**The Robyn Piro Award of Merit**

The Robyn Piro Award of Merit was established in 2017 by the CASA Board of Directors in honor of Robyn Piro, an outstanding volunteer and advocate for foster children and youth. The award shall be given to a Merced CASA foster youth for post-high school education or training. The award shall be funded from ‘Sponsor an Advocate’ donations.

**Eligibility Requirements:**

Applicant must:

* Possess (or will complete by the time the award money is disbursed) a high school diploma (or equivalent) and have a Merced County CASA advocate.
* Submit:
  + A completed application form;
  + A letter of reference from their CASA advocate;
  + Two letters of recommendation from teachers, coaches, or other responsible adults;
  + A one-page written statement on “What are your educational or training goals and how do you plan to achieve them?”
* Participate in an in-person interview with RPAM representatives.

**Award Amount:**

The award shall be up to $500 per year.

**Application and Award Timelines:**

Application forms shall be available in the CASA Office beginning January 15 of each year. Completed applications must be submitted to the CASA office by 5:00 P.M. on the second Friday in March. Late applications will not be considered. Award winner(s) shall be notified within 30 days of the application deadline. The applications shall be submitted to:

CASA of Merced County

2824 Park Avenue, Suite A

Merced, California 95340

**General Information:**

Applications shall be reviewed by the Merced CASA Executive Committee which will recommend top candidates to the Board of Directors. Final selection shall be by majority vote of the Board of Directors. A board member who knows any candidate must recuse himself/herself from the entire selection process.

An awardee may reapply in subsequent years, but shall be considered competitively with other applicants.

The award shall be disbursed for educational or training expenses only. A check shall be written directly to the educational or training institution after the recipient of the award provides proof of enrollment at a post-secondary institution or training program.