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# CASA Notes

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A Member of the National CASA Association

## A few words to our Advocates from Henry Strength—CASA Board President



*“With your Support, Foster Youth can grow up to Change the World.”*

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of Merced County exists for three reasons: Youth in Need, Volunteer Advocates and Supporters. Right now, some 756 youth are in foster care in Merced County. This figure, unfortunately, keeps growing, as does the annual number of new entrants into the system. This past year, 311 new children and youth in Merced County's foster youth system.

Though the number of our youth in need continues to grow, this CASA has been blessed by those of you caring leaders who have volunteered to serve as Advocates. Nurturing role models who help foster youth conquer what comes next, who help to clear the path, and who help to instill in our young clients a sense of possibility and the prospects of a brighter future.

By design, the majority of the funding that underwrites the work of CASA staff, Advocates, and volunteers comes from you and other incredible supporters. From sponsoring events, to purchasing seats and tables at our fundraisers, and from providing auction items to opening doors and making connections, you and our Advocates serve as the lifeblood of this organization. Your involvement gives our foster youth the opportunity to achieve, to grow into adults with meaningful lives, to be contributors, and to one day make a difference.

Do you know what the following people have in common? Eleanor Roosevelt, Nelson Mandela, Babe Ruth, Art Linkletter, Ray Charles, Cher, Sylvester Stallone, Steve Jobs and Jim Thorpe. They were all foster youth. They went through the system and made indelible impacts to the economy, culture and fabric of our world.

I once told a class of CASA Volunteers, Gandhi once said “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”. This is what a CASA Volunteer does and that is why you can make a difference to that child you are assigned. With your help and support, perhaps the next Louis Armstrong (a foster youth) or a self-empowerment guru Dr. Wayne Dyer (a foster youth) will emerge from among the nearly 800 foster youth in the diverse neighborhoods that \_\_\_ our country.

In deep appreciation, Henry Strength

*Call our office and see how you can help change the world of a foster youth.*

209-722-2272 (CASA)

## Spotlight on an Advocate: Tom Legg



Tom grew up in Atwater, where he attended Elementary, Jr High and High School. As a kid, he was very active in youth sports like Baseball, Football and Basketball. After graduating from High School, Tom attended Merced Junior College while also working in the City Youth Programs for the Atwater Recreational department. Tom is currently the President of the Atwater-Winton Lions Club, chairing events such as the High School Speech Contest and High School Baseball Tournament. He is active in his church as a Liturgist and a member of the Estate Team. He also enjoys days as a Substitute Teacher.

Tom is happily married to Debra Legg, who is also a CASA Volunteer. They have three children and four grandchildren in their family. The grandchildren range in ages from seven months to seven years old. They all reside out of state, so their time is limited, but still very special. Tom first heard about CASA through his daughter, she became involved while attending college in Colorado. He said, “Her experiences were heart-warming and very encouraging”. Upon his retirement, him and his daughter discussed activities he could become involved in and she recommended he look into the CASA program through Merced County.

Throughout the time Tom has been a CASA Volunteer, he has enjoyed many experiences with his Kiddo. His most favorite to day was the snow trip to Leland Snow Play in January 2019. Watching his CASA Kiddo cut loose in the snow, full of smiles, reminded him of why being an Advocate is so important. Tom understands that our kiddos do not get the normal family outing a nuclear family would and as a result, they miss special trips to the snow, visiting museums, attending ball games and all other fun activities. The one thing he stresses frequently is “I am not going anywhere, no matter what happens”. Tom feels that reassurance is a seed well planted.

Tom wants every potential CASA Volunteer to know “You make a difference! It is not all puffy clouds, but if you go home knowing you left your Kiddo with a hug, smile and a good memory, then you had an outstanding day”. You may not feel as though you are making a difference, but know you do make an impact with each minute, hour or day you spend with him or her. In addition, always remember why you made the decision to volunteer.

## We are so THANKFUL for our CASA Volunteers and all of the wonderful things you do daily for our Foster Youth!

Abong, Sabrina	Cuevas, Ana	Hewitt, Gwendolyn	McAndrew, Kimberlie	Rivero, Stephanie
Acevedo, Kaitlen	Davis, Jerry Lou	Hoffar, Claudia	McAuley, Kim	Robledo, Valerie
Acosta, Jewel	Downing, Sonja	Huff, Violet	McBride, Michelle	Rodriguez, Lizette
Aguilar, Marina	Drolshagen, Yuki	Hurtado, Nereida	McKellar, Angela	Romero, Rita
Alshami, Sonia	Dyas, Lynda	Irvin, Sharon	Meraz, Caroline	Sadler, Marge
Alvarado, Colby	Edmiston, Nancy	Jacobs, Tina	Minor, Kristine	Salzberg Kiriara, Judith
Alvarez, Karolyn	Engel, Debbie	Jimenez, Juanita	Mohn, Catherine	Samuelson, Deborah
Arambel, Cynthia	Estrada, Monica	Johnston, Debbi	Morgan, Kay	Sanchez, Lisa
Aju Diaz, Daisy	Fishback, Bill	Jones, Luwanda	Murillo, Karina	Scoto, Kathy
Barnes, Donna	Fleming, Henrietta	Jones, Tim	Murphy, Linda	Sevilla, Sandie
Barreno, Albert	Foley, Christie	Jones, Veda	Nguyen, Namkha	Sharma, Krishneel
Bartholomew, Candace	Fuentes, Diane	Kalmin, Claudia	Nord, Rita	Shay, Pat
Baylard-Sampson, Maggie	Fuentes, Tony	Kolb, Tim	Ochoa Sierra, Elizabeth	Silveira-Miller, Selena
Benavides, Alma	Garcia, Paola	Kuster, Catherine	Orozco, Nelly	Smaby, Nadine
Benavides, David	Garcia-Zaragoza, Paola	Latronica, Jason	Ortiz, Angelina	Smelcer, Erin
Bier, Debbie	Garretson-Merino, Cindy	Lawrence, Dondi	Osborn, Lynda	Smith, Dan
Boykin, Gwendolyn	Gilliam-Bowers, Crystal	Legg, Debra	Otani, Ashley	Smith, Karen
Bradley, Jan	Gills, Jessica	Legg, Tomas	Parker, Lynn Kahn	Souza, Stephanie
Breth, Debbie	Gittens, Elyse	Livingston, Tanya	Parr, Kaitlyn	Stavrianoudakis, Stacey
Bui, Stephanie	Gonzalez, Celeste	Lorenzi, Jan	Paulo, Jane	Steed, Casey
Callister, Christine	Gonzalez, Yalitza	Lowrance, Diana	Paz, Ivette	Sullivan, Martin
Cano, Kimberly	Gunter, Terry	Lucas, Kenedy	Piro, Robyn	Taiby, Zohra
Carlson, Mizhael	Hafer, Michelle	Madrigal, Elizabeth	Pouncey, Elisa	Thomas, Kristen
Carlson, Rita	Hague, Wayne	Makoui, Anali	Purslow, Barbara	Torres-Pinon, Daisy
Castro, Adam	Halpin, Joan	Maldonado, Julissa	Quall, Sheila	Trujillo, Daisy
Chappell, Susan	Hamm, Carol	Marciochi, Helena	Quien, Alane	Van LobenSels, Patty
Cheeks, Corey	Hansford, Carissa	Marks, Brooke	Ramirez, Christopher	Villa, Lesly
Cheffer, Karen	Harris, Skip	Martinez, Emily	Ramirez Sr, Bosco	White, Mary Elizabeth
Coble, Andrea	Harville, Luzie	Martinez, Eva	Ramsey, Janet	Wood, Jan
Colbert, Katelynn	Hazlett, Juene	Mattoon, Lyssabeth	Reyna-Canales, Jill	Workman, Deborah
Cortez, Rafael	Herrera, Shar	Matzenbacher, John	Reynolds, Carolyn	Young Bergman, Nancy
Craig, Elaine	Herrera, Teanna	Maxey, Steven	Reynoso, Vilma	Zalinski, Jon



Are you interested in becoming a CASA Volunteer and changing the life of a child in foster care?

Our next Training class begins on April 13, 2020!

Learn more by attending an Information Session. Sign up TODAY on our website or contact our Office!

[www.mercedcasa.org/volunteer](http://www.mercedcasa.org/volunteer)  
209-722-CASA (2272)

### Congratulations Class 33!

Twelve new Advocates were sworn in on \_\_\_\_\_. Pictured left to right:

These wonderful community citizens will soon begin advocating for foster youth in Merced County. On March 19, 2020, Graduates of CASA's thirty-third training class were sworn in as Court Appointed Special Advocates. Our graduates completed 30 hours of training, 5 hours of courtroom observation, multiple background checks, multiple reference checks and will make a minimum commitment of 18 months to the child they will serve.



CASA of Merced County  
P O Box 2362  
Merced, CA 95344

Winter 2020 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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In support of Child Abuse Awareness month, CASA is selling t-shirts again in order to raise awareness!  
To purchase a t-shirt, please contact the CASA office at 209-722-2272, or email [clancaster@mercedcasa.org](mailto:clancaster@mercedcasa.org)  
You can also pay online at <https://mercedcasa.org/donate/>

**\$25**

**PURCHASE YOUR T-SHIRT TODAY!**

### Merced College NextUp Center Grand Opening



Cutting the ribbon was honorable Judge Proietti

On Wednesday, 2/6/2020, CASA attended the grand opening of the Merced College NextUp Center to support current and former foster youth under the age of 26. Their primary goal is to encourage the enrollment, retention and transfer of students challenged by social, economic and educational disadvantages. They hope to facilitate the successful completion of their goals and objectives in college. The NextUp Center serves over 60 current/former foster youth by providing academic & life skills workshops, support networks, grants, on-campus meal cards, gas cards/bus passes, Merced College Semester parking passes, book purchasing assistance and educational supplies. If you get the chance, you should check out the wonderful program Merced College has created! This is a huge step in supporting our children that are in the foster care system!



### Upcoming CASA of Merced County Events:

- Tuesday, 3-25-2020 CASA Office Closed for Cesar Chavez Day
- Monday, 4-13-2020 Training Class 34 begins
- Monday, 5-25-2020 CASA Office Closed for Memorial Day
- Monday, 6-22-2020 Training Class 35 begins

After receiving advice from various governmental agencies regarding large gatherings the CASA Board of Directors has decided to postpone **CASA Casino Night**.

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.

**Join our group!**



Our **VOICES4CASA** are asked to support the organization with an annual donation. We welcome all support. **You can help make a difference!**

### Memorials & Honorariums

- In Honor of Imam Ali**  
Zohra Taiby
- In Memory of Anne Hurd**  
Mike & Jan Wood
- In Honor of Bette Woolstenhulme**  
Richard & Karen Albright
- In Memory of Anne Hurd**  
Glenn Arundell & Barbara Beeman
- In Memory of Lois Ingraham (lived to be 101 years old)**  
Robin & Eileen Ingraham
- In Honor of Liz Salles**  
Mary K Camper
- In Memory of Anne Hurd**  
Dominic & Sally Carlucci
- In Honor of Dorothy Menezes Birthday**  
Diane & Anthony Neves
- In Memory of Ralph Temple**  
Bette Woolstenhulme
- In Honor of Dorothy Menezes Birthday**  
Mike & Katherine Crinklaw
- In Honor of Dorothy Menezes**  
Patrick & Irene Menezes
- In Memory of Anne Hurd**  
Paul Pafford Farms
- In Memory of Anne Hurd**  
Christopher & Joann White
- In Memory of Ann Hurd**  
Dorothy Menezes
- In Memory of Elyse Etcheverry**  
Joey & Angie Machado
- In Memory of Ann Hurd**  
Anthony & Diane Neves
- In Memory of Elyse Etcheverry**  
Robert McDonald & Helen, Nate and Lisa Marciochi
- In Memory of Anne Hurd**  
Ellen Legg



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.