

Social Worker Appreciation

April was Social Worker Appreciation month! Each year CASA of Merced County loves to show gratitude to our counties social workers by hosting a potluck breakfast. The COVID pandemic temporarily stopped that tradition but we still wanted to express our appreciation. This year staff from the CASA office delivered goodie bags filled with treats to Social Workers at the three Human Services Agency locations in Merced County.

The job of a social worker is often a thankless one, but at CASA, we know how hard they work. We truly value all they do and we want them to feel our appreciation; we want to say THANK YOU for all of the hard work, and long hours that they put in to ensure that foster children are safe! Social Workers truly do amazing work for our community.



Mix Bakery Fundraiser



Thank you to everyone who stopped by Mix Bakery to purchase some delicious sweets during the fundraiser with CASA of Merced County! All of your support is truly appreciated and we hope you all had satisfied your sweet tooth!

We also want to give a special thanks to Mix Bakery for hosting another successful fundraiser with us. We are so grateful for your consistent support!

Wonderful Donations from Ticket to Dream



Ticket to Dream Foundation is proud of the work our foster youth put in to take hold of their future. They have generously provided our graduating foster youth with gift cards and hand written congratulation cards so they can know that their community is cheering them on! Thank-you Ticket to Dream for another amazing donation to our organization!



Chapstick & Make up pallets! Ticket to Dream Foundation wanted to give a little something extra to our CASA kiddos this year for graduation. We are thankful for all of the generous items that the Ticket to Dream Foundation continues to give to our kiddos. Happy Graduation Day to all of our graduates!

CASA Appreciation Day

Senator Josh Newman (CA Senate District 29) put forth the senate resolution SCR 106, declaring **May 2, 2022** as CASA Appreciation Day in California. This day recognizes the important role played by Court Appointed Special Advocates who volunteer their time to improve the lives of children in foster care. Approximately 80,000 of California's children are living in foster care because they have been abused, neglected, or abandoned. In 2021, 10,105 CASA volunteers supported 12,947 foster children in California.

This day is to say thank to all of the dedicated CASA volunteers who ensure children and youth in the foster care system have their voices heard every day!



Univision Interview

We need Advocates and are reaching to whoever will listen! So, on May 4th, Cathie Lancaster and Elisa Poncey completed an interview with Univision—The United States' largest provider of Spanish-language content! We hope this interview helps bring more awareness and a new diverse group of individuals to recruit!



CASA of Merced County

P O Box 2362

Merced, CA 95344

Spring 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.

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
MERCED, CA
PERMIT NO. 1493

Return Service Requested

Donate Today!

Scan the QR code using your smart phones camera



Upcoming CASA of Merced County Events:

Monday, 7/4/2022	CASA Office Closed for 4th of July
Monday, 7/11/2022	Training Class 44 Begins
Tuesday, 8/1/2022	Training Class 45 Begins
Tuesday, 8/2/2022	Merced National Night Out
Tuesday, 8/9/2022	Atwater National Night Out
Monday, 9/5/2022	CASA Office Closed for Labor Day
Monday, 9/26/2022	Golf Fore CASA Tournament
Friday, 9/23/2022	CASA Office Closed for Native American Day

Memorials & Honorariums

In Memory of Joyce Giampietro
by Marlene Salha

In Honor of Aaron & Eric Barcellos, A-Bar Ag Enterprises
by Hercules & Jayne Gonsalves

In Honor of the Children
by Don & Claire Hughes

In Honor of Mix Bakery
by Bette Woolstenhulme



If you would like to make a donation in Honor or Memory of a special someone who has impacted your life, please use the enclosed donation envelope to submit your gift.

Your "In Memory of" or "In Honor of" will be included in our next quarterly newsletter. What better way to pay tribute to remarkable individuals than to make a charitable donation in their name?

Join the current group of **Voices4CASA** members!



Our **VOICES4CASA** are asked to support the organization with an annual donation. We welcome all support.

You can help make a difference!

CASA relies on individual and corporate donors and financial partners to make its work possible. Financial support is needed to recruit, train and supervise advocates.

Board of Directors

President
Emily Haden

Vice President
Dena Traina

Treasurer
James Broadley

Secretary
Jane Lawrence

Past President
Henry Strength

Members
Mindy Broadley
John Carlisle
Carol Etcheverry
Stephen Jones
Angela Miller
Holley Moyes
Diane Neves
Karla Seijas
Steve Tietjen
Dena Traina
Bette Woolstenhulme
Carol Hamm

Ex officio Members
Judge Donald Proietti
Judge Brian McCabe
Judge John Kiriara
Jami Johnson, Human
Services Agency

Marge Sadler, Peer Coordinator
Albert Barreno, Advocate

Executive Director
Cathie Lancaster

Honorary Board Members
Congressman Jim Costa
Senator Cathleen Galgiani
Assemblyman Adam Gray
Anna Balatti Brooks
Nancy Young Bergman

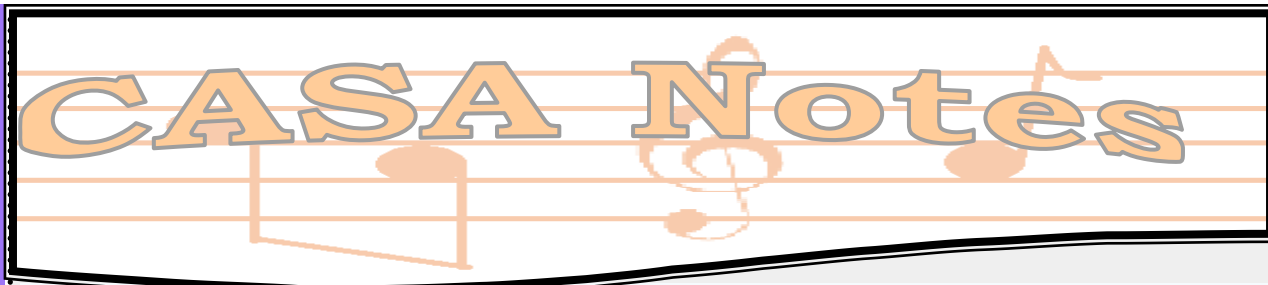
Contact:

Phone: (209) 722-2272
Fax: (209) 722-2270

2824 Park Avenue, Suite A
Merced, CA 95348

PO Box 2362
Merced, CA 95344

MercedCASA@gmail.com



Volume 10, Issue 2 Spring 2022

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



Summer is upon us and we have already celebrated the longest day of the year. For many of us summer means a little extra sunlight and time to celebrate Dads and Grads, barbeques, sitting at the pool under an umbrella with a cool drink in hand, family vacations, making happy and lasting memories. However, for our foster youth, summer can have a different meaning and they do not always experience happy summer memories.

After working 5 years with CASA of Merced County, many long days come to mind, but when I think of what it must be like for our foster kids and how long some days must feel to them, my heartbreaks. It is also my motivation to keep driving toward growth, to ensure that no child faces their longest day alone. It also makes us think of what a long day *really* looks like.

Take a moment and think about your childhood. Think about the people you can call or text when you want to chat or have something important to share. Do you have neighbors or friends you consider family, people you see on a regular basis? Think about teachers, mentors, counselors or coaches that have made an impact in your life. Who taught you how to drive? I think we can agree, all of these are important people in our life. People who make your life easier, happy, fulfilling.

Now think about this, all of these people are important to you or have been at some time in your life. What if all of those people were suddenly ripped from your life? How would you feel knowing someone else is making the decisions as to who can be in your life, who you can speak to or visit? The people that should love and care for you are no longer able to do so. You now live in a home with strangers. You are no longer able to celebrate your family traditions. The food, smells and customs in your new home are strange to you. Some of our children are taken from their home in the middle of the night with only the clothes on their backs. The things that bring them comfort like their favorite toy or pair of jeans are left behind. These children feel very alone and their days are very long. How do you think children feel not knowing where everyone went? Sometimes they are not able to contact or know where their siblings are.

The children start to blame themselves for what happened and for being where they are. When they have a special event at their school and no one can come, they are sad. There is no one to wish them a happy birthday, celebrate small accomplishments, or console them when they have a bad day. This is where an Advocate steps in. They cannot replace family but they are the constant adult in the child's life.

CASA needs the support of people like you. People who believe that children who have experienced abuse or neglect deserve the best chance in life. Please consider becoming an advocate or making a donation to help train advocates to serve more abused, abandoned and neglected foster youth.

Merced County Fair

This year CASA had the pleasure of securing an Adult Beverage Booth at the Merced County Fair! This was a first for our organization, but it was truly so much fun—the best part? We raised money for children in the foster care system. CASA was also invited to assist in judging the 4H Pee-Wee Showmanship event and that was seriously adorable. We sure kicked off the summer with a huge bang and we cannot wait to see what the rest of the year holds. Thank you to everyone who stopped by the CASA booth this year and we look forward to seeing you all there again in 2023!



Adam is the oldest of four children. His parents taught him, his sisters, and his brother the importance of working hard and appreciating the little things in life. They did not grow up with fancy things or gadgets; instead, they enjoyed camping with family and visiting grandparents in Mexico during Easter breaks. When Adam is not working as an Advocate, he is the "on call" favorite Uncle. He is blessed with 10 beautiful nephews & nieces from his siblings, and 8 beautiful nephews & nieces from his husbands side of the family. Then add the dozen or so extra kids who he has taken under his wing as their cool Uncle, Adam is a happy man. He loves traveling as often as he can, he attends concerts and theaters, or sometimes he will do absolutely nothing at home. Adam has an amazing husband who has always supported his volunteer work, along with his busy life. They have been together 19 years, married for 5 and they have 3 dogs in the home.

Adam has always volunteered in some form or another from a young age, helping anyone who needed help especially when it comes to kids and families. Over the years, he was told he should check into CASA and after his research, he joined the organization! During his time so far as a CASA volunteer, Adams favorite moments have been seeing his kiddos face of excitement any time they would get together. They went to the movies, the park, played video games, and really, did anything they felt like doing. He enjoyed watching him chase lizards and run free. They would spend hours together! They built such a wonderful bond, that even though he is no longer his kiddos advocate, his kiddo still calls him from time to time and they are even planning to get together again this summer!

It takes a strong adult to work with a hurt foster child. Adam felt that his availability and his openness is what really helped him connect so well with his CASA kiddo. He loves unconditionally, he listens, and he is a very fun active adult. He also feels that many children, at this point, are just looking for a stable adult in their life. Someone they can trust; someone who makes them feel safe and protected. Adam said, "Something that has always worked for me is to not overwhelm the child with attention. Let them watch you interact with the adults in the room. Remember to smile and acknowledge them of course, but remembering you're another new face in their lives and they don't know if they can trust you yet. Allowing them to observe you. Being patient is key".



EVERY DAY HERO: ADAM CASTRO



2022

GOLF FORE CASA

- Tournament -

\$600 PER TEAM

Benefiting CASA of Merced County

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2022
MERCED GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB
Registration: 8 am | Shotgun Start: 9 am

CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST & CATERED LUNCH PROVIDED

Contact CASA of Merced County: (209) 722-2272
Text questions to Cathie: (209) 631-6313 or Carol: (209) 769-7445

Events Around Town



Things are finally looking normal again! CASA of Merced County has been invited to so many wonderful events around town and we have met so many delightful new people. We also kicked off the summer with our local Kona Ice truck to fundraise for our foster youth. If your business or neighbors are doing any type of tabling event or want to assist in a fundraiser with CASA of Merced County, please reach out to our office at 209-722-2272. These tabling events are crucial to our non-profit, because in order for us to successfully change the lives of foster children in our community, we need to reach out to as many potential volunteers/donors as possible. Thank you all for all that you do and your continued support to our mission.