

2019
IMPACT REPORT


Because Every Child Needs Someone Who Cares



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF SAN MATEO COUNTY



“The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be able to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love... People, not programs, change people.”

- Dr. Bruce Perry

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OUR MISSION

Our mission is to ensure that all abused and neglected children under the protection of the court have a consistent, caring adult who speaks on their behalf and helps them reach their full potential.

OUR VISION

We believe that every child deserves a safe and permanent home and will, therefore, provide a trained CASA volunteer to every abused, abandoned, or neglected child who needs one, and advocate to improve the lives of children in the foster care system.



Dear Friends,

This fiscal year marked a bittersweet milestone for our organization as Pat Miljanich transitioned out of her role as Executive Director to pursue other opportunities. We are forever grateful for her decades of leadership and dedication to our foster youth, and the impact she has had on our community.

I have always been passionate about supporting people and their protected rights under our judicial system, especially those who come from underserved and vulnerable communities. I began my legal career as a dependency attorney in Los Angeles County with Dependency Court Legal Services, where I represented children and parents. Prior to joining CASA's board of directors, I worked as a Senior Deputy City Attorney for the City of San Jose litigating employment and civil rights cases. After serving five years on our organization's board of directors, it is a privilege to take the baton from Pat's capable hands and to be entrusted with furthering CASA's mission. I am proud to share this report with you to celebrate CASA's impact over the last year.

Thanks to the support of donors like you, this was another year of growth for our program and, with the help of 271 dedicated volunteers, we were able to serve 310 children. I'm excited that, in partnership with our volunteers, staff, board and donors, CASA gave our community's most vulnerable children a voice and provided consistency as they navigate their way through unimaginable trauma.

It is inspiring to be a part of a community that cares about lifting up the children who need us most. Your ongoing contributions help us make a lasting difference in the lives of hundreds of young people and I thank you for continuing to work tirelessly with us to keep our children safe and protected and to provide them with the support they need to thrive.

With thanks,

Nkia Richardson
Executive Director



A BEACON OF HOPE
FOR A FOSTER CHILD

Why CASA Matters

Imagine being an abused or neglected youth who is removed from your home, not because of something you did, but because your parent(s) cannot, or will not, take care of and protect you. Then strangers enter into your life: foster parents, social workers, judges, lawyers, sometimes police and more. For some, one of the few adults who remains a constant as others come and go is a Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) volunteer.

In San Mateo County, CASA volunteers advocate one-on-one for youth in foster care and on probation to ensure they don't get lost in the overburdened child welfare and juvenile justice systems or languish in an inappropriate placement. CASA volunteers visit weekly with their youth and maintain ongoing communication with all parties involved to best serve the youth's interests. They provide a voice for the child in court to ensure receipt of and continuity of services. For the volunteer, this means a commitment of a minimum of 18 months, or until the case is closed, and an average of 12 hours per month of service.

5 Key Actions of a CASA

COURT APPOINTED SPECIAL
ADVOCATES HELP CHILDREN NAVIGATE
THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM:



ADVOCATE

Speak up for the best
interest of a child



SUPPORT

Provide a stable and
caring relationship



INVESTIGATE

Gather important information



REPORT

Organize and present details



RECOMMEND

Offer ideas that will improve
the situation

THREE KEY OUTCOMES

Safety

A Forever Home

Well-Being



Case Study Story

Jessica’s parents abused alcohol and drugs and, by the time she was 8, she was drinking as well. At age 11, Jessica was regularly experimenting with cocaine, meth, and other hard drugs and, by her early teens, she had developed a serious drug addiction. Because of her addictions and participation in self-harming behaviors, Jessica had numerous hospitalizations. Jessica’s mother disappeared from her life and Jessica was not interested in living with her father, who continued to smoke crack. The juvenile court placed her in a therapeutic group home to address her poor mental health which was linked to post traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse. Jessica got sober and received psychiatric care in the group home, but was dispassionate about school. When CASA volunteer Paula met Jessica for the first time at the group home, she readily saw past the medical chart that labeled Jessica “emotionally disturbed.” Paula had observed Jessica’s general health and noted that she was sometimes lethargic. She called attention to the high dosage of psychotropic medication being prescribed, urging a reevaluation of her medication intake. An adjustment was made, with positive results. In addition, Paula introduced some healthy practices to improve Jessica’s physical and mental health, such as yoga and meditation. Jessica told Paula that she had taken the initiative to practice meditation on her own and that it was something she had begun to rely on to help her cope with stress.

In a report to her CASA supervisor, Paula wrote about a sweet and grateful child who seemed detached from the world. Paula felt that Jessica was articulate and bright but needed to find a passion and develop pride in some newfound skills. During a hike one day, Paula noticed that Jessica seemed to have an interest in the lizard and snakes they passed along the way. A professional biologist, Paula began to engage Jessica in her work projects. Together they would trap snakes for analysis, observe bats with night vision goggles and research endangered species. Paula noted that Jessica was very methodical and focused on her work as she concentrated on improving her computer skills. After failing to help secure an internship for Jessica because of immigration restrictions, Paula began working to address Jessica’s immigration status. In a court report, Paula wrote, “It has been very satisfying to see the way Jessica has grown and the positive changes she has made in her life. I’d very much like to see her get the opportunities to move in new educational and employment directions at this critical time in her life.” Paula is also advocating for Jessica to leave the group home and return to public high school for her senior year.

ACCORDING TO CHILDREN'S ATTORNEYS AND SOCIAL WORKERS, CHILDREN AND YOUTH WITH A CASA VOLUNTEER ARE MORE LIKELY TO:



Receive needed services in a timely manner



Be enrolled in an appropriate educational setting



Participate in extracurricular activities



Have long-term connections to siblings, relatives or other support people



Be on track to graduate high school on time



Enroll in post-secondary education

CASA by the Numbers

NO. CHILDREN SERVED

310

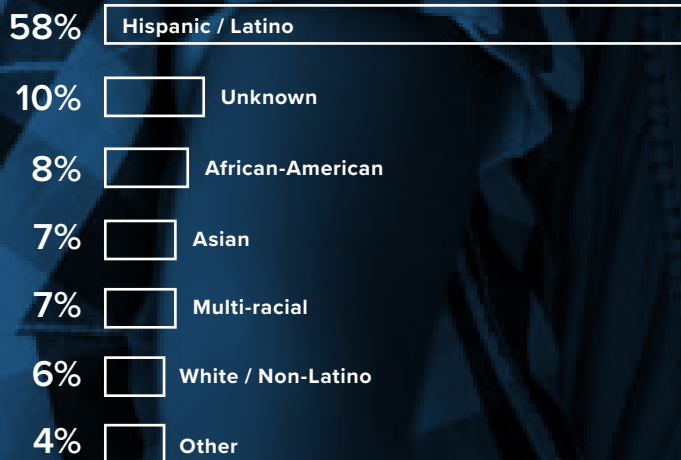
ACTIVE CASA VOLUNTEERS

271

HOURS OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS

14,390

RACE AND ETHNICITY





A BEACON OF HOPE
FOR A FOSTER CHILD

The Need

In San Mateo County, there are hundreds of foster children whose lives have been turned upside down through no fault of their own. Often from an early age, children in foster care face unimaginable trauma and are forced to deal with complex emotions that should not be part of childhood: sadness, anger, fear, hopelessness, grief. They have lost trust in adults. Their hearts ache. They bear the scars of trauma – inside and out.

The bureaucratic safety net they are placed in is overburdened and difficult to navigate. Children whose pasts are marred by trauma face uncertain futures with higher risk of substance abuse, homelessness, incarceration, and unemployment.

According to a 2017 study, Generations United, “Children in foster care are at least five times more likely to have anxiety, depression, and/or behavioral/health problems than children not in foster care.”

All children have the right to live in an environment free from abuse and neglect. They need a family and a permanent place to call home. To thrive, they need consistency and connectedness in their lives. CASA volunteers are devoted to making those things possible for children in foster care.

NUMBER OF NEW VOLUNTEERS
TRAINED THIS YEAR

92

Carl is only 7 but his short life has been filled with uncertainty. Born to parents with a history of drug abuse and mental illness, Carl was removed from his home at the age of 4 when his mother had a psychotic episode that endangered Carl's life. Over a period of 3 years, Carl transferred between caregivers 11 times, 4 of them so abrupt that he had to leave behind clothing and toys. Twice Carl was reunited with his father only to be taken away from him again when he resumed his drug use. Like any young child, Carl was powerless to stop the chaos and heartbreak in his life.

Carl's CASA volunteer became the one consistent, caring adult in his life, reassuring Carl that he was not forgotten. Carl's CASA volunteer sees him weekly, engaging him in activities at the playground or taking him to the library, zoo and museums. His CASA volunteer communicates his concerns about Carl to Carl's social worker, attorney, teacher and other professionals in the child welfare system. He is a strong voice for Carl in court, making sure that the judge has current, relevant information about Carl and that his needs are being met. Carl has developed a trusting relationship with his CASA volunteer and knows he can count on him.

How you can help

HERE ARE WAYS YOU CAN HELP MAKE A
DIFFERENCE IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD

Volunteer as a CASA:

Your advocacy gives foster children a voice. Helping a child can begin here – become a CASA Volunteer. Visit our Volunteer page to learn more.

Make a Donation:

Every gift makes a difference. Donate today, and take a look at other ways to give.

Join Our Social Media Network:

Keep up to date on our latest news and info...and Like, Follow and Subscribe with us today!



Financial Summary

FISCAL YEAR 2018-2019

Statement of Audited Financials

FY2018-2019 & FY2017-2018

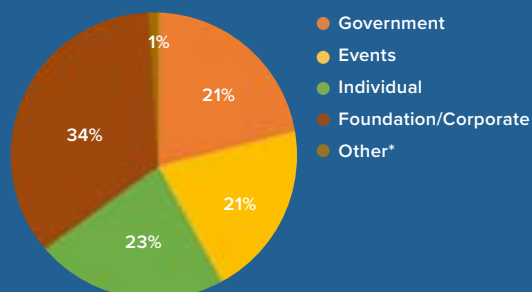
REVENUES	FY2018-2019	FY2017-2018
Contributions	\$445,947	\$500,334
Grants	\$613,730	\$458,933
Government	\$261,580	\$173,626
Investment Income	\$3,128	\$2,181
Net assets released from restrictions	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue and support:	\$1,324,385	\$1,135,074
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$833,062	\$735,195
General and Administration	\$101,991	\$104,799
Fundraising	\$275,874	\$204,814
Total Expenses:	\$1,210,927	\$1,044,808
Change in Net Assets:	\$113,458	\$90,266
Net Assets at Beginning of Year:	\$913,830	\$823,564
Net Assets at Year End:	\$1,027,288	\$913,830

Statement of Financial Position

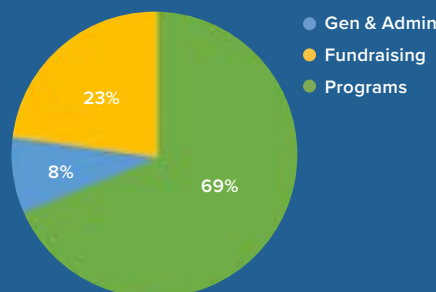
FY2018-2019 & FY2017-2018

ASSETS	FY2018-2019	FY2017-2018
Current Assets	\$917,014	\$803,538
Accounts Receivable	\$65,000	\$73,000
Prepays and other assets	\$21,248	\$21,248
Property and equip, net of accumulated depreciation	\$39,546	\$48,662
Total Assets	\$1,042,808	\$946,448
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities	\$15,520	\$32,618
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$962,288	\$863,830
Restricted New Assets	\$65,000	\$50,000
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,042,808	\$946,448

SOURCE OF FUNDS



EXPENSES



With Thanks

Thank you to our donors who ensure that our program is able to impact our most vulnerable children. The following gifts were received in the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2019.

\$100,000+

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Violet M. Johnson Family Foundation

\$50,000 - \$99,999

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State of CA Judicial Council
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\$20,000 - \$49,999

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With Thanks

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How Your Support Makes A Difference

Your donation helps to change the trajectory of a foster child's life by providing the following support and services:

- \$2500:** Advocacy for one child for one year, including volunteer training, materials, staff support, and court requirements
- \$1000:** Provide continuing education for our volunteers, who receive a minimum of 12 classes per year
- \$500:** Provide volunteer training and materials for Spanish-speaking members and Juvenile Justice Youth (unique program to San Mateo County)



Our organization is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (IRS Tax I.D. # 04-3849393) and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

With Thanks

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Tanya Esselmann
J. Weinrach
Omar Valadez
Tony Press
Diana and Robert DeGraff
Jane Dunbar
Ma Grace Rivera
Jessica Rivas
Karina Mendoza
Liz Cortez
Luis Cortez
Marisol Mendoza
Martin Reschke
Steve Giordano
Jennifer Lukan
Monica Dalila Leos
Rose Stenberg Thomson
Miran Bresic
Trevor Labuda
Patricia Crawford
Ray Yin
Elizabeth Mester

EVENTS

11th Annual Garden Party

CASA's premier fundraising event is hosted annually by the Auxiliary for CASA of San Mateo County and attended by over 300 guests. The event is an afternoon of music, hors d'oeuvres, wine and beer tasting while raising funds via a raffle, and a silent and live auction, all in a spectacular garden setting.



The CASA Auxiliary includes dedicated women who donate their talents and time to organize and support the annual Garden Party fundraiser.



Over 300 guests enjoyed the afternoon, accompanied by great music and delicious food and drinks. Bidding was fierce and friendly as the auctioneer energized the crowd, with winners receiving highly sought after items.

EVENTS

Donor Appreciation

The generosity of our donors enables CASA of San Mateo County to serve over 300 children in foster care and recruit, train, and support over 270 CASA volunteers each year. We are grateful for their support and host an evening filled with great conversation to show our appreciation.



Our organization depends almost entirely on the generosity of individuals, foundations, and corporations to support this vital work. Our community excels as a whole because of the generous donations from individuals like you.

Volunteer Training in Action

Volunteers attend 30 hours of training in the child welfare system - and unique to our program - the probation system, so they can advocate for their CASA foster youth. Upon completion, they are sworn in as an Officer of the Court. In addition, each volunteer completes 12 hours of continued education throughout the year.



With over 50% Hispanic/Latino foster youth in our community, we ensure our Spanish-speaking volunteers are trained in their native language to better connect with their Spanish-speaking foster youth to build a trusting relationship, and be able to best advocate on their behalf.



Volunteer Graduation!

With our four volunteer training sessions offered annually, we host graduation ceremonies to celebrate our newest Officers of the Court. These dedicated people will go on to make amazing changes in the life of their foster youth.

In 2018-2019, we had 271 volunteers spend over 14,000 case hours with or on behalf of their CASA children. The average length of time a CASA Volunteer worked with a child in an official capacity as a CASA was 18.5 months.



CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

CASA of San Mateo County
Sobrato Nonprofit Center - Redwood Shores
330 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 139
Redwood City, CA 94065

(650) 517-5840

www.CasaofSanMateo.org

CASA program name is a member of the National CASA/GAL Association and the California CASA Association.

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