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# ADVOCATE ALLEY

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Volume 2, Issue 7

July 2008

“The child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world there will not be, another child like him.” Pablo Casals

## CASA Corner: Rear View Mirror

We've made it to the midway mark of 2008, and it's all because of you! Already at the half way mile marker of 2008, we took a moment to look in the rearview mirror and are overwhelmed with the accomplishments thus far!

From the new additions to the CASA family, to tremendous event and fundraiser success, to increased enthusiasm and participation in continuing education programs, we could not be more pleased with the level of advocate support and achievement in both our Monterey and San Benito County programs.

Our success is due to your dedication to CASA, your kids, and the betterment of our community. We are so lucky to have you all in the driver's seat: Your continued enthusiasm and support is the key to helping ignite other potential advocate involvement.

Think about what drove you to become involved with CASA, and in turn drive a friend, family member, or colleague to one of our upcoming information sessions (Wed, July 2nd, 6pm-Sand City Starbucks and Wed, July 30th, 6pm- King City Starbucks).

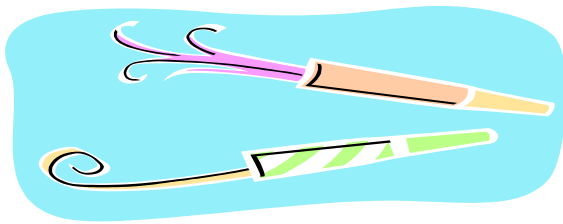
As always, thank you for all you do!

We have 25 free tickets left to the Aquarium if you haven't picked some up yet!



Contact Edna for details...

You're Invited!



Activity Room Ribbon Cutting  
Thursday, July 24, 4pm-6pm  
Celebrating the completion of our new activity room  
and thanking the many contributors...

## Driver's Ed: Remembering the CASA Rules of the Road

Whether your advocate training was months or years ago, here is a refresher on some CASA "do's and don'ts" that will keep you headed down the right road!



### Green Light: CASA Do's

- Be consistent with the child, don't miss appointments without talking to the child first
- Be open minded
- Embrace the unexpected
- Be yourself
- Call the CASA office at anytime with questions or concerns



### Red Light: CASA Don't's

- Don't take your child to your home or work
- Don't introduce the child to your family or other children
- Never leave your child unattended
- Don't make promises you have no control over
- Don't take the child out the county without permission from CASA and DSS

# Did you know...?

## The Road not Taken: Stop in, Look around!

While CASA offers many activity and classroom based opportunities for continuing education, the 12 hour requirement can be fulfilled in other ways! In the CASA front office, there is a growing library of novels, texts and video programs that not only aim to enhance and reinforce all aspects of CASA training, but also bring in supplemental information in areas that can improve your effectiveness as an advocate for the child(ren) you serve. This includes texts and videos on child development, psychology, teen drug use, abuse, mentoring, personal memoirs from foster youth, and narrative fiction novels.

**Watching a film or video counts for 1 hour**  
**Reading one of our books counts for 2 hours**

Stop in and check out the CASA selection, and feel free to make suggestions that will enhance the collection. Help pave the way for our continuing education. We appreciate the donation of any pertinent literature or video!



## ***ROAD MAP TO SUCCESS:***

**Important date reminders to keep you off the bumpy roads!**

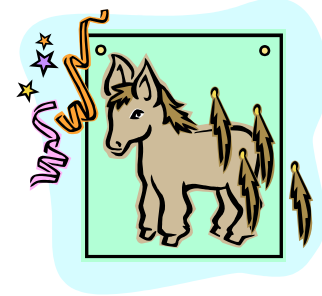
**July 4- Independence Day (Office closed)**

**July 12- Barnyard Food and Wine- 5 Volunteers still needed**

**August 15- 'The Quail' a Motorsports Gathering:** Volunteers are still needed for the day of this event. The funds we receive are directly related to the number of volunteer hours we provide. Please email, fax or call in your registration form to Edna .

**August 17- The Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance:** Volunteers are still needed to sell tickets on the day of and beforehand for this event. The funds we receive are directly related to the number of tickets that we sell. Please email, fax or call in your registration form to Edna or let her know how you would like to be involved.

## Advocate Avenue



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

Tracy Henderson	7/3
Fred MacDonald	7/7
Barbara Moore	7/12
Jacque Swartz	7/15
Stephen Bloch	7/17
Lucia Bonnaud	7/17
Ellie Brookman	7/18
Marlene Vanzant	7/20
Stacey Gooder	7/26
Debbie Sandoval	7/28
Catherine Horan-Walker	7/30

## **Yellow Light: Slow down and Refresh your CASA knowledge!**

Sharpen your Advocate skills by attending a new advocate training session. Having the opportunity to share your personal experience and CASA knowledge would greatly benefit the new advocate trainees, and keep you up to date on the current training agenda.

**Tuesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> through  
Thursday, July 31<sup>st</sup>**  
(each class will be held from 6pm to 9pm)

**Please contact Michelle if you are interested in sharing your experience with the next group of CASA trainees. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet new advocates, share the lessons you've learned as a CASA and present your current case plan.**

## **July Roadside Attraction: Hope's Boy, A memoir by Andrew Bridge**

### *An excerpt from Hope's Boy (pg. 134)*

The first of their inquiries were easy ones that I had answered many times:

“What is your name?”

“Is this your first day?”

“What grade are you in?”

Then suddenly, their simple questions began demanding impossible answers:

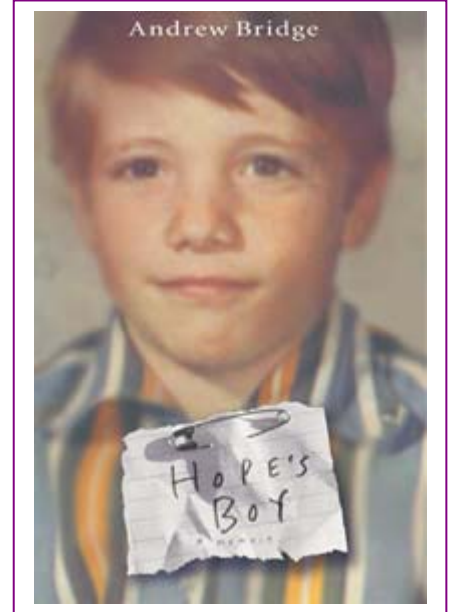
“Why did your parents move here?”

“Do you have brothers or sisters?”

“Where are you from?”

I wish it had been harder. I wish that someone had told me something else to say. I wish that I had been better than just another eight-year-old boy. I denied my mother and put the Leonards in her place. I have forgotten the details of what I said, though I must have claimed the Leonard's daughter Becky and son Christopher as my siblings... On the playground that morning I cobbled together a family of lies. Then behind them, I hid the woman I wanted most, the one I desperately prayed would return...

Andrew Bridge's memoir, Hope's Boy, eloquently recounts the details of a scattered childhood wrecked and resurrected through his experience in the Los Angeles foster care system. At 6 years old Andrew had become adept at begging for enough change to buy both himself and his mother McDonalds hamburgers, while watching his mother's mental faculties disintegrate, as she would cash welfare checks instead to purchase black leather boots. At the age of 7 Andrew's mother, Hope, was institutionalized. Subsequently, Andrew was thrust into the floundering foster system, where for 11 years he was exposed to even greater brutalities. Through his own institutionalization in the depths of Maclaren Hall, Andrew persevered. Edging towards adulthood, despite the neglect from his callous foster care family, Andrew gained personal perspective and understanding of the flawed system. Keeping the love for his mother in his heart Andrew clung to his academic talents that eventually led him to Harvard Law. As an adult Andrew has dedicated his life to elevating awareness of the atrocities he overcame and those many of his peers did not.



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**A copy of this book is  
available in the CASA  
office and is worth  
two hours of credit  
towards continuing  
education**

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## **Road Map: A note from author, Andrew Bridge**

*(Lisa Crawley was kind enough to donate a copy of Hope's Boy to the CASA library and share her personal correspondence between herself and Mr. Bridge. We hope Mr. Bridge's words will inspire you and that reading his novel will reinforce how much your dedicated efforts with your kids are appreciated.)*

Dear Lisa:

Thank you for your kind note and for taking the time to read Hope's Boy. I hope the folks at your local CASA enjoy the book. I'd, of course, love to hear from them too.

As I mentioned already, I am such a fan of CASAs. You do such wonderful and important work. I wish there were more of you to go around. I would have loved to have had a CASA as a boy, to have had someone that I could have trusted in that way. I'm sure you would have been a terrific choice for me as a kid!

I've said it already but congratulations on your work as a CASA and the differences you make. Give my very, very best to your fellow CASAs. Thanks again for everything, and never forget that few things cannot be mended with time—especially with a little bit of help.

Best wishes,  
Andrew Bridge

**CASA Spanish Class has just wrapped up!**

Thank you to the wonderful advocates and system partners who came together to make this class possible. Very special congratulations go out to **Roelof Wijbrandus** and **Albert Gonzalez** for their PERFECT attendance records!



Albert Gonzalez and Sonya Splane-Wilson

**Nuestra celebración para la clase pasada. ¡Muy delicioso!**



From left to right: Terry Teplitsky, David Olsen, Jennifer Mitchell, Audrey Boutta, Paula Arnold, Albert Gonzalez, Sonya Splane-Wilson, and Chris Farmerie

**Congratulations and welcome to our newest advocates who completed their training and were sworn in on Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>!**



From Left to right: Michelle Arnold (Trainer), Robert McDowell, Robin Ramsey, Mel Spehn

**Recognize any of these baseball fans?**

A few advocates and staff members enjoyed a fabulous evening in the owner's suite at the Oakland Coliseum watching the San Francisco Giants beat the Oakland Athletics. This once-in-a-lifetime experience was purchased during the live auction at CASA's Cotton Club this past April. Sound like a blast? Make sure to attend next year's event for opportunities just like this!



From left to right: David Olsen, Michelle Arnold, Ruben Urzua, Jackie Steakley and Paula Arnold

To the left: Ruben shows off his As pride... even though they lost ☺



## *San Benito Street*

Advocates in San Benito County can now request blankets for their CASA child from Project Linus a non-profit organization in Hollister. Project Linus provides new blankets created by “blanketeers” to children in crisis. Just call or email the CASA San Benito office with a request and we will pass it on to Sheron Johnson with Project Linus.

New to San Benito County is the Drop Zone. This project is the brainchild of Leadership San Benito; our very own Advocate Tracy Young is part of this group. Life will get a little more fun for kids ages 11 to 14; this center for “tweens” will be open every Thursday from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm at the Hollister Community Center, 300 West St. with different snacks and activities each week. This is a great place to take your CASA teen.

Look for us on Wednesday, July 2 at the Hollister Farmer’s Market. We will be there promoting CASA San Benito and recruiting community members to become CASA Advocates. Spread the word, we are always looking for great volunteers.

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

Come to the CASA office for Conflict Resolution and Mediation (TWO hours of credit)

With whom? Siobhan Greene

What day? July 9th

What time? 6-8pm

Present your case plan and share your experiences as an advocate (TWO hours of credit)

With whom? New advocate trainees

What day? TBA

What time? 6-8pm

Participate in a Peer Review (TWO hours of credit)

With whom? Bree Nakashima

What day? July 30th

What time? 12-2pm



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

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!