara Marie Soares*
by Hercules and Jayne Gonsalves
- In Memory of Jan Falasco*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Beverly Orr*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Mary Lee Vierra*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Sally Paternain*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel

- In Memory of Victor Gurostiza*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Dave Nannini*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Annette Marques*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Ibert Pamplona*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Clara Soares*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Mickey Mello*
by Daniel and Cynthia Arambel
- In Memory of Skip Harris*
by Frank and Rhonda Buckner
- In Memory of Craig Copus*
by Friends at CASA

- In Memory of Titika Herman*
by Mary Camper
- In Memory of Jan Chapman*
by Mary Camper
- In Memory of Josephine Friesen-Bong*
by Carole Jones
- In Memory of Helen Gastelo*
by Dennis and Kirsten Areias
- In Memory donations for Paul Thomas Jr*
by Anthony and Diane Neves
by Mark and Kim McAuley
by Phyllis Thomas
by Jason and Stefani Durbin
by Christine Cook
by Don and Karen Smith
by Alberto and Alta Moreno
by Bobby and Antoinette Dal Porto
by The Lancaster Family
by Mike and Leslie Smalley
by Paula Cresci

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CASA Notes

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A message to Staff, Volunteers, Donors, and Advocates By Executive Director, Cathie Lancaster



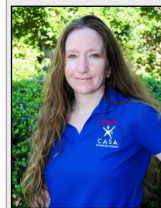
As we slip into fall, football and soccer season are upon us and many families are spending their Saturdays rooting their children on as they run up and down the playing fields. Sadly, this is not true for many of the youth in foster care. They do not usually have the opportunity to play extracurricular sports and if they do, family is often not able to be there to support them. However, if a child has a Court Appointed Special Advocate they have a special person in their corner to be their cheering section, to be there for special events and make sure they are successful in school.

It is hard for me to believe that just over 5 years ago I started my journey with CASA. After being in the For Profit sector for almost 38 years, it was a huge change to enter into the Non Profit world. I found myself counting paper clips, watching the number of paper copies that we printed and standing guard over the thermostat to ensure we stayed within our limited budget. I was one of those people that would see a commercial on TV about donating new PJs or school supplies for foster youth and I wondered why. I would think, "They are living with a family that should be taking care of them why do they need those items?" I did not understand what a foster youth experiences each day and how scary life without parents, siblings and extended family can be. I had not imagined what it would be like to be removed from your home in the middle of the night only to be placed with strangers, not having your favorite toy or pair of sneakers with you, and having your daily routine disrupted. Now I see all of this on a daily basis and it is heart wrenching. All children have a right to a home with loving people to care for them. However, each year, hundreds of children in Merced County are abandoned, abused and neglected by their families. This is where CASA comes in!

CASA opened our doors twelve years ago and since that time, we have trained over 475 volunteers and served over 450 children. There are currently almost 800 children in foster care in Merced County and many of them are waiting for a caring, consistent, loving person – a CASA – to enter into their life. Could this be you?

If you are interested in becoming the voice of a child in foster care, please contact the CASA office at 209-722-2272 and we will be happy to share with you how you can make a difference in the life of a child. Of course, being an Advocate is not for everyone but you can also help by making a donation to assist with recruitment and training.

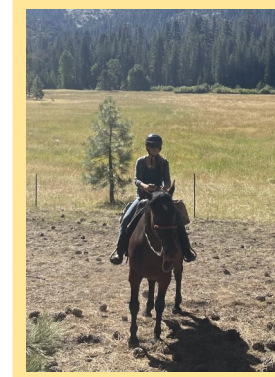
Farewell Charissa Beardsley—Welcome Daisy Trujillo



It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to our Family Connections/Advocate Coordinator, Charissa Beardsley. Charissa was an employee at CASA of Merced County for 5 years and she will be deeply missed. She did amazing work for her Advocates and CASA kiddos and we are forever grateful to have had the privilege to work with her all these years. We are proud of her and wish her the best of luck at her new career! Though we are losing an amazing employee, we have now gained another! The Family Connections/Advocate Coordinator position has been filled by a past intern/CASA volunteer, Daisy Trujillo. Daisy has done excellent work at CASA already and we are so excited to have her with us!



Dondi Lawrence was born and raised in Merced. Growing up, she enjoyed listening to records in her room, decorated in purple and unicorns. She also absolutely loved going camping with her cousins. She is the oldest sibling out of four kids; she has one younger sister and two brothers. As an adult, Dondi works full time as the Coordinator of Merced College's NextUp Program. She loves what she does, because she provides eligible current/former foster youth with resources, referrals, academic counseling, workshops, and a ton more. Dondi is currently working on creating a hiking/outdoor experience club at Merced College. She hopes this club will offer their students, especially our current/former foster youth; an opportunity to experience the amazing outdoors. Dondi's favorite thing to do is to spend time with family, horse riding, camping, and hiking. She has three children, a wonderful Husband, Scott, and two fur babies.



At a young age, Dondi's family experienced the tragic loss of her younger brother to SIDS. This deepened her passion to help children. After visiting a CASA information table one day, Dondi was encouraged to make the leap to join CASA as an advocate; she has been a CASA Volunteer for over 3 years now. Dondi loves teaching others what life has taught her so far. She hopes to help guide her kiddos to learning and doing life in a healthy way.

"With all of the instability the kids in foster care experience, it is wonderful that there are people willing and available to commit to being there for these kids. In working with this population for some years now, I think it is incredibly beneficial to have a mentor to focus on their needs and make it a point to advocate for them. They say that time is the most valuable thing we have. The quality time we give to our CASA kiddos goes a long way. There are no strings attached, we are just there to care." -Dondi

Dondi offers the following advice to new advocates, "being a CASA Volunteer can bring some twists and turns, unexpected bumps in the road for your kiddo. This is where we have the opportunity to show up and do what CASA's do best, support, care, and advocate".

EVERY DAY HERO: DONDI LAWRENCE



CASA at the Ball Game

"Take me out to the ball game. Take me out with the crowd. Buy me some peanuts and cracker jacks. I don't care if I never get back!"

On Saturday, July 9th, the CASA staff and volunteers loaded up into a VIA bus FILLED with delicious snacks, games, and eager foster youth, ready to watch a baseball game! Thanks to Ticket to Dream, CASA was able to take our CASA kiddos out to the Oakland A's stadium to watch them play against the Houston Astros. Our youth were able to enjoy a tailgate pizza party, goodie bags filled with snacks and items needed for the game, signed photos of former A's pitcher, Brian Fuentes, and delicious snacks to fill their bellies! Trips like these are so important for our youth and it is always a truly memorable time for all involved. We are grateful to be able to bring back this amazing field trip opportunity for our kiddos.

