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# ADVOCATE ALLEY

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Volume 2, Issue 9

September 2008

**When the student is ready, the master appears. ~Buddhist Proverb**

## CASA Corner

Greetings Advocates,

I hope September is treating you all well so far. It's been busy around here, so my apologies that the newsletter is a bit behind this month. School has started, and with that, the need for all of us to update our educational surveys for our CASA kids. Please make sure to speak with your case supervisor regarding this.

The Independent Living Program (ILP) has just begun, so those of you working with transitional aged youth should make sure your child is enrolled. It's a great program where they will learn life skills while earning cash incentives to help them when they emancipate. Talk to your child's social worker about getting them signed up.

Thank you very much to all who helped with The Quail and Concours d'Elegance this year. The events went well and the proceeds will help keep our program running smooth! We have upcoming volunteer opportunities (see pg. 2 for details) so feel free to spread the word to family and friends!

As always, thank you all for all you do and if we can ever be of service please do not hesitate to contact us.

With gratitude,  
Michelle Arnold  
Recruitment & Training Coordinator  
455-6800 or michelle@casamonterey.org

## Event Expressway

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### September 14 -- Carmel-by-the Sea's Annual Great Sandcastle Contest

Family Fun: Come down to Carmel Beach and join your friends, Family, and neighbors from near and far and build a wonderful sand castle, big or small! Registration takes place right on the beach the morning of the event and judging begins around Noon that afternoon.

**Fee:** Free **Time:** 8 a.m. **Phone:** 620.2020

### September 20 - 21 -- Carmel Valley Rancher's Days

Celebration, Family Fun: Re-organized for 2008, Carmel Valley Ranchers Days is now a two-day format with more events for the whole family. From working ranch hands to recreational riders to shutterbug spectators, there's something for everyone at the 2008 Carmel Valley Ranchers Days! At the Trail and Saddle Club **Phone:** 620.6771

### September 24 -- 15th Annual Chili Cook-off

Celebration, Benefit: Professional and amateur Chili maker's competing for the awards of Best Amateur Cook, Best Professional Cook and the People's Choice Award. Raffle, music, wine and other bites will also be a part of the festivities. Held at Holman Ranch. Fundraiser for the Carmel Valley Chamber of Commerce.

**Fee:** Call for information **Time:** 5:30 - 8:30 **Phone:** 659.4000

### September 27 - 28 -- California International Airshow

Exhibition: Top air performers and ground exhibitions. Salinas Municipal Airport, Salinas, CA

**Fee:** \$16 in advance, \$19 at the gate **Phone:** (888) 845.SHOW

## ONGOING EVENTS

### Sundays Year-round -- Everyone's Harvest Farmer's Market

Family Fun: Fresh produce, baked and ethnic foods, cooking demonstrations, live music, and crafts. At the Marina Transit Station, 280 Reservation Road.

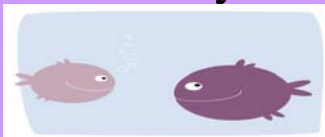
**Fee:** Free **Time:** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. **Phone:** 384.6961

### First Sunday of the Month -- First Sundays at La Mirada

Museums & Exhibitions: "First Sunday" is an ongoing series which highlights classical music and art. While taking in La Mirada's lovely surroundings, visitors may also enjoy light refreshments. Museum docents are on hand to answer questions and interpret the exhibitions. Monterey Museum of Art at La Mirada.

**Fee:** Free **Time:** 1- 4 p.m. **Phone:** 372.3689

## We STILL need your HELP!



We're out of Aquarium tickets, but many of the tickets we gave out haven't been used.

We will not be eligible to receive any more tickets unless we can document when they were used.

If you came and picked up tickets, please contact Edna at [edna@casamonterey.org](mailto:edna@casamonterey.org) and let her know when you and your CASA child used them.

We really appreciate your help and look forward to being able to offer these tickets again in the future.

## Did you know...

Thanks so much to advocate David Maradei for facilitating the most recent training on mandated court reporting. Here is some great info for all!

Child Abuse Reporting Hotline

Salinas Valley (831) 755-4661

Toll Free Line for Monterey County 1-800-606-6618

- The Child Abuse Reporting Hotline hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.
- After hours and weekends, callers with concerns for children should dial (831) 769-8888 and ask for the children's social worker to make a report.
- **If there is an emergency** involving a child the caller should dial 911 immediately.
- Child abuse referrals are assessed and handled according to the Article 6 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code (Section 300 *et seq.*).

Mandated Reporters can fax or email as an email attachment a Suspected Child Abuse Report (SCAR) form.

Confidential Fax Number (831) 796-8529 for use by Mandated Reporters to send SCAR's.

Email Address [ReportChildAbuse@co.monterey.ca.us](mailto:ReportChildAbuse@co.monterey.ca.us) for use by Mandated Reporters to send SCAR's.

More information about Child Protection Program Forms can be found at the State of California Office of the Attorney General

<http://caag.state.ca.us/childabuse/forms.htm>

## Sunset Monterey Idea House

Sunset Magazine has invited CASA of Monterey County to partner with them on a unique fundraising opportunity. Sunset Magazine has chosen to build this year's Idea House on the Monterey Peninsula, at Monterra. The home will be open to the public for ten weeks starting in September. CASA has been asked to provide almost 750 volunteers over the ten week period in exchange for a very nice donation from Sunset Magazine.

Your help in either volunteering to work a shift (or two) and/or to recruit additional volunteers will help ensure the success of this event. Please contact Julie Ann Lozano at [lozanojulieann@hotmail.com](mailto:lozanojulieann@hotmail.com).

## Advocate Avenue



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

Jane Doud	9/1
Michele Chavez-Diaz	9/5
Maggi de Lorimier	9/7
Bob Carroll	9/13
Richard Allen	9/17
Barbara Hays	9/21
Bill Sullivan	9/23
Mary Dandridge	9/25
Kathryn Pernet	9/25
David Maradei	9/27
Sonja Erickson	9/28
Ken Graeber	9/28
Kathi Wojtkowski	9/29

## 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.

## Next Training begins October 6th!

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.

## **Levels of Care: A Brief overview for CASA Volunteers**

*By Libby Coleman*

State and Federal laws require that children who are removed from their homes and declared Dependents of the Court must be placed in the least restrictive environments consistent with their own safety and the safety of others. That is, if they can be safely cared for by a family member or friend, such a placement must be considered first. Licensed foster homes and group homes are considered more restrictive environments because they utilize trained caregivers and a higher degree of structure than might be found with friend or family. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is in charge of licensing and monitoring foster care providers and group homes in the state of California.

### Foster Care

Foster Homes are family homes in which the parent(s) are paid to care for the children placed in their care. At the least restrictive end, they are actually the home of a friend or family member of the child in question and obtain a restricted license to provide care for one particular child or sibling group. At the opposite end, a foster home may be licensed to care for as many as six children and may seem more like a group home than like a normal family. The home may be licensed as a "foster home" if the caregivers live in the home full time, even though they may pay others to provide much of the care and supervision.

Licensed foster homes are subject to the rules established by CDSS. In addition to the basic level of foster home, CDSS has established Specialized Foster Homes in which the care provider receives extra training to provide special care for children with specific needs (e.g. medically fragile infants or emotionally disturbed children).

There are also Respite Care Foster Homes, that is, homes with experienced foster parents who take children for a short period of time so that the regular caregiver can go on a vacation or simply take a break from the demands of being a foster parent, and Emergency Foster Homes for temporary placement when a child is removed from his or her home and there is no longer-term home available. Some foster homes are supervised directly by the county, while others are part of a Foster Family Agency (FFA), which recruits the parents, trains them, and provides on-going support and certification for the caregivers. Foster parents who work for an FFA receive their subsidy through that office. It is the FFA that has the contract with the county, not the individual foster family. If your child is placed in an FFA foster home, you will be involved with the FFA social worker who supervised that household as well as the county social worker. In most cases, the FFA social worker will know more about the foster family and the child than the county social worker.

### Group Homes

Group homes provide a more restrictive out-of-home placement option for children in foster care. They all provide 24-hour care and supervision, but they vary in the amount of additional services they provide. CDSS has established 14 levels for group homes. The levels are referred to as RCLs, that is, Rate Classification Levels; the higher the level, the higher the rate of compensation - and the

The RCL of a particular group home is based on three components: 1) child care and supervision, 2) social work activities, and 3) mental health treatment services. Each home receives points for the number of hours per child per month for each service and for the level of education and training of the staff who provide each service. Thus a home receives more points for providing tutoring, counseling or therapy and for having trained educators, social workers or psychologists on staff.

Level 1 is the minimum level, providing only childcare and supervision with staff that has minimal experience and/or education. A level 1 home is

**Reasons to Celebrate!**





**The CASA staff celebrating Yolonda's birthday!**

From L to R:

Edna, Michelle, Brianne, Yolonda, Siobhan, Ruben and our wonderful intern, Jackie

**Congratulations to Dr. Stephen Los, the lucky winner of the 2008 Concours d'Elegance raffle car!**



From L to R: Ruben, Michelle, Edna and Dr. Los (with his winnings- a 2008 Jeep Grand Cherokee- parked behind him)

**It's a Boy!**



Congratulations to Advocate Yesenia Salvatierra on her beautiful son Aiden Joseph Lloyd Velarde.



school. For some of our CASA kids it's very difficult to be involved in extra-curricular athletic programs or clubs the schools offer. Often the expenses are a deterrent, however I found that contacting the coaches and diplomatically explain the child's situation, some expenses can be waived. It's worth asking, your CASA child may be able to participate and fulfill their dream.

September is also the start of a new training session in San Benito County. We are looking for participation of active Advocates on Thursday, September 25. If you would like to share your

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

### **Educational Advocacy Seminar (Date, Time and Location TBA)**

There is a great deal of emphasis being placed on monitoring the children's and youth's education. The system partners (social workers, attorneys, and judges) with much greater frequency are looking to us for information and support for the children educationally. That is why it is imperative that you each complete your education survey. In addition, we will be hosting a half day Educational Advocacy Seminar in the near future. If you have not participated in Educational Advocacy training from us in the past, this is critical. Please plan to attend as it is our goal to have 100% advocate participation in this training.

### **When its Hard to be a CASA - A four-week session begins Monday, Sept. 29th**

We all know that some days it is hard to be a CASA. We read stories that are sad, we see difficult situations, and interact with kids in pain. Sometimes the outcomes are simply not what we hoped for. We will be hosting a four week session on Monday nights (great alternative to Monday Night Football!) offering advocates a more in-depth look at what transpires on when you get involved with a CASA child. This supportive examination at some of the emotions, feelings, and reactions that are stirred up as a CASA advocate will begin on Monday, Sept. 29th, from 6 - 8pm. The location will likely be the peninsula, but that is to be determined.. The facilitator will be Laura Robinson Harbert, PhD. She is a wonderfully skilled, compassionate clinician from whom you will learn a great deal. Dr. Robinson-Harbert practices in Pacific Grove and has conducted a similar workshop for us in the past. All the participants reported it to be a wonderful experience. This will be open to up to max. 12 participants, first come, first serve. I ask that you do everything in your power to commit to all four sessions; it is far more effective when you do so. Call your direct case supervisor to sign up.

### **Peer Review w/ Bree Nakashima- Wednesday, Sept 24<sup>th</sup> 12pm to 2pm**



**RSVP:** to Ruben at 455-6800 or [ruben@casamonterey.org](mailto: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!**