
ADVOCATE ALLEY

Volume 3, Issue 2

February 2009

Love is, above all, the gift of oneself. ~Jean Anouilh

CASA Corner

Greetings Advocates,

For those of you that haven't been in the office lately, we've got some familiar faces spending more and more time in the office. Case Supervisor Kylie Kelly has re-joined the CASA team two days a week, with her beautiful daughter, Sage, in tow.

Since this dynamic duo only grace us with their presence on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we've brought in advocate Jackie Steakley as a new case supervisor. Jackie comes with over two years of experience as a CASA advocate, loads of business management experience, and excellent intuition. She has also been a volunteer on the Lighting the Way annual fundraiser committee.

So if you haven't yet met Jackie and you're in the office on Monday, Wednesday or Friday, make sure to poke your head into the back office and introduce yourself!

We are incredibly excited to have such dynamic members join our team and look forward to providing you all with even better supervision and support. If you ever have feedback about the whens, wheres, whys, etc of how we support our advocates, please do not hesitate to let us know. We're always working to improve!

Thank you for all you do,
Michelle Arnold
Recruitment & Training Coordinator

Event Expressway

• **United Way's 33rd Annual Community Service Awards**
Scheduled for March 18, 2009 to be held at the Monterey Plaza Hotel. If you would like to nominate an outstanding volunteer, please visit www.unitedwaymcca.org to access a nomination packet. Last year, they honored 34 volunteers and 1 business. The deadline to submit a nomination is next Monday, February 9.

• **Share your experience with CASA Trainees! - Feb 11**
There are still spots available to speak to the new advocate training class on Wednesday, February 11 from 6pm to 8pm. Contact Michelle if you'd like to participate and earn two hours of continuing education credit.

• **Monterey County's 25th Annual Spelling Bee Contest for 4th & 5th Graders - Feb 28**
The final county competition will be at San Benancio Middle School. Last year, more than 4,200 public and private school students from 34 schools participated with the hopes of bringing home the title. This year, more than 30 schools are registered to participate! Hosted by the Lyceum of Monterey County, please contact Emilie Staryak at Emilie@lyceum.org or 372-6098 for more information.

Traffic School: Extended Education Opportunities New Avenues: Explore your extended education opportunities!

Child Sexual Abuse Training

CASA is offering a three-session, dynamic training on Child Sexual Abuse by local expert Tom Berg, PhD. Each of the three sequential, two-hour sessions will address important concepts related to Child Sexual Abuse. The dates are: February 3rd, 10th and 17th from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Look on page three of the newsletter for detailed information.

Peer Review

Date: Wednesday, February 25th
Time: 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Location: CASA Office

RSVP: to Ruben at 455-6800 or ruben@casamonterey.org If you have any ideas, suggestions, etc regarding our continuing education program, consider joining the Continuing Education planning committee. Call or email Ruben for more information!

Drivers License Information

Foster youth, both dependents and wards, may apply for a driver's license if the application is signed by:

- a grandparent
- a sibling over the age of 18
- an aunt or an uncle
- or a foster parent with whom the minor resides
 - a probation officer
- child protective services worker

AND:

if the foster youth files proof of financial responsibility.

Once a youth has a driver's license, his or her parents or guardian are responsible for any damages resulting from any accident or injury caused by the youth while driving a motor vehicle. The same is true for any person (including a foster parent) who signs a driver's license application on behalf of a youth. (Only state and county probation officers and county social workers are specifically exempted from the joint liability provisions of VC Sections 17707 and 17708.)

Therefore, probation officers and county social workers may sign driver license applications on behalf of foster youth irrespective of the joint liability provisions if the foster youth files a proof of financial responsibility. For details, go to [ACL No. 01-30](#).

If a driver license is not obtained, you can apply for an official Identification Card issued by the California Department of Motor Vehicles. For purposes of identification, this ID is the same as a driver license.

In general, both a driver license and an ID card require that you:

- visit a DMV office,
- complete an application form,
 - give your thumb print,
 - have your picture taken,
- provide your social security number,
 - verify your birth date, and
 - pay the application fee.

For specifics, go to the [California DMV](#) website.



Advocate Avenue



We would like to wish the following advocates a very happy birthday during the month of February...

Kelly Locke	2/4
Gina Lucas	2/5
Betsy Collins	2/12
Kathy Andrew	2/14
Nancy Hanson	2/16
Eric Paulson	2/19
James Garcia	2/22
Christina Courcier	2/29

CASA of San Benito is moving to a new location! Starting Jan 31, you can find us at 449 San Benito Street, Ste M in Hollister.

Our phone number, fax number, email address and website remain the same. Please update your records. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Esther at 831.637.4992.

Upcoming Events

Birdies for Charity: a fun and exciting way to make a charitable donation to CASA based on the number of combined birdies scored by PGA TOUR players throughout the 2009 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament, Feb 12 -15.

Lighting the Way, The Cotton Club (Monterey's Major Fundraiser)- April 4th

Heart of CASA (San Benito's Major Fundraiser) - May 22nd

CASA Golf Classic at Pasadera - June 8th

Contact Edna for more information! 455-6800 or edna@casamonterey.org

What Every CASA Needs to Know About Child Sexual Abuse:

More than likely, it was a report of neglect, abandonment or abuse that brought your CASA child to the attention of the Child Welfare System. Maybe the term sexual abuse hasn't been identified as a form of abuse suffered by your child. Is this course for you? Sadly, it is absolutely right for you.

Here's why it's important that we all increase our awareness of this global social ill:

- The number of unreported instances of child sexual abuse is an ongoing health and public concern.
- Often various forms of abuse are intricately linked: children who have been abandoned, neglected, physically or emotionally abused, might also have been the subjects of child sexual abuse. Child sexual abuse often happens in secret and can be less visible than a child found wandering the streets. It might be easier for a child to reveal that he or she is hungry and without proper clothing and shelter than to tell someone that he or she has been sexually abused.
- We have reason to believe that at least 60% of the child welfare cases include child sexual abuse; even if that abuse is unreported.
- In terms of cultural sensitivity, it's important to understand that many marginalized communities, including those impacted by an undocumented or non citizen immigration status, may have even greater fears about trusting or cooperating with agencies such as the police and child protective services.

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This training is for CASAs and others involved in providing services to children who may have been victimized by sexual abuse, but is relevant for CASAs working with children who have don't show a history of this particular form of abuse.

Overview of the material that will be covered during the 3 session training course:

February 3rd: Overview of Dynamics of Child Sexual Abuse

- Examining the potential impact on the child and the families involved on sexual abuse
- Exploring Male/Female Dynamics
- Understanding Cultural Dynamics
- Offender Behavior- learning to adequately distinguish the differences between Pedophiles, Molesters and Predators
- Cutting Edge Information and Research

Feb 10th: How to be a Better Advocate for Child Victims of Sexual Abuse

- Understanding characteristics and behaviors displayed by victims of child sexual abuse
- Learn about various community resources available to child victims of sexual abuse
- Guest Speaker from one of the community organizations that provides services to child victims of sexual abuse

Feb 17th: Case Consultation: Present challenges and receive professional advice from Tom Berg Ph.D.

Contact Yolonda at yolonda@casamonterey.org or 455-6800 to reserve your spot!

Excerpted from the National CASA Website

Dear all~

As you may know, we are adopting Cody through the state of Oregon, after doing foster care with him for over a 1 ½ years. Doing foster care has been an amazing journey. Heart breaking, emotionally wrenching and yet more awarding emotionally than I could have ever expected. Would we do it again? Yes...Although not right now as we need to focus on Cody and his transitions.

People have asked me what it is like.... To love and to know that you may have to very well loose the little one you have care for. Many people have said that they have 'thought of it' ... 'don't have the time' Or simply – 'couldn't handle' the emotional part or parenting a wild and wooly child.

To each of you, I know that your reasons are true and right for you & your family. I would ask that you think about being a CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) instead. The links at the bottom of this page will give you the information. I would like you to know our hearts... what it meant to us to have a CASA Representative appointed for Cody.

I can strongly say **No child should be without one... not even one child**. The process that these children go through from family/life problems, state and court processes, emotional & physical challenges is incredibly saddening and even close to crazy. Cody thankfully was appointed a CASA Representative and as a foster mom, I found him a huge resource. Sorting out the complicated issues surrounding these children then adding to it the DHS and Court issues was at times overwhelming. DL (our rep) would check in regularly, visit our home, watch how the child was doing, track issues with court and DHS. CASA Representatives are NOT hired through DHS and can speak freely – for the child's welfare and benefit, to the Courts and other agencies (believe me there are many agencies involved!).

At times, I would be frustrated by policies, procedures, rules/regulations that I did not always feel had the child's best interest at times . During those times, I would speak to DL and he would give the support and direction that I needed. DL would then start the process for Cody to redirect or direct the process in a manner that was best for Cody... Our CASA representative became a resource that was so very awesome that I only say that DL was a blessing to our family. Yet there are children are in our system without a CASA Representative. We all have stood back, with our so very valid reasons, and let these children be navigated through weighty life challenges ~ without someone in *just their corner*. Yes- it does hurt when you get involved and yes, I have cried as a foster mom. But I cry even now as I write this, knowing that there are children out there who just need someone to speak out for them ~ to be involved.

Would you take the time to pray and think about volunteering as a CASA Representative? If you have questions that I can answer, please call me. If you feel that you would like to do something like this, please check out the links below.

When my grandmother died recently, one of the thoughts I had was about all the times I 'almost visited her' 'almost helped her in her yard' Almost gave my time. I don't want to repeat certain life errors....I don't want to almost give again.

Please join me in volunteering your time this upcoming year of 2009. Find the area that calls to your heart and then just give. I am certain that you will find what you give does not even compare to the blessings that you will receive.

Much love
Sherry

CASA Home page: <http://www.nationalcasa.org/index.asp>
Find a CASA Office near you: <http://www.nationalcasa.org/VolunteerInquiry/index.aspx>

