

Christmas Party



Christmas is an exciting time for most of us. Sadly, some foster children have not experienced the joy of the holiday season.

However, if they have a CASA, Christmas truly becomes Merry!

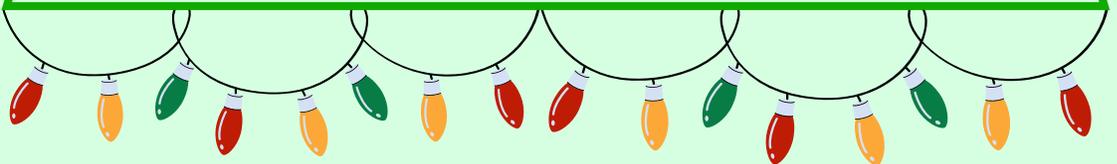
Thanks to MID and other wonderful donors, CASA puts on a fantastic Christmas party including a visit from the Jolly Man himself, Santa Claus. Children were treated to games with prizes, a delicious dinner, homemade Christmas treats and plenty of gifts!



Community Christmas Donations



Thank you to our local businesses and community members who were so gracious to stop by our office and show the love by dropping off donations during the holiday season. Magic and memories were made in the CASA office for our Foster Youth.



Every Day Hero: Lou Souza



Lou grew up in Southern California on a dairy in a city called Dairy Valley (now known as Cerritos). He is the third oldest of eight with one younger brother. He enjoyed the "dairy life" doing chores and being around the animals. As a kid, he loved playing Little League baseball and Pop Warner football. He continued to play both sports in high school and went on to play baseball through college.

Lou is a Breakfast LIONS Club member and he also works part-time as a high school League Commissioner for the Sac Joaquin Section. In his spare time, Lou loves to go fishing and enjoys playing golf. Lou is married to Martha, who owns a hair salon in Merced. He has a daughter, Lunden, who is 34 years old; a son, Michael, who is 31 years old and an awesome granddaughter, Raegynne, who is 4 years old.

Lou became an advocate because as a teacher/coach, he loved working with kids. Lou was fortunate to have both parents in life with six sisters and one brother. As a "dairy boy," he knew what it was like to not have many things, but lots of love. Lou has come across so many kids from broken homes and no father figure at home; he wants to help fill that void. Lou has been a CASA for close to one year.

Lou has two favorite/memorable moments with his CASA child. The first one was when he took his CASA child to see his twin sister and two younger sisters for the first time in months. They live in different foster homes. They met at a park and he was blown away with their first encounter. His CASA child jumped out of Lou's truck and the four of them ran to each other for one big group hug. You cannot put a price tag on that stuff! The second time was when he took his CASA child fishing for the first time. The CASA child was so excited when he caught his first Largemouth Bass (a 2+ pounder) all by himself. Lou feels that children need to know that someone truly cares for them with no strings attached. He believe his CASA child needs an adult male in his life that will be there for him and he hopes to continue to be that person throughout his life.

Lou has always enjoyed teaching and coaching young men and believes his biggest strength is that he truly cares and enjoys the time he spends with his CASA child. Lou believes in being an honest adult friend, not a buddy, and teaching life skills along the way. Lou's advice to a new CASA volunteer is to do your best to not let your CASA youth down. He believes they have been let down enough and children need to know that they matter and that you care. Be true to your word!

WELCOME ADVOCATES!

The Honorable Judge Donald Proietti



Class 44



CASA of Merced County welcomes our newest volunteers! Each of these new advocates have completed 30 hours of training and 5 hours of court observations along with background checks. We cannot wait for them to take a case and start advocating for foster youth.

Class 45



Class 46



Cooking with CASA

Cooking with CASA - We have a mini kitchen that allow Advocates to bring their kiddos in to cook! We have funds that allow the Advocate and kiddo to plan a menu and then shop for the ingredients. Budgeting and cooking are two very important skills foster youth need in life.

