

Congratulations CASA Class 31!

Five new advocates were sworn in on Tuesday, October 1, 2019.
Pictured left to right: Debbie Breth, Terry Gunter, Teanna Herrera, Judge Proietti, Julissa Maldonado & Stefani Durbin.



Congratulations CASA Class 32!

Nine new advocates were sworn in on Tuesday, December 3, 2019.
Pictured left to right: Liz White, Valerie Robledo, Daisy Trujillo-Bucio, Lynn Parker, Brooke Marks, Judge Proietti, Deborah Engel, Elaine Craig, Kaitlen Acevedo, & Catherine Mohn.



We thank our amazing CASA Volunteers for the remarkable service you provide to foster youth!

Abong, Sabrina
Abrams, Cherylyn
Acevedo, Kaitlen
Acosta, Jewel
Aguilar, Marina
Alshami, Sonia
Alvarado, Colby
Alvarez, Karolyn
Arambel, Cynthia
Barnes, Donna
Barreno, Albert
Bartholomew, Candace
Baylard-Sampson, Maggie
Benavides, Alma
Benavides, David
Bier, Debbie
Boykin, Gwendolyn
Bradley, Jan
Breth, Debbie
Bui, Stephanie
Callister, Christine
Cano, Kimberly
Carlson, Rita
Castro, Adam
Chappell, Susan
Cheeks, Corey
Cheffer, Karen
Coble, Andrea
Colbert, Katelynn
Cortez, Rafael

Craig, Elaine
Cuevas, Ana
Davis, Jerry Lou
Downing, Sonja
Drolshagen, Yuki
Dyas, Lynda
Edmiston, Nancy
Engel, Debbie
Estrada, Monica
Fishback, Bill
Fleming, Henrietta
Foley, Christie
Fuentes, Diane
Fuentes, Tony
Garcia, Paola
Garcia-Zaragoza, Paola
Garretson-Merino, Cindy
Gilliam-Bowers, Crystal
Gills, Jessica
Gittens, Elyse
Gonzalez, Yalitz
Gunter, Terry
Hafer, Michelle
Hague, Wayne
Halpin, Joan
Hamm, Carol
Hansford, Carissa
Harris, Skip
Harville, Luzie
Hazlett, Juene

Herrera, Shar
Herrera, Teanna
Hewitt, Gwendolyn
Hoffar, Claudia
Huff, Violet
Hurtado, Nereida
Irvin, Sharon
Jacobs, Tina
Jimenez, Juanita
Johnston, Debbi
Jones, Luwanda
Jones, Tim
Jones, Veda
Kalmin, Claudia
Kolb, Tim
Latronica, Jason
Lawrence, Dondi
Legg, Debra
Legg, Tomas
Livingston, Tanya
Lorenzi, Jan
Lowrance, Diana
Madrigal, Elizabeth
Makoui, Anali
Maldonado, Julissa
Marciochi, Helena
Marks, Brooke
Martinez, Emily
Martinez, Eva
Mattoon, Lyssabeth

Matzenbacher, John
Maxey, Steven
McAndrew, Kimberlie
McAuley, Kim
McBride, Michelle
McKellar, Angela
Meraz, Caroline
Minor, Kristine
Mohn, Catherine
Morgan, Kay
Murillo, Karina
Murphy, Linda
Nguyen, Namkha
Nord, Rita
Ochoa Sierra, Elizabeth
Orozco, Nelly
Osborn, Lynda
Otani, Ashley
Parker, Lynn Kahn
Paulo, Jane
Piro, Robyn
Pouncey, Elisa
Purslow, Barbara
Quall, Sheila
Quien, Alane
Ramirez, Christopher
Ramsey, Janet
Reyna-Canales, Jill
Reynolds, Carolyn
Reynoso, Vilma

Rivero, Stephanie
Robledo, Valerie
Rodriguez, Lizette
Romero, Rita
Sadler, Marge
Salzberg Kirihara, Judith
Samuelson, Deborah
Sanchez, Lisa
Scoto, Kathy
Sevilla, Sandie
Sharma, Krishneel
Shay, Pat
Silveira-Miller, Selena
Smaby, Nadine
Smelcer, Erin
Smith, Dan
Smith, Karen
Souza, Stephanie
Stavrianoudakis, Stacey
Steed, Casey
Sullivan, Martin
Torres-Pinon, Daisy
Trujillo, Daisy
Van LobenSels, Patty
Villa, Lesly
White, Mary Elizabeth
Wood, Jan
Workman, Deborah
Zalinski, Jon

Will you join our next training session?

CASA Volunteers are ordinary citizens like you! Our Advocates possess a desire to make a difference in a child's life. It is not necessary to have experience in child welfare to become a CASA Volunteer. Our extensive CASA Training will prepare you for your role as a Court Appointed Special Advocate.

Sign-up on our website or contact our office!

www.mercedcasa.org/volunteer
209-722-CASA (2272)



CASA of Merced County

P O Box 2362

Merced, CA 95344

Fall 2019 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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Carolyn Jones Memorial Library

Tuesday, October 15 - Saturday, October 19

To commemorate the opening of the Carolyn Jones Memorial Library the CASA Office hosted activities for our Volunteers and youth. The CASA Office held a pumpkin decoration contest. We had CASA kiddos come in to create ornaments for our CASA Christmas Tree that is on display at the Courthouse Museum during the Christmas holidays. On Wednesday, October 16, 2019, CASA of Merced County hosted the dedication Ceremony for the Carolyn Jones Memorial Library. Community members joined the Board of Directors and Staff for the celebration.

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CASA Notes

Volume 7, Issue 4 Fall 2019

A Member of the National CASA Association

A Message from our Executive Director, Cathie Lancaster

Thanksgiving is all about coming together as a family, enjoying and treasuring each others company. Christmas is right around the corner. Stop and think for a moment about what holidays mean if you are a child placed in foster care, living apart from your family, friends and unsure of what the future holds.



Holidays can be a challenging time for foster youth as they may miss their biological family and experience all the confusing feelings that go along with celebrating with a "temporary" family.

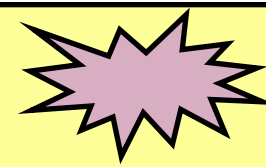
At CASA of Merced County, we believe that all children deserve a positive, long-term connection with a supportive adult – especially those youth placed in foster care. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), help children navigate life in the foster care system, they get to know the child, often becoming the only consistent adult presence in their life. CASA volunteers can be the difference between success and failure in a child's life. By simply listening, encouraging, guiding and speaking up for a child, CASA volunteers help these vulnerable children and teens to reach their full potential. Sometimes it is just allowing a child to feel cared about for the first time. More than mentors, Advocates provide vital information to the Court to facilitate better-informed decisions on behalf of a child.

CASA is recognized nationally as a positive solution to the high volume of dependency cases; Merced County faces one of the highest caseloads per capita in the state. Clearly, the combination of consistent mentoring and advocacy for a child's needs result in a much greater chance that these kids will achieve a bright, successful future.

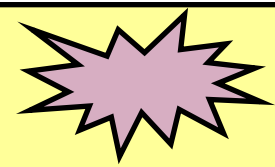
As 2019 is winding down and we are preparing for 2020 and our 10th Anniversary, I look back at some of our accomplishments this year; we were certainly busy!

- We served over 150 foster youth this year alone
- We had a successful Derby Night in Merced and Casino Night in Los Banos
- We raised CASA awareness through fundraisers with The Cupcake Lady, Panera Bread, Panda Express and Mix Bakery
- We participated in the Atwater 4th of July Parade and other events throughout the county
- We dedicated the Carolyn Jones Memorial Library
- We started a radio campaign to raise advertisements on Radio Merced
- We were able to provide fun (and sometimes first) experiences for our CASA youth such as taking them to Leland Snow Play, an Oakland A's game, tour University of San Francisco, California Academy of Sciences, a paint and snack afternoon and a Haunted House
- We continue to provide foster youth the opportunity to spend time in Yosemite with Sacred Rok and experience nature
- Most importantly, we have trained 44 new Advocates to serve more foster youth!

Each of us has the power to improve a child's life, restore their trust, and form meaningful connections. Please consider becoming a CASA volunteer in 2020.



Advocate Appreciation Dinner



November is considered a time to be thankful; CASA is truly thankful all year long for our Advocates! To honor and celebrate our wonderful Volunteers, CASA hosted Advocate Appreciation at Cova's Great American Food on November 12. CASA staff, Board of Directors and Advocates enjoyed an evening of comradery, delicious food and awards.

While we value ALL Volunteers, CASA did present a few awards:

Most Hours Spent with CASA youth – Kim McAuley, 342 hours

Most Children Served – Claudia Kalmin and Karen Cheffer, both have served nine (9) children

Most Miles Driven – Albert Barreno drove a total of 5,155 miles for his CASA youth

Advocate of the Year - Albert Barreno

From 10/1/18 through 9/30/19, CASA Advocates spent a combined 5415 hours with their youth or advocating on their behalf. Advocates also drove a combined 44,289 miles! Our Advocates drove around the world almost TWO TIMES! This proves how seriously our Advocates take their responsibility with their CASA youth.

A huge thanks goes out to all Advocates for their hard work and dedication to foster youth!



Advocate of the Year 2019
Albert Barreno



Join the current group of 163 Voices4CASA members!

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.

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

You can help make a difference!



Upcoming CASA of Merced County Events:

Tuesday, 12-24-2019	CASA Office closed noon for Christmas Eve
Wednesday, 12-25-2019	CASA Office closed for Christmas Day
Thursday, 12-26-2019	CASA Office closed
Tuesday, 12-31-2019	CASA Office closed noon for New Years Eve
Wednesday, 1-1-2020	CASA Office closed for New Year
Tuesday, 1-7-2020	Information Session at 12PM
Thursday, 1-23-2020	Winter Training Class 33 Begins
Tuesday, 2-4-2020	Information Session at 12pm
Friday, 2-14-2020	Valentines Day



Memorials & Honorariums

In Memory of John Menezes
Juan and Carman Amparan

In Celebration of Scott & Debbi Johnston's 45th Wedding Anniversary
John & Leigh Walth



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.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!