

CASA of Merced County Casino Night Fundraiser

On September 14, 2019 — CASA of Merced County hosted the popular Casino Night for the Fall Fundraiser in Los Banos. We would like to thank everyone who attended and donated to this glorious event! The evening was a huge success! Attendees enjoyed playing Black Jack, Cornhole, Money Tree, Roulette and Craps. Our guests also enjoyed shopping in the Market Place and out-bidding each other during our newest auction game - The Real Steal. The amazing food and dessert selections were provided by: The Kitchen at the Mission, Espana's Southwest Bar & Grill, M&M Italian Restaurant, Quail Wine Bistro and Baskin Robbins.

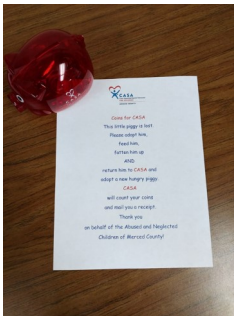
All generated funds will help to recruit, train and supervise new CASA Volunteers. Thank you for your partnership in supporting the foster children in Merced County. We are grateful for supporters like you!



CASA Piggy Bank

Would you like to feed a hungry piggy and help CASA of Merced County at the same time? We all have loose change in our pockets or purse that weigh us down and we do not spend. Come on down to the CASA Office, pick up a hungry piggy, fill it with your spare change and return it to the CASA office. We will give you a new piggy bank, count the coins and mail you a donation receipt. What an easy way to help a foster youth!

Albert Barreno (Advocate of the Year) is pictured with his Advocate Coordinator David Benavides. Albert filled his hungry piggy (with only quarters) and was the first to exchange a full piggy for a hungry piggy. How many quarters will a piggy bank hold? - 447 which equals \$111.25



Did You Know?

- September was a busy month for detentions. Children were back in school, settled in and were more comfortable sharing about their lives.
- 531 dependents in care – of those 266 are male and 265 are female
- 436 are in a resource home
- 73% are placed in county
- 115 youth have a CASA; 33 are Non-Minor Dependents

Identified Ethnicity:

- 57% Caucasian
- 23% Hispanic
- 14% African American
- 6% other



Spotlight on an Advocate: Michelle McBride



Michelle grew up in Madera, CA but was born in the Philippines. When she was about a year old, she was adopted and brought to the United States. As a young girl she was very active in 4H and FFA where she raised and showed beef cattle. Michelle went to Merced Junior College and then on to Fresno State where she majored in Ag Business. Prior to becoming a CASA Volunteer, she worked in the equine feed sales, where she managed three Western States. Michelle's hobbies include: showing horses - she has been competing for the last 3 years, being a director for the San Joaquin Paint horse club, and water skiing.

Michelle has two grown children who are both Fresno State graduates like herself. She currently lives in Los Banos with her husband and they have a successful business together. They have two grandchildren along with an Australian Shepherd named Chance.

Becoming a CASA Volunteer had been on Michelle's mind for many years. She had always wondered in what ways she could help out in her community. Years prior she had attended an Information Session for CASA, but was not able to commit at that time. Things changed and she was ready to help the children in the foster care system. So, she completed her application and training and became an Advocate in June of 2018.

Michelle had two memorable moments with her CASA kiddos. The first was the initial meeting with the children, getting to know who they are and simply bonding. Next was when she took her CASA kiddo to the CASA Christmas Party. At the party, it was the first time her kiddo had ever seen Santa. The look on her kiddo's face after meeting Santa and receiving the gifts was truly a magical moment.

Michelle believes that children need an adult who will be in their lives constantly; someone the child can count on to always be there for them. She believes that if you are going to do something, then you need to make sure you follow through with it. She states "Let's face it, life gets in the way at times, but all children need is an adult to help them navigate through this messy world".

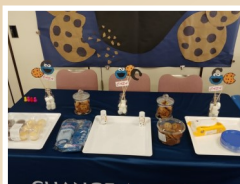
Michelle's advice to new advocates is "take a deep breath, take notes, listen to the child and most important - be present for them. Enjoy the time, you are making a difference in their life and in our community".

Thank you Michelle for all that you do for CASA of Merced County. You are truly appreciated!

Human Services Annual Adoptions Event

"Adoption is not about finding children for families, it's about finding families for children." - Joyce Maguire Pavao

Merced County Human Services Agency hosted their annual Adoptions Event on November 8th, 2019. They gathered local agencies such as: CASA of Merced County, Family Builders, Promesa, Aspiranet, Approachable, Golden State Family Services, Creative Alternatives and Rainbow Family to celebrate the Foster Care children who had been adopted in the last year. The theme was Sesame Street and every local agency decorated to the character of their choice. It was a fun and exciting day for the children and their new families to come together and celebrate.



CASA of Merced County Outreach Events

CASA Staff and Volunteers set up a table at the San Joaquin Health Fair on October 10th, the Red Ribbon Celebration on October 26th and the John Muir - Family Fun Night on November 7th. They spent their time recruiting more individuals who want to make a difference in the life of Foster Children. All of the following outreach events were a great success for CASA of Merced County.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer contact Stefani at 209-722-2272.