



Take Me Out to the Ball Game... On July 1 thanks to one of our wonderful board members and her friends CASA was able to take children and advocates to watch an Oakland A's baseball game. The kids had a tailgate pizza party before the game, enjoyed a visit from Stomper and received a backpack full of treats to enjoy while making memories watching America's favorite pastime.



The Robyn Piro Award of Merit was established in 2017 by the CASA Board of Directors to honor Robyn Piro for outstanding volunteerism and leadership. The Award of Merit is to be used by a CASA of Merced County foster youth for education and/or training beyond High School. In June, CASA honored Holly as the first recipient of the Robyn Piro Award of Merit. Pictured from left to right is Robyn Piro, Advocate Stephanie Souza and award recipient Holly. Pictured from left to right Robyn Piro (Advocate), Stephanie Souza (Advocate) and Holly.

In June CASA took a group of foster youth on a tour of UC Merced and Fresno State campuses. We want our CASA youth to realize that a college education is not only a dream but that it can become a reality.





A CASA Family Connections Story



A recent CASA Family Connections case truly reflects the purpose and need for positive adult connections for youth in foster care. I first began “Tina’s” case when multiple involved professionals believed this was a positive outlet to explore for “Tina”. The Child Welfare case file stated that as an infant, “Tina’s” mother abandoned her in a motel room in the care of a man who was not the child’s father. Shortly after, this man also abandoned “Tina.” He left her in the care of a new girlfriend while he spent time in and out of jail. “Tina” came to the attention of Social Services when she was locked out of her residence one day after school. “Tina” had been raised by strangers all of her life. She has been in foster care since age 7 and now as a teenager, she still does not have any consistent personal relationships. It was thought that she might likely age out of foster care without any family to support her transition into adulthood.

The only exception is her CASA volunteer. Her CASA has been advocating for “Tina” nearly 7 years; this volunteer has stood by her side for about half of her short life. Fortunately, the CASA had been carefully conducting her own research and had a whole notebook of leads. The CASA had some potential clues about her father. She discovered a spelling for his name, which differed from the court file. Next, I met with “Tina” for more clues. She mentioned the people who had raised her before entering foster care. When I asked her about her birth family, she explained that she did not remember her mother and had never met her father. She did not think she had any other family. After all knowledgeable parties on the case were consulted, I began the search for “Tina’s” family.

Using the new spelling for her father’s name, I found a potential address for the father and some associated family members. I sent inquiry letters to all last known addresses. I also looked up her mother’s information and found a large amount of family members connected to her. I sent inquiry letters to them as well. A few weeks went by before I received an out-of-state phone call from a man claiming to be “Tina’s” father. He claimed that he had been looking for her for years. He stated that when “Tina” was younger, her mother would never arrange to meet or reveal their location. He just kept paying his child support as he was supposed to do. He did not know that “Tina’s” mother abandoned her all those years ago. He mentioned that “Tina” has a lot of paternal family that is worried about her and who want her to come home. I then started calling last known phone numbers for the maternal side of the family. I spoke with a cousin in another state who also stated that “Tina” has maternal family who were worried about her whereabouts.

This case has not yet reached a conclusion; the Family Connections process is still unfolding. The next step for this case would be for “Tina” to decide if she is interested in meeting these newly located family members. Regardless of her choice, she now knows that she does have family members who care about her and her wellbeing. Hopefully, when she is ready, they will welcome her back into the family with open arms. It is important to remember that everyone has a family!

Charissa Beardsley—Family Connections Coordinator



Did you attend the Atwater 4th of July parade? If so, you may have seen the CASA entry. The theme of this year’s parade was Salute to our First Responders. CASA also wanted to salute our incredible Advocates who work so tirelessly to stand up and speak out to help abused and neglected children.



We closed the month of July by taking 28 CASA youth plus advocates to the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The kids were not only able to tour the aquarium, but they beat the triple digit heat by having some fun time on the beach as well. Another day making memories for our CASA children made possible by a wonderful board member and her generous friends.