
ADVOCATE ALLEY

Volume 2, Issue 11

November 2008

I would thank you from the bottom of my heart, but for you my heart has no bottom. ~Author Unknown

CASA Corner

Greetings Advocates,

The crisp, fall air is forcing us to admit that once again, the holiday season has come upon us sooner than expected. Things are bustling, as per usual, at the CASA office, as we prepare to make this time of year special for the children we serve.

As we all know, the holidays can prove to be a difficult time for many, and our children may be dealing with loaded emotions around this time. As advocates, we have the unique opportunity to do a little extra something to make our CASA children feel remembered and appreciated.

We have holiday craft projects available at the CASA office, as well as a cake decorating class being offered. We'll be holding our annual toy drive and will provide more information about that early next month. This is a great opportunity to teach our children the gift of giving as well as receiving.

If your child is enrolled in the ILP program, make sure they get to attend the Harvest Dinner on November 8th at Hartnell College. It should be a great opportunity to learn about Thanksgiving and how to start his/her own holiday traditions. The ILP program is also gearing up for a very special Holiday Dinner on December 13th. Talk to your child now about clearing their schedule, as this is an incredible opportunity for a very memorable experience, thanks to a very generous CASA supporter.

As you spend time with whoever you hold dear in your own life this month, please pause and give thanks for all you have, as we here pause and give thanks for all you have given to us here at CASA. We are so fortunate to have you all as advocates, as peers, as neighbors and as friends. Thank you all.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Michelle Arnold

Recruitment & Training Coordinator

Library Contest will Award Free Books

The Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) system announces its Tutor.com & Win contest for kindergarten through college students beginning on October 27th and ending at 5 pm on November 26th. Students with a library card can get live homework help by participating in a free Tutor.com session in their library, or from their home computer. They enter the contest by writing a short paragraph on "How Easy is Homework with Tutor.com?" and turning it in at any branch of MCFL. One winner will be chosen for each grade level, and will receive an age-appropriate book. The best essays will be posted on MCFL's website.

For information about the contest, or about homework help, call Ruth Paget at (831) 883 - 7542.

Event Expressway

Seventh Annual Rods on the Wharf Car Show

The sprawling grounds of the Custom House Plaza get decorated with the gleaming chrome and custom paint jobs of pre-1973 classic cars and trucks, by way of the Rods on the Wharf Car Show. Sponsored by Old Fisherman's Grotto and Isabella's, the showcase of automotive beauty and nostalgia is accompanied by a soundtrack of DJ Joe Guerra and the Hot Rods Band. The free event honors veterans and benefits the Developmentally Disabled Adults of Monterey County, so canned goods are appreciated.

dates: Tue, Nov 11
time: 10am-8pm
price: Free to attend
venue: Custom House Plaza
The northern end of Alvarado Street, Monterey
contact: 625-9623, 238-6740

The Stars of Autumn and Astronaut at Hartnell Planetarium

The Hartnell College Planetarium examines the marvels of the night sky in two different shows. The first, The Stars of Autumn, examines the stars and constellations that emerge during Fall. The second presentation, Astronaut, studies the rigors and wonders of the human body during space flight.

dates: Fri, Nov 07
Fri, Nov 14
time: 7pm
price: \$6/general; \$4/students, youth, military
venue: Hartnell College Planetarium
411 Central Ave., Salinas
contact: 755-6913
<http://www.hartnell.edu/planetarium>

November 29-30 -- 28th Annual Big Sur Harvest & Craft Fair

A unique collection of artists from Big Sur and their friends from the outlying areas who craft or practice their arts year round. Big Sur Grange Hall, Hwy 1 & Juan Higara Creek

Fee: Free
Time: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Phone Number: (831) 667.2557



We are looking for people interested in working on the 2009 Lighting the Way committee. This is our major annual fundraiser, so look forward to a great time for a great cause! First meeting Monday, 11/3, the location for the Volunteer Info Meeting is 321 Webster St. in Monterey from 5- 7pm.

Did you know...

Reaching Independence through Sustainable Employment (RISE)

The RISE Program serves youth who are at-risk and struggling to succeed in an educational and/or work environment due to various factors which may include: history of poor choices, lack of social supports/connections, limited English, pregnant/parenting youth, homelessness, lack of basic skills, poor work history, poor self-esteem, and poor study habits. The program is designed to foster familiarity with the workforce culture. Youth are exposed to "real-life" scenarios through workshops and one-on-one sessions. Employment Specialists encourage the development of accountability, responsibility and job/career readiness through the following:

- Educational and vocational self-assessments
- Job search assistance
- Occupational assistance pertaining to the identification of vocational interests, and gaining job experience with support
- Educational assistance such as exposure to postsecondary **educational** opportunities, planning for educational and career development, navigating financial aid/scholarship resources
- Workshops/classes to prepare participants for job sustainability and educational success. These may include topics such as: resume writing, interviewing skills, communication skills, maintaining a job, workplace safety, sexual harassment, study skills, knowing your learning style, etc.
- Addressing barriers/needs such as transportation, work attire, tutoring
- Job placement
- Referrals to community resources

For additional information about RISE, contact Rhonda Staton at 831-757-4525

Advocate Avenue



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

Kathy Kessler	11/4
Shirley Wylly	11/4
Yesenia Salvatierra	11/6
Anne Morris	11/9
Maureen McEachen	11/10
Susan Alexander Myers	11/13
Fe Nadine Leong	11/14
Alice Knapp	11/18
Bree Nakashima	11/19
Linda Kuhnz	11/20

We need your help in South County!

If anyone has any ideas for recruiting advocates in South County, we welcome your tips and suggestions.

We are currently in the process of setting up lunch-&-learns.

If you know a business that would like to host a lunch and learn, please let Brianne know.

Q and A Blvd with CASA's Administrative Assistant, Jackie Beltran



Q: What led to you seeking out CASA?

A: At Central Coast College we do a work-study program and that is how I found out about CASA. When I went in everyone seemed really nice so I decided to work here.

Q: What are your career goals?

A: For now it is working in an office as an administrative assistant. After that I would like to work with juveniles, maybe at Juvenile Hall.

Q: What do you do for fun?

A: On weekends I take my little sister out or I go to movies or dinner with friends.

Stop by the office to meet Jackie. She is here 20 hours a week for the next month. CASA of Monterey thanks Jackie for joining our family.

When faxing in documents to the CASA office please double check that you are faxing them to 831-455-6802 and NOT 831-455-8602. This 8602 fax number is someone not affiliated with CASA. This person has received a few misdirected faxes intended for our office, and it is a confidentiality breach we need to rectify as quickly as possible.



Holiday Craft Projects:

The holiday season is just around the corner, so we've gathered a few art projects in the CASA Activity Room that you can make with your CASA child. These projects are a great opportunity for your CASA child to express themselves creatively and give the finished product to a parent, caregiver or friend as a gift. It is a great opportunity for you to teach them about the joys found not just in GETTING a gift, but from GIVING one.

"It's Me" Magnets

These are blank figures that each child can decorate however they want (both girl and boy designs).

"It's Me" posters

These posters may help you break the ice and begin to develop a rapport with your CASA child. It is a poster size board that the child can fill in with their interests. This tool can also be used for show and tell or other activities.

"Tree of Thanks" Photo Frames

Children can decorate the frame with fall leaves and place a photo into the frame. We are happy to take digital photos in the office for you to avoid any issues with confidentiality.

Feel free to bring your CASA child in to create the craft or contact Brianne for some to take if you would like to do the art elsewhere.

DON'T MISS OUT!
We have 10 Aquarium passes left. They will expire on November 30th !!!

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoption Act

Will Improve Outcomes

for Children and Youth in Foster Care

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893) will help hundreds of thousands of children and youth in foster care by promoting permanent families for them through relative guardianship and adoption and improving education and health care. Additionally, it will extend federal support for youth to age 21. H.R. 6893 also will offer for the first time many American Indian children important federal protections and support. H.R. 6893 has bipartisan support and is fully paid for. This bill resolves differences between the House-passed Fostering Connections to Success Act (H.R. 6307) and the Senate Finance Committee-approved Chairman's Mark of S. 3038, the Improved Adoption Incentives and Relative Guardianship Support Act.

The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, which would improve outcomes for children and youth in foster care, must be enacted in September. The bill will:

Promote Permanent Families for Children in Foster Care

With Relatives

- **Subsidized Guardianship Payments for Relatives.** Helps children in foster care leave care to live permanently with grandparents and other relative guardians when they cannot be returned home or adopted and offers federal support to states to assist with subsidized guardianship payments to these families. Clarifies that all children who currently receive federally-supported subsidized guardianship payments in states with Child Welfare Demonstration Waivers will be able to continue to receive that assistance under the new program.
- **Notice to Relatives When Children Enter Care.** Increases opportunities for relatives to step in when children are removed from their parents and placed in foster care by ensuring they get notice of this removal.
- **Kinship Navigator Programs.** Guarantees funds for Kinship Navigator programs, through new Family Connection grants, to help connect children living with relatives, both in and out of foster care, to supports and assistance they need.
- **Licensing Standards for Relatives.** Clarifies that states may waive non-safety related licensing standards for relatives on a case-by-case basis and requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to report to Congress on ways to further eliminate licensing barriers so that more children can be placed with relatives in foster care and be eligible for federal support.

Improve the Quality of Staff Working with Children in the Child Welfare System

- **Extended federal support for training of staff.** Expands the availability of federal training dollars, on a phased in basis, to reach more of those caring for and working with children in the child welfare system, including relative guardians, staff of private child welfare agencies, court personnel, attorneys, guardian ad litem, and court appointed special advocates.

With Adoptive Families

- **Incentives for Adoption.** Increases incentives to states to find adoptive families for children in foster care, especially those with disabilities or other special needs and older youth.
- **Adoption Assistance.** Increases opportunities for more children with special needs to receive federally-supported adoption assistance without regard to the income of the birth families from whom they were originally removed.

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(Adoption Act cont.)

With Birth Families and Other Relatives

- **Establishes New Family Connection Grants.** Increases resources for Kinship Navigator programs, as described above, Family Group Decision-making meetings, Intensive Family Finding activities, and Residential Family-Based Substance Abuse Treatment, all of which can help children stay safely with family members and out of foster care or, once in care, return to their parents or other family members.
- **Keeping Siblings Together.** Preserves the sibling bond for children by requiring states to make reasonable efforts to place siblings together when they must be removed from their parents' home, provided it is in the children's best interests. In the case of siblings not placed together, states must make reasonable efforts to provide for frequent visitation or other ongoing interaction, unless such interaction would be harmful to any of the siblings.

Improve Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care

- **Foster Care for Older Youth.** Helps youth who turn 18 in foster care without permanent families to remain in care, at state option, to age 19, 20, or 21 with continued federal support to increase their opportunities for success as they transition to adulthood.
- **Educational Stability.** Helps children and youth in foster care, guardianship and adoption achieve their educational goals by requiring that states ensure that they attend school and, when placed in foster care, they remain in their same school where appropriate, or, when a move is necessary, get help transferring promptly to a new school; also provides increased federal support to assist with school-related transportation costs.
- **Health Care Coordination.** Helps improve health care for children and youth in foster care by requiring the state child welfare agency to work with the state Medicaid agency to create a plan to better coordinate health care for these children in order to ensure appropriate screenings and assessments and follow-up treatment and to assure sharing of critical information with appropriate providers and oversight of prescription medications.

Increase Support for American Indian and Alaska Native Children

- **Direct Access to Federal Support for Indian Tribes.** Offers, for the first time, many American Indian and Alaska Native children federal assistance and protections through the federal foster care and adoption assistance programs that hundreds of thousands of other children are eligible for already.
- **Technical Assistance and Implementation Services.** Requires HHS to provide technical assistance and implementation services dedicated to improving services and permanency outcomes for Indian children and their families.

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San Benito Street

The Holiday season is upon us! Once Halloween has taken place it seems like the days are flying by and before you know it Thanksgiving is here and Christmas is just around the corner. CASA San Benito started the planning for the foster kids toy drive in August and this week letters were mailed out to 250 businesses and individuals asking for their support. Some businesses and churches have already stepped up and pledged their support *before* the letters were mailed. There are several ways to support the toy drive; you can “adopt” a child and purchase everything on their wish list, or you can drop off unwrapped toys, or a monetary donation. You, the Advocates, can help by spreading the word about the toy drive and let your co-workers, friends, family and neighbors know about this project. For additional information or questions please contact Esther at the San Benito office; 637-4992 or email to esther@casamonterey.org.

Best regards,

Esther Curtice



One of our wonderful new trainees has offered CASAs and their children the opportunity to participate in a hands-on cake decorating class hosted in the CASA Activity Room. Whether you have an aspiring baker, event planner or socialite on your hands or you just want a fun activity for the two of you to do together, this is a wonderfully fun and educational opportunity. Please contact Michelle if you'd like to be included in the November or December class.

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

Salinas Police Department: NARC Unit Presentation

Date: Tuesday, NOV. 11

Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm

Location: CASA Office

Peer Review w/ Bree Nakashima

Date: Wednesday, NOV. 19

Time: 12:00pm- 2:00pm

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!