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# ADVOCATE ALLEY

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Volume 2, Issue 4

April 2008

*“What a child does not receive, he can seldom later give.” -P. D. James*

## CASA Corner

Greetings Advocates,

Those of you who have been in the office lately may have noticed a little bit more hustle and bustle than usual! It is a very exciting time for CASA, as we prepare for our major fundraiser, **The Cotton Club**, on **Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup>**.

This time is especially exciting for me personally, because it was by attending and volunteering for this annual event that I first came to know CASA. The magic of this wonderful event inspired me with the ever-present message of hope in the CASA mission and the diverse pool of community supporters, be they advocates, donors or fellow volunteers that came together on this wonderful evening each year. Not long after the event last year, I hung up my volunteer hat and became a full-time member of the CASA staff.

Finding my home here has been a dream come true- I don't know how I ever came to be so lucky as to be surrounded by such dedicated and selfless individuals everyday. I wish for all of you this same experience, this amazing source of inspiration, and I encourage you to come and witness the magic... and maybe cheer me on as I don my 1930s formalwear and host our live auction!

With constant gratitude,  
Michelle Arnold  
Recruitment & Training Coordinator

## Welcoming Cornelia Jane Rainey



Congratulations to Advocate Barbara Hays on the birth of her daughter's beautiful new baby girl. Barbara reports that her granddaughter, Cornelia, weighed in at 6 lbs, 11 ounces and both mother and baby are doing great!



## Q and A Blvd

with Advocate Meechie Pierce

**Q:** Why did you choose to become a CASA volunteer?

**A:** Personal experience and a passion for children. And God told me.

**Q:** What have you learned from this experience?

**A:** I'm still learning. I'm learning a lot about the court system and the importance of the position of being a CASA. And about the organization.

**Q:** What advice do you have for new advocates?

**A:** Research and some more research. And then there's always more research to do.

**Q:** What do you do for fun?

**A:** Hang out with my dog and my friends and family. Cook. I have a lot of dinner parties. I cook a lot.

CASA of Monterey thanks Meechie for his hard-work and dedication to the children he advocates for.

## Did you know...?

### TEAM DECISION MEETING (TDM)

In our last peer review we discussed Team Decision Meetings and here is a brief overview of this process should you find yourself invited to a team meeting.

### PURPOSE

TDM is an opportunity for families who become involved in the dependency system to discuss their issues in the presence of a multidisciplinary team. Often times, these meetings occur at the beginning of a Child Protective Services Referral, and once the case is reviewed in this setting, it remains a TDM case throughout the dependency process.

### PROCESS

The case carrying social worker and her supervisor must be present at the TDM to review the case with the family involved in the system. Other participants can include service providers: mental health therapist, attorneys, and educators working with the family, and, of course, a CASA worker.

The parents involved in the CPS case are encouraged to bring their family and friends to these meetings. The hope is by enlisting these individuals, the families can strengthen the ties within the community and also be introduced to other services that might be helpful in their particular situation.

In each instance these meetings are facilitated by a trained professional through the County and will be always be present at these sessions.

The TDMs will be arranged through Monterey County Family and Children Services.

### TIPS FOR CASA WORKERS

It is important to remember that you bring an objective perspective to the table that is focused on the well being of the child. The other service providers will be looking at the parents to see what is necessary for them to be successful with their case plan.

It is imperative to remind the team of the child's strengths and of concerns that might be related to visits with the parents or other issues that might negatively impact reunification, permanency for the child, or placement.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any other thoughts or questions regarding Team Decision Meetings. I'm at the CASA office on Wednesdays from 9:30-4:30 pm. I'm also available by cell phone 831-760-2655.

Bree Nakashima, CASA Consultant

## Advocate Avenue



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

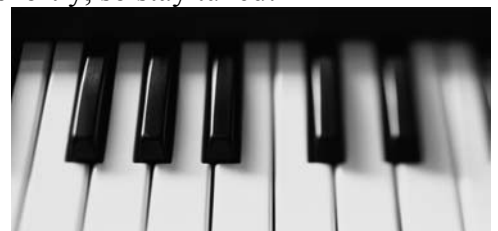
Elana Schwartz	4/11
Jane Foley	4/20
Jackie Steakley	4/20
Sherli Muir	4/25
Kylie Kelly	4/27
Cathy Estrella-Dannels	4/29

## MUSIC DAY

The Smith Renaissance Society invites you to join us for our 5th Annual Music Day on May 10th at UC Santa Cruz. The day will be full of music and music related workshops, guest performances, and our very popular Open Mic for visiting students to show off their new skills!

This is a FREE event for all high school/recently emancipated foster youth, orphans, wards of the court, or runaways. Breakfast, lunch, and t-shirts are included for all that attend (including chaperones).

A detailed event schedule, flyer, and registration form will be sent out shortly, so stay tuned!



## *Trainee Turnpike*

Please join us in welcoming the Epsilon class of six newly trained advocates who were sworn in by Judge Scott on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Each new advocate brings a wealth of life knowledge that will serve them well as they begin their casework. We are so very excited to have them join our team!



**Top** (from left to right): **Barbara Singer, Jo Greenshields, Anissa Ferraro, Don Manzagol, Kathy Andrew**  
**Bottom:** Alice Knapp and Trainer Michelle Arnold



Thanks so much to Sylvia Montez and friends at Dole Fresh Vegetables for providing Easter baskets to some of our very lucky CASA kids.



From left to right: Advocate Coordinator Kylie Kelly, Executive Director Siobhan Greene, Dole Employee Sylvia Montez and Case Supervisor Donna Hagins





## Free Nature Programs Hosted For Children and Teens

The Marina, Seaside, and Carmel Valley Branches of the Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) and the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District have teamed up to offer nature walks to the libraries.

“Bee at the Party” (ages 7 to 11) features a nature walk and scavenger hunt, bug stories, songs, crafts and drawing. The teen program “What’s Buggin’ You” (ages 12 to 18) features a nature walk and poetry workshop. Both programs are open to MCFL library cardholders. (Free cards are available at MCFL branches and online at [www.montereycountyfreelibraries.org](http://www.montereycountyfreelibraries.org) under “Services”). To register call 883-7543. For information call MCFL’s Youth Services Librarian Ruth Paget at 883 - 7542.

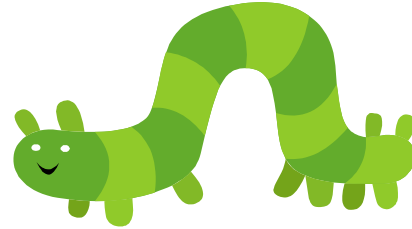


### Bee at the Party:

Seaside Library - April 1 from 3 pm to 5 pm  
Carmel Valley Library - April 10 from 3pm to 5 pm

Seaside Library - May 17 from 10am to 12pm  
Marina Library - May 3 from 10am to 12pm

Seaside Library - June 3 from 3pm to 5pm  
Carmel Valley Library - June 7 from 1 to 3pm



### What’s Buggin’ You:

Carmel Valley Library - April 17 from 3pm to 5pm

Seaside Library - May 1 from 3pm to 5pm  
Carmel Valley Library - May 15 from 3 to 5pm



**There are still spots left at our annual CASA fundraiser on April 5<sup>th</sup>!**



**Join us for an amazing night for an amazing cause! Enjoy fabulous food, award-winning entertainment and a thrilling silent and live auction. Call 455-6800 to secure your spot at The Cotton Club today!**

# CASA of Monterey County

## April Continuing Education Calendar

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### ***Conversational Spanish Class***

How many of us can benefit from mastering basic conversational Spanish???

Join us and our facilitator from the Salinas Adult School one evening per week beginning on **Monday, April 14<sup>th</sup>** through **July 7<sup>th</sup>** as we tackle beginning Spanish.

***Date:*** Every Monday for 12 weeks

***Time:*** 5:30pm- 8:30pm

***Location:*** CASA Office

***RSVP:*** to Michelle at 455-6800 or  
[michelle@casamonterey.org](mailto:michelle@casamonterey.org)

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### ***Advocates Understanding Attorneys***

Join Attorney Doug Tsuchiya as he provides an understanding of the dependency system from an attorney's perspective.

***Date:*** Tuesday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

***Time:*** 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

***Location:*** CASA Office

***RSVP:*** to Michelle at 455-6800 or  
[michelle@casamonterey.org](mailto:michelle@casamonterey.org)

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### ***Peer Review Session***

w/Bree Nakashima

***Date:*** Wednesday, April

***Time:*** 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

***Location:*** CASA Office

***RSVP:*** to Michelle at 455-6800 or  
[michelle@casamonterey.org](mailto:michelle@casamonterey.org)

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If you have any ideas, suggestions, etc regarding our continuing education program, please do not hesitate to provide feedback. Call or email Michelle and share your pearls of wisdom... We are here for you!