

Our Outstanding CASA Volunteers

Abong, Sabrina	Cortez, Rafael	Hyatt, Tania	Najar Perez, Debbie	Silveira-Miller, Selina
Acevedo, Krystal	Craig, Elaine	Hyde, Jewel	Nguyen, Namkha	Smelcer, Erin
Aguilar, Marina	Cuevas, Ana	Ibarra, Lupe	Nord, Rita	Smith, Dan
Alshami, Sonia	Curry, Patrick	Jacobs, Tina	Ortiz, Angelina	Smith, Karen
Altieri, Rhapsodie	Donayre Nolasco, Alba	Johnston, Debbi	Osborn, Lynda	Solis, Amanda
Alvarado, Colby	Downing, Sonja	Jones, Luwanda	Pagan, Nitza	Solis, Lindsey
Arambel, Cynthia	Dyas, Lynda	Jones, Tim	Parker, Hannah	Souza, Lou
Arias, Monika	Engel, Debbie	Kalmin, Claudia	Parker, Lynn Kahn	Souza, Stephanie
Aju Diaz, Daisy	Espinoza, Marlen	Kelley, Cindy	Parr, Kaitlyn	Stavrianoudakis, Stacey
Avila, Isaac	Fleming, Henrietta	Khangura, Amrit	Paulo, Jane	Steed, Casey
Avila-Vargas, Joseph	Foley, Christie	Khatri, Shilpa	Payne, Sarah	Taiby, Zohra
Barnes, Donna	Fuentes, Diane	Kolb, Tim	Piro, Robyn	Thomas, Kristen
Barreno, Albert	Garcia, Salena	Latronica, Jason	Pouncey, Elisa	Thompson, Angelina
Bartholomew, Candace	Garcia-Zaragoza, Paola	Lawrence, Dondi	Purslow, Barbara	Torres-Pinon, Daisy
Baylard-Sampson, Maggie	Garduno, Cinthia	Legg, Debra	Quall, Sheila	Torres, Krysteen
Benavides, Alma	Gilliam, Crystal	Legg, Tomas	Quien, Alane	Trevino, Crystal
Benavides, David	Gills, Jessica	Lor, Gozong	Ramirez, Christopher	Trujillo, Daisy
Bennett, Vangie	Gittens, Elyse	Lowrance, Diana	Ramirez Sr, Bosco	Van LobenSels, Patty
Bergman, Don	Gonzalez, Celeste	Marciochi, Helena	Ramsey, Janet	Verrinder, Lindsey
Bier, Debbie	Gonzalez, Yalitza	Marks, Brooke	Reyna-Canales, Jill	Verrinder, Timothy
Bradley, Jan	Gunter, Terry	Marquez, Humberto	Reynoso, Vilma	Villanueva, Jessenia
Breth, Debbie	Guzman, Jorge	Mattoon, Lyssabeth	Rivero, Stephanie	White, Mary Elizabeth
Calbert, Brenda	Halpin, Joan	McAuley, Kim	Robledo, Valerie	Wood, Jan
Calderon, Wendy	Hansford, Carissa	McBride, Michelle	Ruiz, Blanca	Workman, Deborah
Callister, Christine	Hargrave, Immanuel	McCoy, Emily	Sadler, Marge	Yanez, Eddy
Cano, Kimberly	Harville, Luzie	McMillen, John	Salzberg Kiriara, Judith	Young Bergman, Nancy
Carlson, Mizhael	Hernandez, Daisy	Medina, Karla	Samuelson, Deborah	Zapien, Barbara
Carlson, Rita	Hestir, Erin	Mendoza, Lisa	Hughes, Lisa	Zalinski, Jon
Castro, Adam	Hewitt, Gwendolyn	Meraz, Caroline	Santana, Hilaria	
Cheeks, Corey	Hoffar, Claudia	Minor, Kristine	Scoto, Kathy	
Coble, Andrea	Huff, Violet	Morgan, Kay	Shay, Pat	
Colbert, Katelynn	Hurtado, Nereida	Murphy, Linda	Silva, Joanna	



Swearing in Ceremony for CASA CLASS 43



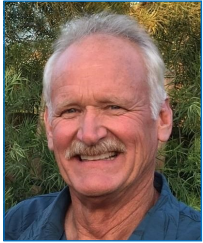
Five community citizens will soon begin advocating for Merced County foster youth. Graduates of CASA's forty-third training class have completed 30 hours of training, 5 hours of courtroom observation, numerous background checks, multiple reference checks and will make a minimum commitment of 18 months to the child they will serve. Pictured from left to right are: Barbara Zapien, John McMillen Daisy Hernandez, Judge Donald Proietti, Wendy Calderon, and Lupe Ibarra

A CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) is a trained volunteer who is appointed by the Judge to represent the best interests of a child currently in foster care. The CASA Volunteer provides the presiding Juvenile Dependency Judge with recommendations that help the Court make difficult decisions about the child's future. No specific type of background is required to become a Volunteer. CASA of Merced County provides all necessary training needed to become a Court Appointed Special Advocate. Learn more about how to become a CASA Volunteer by visiting our website at www.mercedcasa.org or calling our office at 209-722-2272.

**Our next training class starts October 17, 2022;
would you like to join us?**

In Memory of two CASA supporters

It was with great sadness that the CASA family said good-bye to two extended family members over the past few months. Craig Copus, the fiancé of Advocate Coordinator, Charity Mocklin, passed away suddenly in May. Paul Thomas Jr. longtime boyfriend of Executive Director, Cathie Lancaster, passed away after a brief battle with brain cancer in August. Both men will be greatly missed by their CASA family.



Paul Thomas Jr. 1956 -2022

Carrol Paul Thomas Jr. was born in Oakland CA. When Paul was 13, he and his family moved to Merced County, where he spent the rest of his life. From an early age, he had a wonderful sense of humor and was always ready with a joke that was sure to keep everyone laughing.

Paul had a true passion for motorcycles, traveling, and nature. He was an avid motorcycle rider (both on and off road) and was happiest when on his bike in Baja, enjoying nature in any of the wonderful places he visited, working in his yard or spending time with family and friends.

Paul worked for Safeway for ten years and then began working as a firefighter for Merced County. In 1991, Paul was named firefighter of the year. He retired from Cal Fire after 30 years. Paul was enjoying retirement by landscaping his yard, working on bonsai, spending time with family, especially his grandchildren, taking care of his four legged children, and planning adventures with Cathie. He was looking forward to meeting his newest granddaughter who is scheduled to arrive in January 2023.

Paul was described as being larger than life, and he definitely lived his life this way. He never met a stranger and could be seen at CASA events talking to guests and making new friends. Paul's unexpected passing left a huge void in the lives of his loved ones. They asked to keep Paul's memory alive by donating to CASA in his memory to help children who were not blessed with the wonderful life he had.



Craig Copus 1986 -2022

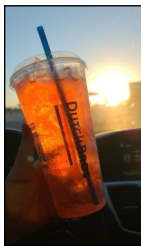
Craig Copus was born and raised in Merced where he spent his entire life until his unexpected passing. Craig was a kind, loving, caring and giving man. He loved to laugh and smile, and was friendly to everyone he met. He was loved by his co-workers at Costco where he had been employed since his senior year in high school. He loved working at Costco, and valued the relationships he had with many of his co-workers. Craig also loved to help others, and

children held an especially dear place in his heart. Which was why he was truly proud, and always eager to assist CASA of Merced County in any way he could. In fact, around the CASA office, he was affectionately known as our Costco Shopper because of the many times he picked up necessary items for the office and delivered them, saving the staff a trip.

When it came to home life, Craig's fiancé Charity, her son Matthew and his children Peyton and Garrett meant the world to him. Craig enjoyed spending time with them more than anything. Craig loved his big red truck, watching movies, going to historic Columbia, listening to music, playing video games, going on drives, fishing, yard work, and going to amusement parks. Craig was a truly beautiful person on the inside and out and will be incredibly missed by all that knew him.

Dutch Bros—Bucks for Kids

For the third year in a row, Dutch Bros chose CASA of Merced County as the one non-profit organization in Merced County to be the recipient of the national Bucks for Kids event. We cannot express how grateful we are for this tremendous opportunity to spread awareness and earn a generous donation. We also want to thank everyone who participated in this successful event hosted by our friends at Dutch Bros!



Celebrating 100 year of Atwater

This year, the 4th of July parade in Atwater was a bit more special, because we celebrated the 100 year anniversary as a town! The CASA staff, advocates, and their families participated in the 4th of July parade, showing off their patriotic spirit on our float! It was a beautiful day for everyone involved. We want to thank our amazing volunteers for offering so much of their time to ensure our Foster Youth are supported and loved. We would not be successful without each and every one of you!



National Night Out Events

Events like National Night Out are a true treasure for so many Merced County families. Learning about the resources available as well as ways to give back to our community is an invaluable occasion for city! We are so excited that these great family events have started again and that we can be apart of it!



Merced National Night Out



Atwater National Night Out

Mercado Event

Once a month, main street in Merced is filled with many vendor booths, food trucks, informational booths, and live entertainment. This evening



event is a chance for families to come together for free entertainment and shopping. CASA was glad to be able to attend and reach out to our community and spread awareness about our mission. Thank you to the Mercado for hosting!