

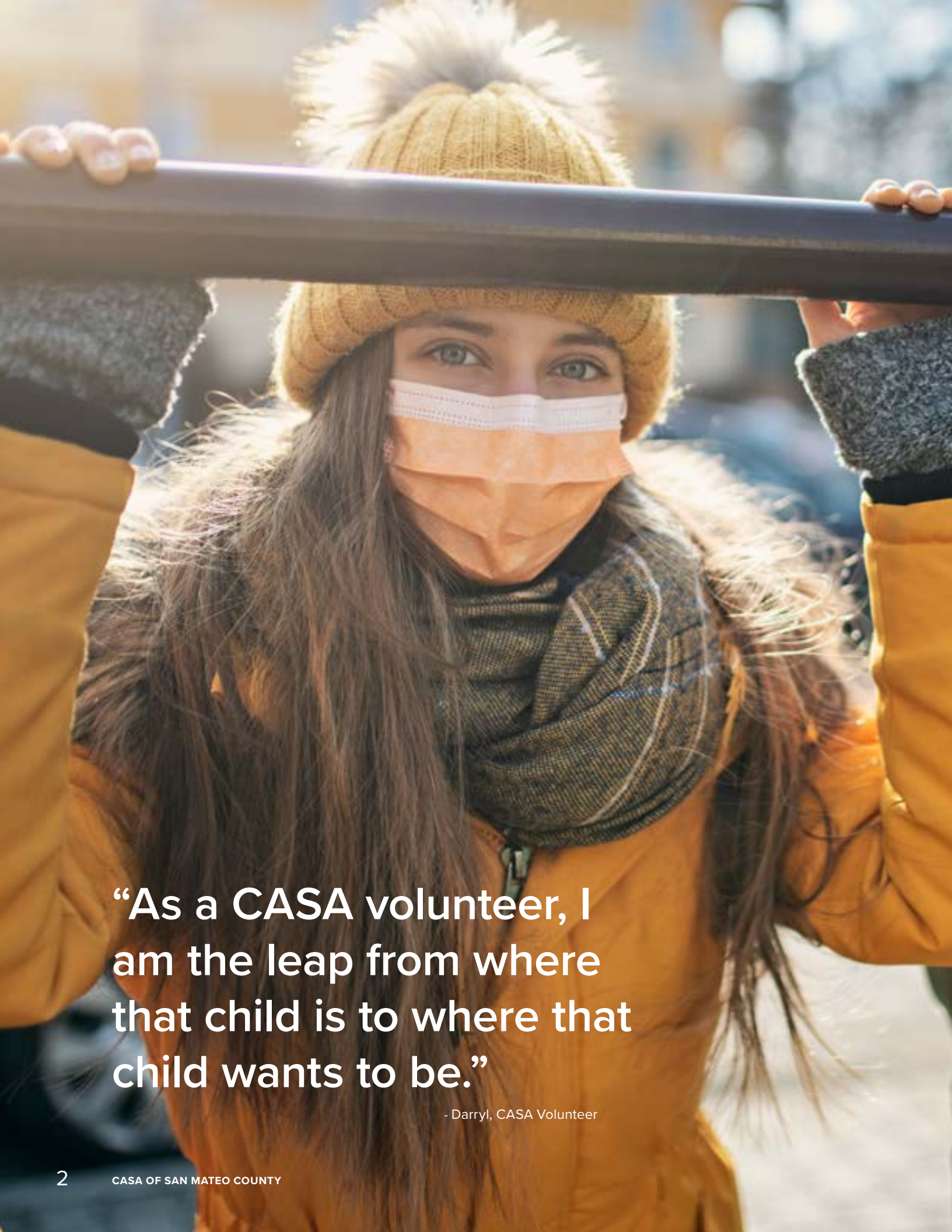


CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocates
FOR CHILDREN

CASA OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

Stronger Together



“As a CASA volunteer, I am the leap from where that child is to where that child wants to be.”

- Darryl, CASA Volunteer

OUR MISSION

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,

What began as a year that looked familiar, turned into a time of unforeseen crisis and challenges that caused all of us to reexamine our assumptions about the systems we have in place and how to support one another. We have all been reminded, in various ways, about the meaning of relationships and home.

For youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, the sense of connection to others and to the larger community became that much more important but, at the same time, even further out of reach as systemic inequities were widened, access to services diminished and the ability to leave our homes for the supports provided by school and family visits slowed down or stopped entirely.

The willingness to commit oneself to the wellbeing of others and dedication to stability for all children have always defined the CASA experience, but perhaps no more so than when the world seemed to shut down in response to the introduction of COVID-19 and in the face of a racial reckoning. Our CASA program shifted gears and restructured our operations. This included staff working remotely and offering virtual training for our volunteers so that we could continue to prepare them to meet the needs of the youth we serve.

On the ground, our volunteers:

- Continued to connect with children and youth of all ages to combat isolation.** They took advantage of virtual opportunities to take classes and tours. They read stories, played games and enjoyed meals together online. When circumstances allowed, they met for time outside and maybe some exercise.

- Helped children meet basic needs.** Volunteers connected families with resources for food, sometimes delivering food to families who were unable to get to distribution sites.

- Distributed tools to tackle distance learning,** giving out new laptops, printers and other school supplies that were donated by you or purchased with your generous donations.

- Provided personalized advocacy and support,** attending court hearings, making sure birthdays were celebrated, assisting with schoolwork and collaborating virtually with teachers, lawyers social workers and other professionals.

During times of crisis, our community comes together, driven by compassion and a desire to collectively overcome challenges and support one another. With your generosity, our CASA program has remained focused on ensuring the children we serve have the deserved opportunities to thrive. We are grateful for your continued partnership that empowers us to make progress on our mission to provide each child in our juvenile court system with a caring, consistent adult. On behalf of the youth we support, thank you for your empathy and enabling us to offer hope and make a meaningful difference for children throughout our community.

With thanks,
Nkia Richardson
Executive Director

A young girl with braids, wearing a denim jacket, is smiling and looking towards an adult whose profile is partially visible on the right. The background is a soft-focus green outdoor setting.

Why CASA Matters

A child in foster care needs someone to look up to, someone to count on. Having a stable relationship with a supportive adult can help children thrive, even when they have faced significant trauma and hardship.

In San Mateo County, CASA volunteers advocate one-on-one for the hundreds of children and youth who are in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Often from an early age, these children face unimaginable trauma and are forced to deal with complex emotions that should not be part of childhood: sadness, anger, fear, hopelessness, and grief. Their hearts ache. They bear the scars of trauma - inside and out.

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 and on probation. They 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 minimum 18 month commitment, or until the case is closed, and an average of 11 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



Advocacy Through Difficult Times

Children in foster care are disproportionately impacted by economic and social disparities, racial inequities, physical and mental health challenges, and the effects of trauma. When the outside world feels uncertain and their needs are exacerbated, it is all the more important for children to have the consistent support of an adult who can advocate on their behalf.

A young girl with long blonde hair is shown in profile, wearing a white surgical mask. She is looking down at a white stuffed animal, possibly a teddy bear, which she is holding. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be a window with curtains and some greenery. The overall lighting is warm and yellowish.

**More than
Ever...The
Need for
Stability and
Connection
in an Already
Chaotic Time**



The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has changed the world in ways beyond what we can imagine. It will have a lasting impact on our community, including the children we serve, our volunteers, and our staff at CASA of San Mateo County. In early spring, we closely monitored the situation both locally and nationally, remaining in close and regular communication with court and county officials. Throughout the many challenges and changes, our CASA volunteers have provided unwavering support for their youth.

CASA volunteers have been fierce education advocates for their children to reduce the potential for learning loss. They have responded to children in crisis and connected them with vital resources. They have connected older youth with food, housing and other resources to provide stability during a time of significant uncertainty. Importantly, when many things in the world came to a halt, CASA volunteers continued to provide regular reports and crucial information to our local child welfare and juvenile court judges to assist them as they made life-altering decisions impacting children and their futures.



Racial Injustices

The late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg once said, “Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time.”

CASA exists because we recognize the importance of human connection and the power that connection has for every child, particularly those undergoing trauma. Time and time again, the presence of one consistent adult, a CASA volunteer, has provided our children with the strength and voice they need.

The heartbreaking murder of George Floyd underscored a history of violence, injustice, and pain around race and poverty in our country. Many were left questioning how to process, what to do to keep their spirit intact and how to respond meaningfully and in a way that moves us forward. If this is the impact on the adults around us, how must already-vulnerable young people be expected to respond? How can we continue to provide needed support and give them a community where they can all live with dignity, hope, and equal opportunity for success?

Our CASA youth may have more lived experience with these issues than some of us and, likely, more lived experience than we would want for any child.

Our program continues to explore and implement opportunities to provide our community with tools to help navigate these issues and support our CASA youth and volunteers. We will continue to provide education classes for our staff and volunteers and resources to always learn more. We are committed to taking the steps needed to provide knowledge and opportunity to contribute to diversity, equity, and inclusion and racial justice for all.

STATEWIDE OUTCOMES

The Need for Stability

80%

OF YOUTH WHO ENTERED FOSTER CARE AT AGE 12 OR OLDER LEAVE THE SYSTEM THROUGH EMANCIPATION

56%

OF YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE ARE ULTIMATELY REUNIFIED WITH A FAMILY MEMBER

40%

EXPERIENCE HOMELESSNESS UPON AGING OUT OF THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

28%

RECEIVE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE BY AGE 21

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 children in foster care a voice. Helping a child can begin here.

<https://www.casaofsanmateo.org/what-is-a-casa-volunteer>

MAKE A DONATION:

Every gift makes a difference. Thank you for donating today.

<https://secure.donorpro.com/casa>

JOIN OUR SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORK:

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

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 @CASAofSanMateo  CASA of San Mateo County

 CASA of San Mateo County



Trauma and Resilience

Children in foster care are most vulnerable to adverse childhood experiences

Pediatrician Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California’s Surgeon General, has dedicated much of her career to spreading the word about the dangers of toxic stress to children, championing a multidisciplinary approach to these problems to improve health and build resiliency in youth.

Childhood adversity not only affects brain development; it can alter children’s hormonal systems, immune systems, and even their DNA. This can cause behavioral issues, learning difficulties, and physical health problems. Exposure to ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) includes abuse, neglect, domestic violence, and parental mental illness and substance abuse. Children in foster care experience these traumas far more often than other children, and it can shape not only their behavior and health but also their worldview.

As powerful as ACEs can be in the lives of children, there are concrete solutions to reduce their impact. In a recent interview, Dr. Burke Harris explains that the “science and research show that having someone to look out for you is really important for improving outcomes. Biologically, safe and stable and nurturing relationships release a cascade of processes in the brain and the body to help arrest the biological stress response. That’s the power of a program like CASA, that supports kids who are at known risk, who are going through out court system. CASAs provide someone who is just there for them, who is just looking out for them.”

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

245

ACTIVE CASA VOLUNTEERS

221

NUMBER OF COURT HEARINGS ATTENDED

543

HOURS OF ADVOCACY EFFORTS

12,537

RACE AND ETHNICITY

50% Hispanic / Latinx

18% Unknown

10% Asian

7% Multi-racial

6% African American

5% Caucasian

3% Other

1% Native American

Financial Summary

FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020

Statement of Audited Financials

FY2019-2020 & FY2018-2019

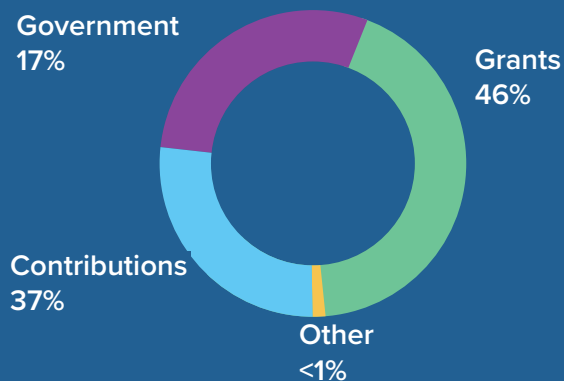
REVENUES	FY2019-2020	FY2018-2019
Contributions	\$634,964	\$445,947
Grants	\$778,229	\$613,730
Government	\$291,370	\$261,580
Investment Income	\$2,627	\$3,128
Net assets released from restrictions	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue and support:	\$1,707,190	\$1,324,385
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$794,347	\$833,062
General Administration	\$139,492	\$101,991
Fundraising	\$235,542	\$275,874
Total Expenses:	\$1,169,381	\$1,210,927
Change in Net Assets:	\$537,809	\$113,458
Net Assets at Beginning of Year:	\$1,027,288	\$913,830
Net Assets at Year End:	\$1,565,097	\$1,027,288

Statement of Financial Position

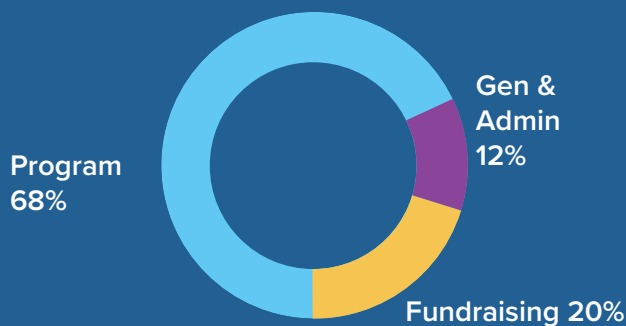
FY2019-2020 & FY2018-2019

ASSETS	FY2019-2020	FY2018-2019
Current Assets	\$1,571,422	\$917,014
Accounts Receivable	\$192,000	\$65,000
Prepays and other assets	\$8,410	\$21,248
Property and equip. net of accumulated depreciation	\$25,553	\$39,546
Total Assets	\$1,797,385	\$1,042,808
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities	\$232,288	\$15,520
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$1,373,097	\$962,288
Restricted Net Assets	\$192,000	\$65,000
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$1,797,385	\$1,042,808

Revenue



Expenses



With Gratitude

CASA of San Mateo County is a private, nonprofit organization that depends on the generosity of individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies. The following gifts were received in the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020.

\$100,000

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative
County of San Mateo
Anonymous

\$50,000-\$99,999

VOCA
State of CA Judicial Council
Sequoia Healthcare District
Andrew and Judy Mendelsohn

\$20,000 - \$49,999

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CASA of San Mateo County is a member of the National CASA/GAL Association and the California CASA Association.

This publication was supported by funding awarded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Victim Assistance Formula Grant Program (2018-V2-GX-0029) through the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES).

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